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Reading the Game

Anglo-American Perspectives on Football Fandom in the Age of Premier League Football

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1. Introduction

This study is rooted in straightforward fascination by someone who started playing football in his youth and still keeps trying today. Given the personal attachment to the subject, this study is primarily a work of curiosity. Most of us have played numerous games and sports when we were young, but whilst the fascination for most games subsides when we grow older our often childlike passion for football remains. But why? Is it the game's simplicity? What is it that mesmerizes millions of players and fans around the globe? And does a pastime merit such levels of academic attention? Apparently, it does as Arthur Hopcraft is quick to point out football's cultural centrality in Britain:

> The point about football in Britain is that it is not just a sport people take to, like cricket or tennis or running long distances. It is inherent in the people. It is built into the urban psyche, as much common experience to our children as are uncles and school. It is not a phenomenon; it is an everyday matter. There is more eccentricity in deliberately disregarding it than in devoting a life to it. It has more significance in the national character than theatre has. Its sudden withdrawal from the people would bring deeper disconsolation than to deprive them of television. The way we play the game, organize it and reward it reflects the kind of community we are.[1]

Assuming that football's fascination exceeds the essence of the sporting moment, the present paper seeks to trace the game's cultural impact on individuals and societies. It is concerned with the ceremonial dimension of the game, the meanings people attach to the game‘s periphery – be it the shared communal experience or the sounds and sights of the public spectacle. While the present study seeks to place football's social importance into a wider global perspective, major attention is given to the country that gave football to the world. 150 years after a small group of Oxbridge graduates codified its rules, thereby enabling the game's meteoric rise around the world, football is alive and kicking in its homeland. However, many fans argue that the people's game, at least at the elite end, has changed beyond recognition sparked by the inception of the Premier League and the advent of pay TV. The present paper focuses on this era of structural transformation by exploring the fans‘ literary reactions to a period of radical commercialization examining the effects of what Brian Glanville once coined a "Faustian pact with television."[2]

[1] Arthur Hopcraft, *The Football Man: People and Passions in Soccer*, London 1968, 9.
[2] Brian Glanville, *Football Memories*, London 1999, 268.

2. Methodological approach

2.1 The aims of the present study against the background of previous research

In contrast to the United States where the literary representations of sport have long been subject to intensive research by a multidisciplinary community of scholars guided by the Sport Literature Association, research on the ground has been scarce in British and German academia. However, ever since the 'linguistic turn' the use of literary sources to interpret historical, cultural and social changes and continuities in British society has gradually been employed by various disciplines such as literary criticism, sociology, cultural studies and sports history.[3] Jeffrey Hill reminds us that in the more traditional field of sports history, conservative historians have strongly opposed this new approach arguing that literary sources provide imagination, but fail to offer reliable evidence as traditionally found in empirical or archival data.[4] Their quintessential objection is how to trust creative sources and how to assess their impact.[5] Instead, they have adopted what Jeffrey Hill has coined a "reflectionist approach," accepting that creative writers are able to portray the atmosphere of a certain period better than historians.[6] But once the literary text, being a product of imagination, is set against more 'objective' evidence it has to follow that it is less

[3] This paragraph draws upon Jeffrey Hill and Jean Williams' introduction to "Special Issue of Sport and Literature" edited by Jeffrey Hill & Jean Williams in*: Sport in History*, Volume 29, Number 2, June 2009, 128. I am indebted to Dr Jean Williams for alerting me to this field during my doctoral research stay at De Montfort University Leicester in 2010. Note that Michael Oriad is one of the leading American scholars on sports literature. His first book together with a handful of studies by other academics established sports literature as a distinct genre. For further reading see: Michael Oriad, *Dreaming of Heroes: American Sports Fiction 1868-1980*, Chicago 1982. Multidisciplinary approaches in British academia can be found in: "Special Issue of Sport and Literature" edited by Jeffrey Hill & Jean Williams in*: Sport in History*, 29: 2 (June 2009). For a short overview and criticism on the linguistic turn see: Michael Oriad, 'A Linguistic Turn into Sport History', in: Murray G. Phillips (ed.), *Deconstructing Sport History. A Postmodern Analysis*, Albany 2006.

[4] Jeffrey Hill, *Sport and the Literary Imagination: Essays in history, literature, and sport*, Oxford et Al. 2006, 22-23. Hill's work cited as 'Hill' hereafter.

[5] See Jeffrey Hill and Jean Williams' introduction to "Special Issue of Sport and Literature", 128. Compare Douglas Booth's definition: "Reconstructionists and constructionists privilege empirical methods, accept historical evidence as proof that they can recover the past, and insist that their forms of representation are transparent enough to ensure the objectivity of their observations." See: Douglas Booth, 'Sport Historians: What do we do? How do we do it?', in: Murray G. Phillips (ed.), *Deconstructing Sport History. A Postmodern Analysis*, Albany: NY 2006, 27.

[6] A term coined by Hill implying that the textual source being studied *only* reflects an already existing reality, see Hill, 21f.

reliable and therefore of lower rank.[7] Opposing this reflectionist approach, Hill favours a deconstructionist[8] approach advocating a 'literary turn':

> In other words, seeing the novel as a cultural artefact that is itself capable of producing 'reality' in the same way as other historical evidence.
> It is endowed with an ideological function in the sense that the novel contains meanings that contribute to its readers' understanding of society and their own place in it. To put it bluntly, the novel is something capable of 'making sense' of the world, and this attribute of literature is something that should be very important for historians.[9]

His concluding ideas, namely that the literary text "has the capacity to *create* meaning as much as to *reflect* meanings construed elsewhere"[10] will be drawn upon in the present study as it analyses constructions of football fandom in autobiographical accounts. Since my approach is primarily concerned with the representations of football fandom in popular literature, it seems fitting to begin with a short overview on previous studies on football's literary representation before outlining the objectives of the present thesis. Perusal of academic literature on football quickly shows that the majority of studies have been confined to the fields of history and sociology. In fact, in-depth research on football's literary discourse has been rather sketchy. This is perhaps somewhat understandable given the fact that research into the relationship between popular literature and football is a comparatively new field of academic enquiry. Whilst it took the field some time to ignite academic interest, research into it has gradually intensified ever since the 1990s.

Player biographies have attracted academic attention as Joyce Woolridge has analysed a vast corpus of football biographies covering the period from 1945 to 1980. Contrary to widespread opinion, she claims that football autobiographies should not be dismissed as poor quality writing, but instead be considered as main evidence for

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[7] See Hill, 22-23.

[8] According to Booth, deconstructionists are aware of the limitations of knowing and presenting the past. They "acknowledge the unknowable and are sensitive to the fragmentary and partial nature of their historical sources and evidence." See Douglas Booth, *The Field: Truth and Fiction in sport history*, Abingdon 2005, 78. For more on this issue see Lars Ole Sauerberg's chapter "story and history" in: Lars Ole Sauerberg, *Fact into Fiction: Documentary Realism in the Contemporary Novel*, London et Al. 1991.

[9] Hill, 27.

[10] Hill, 22. John Bale has also applied this approach in his most recent work where he explores the writings and attitudes of six writers that have either explicitly or implicitly criticised the cult of sports. See John Bale, *Anti-Sport Sentiments in Literature: Batting for the Opposition*, London 2008.

the study of representations of the footballers' images.[11] Her approach is closely linked to Garry Whannel's earlier study, which examines how the lives of media sports stars are narrated. In his case studies, which include Stanley Matthews, George Best and David Beckham, Whannel comes to the conclusion that sporting biographies and autobiographies are a central medium for the narration of sporting lives. Interestingly, his study also shows how images of sports stars are subject to constant reconstruction according to changing public expectations.[12] Looking at the vast number of fictional writings in recent years it is surprising to see that football fiction has actually received very modest consideration from literary critics.[13] Apart from occasional reviews most in-depth literary studies have been confined to Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch*[14] (1992) *or* John King's *The Football Factory* (1997). While Jeffrey Hill's analysis[15] of three football-related novels offers a more comprehensive picture, Jonathan Darts' literary analysis of World Cup accounts[16] provides an insightful study of fan travelogues, whereas Uwe Baumann's paper[17] explores different notions of fandom in fan biographies. Although the confessional hooligan

[11] Joyce Woolridge, 'These Sporting Lives: Football Autobiographies 1945-1980', in: *Sport in History*, 28:4 (December 2008), 620-640. I am grateful to Professor Matthew Taylor for bringing the relevance of Woolridge's work to my attention.

[12] See Garry Whannel, *Media Sports Stars: Masculinities and Moralities,* London *2002.* Ironically his own thesis about the constant reshaping of images is confirmed when he claims about Tiger Woods: "Tiger Woods, as a phenomenally gifted, young, attractive, black man, the first to achieve major success in that most upwardly mobile of sports, golf, is a marketeer's dream made flesh." Ibid., 190.
Note that the brief overview on Whannel's work provided above draws upon Taylor's more substantial analysis of his work. See Matthew Taylor, 'From Source to Subject: Sport, History and Autobiography', in: *Journal of Sport History*, 35:3 (Fall 2008), 469-491, in particular ibid., 479f. For a new cross-cultural, binational approach see: Baumann, Uwe. 'Autobiographie und Populärkultur: Die Inszenierung des Fußballer-Ichs in Autobiographien englischer und deutscher Protagonisten der Fußballszene', in: Uwe Baumann & Karl August Neuhausen (eds.), *Autobiographie: Eine interdisziplinäre Gattung zwischen klassischer Tradition und (post-)moderner Variation*, Bonn 2013, 507-531.

[13] Explanation on this phenomenon will be provided in chapter 4.

[14] See Merritt Moseley, 'Nick Hornby', in: Jay L. Halio (ed.): *British Novelists Since 1960. Dictionary of Literary Biography 207*:3, Detroit Michigan, 1999, 144-148, Merritt Moseley, 'Nick Hornby, English Football, and Fever Pitch', in: *Aethlon*, 11:2 (Spring 1994), 87-95, Ralf Bei der Kellen, *The Making Of A Popular Author – Nick Hornby and Fever Pitch*, unpublished MA Thesis, University of Osnabrück 2002. Reinhold Wandel, '„Psychogramm des Fußballfans" – Nick Hornbys Fever Pitch', in: *HARD TIMES*, 72 (Winter 2000/2001), 24-28.

[15] Jeffrey Hill, *Sport and the Literary Imagination: Essays in history, literature, and sport*, Oxford et al. 2006. Among the works discussed related to football are Robin Jenkin's *The Thistle and the Grail*, Brian Glanville's *The Rise of Gerry Logan*, Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch*.

[16] Jonathan Dart, 'Here We Go, Here We Go'. Football Fans' World Cup Travelogues', in: *Sport in History*, 29:2 (2009), 311-329. I am grateful to Jonathan Dart for drawing my attention to this subgenre. I will also keep the terminology he coined, namely "World Cup travelogues".

[17] Uwe Baumann: 'Fußball als Therapie: Der Fußballsport im modernen englischen Roman', in: Uwe Baumann & Dittmar Dahlmann (eds.), *Kopfball, Einwurf, Nachspielzeit: Gespräche und Beiträge zur Aktualität und Geschichte des Fußballs*, Essen 2008, 191-214.

memoir has attracted sustained academic interest among sociologists,[18] a lack of attention is clearly given to more ordinary forms of football fandom. Given the fact that the overwhelming majority of football spectators enjoys the game peacefully, this must seem unsatisfactory. For it is the 'ordinary' fans that form the backbone of fan culture and consequently deserve to have their voices heard. That is why an in-depth study in this area promises to be a fruitful field of investigation, particularly if literary expressions might generate views and attitudes towards football which differ considerably from findings presented by historians and sociologists. Based on the assumption that narratives about football fandom are not only able to mirror football culture but are also capable of shaping their own constructions of it, the present paper seeks to contribute to the wider study of football culture.[19]

My methodological focus centres upon fans' autobiographical accounts as these belong to the most widespread and popular forms of football writing.[20] Close readings of these accounts promise deeper insights into the way the game is consumed and its culture construed. This is not to say that a study of other genres would not generate valuable findings too. In fact, contrary to German literary criticism,[21] a complete study covering all major genres is missing, which clearly remains a desideratum in English literary criticism. However, such an attempt would go beyond the confines of my approach, yet promises to be an interesting field of postdoctoral

[18] Attempting to provide insights into the social identities of supporters a number of sociologists have scrutinized the emerging genre of the hooligan memoir as well as the 'new ethnographies' of football subcultures. See John Hughson, 'AMONG THE THUGS: The 'New Ethnographies' of Football Supporting Subcultures', in: *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 33:1 (1998), 43-57, Steve Redhead, 'Hit and Tell: a Review Essay on the Soccer Hooligan Memoir', in: *Soccer & Society*, 5:3 (Autumn 2004), 392-403, Steve Redhead, 'This sporting Life: The Realism of The Football Factory', in: *Soccer & Society* 8:1 (January 2007), 90-108. In her studies Emma Poulton has repeatedly scrutinized media related discourses on football hooliganism. She argues that football hooliganism triggers a wide appeal within popular culture, which in turn is represented and reflected through books, DVDs, feature films and documentaries. She then provides a sociological understanding of the reasons for the production and consumption for what she coins "fantasy football hooliganism". Compare Emma Poulton, 'Toward a Cultural Sociology of the Consumption of Fantasy Football Hooliganism', in: *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 25:3 (2008), 331-349. See also Emma Poulton, 'English media representation of football-related disorder: 'Brutal, short-hand and simplifying', in: *Sport in Society*, 8:1 (2005), 27-47. Emma Poulton,' 'Fantasy football hooliganism' in popular media', in: *Media, Culture & Society*, 29:1 (2007), 151-164. Emma Poulton,' 'I predict a riot': forecasts, facts and fiction in 'football hooligan' documentaries', in: *Sport in Society*, 11:2-3 (2008), 330-348.

[19] Compare Whannel, 214: "In the context of a thorough and comprehensive mediatisation of society – sport cannot be understood except through its form of representation – it is centrally about narrative and image."

[20] This claim will be substantiated in chapter 4.

[21] In his PhD dissertation Axel vom Schwemm analyses various texts across different genres exploring how football is represented in German literature and thereby drawing general conclusions on a poetics of sport. He adopts an interdisciplinary approach via German Studies and sport science. See Axel vom Schwemm, *Dichter am Ball: Untersuchungen zur Poetik des Sports am Beispiel deutschsprachiger „Fußball-Literatur"*, PhD dissertation, University of Oulu 2006.

research. As far as the objectives of the present paper are concerned, a textual analysis of literary works tries to identify the significance individuals attach to football fandom whilst equally examining how football culture shapes the makeup of societies.

Assuming that football fandom cannot be grasped without looking at the wider context it thrives in, attention will be given to the way fans perceive football's media representatives as well as its governing authorities.

Whereas issues of fan consumption have been thoroughly explored within sociology, usually by means of participant observation, a similar attempt has not been undertaken in the field of literary studies. This is unfortunate, particularly if we take into account that these literary artefacts, claiming to be true and factual, offer concepts of fan memory, which are equally relevant to the sports historian. Using sociological findings as a conceptual framework, this study seeks to contextualise the narrators' manifestations of fandom into a wider theory of fan consumption. The principal aim behind this approach is to assess whether constructions of fandom mediated in autobiographical accounts either correspond to or depart from sociologically established patterns of fan consumption. This study equally examines Hornby's impact on the 'bourgeoisification' of football writing and questions Giulianotti's widespread notion that the so-called *soccerati* control the literary discourse on the game. In search of what has been described by Lenk and Gebauer as sport narratives of "artistic calibre", the aesthetic appeal of the works at hand will be assessed by scrutinizing their narrative styles.[22] In the light of the peculiar predictability of sporting action the analysis seeks to examine whether retrospective factual reporting can adequately capture suspense and atmosphere as some of the most important ingredients of the passion for the game. Offering a concise overview on the literary representation of football in English literature, the present thesis traces the rise of fan writings, identifies reasons for their emergence and critically questions their popularity while equally providing an outlook on the future of fan writing.

Owing to my interest in the game, constant reading has gradually brought into my hands a considerable number of fan accounts. From the 80 accounts that can

[22] According to Lenk's and Gebauer's understanding sport narratives of an artistic calibre "use unusual means of representation and perspectives to discover and to produce interpretations different from the day to day understanding of sport actions, symbols, heroes, losers, events." Compare Hans Lenk & Gunter Gebauer, 'Sport and Sports Literature from the Perspective of Methodological Interpretationism', in: *Aethlon* 5:2 (Spring 1988), 81. Note that under the section 'narrative style' aspects such as structure, language, themes and audience will be discussed for each work.

currently be identified I have singled out 12 individual pieces and tried to reduce these to some semblance of order. Being the first in its field, this tentative map of fan writings does not claim to be complete. Composed of four distinctive categories, the typology presented aims at outlining major differences in content, scope and focus, thereby contributing to the exploration of football's literary dimension.

Naturally, the selection of narratives has been subjective, yet far from arbitrary. Instead my choice has been shaped by a couple of reflections.[23] For the sake of comparabilty I wanted the narratives to have similar truth claims. All of them claim to be 'factual' in nature with the wider field of fan culture as one of their most dominant concerns.[24] Moreover, the works selected had to originate from a similar period of time. Although the fan biographies of Nick Hornby, Colin Shindler and Alan Edge cover a whole life-span, all the works in question date from the last 22 years, a period of sea-change in British top flight football. True to their state as memoirs, these fan biographies are deemed highly suitable for tracing the changes within British football culture, in particular the impact on fans after the game's commercial revolution through the inception of the English Premier League.[25] In addition, I intended my study to go beyond the confines of English elite football, offering a more global fan perspective on the game. This is why I did not only include alternative football cultures but also featured World Cup diaries in my study, exploring how football is received in previously 'untapped' areas such as Japan.[26] Whilst the accounts of Joe

[23] A private conversation with Jeffrey Hill as well as the study of his introductory chapter in his work *Sport and the literary imagination* have been helpful to identify criteria for the selection of primary sources. Compare Hill, 30-33.

[24] I am aware that these narratives might not necessarily be read and solely understood as narratives about football fandom. Compare John Bale, *Anti-Sport Sentiments in Literature,* 14: "The desire of adjectivally categorise literary works reflects a mindset that sees book classifications as a neat and tidy business, implying certainty. So, the fact that there are references to sports in a work of literature does not mean that it is necessarily read (or written) as a work about sport. That is a question of interpretation."

[25] Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch*, London: Gollancz 1992 (Indigo Paperback Reprint 1996), Colin Shindler, *Manchester United ruined my life*, London: Headline Book Publishing 1998 (Paperback Reprint 1999). Alan Edge, *Faith Of Our Fathers: Football as a Religion*, London: Two Heads Publishing 1997 (Mainstream Publishing Paperback Edition 1999). Note that the chapter on fan biographies is partially based on the findings of my unpublished First State Examination Thesis "'More than a game': Zwischen Faszination und Besessenheit – Der Fußballfan in der zeitgenössischen englischen Literatur", written in 2007. Whilst the selection of narratives has remained the same, findings, previously published in German, were much narrower in scope and have consequently been reassessed and expanded due to the extensive research that has gone into the subject meanwhile.

[26] Simon Moran, *We are Nippon: The World Cup in Japan*, Hyogo: S.U. Press, 2002, Colin Ward, *Well Frogged Out: The Fans' True Story of France '98*, Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 1998, Jamie Trecker, *Love And Blood: At The World Cup With The Footballers, Fans And Freaks*, Orlando et Al.: Harvest Books 2007.

McGinniss and Tim Parks shed light on Italian professional football,[27] as one of the most prestigious counterparts to the English professional game, the likes of Charlie Connelly and Paul Watson explore the game at the non-professional stage in Liechtenstein or even at grass-roots level on the tiny Pacific island of Pohnpei.[28] Pete Davies adds a gender-specific dimension to this study as his account takes stock of the women's game in England.[29] Hoping that outsider observations would generate refreshingly different observations, I added Chuck Culpepper's account[30] to my selection floating his tale of the American novice as a comparative model to more traditional views echoed by seasoned supporters such as Hornby, Shindler or Edge. With the odd exception of Culpepper and McGinniss, all narrators claim to have a personal history of fandom, and in the case of Colin Ward even a history of involvement with football-related violence.[31] During the process of selection it became apparent that the narratives provide a differing scale of literary recognition. Some have been utterly ignored, whereas others have received a huge amount of literary acclaim.[32] Despite claims that the perfection of *Fever Pitch* makes other autobiographical fan accounts redundant,[33] attention will be given to pieces, which I feel, have either been unfairly overlooked or deserve mentioning none the less because of the insights they provide. Due to the limited popularity of these accounts a summary of content will be provided for each case.

[27] Joe McGinniss, *The Miracle of Castel di Sangro*, New York: Little, Brown and Company 1999 (1st Broadway Books Paperback Reprint 2000), Tim Parks, *A Season with Verona: Travels Around Italy in Search of Illusion, National Character and Goals*, London: Secker and Warburg 2002 (Vintage Paperback Reprint 2003).

[28] Charlie Connelly, Stamping Grounds: Exploring Liechtenstein and its World Cup Dream, London: Little, Brown Book Group 2002 (Abacus Paperback Reprint [2]2005), Paul Watson, *Up Pohnpei: A Quest To Reclaim The Soul Of Football By Leading The World's Ultimate Underdogs To Glory*, London: Profile Books 2012.

[29] Pete Davies, *I Lost My Heart To The Belles*, London: Heinemann 1996 (Mandarin Paperback Reprint 1997).

[30] Chuck Culpepper, *Bloody Confused! A Clueless American Sportswriter Seeks Solace in English Soccer*, New York: Broadway Books 2008.

[31] Colin Ward's *Steaming In: Journal Of A Football Fan* (1989) charts the violence and excitement of the terrace scene in the 1970s and 1980s. Being the first of its kind Ward's account was shortlisted for the *William Hill Sports Book Of The Year Award* in 1989.

[32] Note that Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* was awarded the prestigious *William Hill Sports Book Of The Year Award* in 1992. Joe McGinniss was shortlisted with *The Miracle of Castel di Sangro* in 1999. The latter work was also chosen as the "Best Book of the Season" by *Four-Four Two* – UK's leading football magazine. Tim Parks' *A Season with Verona* was also shortlisted for the *William Hill Sports Book Of The Year Award* in 2002 so was Colin Shindler's *Manchester United ruined my life* in 1998.

[33] See David Winner, *Those Feet: A Sensual History of English Football*, London 2005, 2.

2.2 Preliminary notes on autobiographical writing and its truth claims

Having described *Fever Pitch* as "enigmatic", uncertain whether it is "fact, or fiction, autobiography or proto-novel,"[34] Jeffrey Hill hints at a broader issue in this context. For the narratives included in my study are personal life stories claiming to be 'true' or 'factual'.[35] As such they are commonly labelled 'autobiography', defined by Lejeune "as the retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality."[36] Yet as clear-cut as Lejeune's definition might be the wider field of autobiography is far from distinct. Bordering between fact and fiction, autobiography tends to cross genre distinctions.[37]

Due to their factual background there has been considerable debate whether these narratives should be regarded as fiction or non-fiction. In fact, all the narratives selected claim literal validity by constant reference to actuality – be it by referring to authentic people, actual places or events.[38] Those that classify autobiography as non-fiction stress that statements of factual narratives must pass the test of factual verification, while fictional narratives constitute a non-referential framework whose "references to the world outside the text are not bound to accuracy" and whose references do not need to "refer *exclusively* to the real world outside the text."[39]

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[34] Hill, 33. Also compare Hill's objections on the referentialty of Hornby's autobiography: "Hornby's story relies a great deal, as it must in the absence of a 'real' diary (and even that would have had its flaws), on imaginative reconstruction. This raises several questions. How much Hornby the child, whose relationship with his father seemed to exist only at football matches, is real, and how much an invented character? Indeed, is the Hornby who appears in the book the same Hornby as the author?" See ibid., 130.

[35] Compare Nick Hornby's assertion about the factual character of *Fever Pitch*: "If I were writing a novel, Arsenal would win the '78 FA Cup Final." See Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch*, London: Indigio 1992 (Reprint 1998), 108.

[36] Philippe Lejeune (edited by Paul John Eakin), *On Autobiography,* Minneapolis 1989 (=Theory and History of Literature Vol. 52), 4.

[37] Compare Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, 'The Trouble with Autobiography: Cautionary Notes for Narrative Theorists', in: James Phelan & Peter J. Rabinowitz (eds.), *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, Oxford et Al. 2005, 357: "Autobiography is not a single genre but an 'umbrella' term for widely diverse kinds of life narrative [...], literally dozens, that engage historically situated practices of self-representation. The field of autobiography studies, as it has developed across multiple theoretical and methodological approaches, has consistently troubled single definitions as inadequate to account for its myriad genres and the rich complexities of acts of self-narrating and self-representation." For discussion on the distinction between the terms 'memoir', 'biography' and 'autobiograpy' see Michaela Holdenried, *Autobiographie*, Stuttgart 2000, 24-36.

[38] See Patrick Holland & Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing,* Ann Arbor ^{2}2002, 10.

[39] Dorrit Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction*, Baltimore & London 1999, 15. According to Cohn a non-referential narrative "signifies that a work of fiction itself creates the world to which it refers by referring to it." See ibid.,13. She also maintains that: "When we speak of the nonreferentiality of fiction, we do not mean that it *can* not refer to the real world outside the text, but that it *need* not refer to it." See ibid., 15.

Those that advocate the fictional nature of autobiographies point out that they can also be regarded as ‘verbal fictions‘ (Hayden White) because their common dominator is emplotment.[40] Hence the use of narrative techniques and the mere selection, omission, enhancement of facts places them in the field of fiction. As such they are literary artefacts similar to other works of fiction.[41] Yet, a variety of literary critics have energetically rejected White’s assessment. According to critics such as Ansgar Nünning the aspect of emplotment cannot be equated *per se* with fictionality, otherwise it had to follow that newspaper reports would have to be classified as ‘fictional‘ since news reportings also transmit information by means of emplotment. By placing the sole focus on the device of emplotment, White’s assessment insufficiently ignores other fictional strategies such as dialogue, interior monologue, unreliable narration, while equally neglecting the fictional technique of presenting events out of chronological order.[42] As Abbott puts it:

> Narrative nonfiction differs from narrative fiction in its referential function. We expect it to convey as best as it can the truth of actual events. As such it is ‘falsifiable‘. It is also contstrained in what it can affirm, particularly in areas where the truth can not be documented, like much of the consciousness of its historical figures. Therefore it is also limited in the narrative devices that it can employ. Narrative fiction, on the other hand, has no such constraints. It can record with confidence and exactitude the inner thoughts of its characters. It can also plunder our world in the construction of its world, changing our world at will, adding and substracting. It can also plunder all the devices of nonfiction narrative and add a whole cluster of its own.[43]

Additionally, the importance of paratextual indicators is unjustifiably neglected too. Whilst fictional representation is often claimed by the paratextual label ‘novel‘, the

[40] Emplotment understood as “the teller’s imposition of a coherent temporal order on a succession of events he perceives in the past, with a view to structuring them into a unified story with beginning, middle and end.“ See Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore & London 1978, 83.

[41] For more on this issue compare Michaela Holdenried’s chapter ‘Entwicklungstendenzen und Strukturmerkmale moderner Autobiographik’, in: Michaela Holdenried, *Autobiographie*, Stuttgart 2000, 37-51. See also Carola Hilmes, *Das inventarische und das inventorische Ich: Grenzfälle des Autobiographischen*, Heidelberg 2000.

[42] Note that this paragraph draws upon the findings of Nünning’s criticism on White’s theory. See Ansgar Nünning, ’Fiktionalität, Faktizität, Metafiktion’, in: Christian Klein (ed.), *Handbuch Biographie: Methoden, Traditionen, Theorien*, Stuttgart and Weimar 2009, 21-27.

[43] H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Cambridge ^{2}2008 (= Cambridge Introductions to Literature), 153. Genette also stresses the importance of textual and paratextual markers in assessing the fictionality of a text. See Gérard Genette, ‘Fictional Narrative, Factual Narrative‘, in: *Poetics Today,* 11:4 (Winter 1990), 770f. For discussion on the fictiousness of autobiographical writing see Dorrit Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction*, Baltimore & London 1999, 8f.

classification ‘autobiography‘ highlights the narrative’s referentiality and simultaneously indicates that it is subject to falsification.[44]

As far as the classification ‘fact or fiction‘ is concerned for the narratives at hand, it must be said that a clear-cut general distinction seems hard as they vary considerably in their mimetic approach despite similar truth claims. At first glance, all of them do provide the reader with high levels of referentiality, as football-related settings, events and players stem from the extratextual reality and can therefore easily be verified. Moreover, excerpts from authentic sport papers are frequently threaded through the accounts helping to suggest validation of the narrators’ claims. In one account copies of torn match tickets[45] are attached to the narrative serving as proof of the narrator’s personal attendance thereby backing up the validity of his assessments. On second thought, however, several narratives show strong levels of “fictional contamination” (Nünning) in spite of their stories’ fact-based frames. Hence the reader stumbles across the paratextual remark “all names of fans have been altered,”[46] leaving him in uncertainty which character traits stem from a ‘flesh-and-blood-personality’ and which elements are purely fictional. As the autodiegetic narrator continues to deliberately blur the characters’ true identity, the reader is kept in doubt whether the characters at hand do actually exist.[47] While some narratives do not offer insights into characters‘ minds apart from those of the autodiegetic voice, others comply to this novelistic feature offering rich descriptions of characters’ state of mind.[48] Although authentic players are featured, their representation can be

[44] See Ansgar Nünning, ’Fiktionalität, Faktizität, Metafiktion’, in: Christian Klein (ed.), *Handbuch Biographie: Methoden, Traditionen, Theorien*, Stuttgart and Weimar 2009, 25. Compare also Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson, ‘The Trouble with Autobiography: Cautionary Notes for Narrative Theorists‘, in: James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (eds.), *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, Oxford et Al., 2005, 361: “When an autobiographical narrator claims that the memories and experiences narrated are those of the authorial ‘signature‘, when the publisher classifies the narrative as a ‘memoir‘ or ‘autobiography‘, readers attribute the events narrated within the book’s pages to a flesh-and-blood person identical with that signature.“ When referring to the related field of non-fictional biography Schabert claims in a similar vein: “In non-fictional biography [...] statements of the narrative have to stand the test of factual verification. They must be justifiable as being inferred from the evidence, must be warranted as conclusions arrived at by means of historiographic, psychological, medical, economic, geographical and other knowledge.“ See Ina Schabert, ‘Fictional Biography, Factual Biography, and their Contaminations‘, in: *Biography*, 5:1 (1982), 5.

[45] See Tim Parks, *A Season with Verona: Travels Around Italy in Search of Illusion, National Character and Goals*, London: Secker and Warburg 2002 (Vintage Paperback Reprint 2003), 185. Parks’ work cited as ‘Parks’ hereafter.

[46] See Parks, xi above the Acknowledgements. Promoting the veracity of his account Jamie Trecker includes references to websites: “Klok is actually Dutch, but most watching didn’t know that. You can see pictures of this event at his Web Site, should you wish: http: // www.stage-touring.com/hansklok.” See Jamie Trecker, *Love And Blood: At The World Cup With The Footballers, Fans And Freaks*, Orlando et Al. 2007, 22.

[47] Compare Parks, 311.

[48] Compare Parks, 133.

strongly shaped by a narrator's perception, thereby radically diverting from common media presentations:

> Zinedine Zidane in particular has a crazy bullish anger about him, a head-down tension and animal violence that no doubt goes far beyond football, reaches back to some profound personal quarrel this man has with the world, his days as a poor immigrant' s son in the white man's France.[49]

At times it is the prosaic language employed that turns these accounts into far more than factual presentations of place and people. Indeed, such can be the extent of fictionalisation that reviewers are tempted to suggest seemingly real people are "straight out of a Mario Puzo novel."[50] In line with novelistic conventions the stories can provide a variety of different character types. Whilst some are drawn sketchily and remain flat throughout the course of the narrative, others can develop substantially.

Considering these aspects, the reader seriously wonders how to classify the narrative status of these writings. Although claiming to be autobiographical and 'true', how can we be sure fictional and factual elements are not contaminated – particularly if the accounts are imaginative reconstructions? Surely, references to 'real' sporting events, teams or players are easily verified, but this does not apply to anecdotes or details about the narrators' private lives and experiences. Things become more complicated when authors vouch for the accuracy of their accounts. Insisting on the veracity of his narrative Joe McGinniss told me:

> I was constantly taking notes. In the evenings and early mornings I would transcribe these, translating into English. No one who knows the town or the people ever suggested that anything was fictionalized. I don't bother challenging assertions made my [sic] reviewers.[51]

Asked the same question Charlie Connelly, author of *Stamping Grounds: Exploring Liechtenstein and its World Cup Dream*, responded in a similar vein:

> If by 'fictionalised' you mean 'things that didn't really happen' I'd be amazed if there was a notion that it's even in parts a fictionalised account. It's more than a decade since I wrote it,

[49] Parks, 150. The same rings true for the narrator's literary presentation of the brigade. His attempt to portray them as a seemingly peaceful 'band of brothers' victimized by brutal police and exploited by corrupt club officials seems to be a rather romantic, yet fictionalised account of a group notorious for violence and racism in real life.

[50] See Bill Barich, 'Local Heroes: The True story of a small-town Italian soccer team that made it big', in: *The New York Times*, 6 June 1999. Available online at http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/06/06/reviews/990606.06baricht.html (Accessed 30 October 2013).

[51] See email interview with Joe McGinniss in the appendix.

> but the odd minor exaggeration for comic effect aside (ordering a large beer in the pub, for example: obviously I wasn't washed out of the door on a wave of spilled beer) I can say with complete certainty the stories and people I found needed no embellishment from me. Everything in that book happened as described. Absolutely everything. [...]
> All the major conversations in the book (with people like Patrik Hefti, Ernst Hasler, Peter Jehle, Ralf Loose, Stefanie, Mario Frick etc) were recorded on audio tape; conducted in interview style, so I just transcribed the tapes to write them up in the book. They were all in English too – I was very lucky that most people in Liechtenstein, certainly the people I spoke to, seem speak [sic] very good English as my half-forgotten schoolboy German would not have been up to the task. The only time this looked like becoming an issue was with Harry Zech when I spoke to him at his winery, as he wasn't confident about his English. Patrik Hefti came with me to help out if he needed a few words and phrases translated but as it turned out he was fine. So yes, I was very lucky there.
> Hence it was very easy to portray these scenarios and conversations as I was able to write them up exactly as they happened in the words and voices of the people concerned. Obviously I was taking extensive notes of all the things I did, places I visited and the matches I watched so between the tapes and my notebooks I was able to write the book as accurately and as faithful to the actual events as possible. I'd take notes as I went, and at the end of each day I'd spend time going through them and checking I'd not forgotten anything, then write them up into chyapter [sic] form as soon as I got home.[52]

Hence the reader is effectively obliged to accept all truth claims that go beyond his means of verification no matter how improbable they might seem or how unreliable the narrative voice may be. Being caught up in violent clashes with Tunisian fans himself, the narrator Colin Ward claims to have eavesdropped on fellow English fans:

> Some lads used lulls in the skirmishing to phone their friends or even their mums. One lad was heard shouting to his mum.
> 'Hey mum, watch the news, I'm in the middle of a riot. Oy! Cameraman, point this over here. Which station are you from? Swedish TV. Christ that's no good to me. Oy, mum – I'll phone you back if Sky or the BBC cameraman get me into shot.[53]

Against this background it seems appropriate to classify their contents as 'semi-fictional' since they are only partly subject to judgements of truth and falsity.[54] At times passages can clearly not be taken at face value, but must be understood as highly individualised perceptions of reality. Yet irrespective of the narratives' referentiality, what matters in the present study is not so much the veracity of individual pieces but instead the wider mediations of football fandom these accounts reveal. Above all, the highly subjective perceptions of football culture help us to understand how football fans construct fan identities and what it means to be a football fan.

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[52] See email interview with Charlie Connelly in the appendix.
[53] Colin Ward, *Well Frogged Out: The Fans' True Story of France '98*, Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing 1998, 108.
[54] Compare Cohn, 15: "Referential narratives are verifiable and incomplete, whereas non-referential narratives are unverifiable and complete."

2.3 Fan writings as travelogues

> No country is easy to understand from the outside; yet when you get inside a country the wealth of detail and nuance can confuse even further. Simon Moran has seized the chance offered by the World Cup to get behind the scenes in Japan as they were played out in the World Cup 2002. Through his keyboard the World Cup becomes a mircrocosm of Japan interacting with the world.[55]

Indeed, travelling plays a crucial role in these accounts as the narrators follow their teams across different regions or even to foreign countries. It is against this backdrop that an air of estrangement surrounds the travelling experiences enabling the narrative voices to provide interesting outsider perspectives on places and people they encounter. Justifiably the given fan accounts can in large parts equally be read and understood as writings about travel. To what extent the given narratives can be attributed to the terms 'travelogues' (that is 'travel writing') or 'ethnographs', the terms most commonly applied to writings about travel, pretty much depends on the underlying definitions of these terms. In fact, apart from a more general debate on the precise definition of the term 'travelogue' due to its hybrid nature[56] major confusion stems from difficulties in distinguishing this term precisely from the 'ethnograph', its related counterpart.

> Travel writing and ethnography differ primarily in emphasis. Travel writing is self-conciously autobiographical, intentionally anecdotal, and (in some cases) deliberately ethnocentric, whereas ethnography has tended until recently to play down the personality of its author, to substitute scientific for anecdotal information, and to critique ethnocentric assumptions behind the study and description of 'foreign cultures' while remaining aware at the same time of its own prejudices and biases.[57]

Traditionally ethnography has been related to social sciences and predominantly associated with the field of anthropology. Aslop provides us with a precise definition of what exactly constitutes ethnography as a research method:

> It is chiefly a qualitative research strategy that relies primarily on participant observation and concerns itself in its most general sense with the study and interpretation of cultural behaviour. The conventional image of the ethnographer is of the academic who goes out into the field

[55] Foreword of David Jack, Publisher, S.U. Press in: Simon Moran, *We are Nippon: The World Cup in Japan*, Hyogo: S.U. Press 2002, 7.

[56] Holland and Huggan argue that travel writing blurs different categories and genres. See Patrick Holland & Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing,* ^{2}2002, 8-9: "Travel narratives run from picaresque adventure to philosophical treatise, political commentary, ecological parable, and spiritual quest. They borrow freely from history, geography, anthropology, and social science, often demonstrating great erudition, but without seeing fit to respect the rules that govern conventional scholarship." For further discussion see their introduction "travel writing today" in ibid., 1-25.

[57] Ibid., 11.

> (traditionally a distant land of whose people and way of life little was known) and lives closely alongside the people for an extended period of time, observing social interactions, customs and rituals. [...] While in the field the ethnographer records his or her observations by making fieldnotes and then, on leaving and returning home, produces a written ethnographic study of that particular community.[58]

What is striking about the narratives under investigation is that the impressions portrayed could be described as subjective contemplations rather than criteria-based observations. Whilst the narrators are also participant observers, impressions given are rather scattered with a strong emphasis on the self. Consequently, cultural differences are examined by representing their effects on the narrative voice. Written in diary-style fashion, the autodiegetic voice rearranges fragmented personal experiences into a coherent narrative, but does not necessarily rely on empirical data to authenticate the validity of his claims.[59] Based on these ideas it seems befitting to label the relevant accounts ‘travelogue‘ as these narratives are anecdotal in style and lack a systematic empirically-backed frame. Of course, such a classification is rather academic, especially if the authors themselves are in doubt on how to label their work appropriately. Asked how he would classify his work *Stamping Grounds*, Charlie Connelly replied to me:

> I've never really thought about classifying my work: in practical terms that's done by the publishers and bookshops and I'm happy to leave it to them. My intention, as it is with all my books, is simply to tell a good story. I guess that as a football team is the heart of the story it's a football book. Having said that, I also wanted to use the football team as a prism through which to look at the people, history and culture of Liechtenstein as few people in the UK know anything about the place, something that could equally make it a travel book, I guess.[60]

Clearly more important than the matter of labelling these accounts is another fact Connelly hints at – namely that football turns into a looking glass through which foreign cultures can be observed, questioned and assessed.

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[58] Rachel Aslop, ‘The Uses of Ethnographic Methods in English Studies’, in: Gabriele Griffin (ed.), *Research Methods for English Studies*, Edinburgh 2005, 111.

[59] Note that this aspect draws upon the findings of Holland’s and Huggan’s introductory chapter. See Patrick Holland & Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing,* Ann Arbor ^{2}2002, 13-16.

[60] Email interview see appendix.

3. Locating research into fan narratives in the wider field of academic studies on football fandom

The aim of the present chapter is to outline wider social and cultural factors of British football fandom and to locate these within the more general field of fan theory. This chapter traces changes in British football fandom while equally assessing the social and economic impact of the FA Premier League founded in 1992. It critically questions the widespread notion that England's traditional football following has been priced out from the game's top end by scrutinizing various sociological crowd composition studies. Giulianotti's taxonomy of football spectators will be examined and its relevance for the present thesis discussed. The chapter concludes by offering my own football fandom authenticity scale which helps both to understand and compare constructions of football fandom within the given autobiographical accounts.

Until relatively recently the study of football fandom has almost exclusively been the domain of sociologists, psychologists and social historians.[61] Sadly though, most of the research conducted has been overwhelmingly dedicated to the most exceptional forms of fandom – football hooliganism at the expense of more ordinary forms of football fandom.[62] As a result, patterns of fan consumption in people's everyday lives away from the live venue have not yet been thorougly explored.[63] This must seem unsatisfactory, if one takes football's tremendous effect on British society into account. Looking at various studies of fan theory it turns out that 'fandom' is a quintessential phenomenon of popular culture and thus by no means restricted to the 'beautiful game'.[64] Whilst the more general definitions of 'fan' relate this phenomenon

[61] While the psychological focus is on the analysis of individual behaviours, traits and characteristics, the sociological analysis tends to focus on the structural context of the game, its cultural values, collective behaviour and institutional functions. See Daniel L. Wann et Al., *Sport Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators*, London 2001, 17. Social historians have frequently focused on the historical emergence of relationships between football clubs and communities in relation to the social identity-building properties of football spectating. See Adam Brown, Tim Crabbe & Gavin Mellor (eds.), *Football and Community in the Global Context: Studies in Theory and Practice*, London & New York 2009, 2-3.

[62] See Garry Crawford, *Consuming Sport: Fans, Sport and Culture*, London & New York 2004, 111. Crawford's work hereafter cited as 'Crawford'. Indeed, since the publication of Ian Taylor's theory on the origins of football hooliganism (1971) much of the sociological analysis has been focused on this social phenomenon. For more extended treatment of this issue see Anthony King, 'New Directors, Customers, and Fans: The Transformation of English Football in the 1990s', in: *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 14 (1997), 224-240. King's work cited as "King, 'New Directors' " hereafter.

[63] Compare Crawford, 105.

[64] See Cornel Sandvoss, *Fans: The Mirror of Consumption*, Cambridge et. Al. 2005, 3: "Yet fandom still mirrors conditions of popular culture, consumption and their academic analysis. It has become impossible to discuss popular consumption without reference to fandom and fan theory, just as it has become next to impossible to find realms of public life which are unaffected by fandom – from the

to somebody who is "an enthusiastic admirer or supporter,"[65] it is striking that 'fandom' appears in a predominantly negative light within writings about fan theory. Fans are frequently described as 'obsessed' individuals with an intense interest in a specific team, celebrity or band. Accordingly, Joli Jenson states:

> The literature on fandom is haunted by images of deviance. The fan is consistently characterized (referencing the term's origins) as a potential fanatic. This means that fandom is seen as excessive, bordering on deranged behavior.[66]

Drawing on such notions, Jenson refers to a cultural hierarchy of pastimes. In the pursuit of these, Jenson distinguishes between "fans" and "aficionados" – the major difference lying in their objects of desire and the modes of enactment:

> The objects of an aficionado's desire are usually deemed high culture: Eliot (George or T.S.) not Elvis; paintings not posters; the *New York Review of Books* not the *National Enquirer*. Apparently, if the object of desire is popular with the lower or middle class, relatively inexpensive and widely available, it is fandom (or a harmless hobby); if it is popular with the wealthy and well educated, expensive and rare, it is preference, interest or expertise.[67]

3.1 British football culture, its transformation through the inception of the FA Premier League and the impact on its fans

Deeply affected by the tragedies of Heysel and Hillsborough British professional football was in decline in the 1980s, particularly after English football clubs were given a five-year-ban from European competitions following the Heysel tragedy in 1985. The downfall of British football was partly due to the hooligan phenomenon, which immediately linked the game with issues of violence and marked a major burden for the game's popularity. In fact, the reasons for the game's poor state were manifold. Clubs suffered from a decline in attendance while equally struggling with an increase in players' salaries ever since the abolition of the maximum wage in 1961.[68] This in turn had an effect on facilities offered to spectators, which, put quite simply,

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intermingling of show business, sports and politics to the everyday life talk about one's favourite music, television show or film." For a more general theory on audiences see: Nicholas Abercrombie & Brian Longhurst, *Audiences*: *A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*, London et Al. 1998. See particularly chapter 5 "Fans and Enthusiasts", ibid., 121-157.

[65] Elaine Pollard and Helen Liebeck (eds.), *The Oxford Paperback Dictionary*, Oxford et Al. [4]1994, 287.

[66] Joli Jenson, 'Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterization', in: Lisa A. Lewis, *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, London & New York 2001 (Reprint), 9.

[67] Ibid., 19.

[68] See King, 'New Directors', 231-232.

were “unsanitary and dangerous“ (King).[69] These factors led The Sunday Times to call for a radical restructuring of the game: “British football is in crisis; a slum sport played in slum stadiums increasingly watched by slum people, who deter decent folk from turning up.“[70] In terms of revenue and attendance the British game at the top end was simply not able to compete with other leading European leagues such as Italy’s *Serie A*, Spain’s *La Liga* or the German *Bundesliga.* But in the 1990s fundamental change took place. Boyle and Haynes hint at the most notable aspects that are intertwined:

> The powerful combination of forced governmental change, driven by the Taylor Report (1990), a cultural shift in the image of the national game in England facilitated by the relative success of that country at the Italia 90 World Cup, the massive financial and marketing boost given to the game by money from BskyB in 1992, all combined to open up the football industry to the commercial forces which had paid little attention to football in the previous decade.[71]

Especially the transformation into all-seater stadia as implied by the Taylor Report warrants closer inspection here.[72] While this recommendation seemed sensible and certainly stemmed from an honest concern for the well-being of spectators, it had drastic consequences for British football culture in the long run.[73] Thus the reduction of stadium capacities as an immediate response to the Taylor recommendations led to an explosion in seating prices as well as a change of paradigm. Rapidly, the ideal of the loyal diehard fan turning up week-in week-out was replaced by the concept of a paying customer that could expect better services when paying more.[74] This new concept was shaped by the American model and based on the way American professional sports were run and influenced by the apparent orderliness of American spectators. Hence administrators of the British game were not only impressed by the huge financial success American professional sports generated, but at the same time believed that the American model would equally work with British football. Part of the

[69] King, ‘New Directors’, 231.
[70] *The Sunday Times,* May 19, 1985, p. 16a, quoted in King, ‘New Directors‘, 233.
[71] Raymond Boyle & Richard Haynes, *Football in the New Media Age,* London & New York 2004, 9.
[72] Both the English Football League as well as the Scottish Football League introduced the Taylor regulations in their highest leagues. Thus, the all-seater model was compulsorily introduced in the top two divisions of English football. Therefore the English top two divisions have been affected more than the lower two divisions.
[73] See King, ‘New Directors’, 232.
[74] See King, ‘New Directors’, 232.

American model was to promote a family concept which meant attracting a new family audience through different marketing strategies.[75]

Faced with the huge costs of implementing the Taylor recommendations, the Football League First Division clubs decided to break away from the Football League in 1992 and established the Premier League as a limited company, thereby securing commercial independence from its former governing bodies, the Football League and the Football Association. The newly founded Premier League was now able to negotiate its own broadcast and sponsorship deals. This led to an immediate growth of the game's finances especially through the signing of the lucrative broadcasting contract with Rupert Murdoch-owned satellite TV channel BSkyB directly after the launch of the Premier League in 1992.[76] Yet to be fair, securing such lucrative deals was only made possible through the Broadcasting Act passed in 1990 that enabled private broadcasters to bid for exclusive rights to broadcast live games, effectively replacing the terrestrial free-to-air television as the primary means for broadcasting live matches. According to Liz Moor, this neo-liberal approach in turn had a major effect on British football culture, since something that had previously been free of charge, at least in terms of access, was replaced by BSkyB's subscription policy that had to be paid for.[77]

All of a sudden a game that was tumbling only a couple of years earlier started to became immensely popular again and profitable. This attracted a new clientele both in terms of spectatorship and club ownership. Whilst the former ones became known as 'post fans' (Giuilanotti), the latter ones were coined 'new directors' (King). The latter ones have been characterized as follows:

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[75] The aspect of the 'American model' draws upon Dominic Malcom, Ian Jones & Ivan Waddington, 'The people's game? Football spectatorship and demographic change', in *Soccer & Society*, 1:1 (2000), 129-130. For further information on the 'Americanized' approach to marketing football see John Williams, 'Protect Me From What I Want': Football Fandom, Celebrity Cultures and 'New' Football in England', in: *Soccer & Society*, 7:1 (2006), 96-114. Compare in particular ibid., 101.

[76] Whilst the Premier League's initial TV deal with Sky television was worth around £300 million over a period of five years, the latest TV deal has seen campaign prices for domestic football rights skyrocket to a record £3 billion over the next three years starting from the 2013/2014 season. Compare Ian Ridley, *There's a Golden Sky: How Twenty Years of the Premier League Have Changed Football Forever*, London 2012 (Revised and updated edition), 384.

[77] See Liz Moor, 'Sport and Commodification: A Reflection on Key Concepts', in: *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 31 (2007), 133-134. Note that Mike Weed identifies the emergence of the satellite broadcaster BSkyB in 1992 as the stimulus for a growth in pub spectating due to the lack of domestic satelitte TV at home. He attributes the increasing popularity of the pub as a sports spectator venue to the "shared communal experience" spectators can enjoy there. See Mike Weed, 'The Story of an Ethnography: The Experience of Watching the 2002 World Cup in the Pub', in: *Soccer & Society*, 7:1 (2006), 76-95.

> English football clubs have not been incorporated into larger capitalist companies, but, rather, the new directors have merely added the football club to their capital interests or have put all their capital into a single club. For the new directors, the football club is an independent regionally situated investment opportunity. [...] Because the football club is regarded as an investment opportunity in itself – a business operating in its own right in different niches to multinationals – it is essential that the football club is profitable. Here, the new directors in England are distinguishable from both their predecessors and from many football club owners in Europe. [...]
> The demand that football clubs must operate like any other business and make a profit amounts to a sea-change in the administration and perception of football in England. For instance, in the past (probably between the 1920s and the 1970s), the club was not seen as a profit-making institution but part of a city's public amenities and a source of kudos for the owner.[78]

As King accurately outlines, for the 'new director' profit maximisation had become the crucial criterion for his involvement in the club. This differs substantially from traditional ownership patterns where owning a football club was often viewed as a philanthropic hobby tied to the public good.[79] However, once clubs had been identified as another part of the entertainment economy, it had to follow that fans necessarily turned into customers and the goal of profit maximisation prevailed. This in turn resulted in higher admission prices and a much stronger club merchandise. Probably the most notorious representative of the game's 'new director' type is Malcolm Glazer, current owner of Manchester United.[80] This new breed of club owners causes mayhem among many loyal supporters since many fans suspect these 'football entrepreneurs' of saddling their clubs with debt as part of their business model once they bought it. In fact, Malcolm Glazer did just that with Manchester United. *The Guardian* reports:

> The need for the Glazer family to refinance the debt they loaded onto the club when they bought it in 2005 laid bare their business model and provoked the fury of fans. It emerged that the successful £509m bond scheme allowed the owners to take up to £127m out of Manchester United in the next year alone, in order to help them repay the additional £202m in high-interest hedge fund loans that are secured on their shareholding in the club. More than 140,000 supporters, who argue that the Glazers have raised ticket prices and failed to invest in the team, have joined a Manchester United Supporters Trust campaign to back the group of wealthy fans known as the Red Knights looking to engineer a buyout.[81]

[78] King, 'New Directors', 227-228.
[79] See King, 'New Directors', 228.
[80] Such was the resistance against Glazer's takeover that supporters founded their own club, FC United of Manchester. See http://www.fc-utd.co.uk/home.php. On the supporters' protest against the Glazer ownership of Manchester United see the BBC's online article 'Man Utd: Red Knights takeover attempt shelved', in: see http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10212982 (Accessed 30 July 2011).
[81] See anon., 'Football's off-the pitch battles: debt, dysfunction and dissent', in: *The Guardian*, 29 March 2010. Available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2010/mar/29/football-battles-debt-glazers (Accessed 18 February 2012).

As the Premier League's global popularity is on the rise an increasing number of international investors is on the prowl looking out for investment opportunities here. As of December 2012 only 7 out of 20 Premier League clubs are owned by UK nationals. Apart from the big four – Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester United – also Queens Park Rangers, Southampton, Sunderland, Manchester City, Fulham, Aston Villa, Reading, West Ham United and Swansea are at least partly owned by foreign nationals.[82] Whilst all the owners are looking for profitable investment, they simultaneously invest in the clubs themselves, hoping to win some silverware. Although one would suspect the club supporters to appreciate these efforts, many fear that foreign ownership might transform the league beyond recognition. Without any salary caps or limitations on transfer fees immensely rich foreign owners can easily outpay less affluent clubs, making it impossible for them to compete either financially or sportingly. This new type of subsidised overspending is epitomised by the likes of Roman Abramovich of Chelsea and, more recently, Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahvan of Manchester City. After the takeover of Manchester City from Thai premier Thaskin Shinawatra in 2008, City's new owner has allegedly spent close to a £1 billion on signing new players. Yet, Mansour's record losses of £197 million in the financial year of 2010/2011 prove that it remains hard to turn a profit with Premier League clubs.[83] With the first team now playing in League Two the recent sporting and financial decline of Portsmouth FC also serves as a painful reminder that while foreign owners might be successful businessmen they might not necessarily be fit to run football clubs.

On a more general level, the fans' source of discontent is twofold.

On the one hand it stems from the fact that the economic customer model is by no means applicable to a fan's relation to his club. Thus by contrast to an ordinary customer situated within the confines of conventional economy a committed football fan will not go for the cheapest product or the most convenient location. Instead he has a 'monogamous' commitment to his club. Therefore he will solely opt for his

[82] Information taken from Hamish Mackay, 'Foreign ownership in the Premier League – why so much and what does it mean?', 16 September 2012, available online at http://www.footballfancast.com/premiership/foreign-ownership-in-the-premier-league-why-so-much-and-what-does-it-mean-2 (Accessed 30 October 2013).

[83] Figures taken from David Conn, 'Manchester City announce biggest ever loss in English football', in: *The Guardian*, 18 November 2011. Available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2011/nov/18/manchester-city-biggest-ever-loss (Accessed 30 October 2013).

club's merchandise while equally attending the matches of his club. This in turn will leave him vulnerable and unprotected from free-market practices.[84]

On the other hand critics fear that the consequences of the customer approach will lead to an erosion of football's traditional working-class following because they will simply not be able to cope financially. Indeed, discussions about the current state of British football have frequently been dominated by the widely held perception that the increasing commercialization of British top-flight football has led to a wider 'gentrification' and therefore squeezed out football's 'traditional' following. Hence clubs are constantly accused of having exchanged their male working-class fan base for the aforementioned more affluent middle-class 'customers'.

In fact, statistical figures released only recently substantiate this claim. Ever since 1989, the year of the Taylor report, there has been a cumulative inflation rate of 77 per cent in England according to figures of the Bank of England. Yet, ticket prices for attending English top-flight football have skyrocketed. This has been revealed by the figures in David Conn's article "The Premier League has priced out fans, young and old", published in *the Guardian* on 16 August 2011:[85]

Club	**Cheapest ticket (1989-90)**	**With inflation of 77.1%**	**Cheapest ticket (2011-12)**	**% increase**
Arsenal	£5	£8.86	£51	**920%**
Aston Villa	£5	£8.86	£25	**400%**
Everton	£4.50	£7.97	£36	**700%**
Liverpool	£4	£7.09	£45	**1,025%**
Man Utd	£3.50	£6.20	£28	**700%**
Tottenham	£7	£12.40	£47	**571%**

However, the claim of 'pricing out England's traditional following' seems problematic on several accounts. First and foremost the sociological studies carried out to date[86] have not yielded any evidence that the composition of crowds in British professional football have changed fundamentally in recent years.

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[84] This paragraph is drawn from King's more detailed criticism on the customer approach. See King, 'New Directors', 236f.

[85] See David Conn, 'The Premier League has priced out fans, young and old', in: *The Guardian*, 16 August 2011. Available at www.theguardian.com/sport/david-conn-inside-sport-blog/2011/aug/16/premier-league-football-ticket-prices (Accessed 3 November 2011).

[86] See Rex Nash, 'English football fan groups in the 1990s: Class, Representation and Fan Power', in: *Soccer and Society*, 2:1 (2001), 39-58. Richard Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators And The Social Consequences Of Commodification, in: *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 29:4 (2005), 386-410. Dominic Malcom, Ian Jones & Ivan Waddington, 'The people's game? Football spectatorship and demographic change', in: *Soccer and Society*, 1:1 (2000), 129-143. The latter study cited hereafter as 'Malcolm et al.' Giulianotti's study cited hereafter as "Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators' ", Nash' s study cited hereafter as 'Nash'.

The first systematic longitudinal analysis of football spectatorship was conducted by Malcolm, Jones and Waddington in 2000.[87] The overall purpose of the study was to examine all available evidence regarding the widespread assumption that a significant demographic change in football spectatorship had taken place. Here data had been drawn from a range of questionnaire surveys administered between 1984 and 1997. As a basis of comparison all of the surveys had employed similar categories for analyzing data such as age and class. Despite methodological problems with some surveys[88] their longitudinal comparison of data yielded the following results as far as the demographic categories age and sex as well as occupational and employment status are concerned:

> There is, therefore nothing in this review of data to indicate that the age composition of crowds has altered in recent years, and thus no indication that an increasing number of young people are now attending matches. [...]
> Similarly there is little to suggest that more women are now attending games; indeed the most striking feature of the data regarding the sexual composition of football crowds is its highly uniform nature. Leaving aside the Glasgow Rangers (1994) findings, we can see that over a 14-year period surveys conducted in Great Britain have consistently found that females constitute between 10 per cent and 13 per cent of the crowd. [...]
> There is little to support the contention that football is increasingly becoming a family game. [...]
> It is claimed, other groups, such as the unemployed, students and the retired, have been increasingly excluded from the game. Longitudinal comparison is rather more difficult than for, say, age and sex because the occupational structure of the country is subject to rather more regular and pronounced changes than are the former. [...]
> Although the findings for the unemployed and the retired have remained relatively constant, there is some evidence to suggest that students have decreased as proportion of football crowds in recent years. [....] It may be that such changes are a consequence of the increase in ticket prices and the game's marketing but, it should be noted, during the 1990s the economic position has declined noticeably with, firstly, the freezing of the student grant and the advent of student loans in 1990 and latterly the introduction of tuition fees in 1998. [...]
> From the data reviewed here, there appears little to support the theory that football is increasingly attracting a middle-class spectatorship. Indeed, the two nation-wide Carling

[87] Malcolm et al. have included data drawn from 10 different questionnaire surveys including two Carling FA Premier League Surveys (1993/1994 and 1996/1997). While eight surveys are explicitly limited in scope focusing on individual clubs, the Carling Surveys tried to paint a broader picture. Thus the Carling Survey conducted in 1993/94, produced a national sample of 10,651 FA Premier League spectators. These respondents were generated from a distribution of 2000 self complete questionnaires via match day programmes at each FA Premier League club. Understandably, the Carling Surveys belong to the largest and most comprehensive surveys of football supporters undertaken in England.

[88] Malcolm et al. report about methodological difficulties in gathering data. Some difficulties were related to interviewing before matches. This seemed particularly unpractical because a vast number of spectators only arrived close to kick-off. Other distribution methods resulted in low response rates (for instance Carling Survey 1993/94). By contrast surveys conducted at Arsenal and Aston Villa in 1992 and at Luton in 1997 turned out to be the most successful. This was due to the high response rates, which in turn could be attributed to the simple nature of the questionnaires, the incentives for fans (win in a prize draw) and the careful planning. What added to the simplicity of the questionnaires was the fact that they were not sponsored by commercial companies while their distribution had been conducted by researchers and postgraduate students instead of relying on the services of club personnel. See Malcolm et al., 131, 140-141.

> Surveys reviewed actually show a slight decrease in the proportion of middle-class spectators watching Premiership football between 1993/94 and 1996/97.[89]

Giulianotti's study analyses critical narratives of different social groups in relation to the direct and indirect consequences of football's commodification.[90] Interviews have been conducted with a range of supporters, journalists and to a limited extent with officials at five Scottish football clubs between March 2003 and October 2004. The clubs concerned were Celtic, Rangers, Aberdeen, Motherwell and Brechin City. What is particularly relevant for the focus of the present study is the way participants of Giulianotti's study responded to the new label 'customer' and whether they perceived themselves as alienated or marginalized from the game in economic and cultural terms. Hence Giulianotti's study indicated that most fans regarded the commercial practices of their club as an inevitable feature of the modern British game. In order to survive, clubs were forced to apply business strategies.[91] The label 'customer', however, was overwhelmingly rejected by the fans interviewed as this term did not adequately capture a fan's emotional commitment to his club. Fans simply did not have market choices between clubs:

> Bill: It's not just with Rangers, but with all clubs, it's changed, especially the most successful ones. We're perceived not as fans now but as customers. The game is run as a business, but it's not as cold-hearted as business. It's an emotional thing, supporting your team.
> Jack: In the '70s and early '80s they needed us. They weren't getting 50,000 a week. But now, they don't want me there, they'll sell my seat if I don't take it.
> (Rangers fans, North-West England)[92]

While elements of social exclusion do exist due to limited financial resources of established fans, elements of alienation majorly stem from cultural and social aspects rather than financial resources: [93]

> I don't think we're squeezed out financially. You'll always find money for a season ticket. It's just that you don't feel like you're wanted there any more, you're just a customer, not part of the fabric of the club. (Alan, Rangers fan, North-West England)
> [...]
> As a rule of thumb, I have a left of center and Christian socialist background, so I would believe that the poorer fans are left behind, but to be honest, at games, I don't see much evidence for it. A season ticket at Ibrox costs £350, but still I see guys on low income spending on it. I can maybe see why this happens if it's a real passion for them, so that it's worth for them (Gordon, sports journalist).[94]

[89] Malcolm et al., 133ff.
[90] See Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators', 387.
[91] See Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators', 393.
[92] Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators', 397.
[93] See Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators', 398-399.
[94] Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators', Alan quoted on page 398, Gordon quoted on page 400.

Above all, some fans clearly felt alienated by the unfair ticket distribution that privileges more affluent fans to access prestige match tickets at the expense of the most deserving supporters that follow the club week-in week-out to home and away fixtures.[95]

> If I could afford it, I would probably buy nice comfy seats at Celtic Park, I wouldn't do it with the expectation that it gives more rights than the ordinary punter who's been traveling for years. There is a bit of resentment that's crept in, that the 'Big Time Charlies' can come in and get the tickets while the guys like us are waiting for the scraps. (Gerry, Celtic fan, Glasgow)
> But in the glory days, the club didn't want to know us. There are thousands who haven't forgiven the club. People who queued all night to get a ticket for one big European game, the queues were huge, but all the folk at one oil company had two tickets in their pay packets for that month. That's the kind of thing, if you know fans from that time, it put them off. (Donald, Aberdeenshire)[96]

In conclusion one can say that the financial exclusion of the traditional fan does not seem to be the overriding concern of those interviewed. Due to their emotional commitment less affluent fans will expand their financial resources even further. They simply consider it too much of an affair of the heart. Thus quitting is out of question even though economic reason might suggest otherwise. Instead the major source of alienation seems to arise from the availability of tickets and their unfair distribution.

The last, yet by no means least important study has been provided by Nash. In his study he analyses the nature of organised football fans through the study of four Independent Supporter Associations (ISAs).[97] The research question he poses is whether the formation of ISAs can be regarded as working-class fans' responses to their threatened financial exclusion from active attendances in the post Hillsborough era. Here the underlying hypothesis is that working-class membership would effectively draw on classical sociological theories of protest movement in which social change creates inequality that in turn generates personal frustration and triggers activism as a consequence.[98] However, looking at Nash's findings he cannot only find limited evidence for this thesis but also comes to an almost opposite conclusion:

> ISAs must instead be understood as an 'emergency service', where fans become active first and foremost as a response to crisis with the team, manager or chairman, and will remain

[95] See Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators', 402-403.
[96] Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators', 403.
[97] All Independent Supporter Associations are located in England. Nash's analysis has been conducted through the attendance of ISA meetings, surveys of its members and in-depth interviews with its leaders as well as an analysis of ISA documents. The focus of analysis were the ISAs at Sheffield United (BIFA), Southampton (SISA), Leicester City (LCISA) and Newcastle United (INUSA). See Nash, 39.
[98] See Nash, 40.

> active only while the problem persists. This may not prevent ISAs from developing campaigning positions on overtly political issues, but the latter cannot explain the creation of the ISA. [...]
> Within class terms, the active elements of the ISAs were broadly confined to upper-working and middle-class fans, with a professional career element at the top. There appeared to be only one unemployed member active within any of these ISAs, and 45 of 64 activists in INUSA, BIFA and SISA said their attendance patterns had been unaffected by ticket price rises, with most of the difficulties encountered in obtaining tickets attributable to restricted capacities. [...] On the basis of this evidence there is no essential unity of the class backgrounds of the ISA leadership, save that they were not from the excluded element of the crowd struggling to raise the price of a ticket.[99]

The second issue that arises and seriously questions the validity of the crowd composition studies can directly be inferred from Nash's approach. Though not a sociologist by trade, I find the sociological parameters applied at times confusing, at times misleading. This partly stems from the terminology at hand. Much of it is concerned with terms such as 'working class' or 'middle class'. In line with Moor one needs to question whether these terms refer to a national occupational structure, to an individual's wider economic circumstances or to a set of social and cultural practices and values. Or is it a combination of all these factors, and where does the educational background come into play?[100] To fully grasp the demographic composition of football crowds there needs to be a terminological consensus about such categories within sociology itself. [101] Sadly, this is not the case and that is unsatisfactory. Referring to one paradoxical example in Nash's study – the majority of ISA members interviewed all considered themselves to be working class or traditional fans "with the class implications that flow from this".[102] Yet, in the light of their occupations this seems hard to believe. Thus we learn from Nash that these ISA members pursue careers as high-ranking university administrators, freelance journalists, civil servants, revenue inspectors, teachers and as entrepreneurs.[103] What renders Nash's study problematic and at times invalid is the explanation he provides for the apparent absence of the socially excluded.

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[99] Nash, 44ff. Nash's initial hypothesis only rings true in the case of INUSA. Here its chair Kevin Miles explained: "The primary spark behind its creation was Newcastle's method of financing the redevelopment of St James' park, a bond scheme that would raise additional revenue from season-ticket holders while apparently threatening their historically understood rights." See Nash, 43.
[100] See Liz Moor, 'Sport and Commodification: A Reflection on Key Concepts', in: *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 31:2 (2007), 130. Moor's study cited as 'Moor' hereafter. Note that a definition of class primarily on the basis of occupation is unsatisfactory because it will necessarily exclude housewives, pensioners or full-time students.
[101] See Moor, 137.
[102] Nash, 46
[103] See Nash, 45-46.

Once his initial hypothesis does not hold, he simply reverses the initially cited theory of protest as the underlying principle of his hypothesis and now claims:

> Exclusion may generate contempt (prompting withdrawal), rather than activism and commitment. [...] The excluded find it increasingly disheartening to participate in an ISA concerned with a club that no longer has room for them and has eliminated the cultural practices central to their fandom.[104]

Was this not the supposed reason why the socially excluded would join the ISAs in the first place? This line of argumentation is not conclusive since the antithesis he comes up with is not more than an assumption without any evidence provided. One of the major reasons why the excluded might not join the ISA is the fact "that the most passionately discussed topic at all ISA meetings was the team (and its latest matches)."[105] Here Nash seems to neglect the fact that there are multiple layers of active participation in football culture and talking passionately about the team and its latest performances is definitely an important element of it even if a fan has not been present in the stadium. Therefore it is highly doubtful that the 'socially excluded' should not indulge in this.

More importantly, what puzzles me as a non-sociologist is the fixed entity of the label 'working-class' with all its ascribed and implied behavioural patterns. Nash explains the absence of the socially excluded with a supposedly fixed pattern of behaviour:

> It is hard to envisage the rougher working-class lads tolerating, particularly in moments of crisis, the votes, amendments, depersonalized debates and formalized agenda central to ISA work, or the polite discursive practices inherent in meeting club officials and political authority. [...] The ISA's essentially conciliatory approach visible in the way each sought meetings with their clubs in a cooperative spirit (as found in many other pressure groups and protest actvities), appears outside rougher working-class fans' vociferous, noisy approach.[106]

Quite frankly, this assessment relies on a rather stereotypical image of the 'socially excluded'. It restricts the classic representative of the 'socially excluded' to "rougher working-class fans." Thus the typical representative is nothing but a rough, misbehaved, semi-intelligent troublemaker.[107]

It seems to me as though the label 'socially excluded' is seen as a abstract, relatively new phenomenon in football culture arising from the modernisation of the game in

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[104] Nash, 46.
[105] Nash, 47.
[106] Nash, 47.
[107] Nash substantiates his claim by referring to other studies such as Anthony King, 'The Lads: Masculinity and the New Consumption of Football', in: *Sociology*, 31:2 (1997), 329-346. Nevertheless it still relies on a stereotypical notion.

the 1990s. However, this is not the case. Although hardly mentioned in sociological studies concerning changes in football fandom even in the period ranging from the 1960s to the late 1980s, there have always been those labelled 'socially excluded'. Even back then games were far from being free of charge, although admission prices were much cheaper. To conclude with Moor, before classic indicators of class formation such as 'occupation' have not been satisfactorily correlated with wider factors such as family or educational background within sociology itself, no reliable statement can be made about the exact composition of football crowds. Drawing on Moor's argumentation[108] a degree of caution needs to be exercised when spectators appeal to classic class formations and define themselves as 'working-class', particularly since economic and cultural changes in British society have altered the traditional class structure profoundly over the past forty years.[109] So far there has not been any conclusive study refuting the concept of relatively stable patterns of attendance in the post-Hillsborough era. To do so exact terminology and more empirical findings are required. Although a substantial demographic change in crowd compositions remains an unproved assumption, the discourse in the media about football fandom has undeniably been dominated by a new breed of supporters, which Giulianotti terms 'post-fans' and classifies as follows:

> They represent an epistemic break from older forms of fandom, in particular the passivity of the 'supporter'. Post-fans are cognizant of the constructed nature of fan reputations, and the vagaries of the media in exaggerating or inventing such identities. They adopt a reflexive approach in interpreting the relative power positions of their players and club within the political structures of domestic and international football. They maintain an ironic and critical stance towards the apologetic propaganda emanating from their board of directors, and against the generally sympathetic relationship that exists between the latter and the mass media. The comments of post-fans on their favoured club and players often slip into parody or hostility. They are the epicentre of supporter movements which militate to change club policy on the players, managers or directors.[110]

Against the background of British tabloid coverage in the 1980s, witty contributions of this new breed in the field of fanzines have indeed helped to present British football

[108] Frequently a spectator's self-definition as 'working-class' might be a claim of inclusion instead of an objective class membership. Compare Moor, 130: "The majority of the British population describe themselves as working class, despite the fact that only a minority actually fall into working-class occupational categories."

[109] Compare Richard Giulianotti, *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game*, Cambridge 2000 (Reprint), 147: "The working class itself has undergone major structural changes since the 1970s. Deindustrialization and the rise of the service-sector economy have reduced the industrial working class and expanded the white-collar workforce. The structural boundaries between the old lower middle-classes and the affluent upper working classes have become very blurred. A dispossessed underclass is sedimented at the base of the new class hierarchy." Giulianotti's work cited as "Giulianotti, 'Sociology' " hereafter.

[110] Ibid., 148. Indeed, the self-awareness of fans Giulianotti refers to is perfectly mirrored by the homepage of the Football Supporters' Federation. Compare http://www.fsf.org.uk/about-us/.

in a more favourable light ever since the 1990s.[111] Activism channelled through fanzines, blogs and club-based supporter organisations seems to be an ideal way for fans to make their voices heard. But then again, this type of activism implies a dilemma. On its website the English national Football Supporters' Federation (FSF) demands:

> The FSF want to deliver a clear message to club chairmen. We want a fairer deal for football fans through a fairer pricing structure which will make football more affordable for all. We want to see action by the football authorities to limit ticket prices to no more than £15 for adult away fans in the Premier League, to freeze prices for home fans, reducing prices in the cheaper categories and redistributing the facility fee for televised games by subsidising ticket prices for these matches.[112]

Enquiring about the organisation's impact on ticket price structures, I was left waiting for an answer. As praiseworthy as these demands may seem, they clearly reveal the predicaments supporter organisations such as the FSF are faced with. Thus in terms of regulation and decision-making fans have still got very little influence on the game. Hence for the time being the overwhelming majority of British fans might contribute to football's wider discourse particularly through forms of participatory media, yet are left wanting for more control. This problem is not restricted to issues of ticket price control, but equally affects the representation of supporters on the board.

3.2 On the applicability of spectator models and taxonomies for the present study

Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) as well as Giulianotti (2002) have set up models for audiences and spectators.[113] While Abercrombie and Longhurst provide a general model for audiences in the wider field of popular culture, Giulianotti's taxonomy on football spectators is much more limited in scope. The latter's approach is particularly interesting for the present study because Giulianotti has focused on the impact of

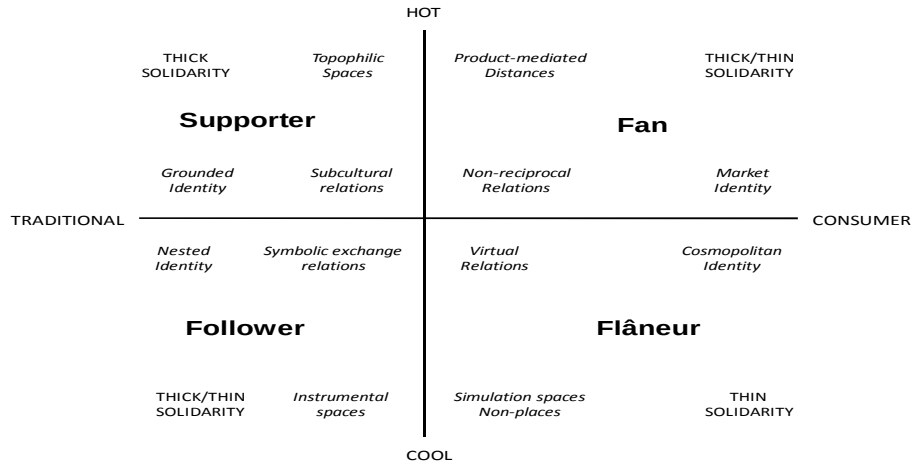
[111] To Brick they have contributed majorly to "new and vibrant discourses from 'within' the football subculture." See Carlton Brick: 'Taking Offence: Modern Moralities and the Perception of the Football Fan', 158 in: Jon Garland, Dominic Malcolm & Michael Rowe (eds.), *The Future of Football: Challenges for the Twenty-First Century*, London & Portland 2003 (Reprint).

[112] http://www.fsf.org.uk/campaigns/ticketprices.php (Accessed 17 March 2012)

[113] See Nicholas Abercrombie & Brian Longhurst, *Audiences*: A Sociological Theory *of* Performance *and* Imagination, London et Al. 1998. See particularly Chapter 5 "Fans and Enthusiasts" (121-157) and Richard Giulianotti, 'Supporters, Followers, Fans, and Flaneurs: A Taxonomy of Spectator Identities in Football', in: *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 26:1 (2002), 25-46. Giulianotti's study cited as "Giulianotti, 'Supporters' " hereafter.

commodification on football spectator identities in British professional football with special emphasis on processes of globalization and postmodernization.

Drawing on Taylor and Critcher's earlier model, Giulianotti sets up a model of four ideal-type spectator identities that may exist in contemporary British professional football.[114] These spectator identities are *Supporter*, *Follower*, *Fan* and *Flâneur*. According to Giulianotti, these categories are generally applicable to those clubs "whose corporate structures are owned or controlled on market principles by individuals or institutions."[115] In his taxonomy each category is underpinned by two basic binary oppositions: *hot-cool* and *traditional* and *consumer*. Hence spectators may be classified into four quadrants: Traditional/hot – traditional/cool; consumer/hot – consumer/cool. Here the traditional/consumer horizontal axis indicates the basis of the individual's investment in a specific club, whereas the hot-cool vertical axis measures the different degrees to which the club is central to the individual's project of self-formation.[116] Giulianotti claims each category shows the distinctive kinds of identification with a specific club and a particular motivation for such a personal commitment. He states: "Traditional spectators will have a longer, more local and popular cultural identification with the club, whereas consumer fans will have a more market-centered relationship to the club as reflected in the centrality of consuming club products."[117] With regards to the hot-cool vertical axis Giulianotti explains: "Hot forms of loyalty emphasize intense kinds of identification and solidarity with the club; cool forms denote the reverse."[118]



[114] For Giulianotti's criticism on Taylor's and Critcher's analysis see: Giulianotti, 'Supporters', 27-28. For Giulianotti's changes of their adopted models see ibid., 41-42.
[115] Ibid., 26.
[116] See ibid., 31.
[117] Ibid., 31.
[118] Ibid., 31.

Within Giulianotti's taxonomy[119] itself the distinctions he draws are coherent and conclusive. But can we apply his sociological taxonomy to fan identities mediated through popular literary form?

Upon closer inspection an adaptation of Giulianotti's taxonomy seems problematic on several accounts. The first problem that emerges stems from the fact that Giulianotti's categories are at odds with the narrators' self-definitions as 'fans'. How are we supposed to deal with narrators who define themselves as 'fans' while they would equally be classified as 'flâneurs' according to Giulianotti's complex terminology? Keeping his terminology would automatically render their claim of fandom inauthentic since their activities would not conform to his prescribed criteria or features. Yet, this is not only an issue of terminology but of substance. Arguing that "the broad trend in sports identification is away from the supporter model (with its hot, traditional identification with local clubs) and toward the more detached, cool, consumer-orientated identification of the flâneur",[120] Giulianotti locates the process of spectator identification within a wider framework of consumption while equally identifying "extensive commodification and remarketing" [121] as the key factors behind changing forms of spectator identification. Stressing elsewhere that "no football supporter is hermetically sealed off from the new marketing system",[122] he presumes "that all 'fans' are tied into this commodification process."[123] More general reservations towards the concept of commodification left aside,[124] Giulianotti's reasoning may well be applicable to processes of spectator identification within the confines of hypercommodified professional football. However, three narratives selected in my study feature fans whose allegiances center around teams in the non-professional sphere. Their teams have not been turned into "commodity signs".[125]

[119] Giulianotti's taxonomy above taken from ibid., 31.
[120] Ibid., 25.
[121] Ibid., 26. Note that Giulianotti takes "*commodification* to mean that process by which an object or social practice acquires an exchange value or market-centered meaning. Commodification is not a single process but an ongoing one, often involving the gradual entry of market logic to the various elements that constitute the object or social practice under consideration." See ibid., 26.
[122] Giulianotti, 'Sociology', 104.
[123] Ibid., 105.
[124] Compare Liz Moor: "Many of the concerns raised in relation to commodification appear to be connected to a further anxiety about the consumption activities of fans, and to a widely held – but rarely explicitly articulated – belief that shifts in the volume of material culture surrounding football fandom will lead to a diminution of its allegedly more substantive qualities and values. Such beliefs are premised in part on a conflation of consumption and consumerism, in which any instance of consumption is taken as evidence of a "consumerist" ethos, but also on an underinterrogated understanding of commodity fetishism, which sees the use of material goods accessed via the market as inextricably tied to a decline in sociability and social interaction." See Moor, 134-135.
[125] Giulianotti, 'Sociology', 89.

These fans are therefore not exposed to extensive forms of club merchandising so that a market-centered 'brand loyalty' is neither expected nor developed. This is not to say that aspects of consumption do not play a vital role in all of the narratives at hand.[126] However, parameters of identification need to be found that can be generally applied to all the narratives selected.

What should equally not be forgotten is the difference in scope when it comes to comparing Giulianotti's objectives with the aims of the present thesis. While Giulianotti aims at presenting a taxonomy of spectators, my study only focuses on fans. This calls for a terminological distinction between fan and spectator, as these two terms are used interchangeably and not mutually exclusive. Hence, borrowing from Wann, the term '**spectator**' shall refer to

> ***Individuals that actively witness a football event in person or through some sort of media.[127]***

By contrast, the term '**fan**' shall refer to

> ***Individuals that regularly observe the performances of a specific team, player or manager either in person or through some sort of media while being emotionally involved and psychologically connected thereby.[128]***

It is important to note here that although the verb "observe" evokes associations of passivity, this does not have to be the case with football fandom.[129] In fact, fans frequently show high levels of activity – be it through chanting, booing, clapping or Mexican waves. So they contribute to the very spectacle they themselves indulge in.[130] Within the scope of this study the notion of passivity proves to be particularly false as all the self-defined fans highly engage in textual production. Furthermore, it is not the mere presence in the stadium that transforms spectators into fans. A considerable number of people attend live matches for reasons other than fandom.

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[126] Note that within the confines of my literary analysis 'consumption' will be understood in a broader sense, which is not necessarily restricted to 'market-centered' activities.

[127] Compare Daniel L. Wann et Al., *Sport Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators,* London 2001, 2.

[128] Compare ibid., 2.

[129] Compare Joli Jenson, 'Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterization', in: Lisa A. Lewis, *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, London & New York, 2001 (Reprint), 10: "The fan is understood to be, at least implicitly, a result of celebrity – the fan is defined as a *response* to the star system. This means that passivity is ascribed to the fan – he or she is seen as being brought into (enthralled) existence by the modern celebrity system, via the mass media."

[130] Compare Crawford, 38.

The presence of player agents, for example, can be explained through economic motivation since they might be there to scout a player or discuss business with others. Business-related activities obviously explain the presence of sports journalists as well as other representatives of the media economy. They are present in the stadium quite simply because their employers expect them to be. The same applies to all others on duty, be it club staff or police. Above all, what triggers an emotional involvement that turns spectators into fans? Here Daniel Wann's studies shed light on the psychology of sport fans. Whereas his motives help to understand the causes of team identification, they reveal little about the intensity of the commitment. Hence the term "fan" is not as clear-cut as it would seem. There are different layers of emotional involvement as football fans will readily admit.[131] Within sociology itself rigid patterns of 'real' fandom have emerged. Based on participant observation a set of behavioural practices has been identified. From what it seems sociological notions of authentic fandom apparently collide with the narrators' self-definitions as fans. Applying sociologically accepted parameters of fan authenticity, Giulianotti seriously doubts the fan credentials of those that allegedly control the literary highground on the game. He claims:

> At the vanguard of this new football class is an oligarchy of metropolitan journalists and Oxbridge graduates which have acquired a literary hegemony over the game. Their personal background in football is usually very limited; their club affiliations are also rather flexible. Dubbed the London *soccerati,* this cadre includes the novelists Martin Amis, Bill Buford (1991), Nick Hornby (1992) and Roddy Doyle (1993); the journalists Simon Kuper (1994, 1997), Emma Lindsey and Anne Coddington (1997); and comedians like Dave Baddiel [...]. The *soccerati* favour the redevelopment of football stadia to the benefit of their class on the assumed grounds that this has eradicated hooliganism and enabled more women and ethnic minorities to attend. The *soccerati* are particularly popular among football *arrivistes*, a strata of London-based white collar workers who 'do football' to flesh out the popular culture dimension of their social curriculum vitae. Through use of the new football media, they may learn the game's lexicon and teach themselves all about the players and playing systems. This knowledge is of the autodidactic type, and not engrained with time, reflection or experience in playing the game.[132]

Here Giulianotti accuses the *soccerati* of nothing short of 'inauthentic fandom', which must seem quite an assertion to those affected. Trying to find out if Giulianotti's assertions are correct, I am going to present my own fan authenticity scale. Drawing

[131] The eight most frequent motives he identifies are as follows: economic, aesthetic, entertainment, family, group affiliation, escape, eustress, self-esteem. For more on this see Daniel L. Wann et Al., *Sport Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators*, London 2001, 31ff.
[132] Giulianotti, 'Sociology', 151.

upon sociological studies,[133] this scale seeks to contextualise the *soccerati's* manifestations of football fandom into a wider theory of fan consumption. The principal aim behind the scale is to assess to what extent the *soccerati's* notion of fandom adheres to or radically departs from sociologically established patterns of fan authenticity.

3.3 Presentation of football fandom authenticity scale

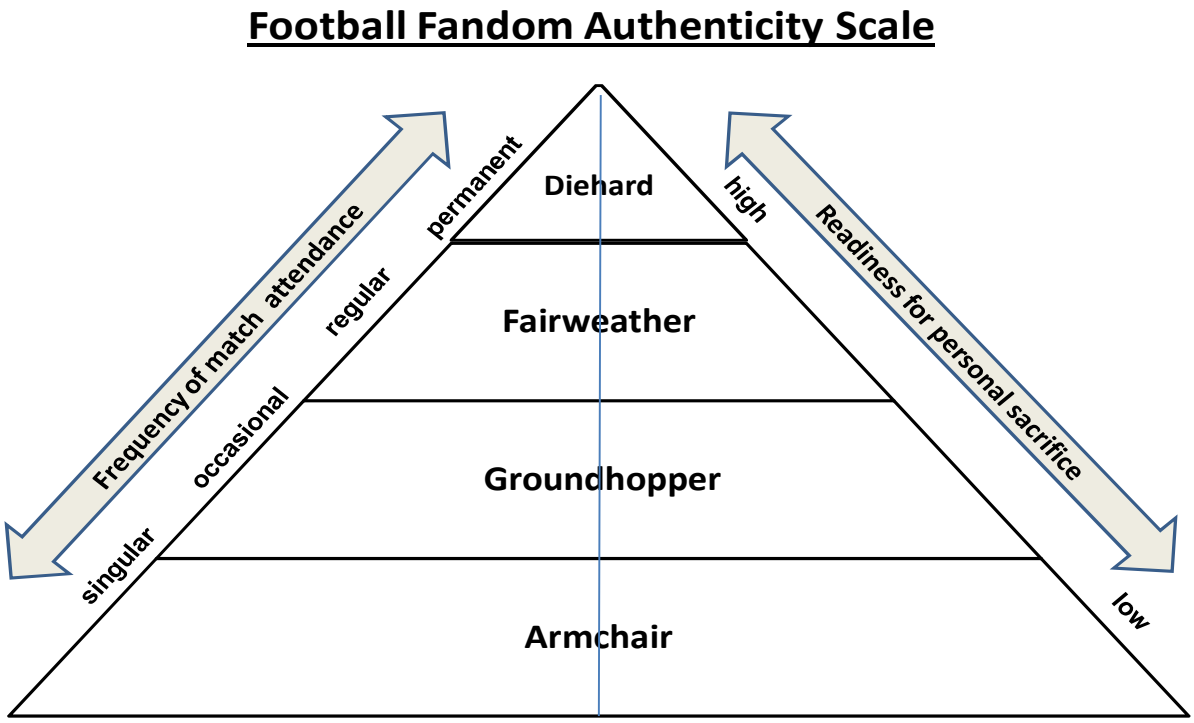
My scale is based on the notion that there are multiple layers of commitment. As sociological studies have shown, a fan's commitment is predominantly shaped by two central factors: readiness for personal sacrifice and the frequency of match attendance.[134] Readiness for personal sacrifice boils down to a set of behavioural patterns attached to notions of 'real fandom'. The scale below does justice to the obvious fact that a fan's commitment is by no means restricted to *in situ* support. Whilst the factor *frequency of match attendance* needs no further explanation, *readiness for personal sacrifice* warrants additional comment. Borrowing from Richardson and Turley, readiness for personal sacrifice means:

> Having to travel to every away match to support the team dictates that money will be in short supply and must be made to stretch as far as possible. Cheap flights, budget hotels (if not sleeping rough in the airport for a few hours) and downmarket restaurants are chosen with this in mind. The obligation to follow the team everywhere therefore results in the development of a

[133] See Richard Giulianotti, 'Supporters, Followers, Fans, and Flaneurs: A Taxonomy of Spectator Identities in Football', in: *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 26:1 (2002), 25-46, Richard Giulianotti, 'Sport Spectators And The Social Consequences Of Commodification, in: *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 29:4 (2005), 386-410, Anthony King, 'New Directors, Customers, and Fans: The Transformation of English Football in the 1990s', in: *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 14 (1997), 224-240, Anthony King, 'The Lads: Masculinity and the New Consumption of Football', in: *Sociology*, 31:2 (1997), 329-346, Brendan Richardson, Darach Turley, 'It's Far More Important Than That: Football Fandom and Cultural Capital', in: *European Advances in Consumer Research*, Volume 8 (2008), 33-38, Daniel L. Wann et Al., *Sport Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators*, London 2001.

[134] See Brendan Richardson, Darach Turley, 'It's Far More Important Than That: Football Fandom and Cultural Capital', in: *European Advances in Consumer Research*, Volume 8 (2008), 33-38. Reconceptualising notions of Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital Richardson and Turley explore the consumer behaviour of football fans by studying two fan communities. They argue that within fan communities a system of cultural capital is present to distinguish between 'real fans' and 'daytrippers'. This system of cultural capital is related to a common set of practices and understood "as a knowledge of how to consume, how to appreciate, how to understand what should be considered tasteful and what should not." This maintenance of distinction is used to grant group membership to those deemed worthy of it. Richardson and Turley write: "While the fan community welcomes new members, it rejects those who do not demonstrate an appreciation of the right ways to support the club. Fans who fail to comply with the call to order of the *habitus* are deemed to lack an appreciation of the system of cultural capital, and therefore excluded from the recognition bestowed through consciousness of kind." Quotes taken from ibid., 33 and 36 respectively.

taste for the necessary i.e. higher cultural preference or value is attached to those things which allow the fan to fulfil this obligation.[135]



Explanatory notes on the typology of fans

Armchair

This category alerts us to the fact that various forms of mass media allow each fan to pursue his fandom in realms other than the live venue. Hence this type of fandom is mass-media centered with a strong focus on convenience. Whilst match attendance is not feasible for some due to financial factors, health, or age, the armchair fans deliberately opt against it. They are simply unwilling to make an effort, e.g. if weather conditions are unfavourable. Travelling to the game is considered too much hassle, although time, commitments and economic means would allow it. Armchair fans put heavy emphasis on comfort. Therefore games are frequently watched at home. Although an emotional involvement with a specific club might not be given armchair fans take a keen interest in football culture. As football can be watched with family and friends, they regard football fandom as social activity. On top of this, talking about fan allegiances is a useful means for them to establish social relations, particularly when the game is consumed in typical group environments such as the pub. Aware of fandom‘s social potential, armchair fans are knowledgeable about the

[135] Brendan Richardson, Darach Turley, ‘It’s Far More Important Than That: Football Fandom and Cultural Capital’, in: *European Advances in Consumer Research*, Volume 8 (2008), 35.

game and can speak passionately about their club. Yet they shy away from the hardships of travel that more intensive fandom would require.

Groundhopper

The groundhoppers are defined as fans that take an entertainment-driven interest in the game. They attend matches occasionally, but their affiliation to a specific club or ground is rather flexible. Some groundhoppers are attracted to a specific game because of the artistic and aesthetic quality it promises. With the main focus on aesthetic beauty long-term allegiances to a single club are hard to keep as the aesthetic and artistic beauty of performances are subject to constant change. Others see football as part of the entertainment industry and attend a particular game because it guarantees the highest entertainment value on that particular day. In the stadium they absorb the atmosphere and enjoy the chants, yet frequently lack the insider knowledge to join in the singing. Since the most successful clubs promise the highest entertainment value grounds of over-performing clubs are preferred. But once their success fades, attention is given to other clubs and grounds. Attendance of specific games can also be explained by the desire to see a certain player whose popularity exceeds the sphere of sports. The most notable example would be David Beckham here. Judged by its wider entertainment value football has to compete with other recreational pastimes like the cinema, theatre or other sports. If football is no longer *en vogue*, interest in the game might easily be lost.

Fairweather

Fairweather fans have a performance-orientated interest in their clubs as well as an effort-based notion of fan consumption. In other words – they are happy to invest in their clubs both emotionally and financially, but they expect something in return. While they claim to have a long-term allegiance to their clubs, emotional commitment is rather flexible and depends on the clubs' success. It's the temporary fortunes of the clubs that influence the frequency of their attendances and the articulation of their support. During periods of relative success many "out-of-towners" (Richardson and Turley) can be found among the ranks of the fairweather fan. In times of glory they are happy to claim their share and bask euphorically in their teams' triumphs. Yet in times of failure these fans will not necessarily claim their share. The communal 'we' in times of glory is frequently replaced by 'they' in times of failure when referring to

the club. Association with the club is documented through the consumption of club merchandise.

Diehard

This type of fan forms the backbone of fan support. Allegiance is permanent, irrespective of sporting glory or failure. Here the club is central to the fan's life, the club becomes an extension of the self.[136] With their fan socialisation process started in early childhood, diehard fans will frequently feel a life-long commitment to the club. Being long-term fans they have developed a deep emotional bond and feel responsible for their clubs. This affects both their private and working lives. Hence projects in these realms have to be carefully worked around their responsibilities as a fan. Supporting the club is seen as a form of duty. In the more extreme cases the club's success becomes more important than the maintenance of family relationships or career ambitions. With a disdain for club merchandising, diehard fans reject the hypercommercialization of their clubs and opt for a more casual style in the stadia. [137] Yet, they are still willing to invest in the club financially. Apart from being season ticket holders they go to great lengths to support their team away from home. Putting up with the most frugal means of transport they travel up and down the country, even across Europe.[138] In the stadia they provide the most vocal support. Because of their emotional allegiance and the hardships they endure, at times stretching over generations, they feel entitled to have their say in the way the club is run and expect the board of directors to listen. The club is understood as a site of representation through which collective social identities are constructed and represented.[139] The core of diehard fans will usually be drawn from the neighbouring communities.[140] Thus, issues of club ownership and ground modernisation are of extreme importance to these fans. Appropriate support is understood as centering on drinking, vociferous

[136] Compare Anthony King, 'The Lads: Masculinity and the New Consumption of Football', in: *Sociology*, 31:2 (1997), 341.
[137] Compare ibid., 339.
[138] Compare Brendan Richardson, Darach Turley, 'It's Far More Important Than That: Football Fandom and Cultural Capital', in: *European Advances in Consumer Research*, Volume 8 (2008), 34-35.
[139] On this aspect see also Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Oxford et Al. 1989, 167.
[140] See John Bale, 'The Changing Face of Football: Stadiums and Communities', in: Jon Garland, Dominic Malcolm & Michael Rowe (eds.), *The Future of Football: Challenges for the Twenty-First Century*, London & Portland 2003 (Reprint), 91-101.

chanting and a willingness to fight.[141] Due to the last aspect these fans have also become known as 'Ultras'.[142]

It is important to note here that the authenticity scale presented does not claim to be a sociological model, although it is based on sociological findings which primarily focus on British football culture. The scale does not only reflect typical behavioural patterns within British fan communities but also a rather fixed set of conventions that the individual needs to adhere to in order to be perceived as an 'authentic' fan. This in turn explains the scale's relevance for the main objective of my study, which is the literary analysis of autobiographical fan accounts. Hence the scale serves as a frame of reference helping to assess to what extent the narrators' fan credentials correspond to or depart from sociologically explored conventions of British fandom. It equally helps to understand why accounts of American writers claiming to be fully-fledged football fans run the risk of being received rather critically among British readers.[143]

[141] See Anthony King, 'The Lads: Masculinity and the New Consumption of Football', in: *Sociology*, 31:2 (1997), 332.

[142] Although frequently mixed up in the media, the term 'Ultra' is not a synonym for 'hooligan'. Vialli describes the defining features of Ultras as follows: "1. Love your colours unconditionally. 2. Be prepared within the limits of your ability, not your convenience – to make sacrifices well beyond the average fan in supporting your team. 3. Have a sense of territory and of belonging. Your seat in the stadium is not just a numbered plastic seat, it is your territory and you shall defend it. 4. Be part of the group but always maintain your own individuality and think for yourself. 5. Know how to distinguish passion from greed. Be prepared to give without receiving. And never profit financially from your club. 6. Weigh up the pros and cons of all your actions, in terms of what is advantageous not only to you but also to your group. 7. Wear your colours with pride. 8. Love your city and your neighbourhood and be proud of who you are. 9. Do not turn the other cheek. 10. Do not stop supporting your team even during the most humiliating defeat." See Gianluca Vialli & Gabriele Marcotti, *The Italian Job: A journey to the heart of two great footballing cultures*, London et Al. 2006, 379-380.

[143] This claim will be substantiated in chapter 6.

4. Mapping the literary representation of football in English literature: -A brief overview-

This chapter aims to provide a brief overview on the representation of football in literature[144] from the Middle Ages up to the present day. Looking at the gradual shift in its literary representation it will explore the game's significant changes in reputation and acceptance. Subdivided into three parts, the first part, focusing on the Middle Ages to 1863, will trace football's representation from frequent bans in legal documents up to occasional references and allusions in works of fiction. The second part will briefly summarise and categorise the vast literature that had gradually emerged after the foundation of Association Football in 1863 up to 1992. The last part sets out to investigate the advent of what Richard Giulianotti has coined "postfandom" and the rise of a new type of football writing represented by the 'soccerati' in the post-Hillsborough era. It is particularly concerned with Hornby's influence on the 'literaturisation' of football writing. The overall objective of this chapter is to refute the widespread notion that there had been little fictional writing before Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* and to explore why football fiction has been largely ignored despite the game's enormous popularity in British society.

4.1 Literary representation from the Middle Ages to 1863

Although the origins of football in England are still subject to debate,[145] games in which balls were kicked by opposing teams could widely be seen across English medieval towns and villages. Several references to folk football can be found in legal or semi-legal documents:

> Many of the earliest references are concerned with the game's physical toughness and violence, and the frequent threat it posed to the life and limb of players and spectators and to the peace and property of the neighbourhood. From the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries football was to appear in legal records, court cases and contemporary denunciations as a violent game; a cause and occasion of social unrest in which personal and collective scores could be settled.[146]

[144] The term "literature" will be used in this chapter in an expanded sense. Thus the term will also be applied to non-fictional writings such as legal documents, guide books etc. Compare M.H. Abrams, *A glossary of Literary Terms*, Boston [8]2005, 152f: "Literature (from the Latin *litteraturae*. "writings") has been commonly used since the eighteenth century [...] to designate fictional and imaginative writings – poetry, prose fiction, and drama. In an expanded use, it designates also any other writings (including philosophy, history, and even scientific works addressed to a general audience) that are especially distinguished in form, expression and emotional power."

[145] For in-depth study see for instance Heiner Gillmeister, 'The Origin of European Ball Games', in: *Stadion*, 7 (1981), 19-51.

[146] James Walvin, *The People's Game: The History of Football Revisited*, Edinburgh & London [2]2000, 12. Walvin's work cited as 'Walvin' hereafter.

In line with Walvin's accurate assessment the first fatal accident relatable to a type of football game can be found in a report from Ulkham in Northumberland on Trinity Sunday 1280:

> Henry, son of William de Ellington (Ellynton *in writ*), while playing at ball (*ludens ad pillum*) at Ulkham (Ulgham *in writ*) on Trinity Sunday [16 June] with David le Keu (Ku *in writ*) and many others ran against David and received an accidental wound from David's knife of which he died on the following Friday [21 June]. They were both running to the ball, an ran against each other, and the knife hanging from David's belt stuck out *(erexit se)* so that the point though in the sheath (*cum tota vagina*) struck against Henry's belly, and the handle (*manch'*) against David's belly. Henry was wounded right through the sheath (*per mediam vaginam*) and died by misadventure.[147]

As we can infer from the tragic circumstances presented in the report, games played must have been quite aggressive, which is not altogether surprising, given their largely unregulated status. It is no wonder that from the Middle Ages onwards football was constantly legislated against. The authorities were particularly concerned about civil unrest sparked by a mass game that could be played by an indefinite number of players.[148] During the reign of Edward II Nicholaus de Farndone, the mayor of London, issued a proclamation for the preservation of peace around 1314:

> [...] Whereas our Lord the King is going towards the parts of Scotland, in his war against his enemies, and has especially commanded us strictly to keep his peace [...]. And whereas there is great uproar in the City, through certain tumults arising from the striking of great footballs in the fields of the public, from which many evils perchance may arise – which may God forbid – we do command and do forbid, on the King's behalf, upon pain of imprisonment, that such game shall be practised henceforth within the city...[149]

The instructions the Scottish King James VI gives to his eldest son Henry in his *Basilikon Doron* (1599) imply that football was considered unaristocratic, but equally suggest that it was not only popular among the peasantry:

> But from this count I debarre all rough and violent excercises, as the footeball; meeter for laming, then making able the vsers thereof: [...] But the excercises that I would haue you to vse (although but moderately, not making a craft of them) are running, leaping, wrastling,

[147] Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous (Chancery): Preserved in the Public Record Office. Prepared under the superintendence of the Deputy Keeper of the Records, Vol. I, London 1916 (Kraus Reprint 1973), 599, item 2241. Note that brackets and Latin phrases derive from the source quoted.
[148] Compare Magoun, 140.
[149] English translation of Farndone's *Proclamatio facta pro Conservatione Pacis* taken from Henry Thomas Riley (ed.), *Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis; Liber Albus, Liber Custumarum, et Liber Horn*, Vol. III, London 1862, 439 (= Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores or The Chronicles And Memorials of Great Britain And Ireland During The Middle Ages).

> fencing, dancing, and playing at the caitch or tennise, archerie, palle maillé, and such like other faire and pleasant field-games.[150]

Marples reminds us of the fact that football also attracted young men away from archery, an important activity for the defence of the country. He asserts:

> The outbreak of the Hundred Years War in 1338 brings it strongly into the picture. A succession of royal edicts prohibiting football (together with other games) on the grounds that it interfered with archery suggests two things; first, that it must have been an extremely popular sport, so popular that king after king failed to do more than administer at the most a temporary check to it; secondly, that it must have been played all over the country by the kind of men who made the best archers, the proverbial yeomen of England.[151]

Apart from references in legal documents football also appeared in fictional works from the fourteenth century onwards. Although there are not many literary references from this period, football imagery is used by different writers at the time. Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400) employs a football simile in his *Knight's Tale*. Magoun's translation into modern English reads:

> There strong steeds stumble and down everybody goes:
> One rolls under foot as does a ball [152]

Likewise John Wyclif (1320-84) uses football imagery in one of his English sermons:

> In these days Christian men are kicked about now by popes and now by bishops, now by the popes' cardinals, now by the prelates under the bishops; and the latter clout their shoes with censures as if they were playing football.[153]

However, it was the ballad of *Sir Hugh, Or, The Jew's Daughter* that first introduced football as an element in fiction:

> 1. Four and twenty bonny boys
> Were playing at the ba,
> And by it came him sweet Sir Hugh,
> And he playd oer them a'.
>
> 2. He kicked the ba with his right foot,
> And catchd it wi his knee,
> And through-and-thro the Jew's window
> He gard the bonny ba flee. [154]

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[150] James I., Basilikon Doron. Or His Maiesties Instructions to His Dearest Sonne, Henry The Prince, in: Charles Howard McIlwain (ed.), *The Political Works of James I*., New York 1965 (Reprinted from the edition of 1616), 48.
[151] Marples, 28.
[152] First found in Magoun. Modern English translation taken from Magoun, 8. For the Middle English version See Geoffrey Chaucer in 'The Knight's Tale', [I (A) 2612-2614], in: Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer,* Oxford et Al. ^{3}2008 (Oxford University Press Paperback), 60.
[153] John Wyclif quoted in Magoun, 8.

Despite the scarcity of appearance in works of fiction, be it as a motif in the plot or as a metaphor, football appears in a negative light, stressing the ferocity of the game. Unsurprisingly, it continued to be disliked by authorities. But no criticism can match "the most outspoken attack"[155] on football by Philip Stubbes, the Puritan pamphleteer, in his campaign against sport. In his *Anatomie of Abuses in the Realme of England* (1583) he effectively declares the game unchristian:

> For as concerning football playing, I protest unto you it may rather be called a freendly kinde of fight, then a play or recreation; A bloody and murthering practise, then a felowly sporte or pastime. For dooth not every one lye in waight for his Adversarie, seeking to overthrowe him& to picke him on his nose, though it be uppon hard stones? [...] So that by this meanes; sometimes their necks are broken, sometimes their backs, sometimes their legs, sometime their armes; [...] and hereof groweth envie, malice, rancour, cholor, hatred, displeasure, enmitie, and what not els: and sometimes fighting, brawling, contention, quarrel picking, murther, homicide, and great effusion of blood, as experience dayly teacheth.
> Is this murthering play, now, an exercise for the Sabaoth day? Is this christian dealing, for one brother to mayme and hurt another, and that upon prepensed malice, or set purpose? Is this to do to another as we would with another to doo to us? God make us more careful over the bodyes of our Bretheren![156]

As we can see very well from this short excerpt – the main reason behind such Puritan opposition against football was that it effectively violated the Sabbath day.[157] Despite widespread fears and restrictions football continued to be popular and even the clergy, especially priests of younger age, must have felt tempted to join games that were frequently played after service in the churchyard or on neighbouring fields.[158] Marples claims that such incidents occurred[159] and these were even reflected in literature, for a minister addicted to football appeared in Sir David

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[154] Francis James Child (ed.), *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, in Five Volumes, Volume III, New York 1957 (Reprint of the 1889 Edition), 243. Concerning the ballad's date of publication compare also Magoun, 12: "The ritual murder of Hugh of Lincoln goes back to 1255, but the ballad in its earliest conceivable form must be somewhat later; however, since the football motif occurs in five (A,C,D,E,N) of the eighteen preserved versions, one may reasonably suppose that this feature was introduced relatively early." Note that the version quoted here is version A.

[155] Marples, 53. He continues: "Few pleasures and amusements, however innocent, escaped his vitriolic pen; but football is castigated more violently than most, being in Stubbes' view a sign of the decadence of the modern age and a proof that the end of the world is at hand."

[156] Frederick James Furnivall (ed.), *Phillip Stubbes's Anatomy of the Abuses in England*, Part I, London 1879, 184.

[157] See Marples, in particular his chapter "The Puritan Attack", 52-65. It is worthwhile noting that Puritan antipathy towards sports had historical precedents as they belonged to authorities' traditional resistance to popular recreations. See Walvin, 21.

[158] See Marples, 75.

[159] Apparently a clergy's participation in the game had severe effects on his professional future. Marples writes, 75-76: "Thus in 1519 a curate of the church of St. Mary in Hawridge, Berkshire, who used to hurry to the church on Sunday morning and read through the whole office for the day, so as to be able to devote the rest of the time to football, paid a severe penalty. His offence was more serious than most: moreover, he played in his shirt – *'ludit ad pilam pedalem in camisia sua*'. When the bishop heard of it, he was deprived of his living."

Lindsay's play *The Three Estates.* In the play minister Parson comments on his skills and his addiction to football:

> Though I preach not, I can the hand-ball teach!
> I bet there is not one among you all
> More furiously can play at the football. (Part Two, vv. 2714-2716)[160]

In defence of the clergy against Puritan outrage it has to be said that occurrences are reported where the whole congregation preferred football to attendance at church.[161] We are also informed that Oliver Cromwell himself was a keen and enthusiastic football player during his undergraduate years at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. This is at least claimed in Heath's biography about him:

> He was more Famous for his Excercises in the Feilds than in the Schools, (in which he never had the honour of because no worth and merit to, a degree) being one of the chief Match-makers and Players at Foot-ball.[162]

Although the game was condemned by the Puritans and hardly accepted in aristocratic circles, Richard Mulcaster (1530-1611), first headmaster of the Merchant Taylor's School and St Paul's in London, was in favour of physical training and greatly advocated the game in his tractate *Positions* (1581), since he praised it for its health-enhancing benefits. Thus we learn about its benefits:

> [...] The Footeball strengtheneth and brawneth the whole body, and by prouoking superfluities downeward, it dischargeth the head, and upper partes, it is good for the bowells, and to driue downe the stone and grauell from both the bladder and kidneies. It helpeth weake hammes, by much mouing, beginning at a meane, and simple shankes by thickening of the flesh, no lesse then riding doth.[163]

But the current state of the game overshadows its beneficial aspects. He claims "though as it is now comonly used, with thronging of a rude multitude, with bursting of shinnes, & breaking of legges, it be neither ciuil, neither worthy the name of any

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[160] Sir David Lindsay, *The Three Estates. A Pleasant Satire in Commendation Of Virtue And In Vituperation Of Vice*, in a new English version by Nigel Mace, Aldershot et Al. 1998, 141.
[161] This occurrence had apparently taken place in East Looe in 1722. See Marples, 79.
[162] James Heath, *Flagellum: Or The LIFE and DEATH, BIRTH and BURIAL of O. Cromwell The late Usurper: Faithfully Described. With An Exact Account of His Policies and Successes*, London ^{3}1665, 7-8.
[163] Richard Mulcaster, *Positions Wherein Those Primitive Circumstances Be Examined, Which Are Necessarie For The Training Up Of Children*, Jeffrey Stern (ed.), Bristol 1995 (Reprint of the 1581 Edition), 105.

traine to health".[164] To optimise its beneficial aspects changes ought to be made, most notably a referee would have to be introduced to the game:

> Wherein any man may euidently see the use of the trayning maister. For if one stand by, which can iudge of the play, and is iudge ouer the parties, & hath authoritie to commaunde in the place, all those inconueniences haue bene, I know, & wilbe I am sure very lightly redressed, nay they will neuer entermedle in the matter, neither shall there be complaint, where there is no cause.[165]

In the light of the changes he proposed, it is understandable why Mulcaster's advocacy of the game is considered unique among scholars until the nineteenth century and that his ideas were three hundred years ahead of his time, although, so Magoun argues, his inspiration for the beneficial and educational value of football had been influenced by the *De Arte Gymnastica* of Mercuriali, first published in 1569.[166] Nevertheless, his main achievement was to adopt and to apply the Italian ideas to the specific requirements of football.[167] In fact, Mulcaster's work and Alexander Barclay's Eclogues (1514) belong to the few early examples praising the game's benefits and its beauty.[168]

During the Elizabethan period football imagery continued to be used in literary works and turned out to be quite popular in Elizabethan drama. One of the references to the game appears in William Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* (1593), there Dromio of Ephesus complains to Adriana about how she treats him:

> Am I so round with you, as you with me,
> That like a football you do spurn me thus?
> You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither;
> If I last this service you must case me in leather.[169] (Act II, Sc. 1,vv.80-83)

The simile of the football as a person of little value and respect, repeatedly used by Shakespeare,[170] can be found in various other works of the time.[171] Yet, even more

[164] Ibid., 104.
[165] Ibid., 104-105.
[166] See Magoun, 26-28. It is noteworthy in this context that David Wedderburn also recognised the positive educational value of football. For the Master of Aberdeen Grammar School published a text-book called *Vocabula* in 1633, in which Latin phrases dealt with a game of football, designed for the use of schoolboys. For both the English translation of *Vocabula* and the Latin original see Magoun, 93-94.
[167] See Marples, 69. A similar plea for the health-enhancing aspect of football was made by George Cheyne in 1734, in his work entitled *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (1734) he advices "to those who have weak Arms and Hams, playing two or three hours at Tennis, or at Foot-Ball every day." Cheyne quoted in Marples, 81.
[168] Compare also Alexander Barclay's Fifth Eclogue, which, according to Magoun, is "one of the most picturesque and attractive descriptions of football in English literature." See Magoun, 19.
[169] T.S. Dorsch (ed.), *The Comedy of Errors*, Cambridge 2004, 71 (= The New Cambridge Shakespeare).

violently, detached human heads were frequently linked to rolling footballs. In John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612) Francisco de' Medici, Duke of Florence, threatens to cut his enemy's head off:

> Like the wild Irish, I'lle ne'er think thee dead,
> Till I can play at football with thy head. (Act IV, Sc.1, vv.136-137)[172]

Likewise, for those whose destiny was unfortunate, negative imagery of football was a prominent way to lament their fate, nicely reflected in complaints such as "I am the verye foote-ball of the starres".[173] Further testimony is hardly necessary to conclude that references to football in drama are very similar to the way the game had been reflected in non-dramatic literature in earlier times. In a word, football continued to feature in predominantly violent contexts. In fact, the very word "football" could be used as a derogatory term in itself.[174] However, no matter what the connotation of "football" might have been, frequent references to it in Elizabethan drama in their own right clearly indicate that football was a matter of people's everyday lives. What's more, the Elizabethan writer Sir Philip Sidney provides us with a poem that possibly contains the first reference to women's football. In his *A Dialogue Betweene Two Shepherds*. *Uttered in a Pastorall Show at Wilton* (c. 1580) one of the shepherds exclaims:

> A tyme there is for all, my Mother often sayes,
> When she with skirts tuckt very hy, with girles at football playes.[175]

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[170] In William Shakespeare's *King Lear* Kent insults Oswald by calling him "You base football player" (Act I, Sc. 4, vv.84-85). See R.A Foakes (ed), *King Lear*, Surrey et Al. 1997, 196 (= The Arden Shakespeare).

[171] Compare the many references Magoun lists, Magoun, 42-44.

[172] Christina Luckyj (ed.), *The White Devil*, London & New York 2006 (Reprint of the 1996 Edition), 80.

[173] See the anonymous Elizabethan tragedy of Charlemagne in: Franck L. Schoell (ed.), *Charlemagne (the distracted empereor)*, Princeton et Al. 1920 (= Princeton University Press), 38.

[174] Compare Thomas Occleve's mock poem about his Lady Money-Bag where he draws on football imagery to ridicule her beauty claiming "Hir comly body/ shape as a foot-ball". See Israel Gollancz (ed), *Hoccleve's Works., II The Minor Poems in the Asburnham MS. Addit. 133*, London 1925 (= Oxford University Press), 38.

[175] http://www.luminarium.org/editions/sidneydialogue.htm. This HTML etext of Sidney's "A Dialogue Between Two Shepherds" was created in July 2006 by Armina Jokinen of Luminarium. The unaltered text is based on the following source: Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), *The Complete Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, Volume I, London 1873, 207-211. Note that the term 'football' has been replaced by 'stoolball' in a different edition. See Albert Feuillerat (ed.), *The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney: The last part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia. Astrophel & Stella and other poems. The lady of May*, Cambridge 1922, 323 (= Cambridge English Classics Volume II). Undoubtedly, 'stoolball' is not the same as 'football'. Compare www.stoolball.org.uk/rules/what-is-stoolball/. (Accessed 10 August 2013). I am grateful to Dr Nicole Meier for helping me to clarify this aspect.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century football imagery continued to be in fashion, but not in a purely negative form.[176] In an attempt of parody[177] it was used in Richard Steele's essay on the solar system, trying to offer a more understandable and vivid access to the complicated scientific matter at hand:

> The inferior deities, having designed on a day to play a game at football, knead together a numberless collection of dancing atoms in the form of seven rolling globes:
> And that nature might be kept from a dull inactivity, each separate particle is endued with a principle of motion, or a power of attraction, whereby all the several parcels of matter draw each other proportionately to their magnitudes and distances, into such a remarkable variety of different forms, as to produce all the wonderful appearances we now observe in empire, philosophy, and religion. To proceed; at the beginning of the game, each of the globes, being struck forward with a vast violence, ran out of sight, and wandered in a straight line through the infinite spaces. The nimble deities pursue, breathless almost, and spent in the eager chase; each of them caught hold of one, and stamped it with his name; as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and so of the rest.[178]

From the fact that the year 1735 provides us with another poem dedicated to football, we can see that the game had been considered an appropriate subject for verse.[179] Indeed, the publishing of Matthew Concanen's mock-epic *A Match at Football* fifteen years earlier substantiates this claim.

However, in terms of quantity the number of references in literature declines significantly from 1750s onwards.[180] This led Joseph Strutt, contemporary antiquarian of sports and pastimes, to assume that football "was formerly much in vogue among the common people of England, though of late years it seems to have fallen into disrepute, and is but little practised."[181] According to sports historians the game was affected by the impact of industrialisation, which partly explains why there are fewer references during this period. Hughes argues:

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[176] See Marples on the metaphorical value of football: "An analogy from football was still an effective way of impressing a point upon congregation or reader, and moralizing writers or speakers sometimes used it in a way that would be impossible nowadays." His argument is substantiated by Robert Wild's writing to welcome the King's Declaration for Liberty of Conscience, where theological controversy is described as a football match. See Ibid., 90.

[177] Magoun believes the object of Steele's parody could have been William Whiston's rather abstract forthcoming astronomical work *Praelectiones Physicae Mathematicae*, see Magoun, 62.

[178] The Tatler, No. 43. July 19, 1709, in: George Atherton Aitken (ed.), *The Tatler*, Vol. I, Hildesheim & New York 1970, 350-351 (= Anglistica & Americana 100). Note that the facsimile presented in the Anglistica & Americana series is a reprint of Aitken's 1898-1899 edition.

[179] The work entitled "Foot-Ball." reveals how the game is played on ice, is then compared to a ship on a rough sea and finally alludes to the vicissitudes of life. See Magoun, 66. The anonymous poem can be found in *The London Magazine: or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, March 1735, 151.

[180] Baumann, 198.

[181] Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England; Including The Rural and Domestic Recreations, May Games, Mummeries, Shows, Processions, Pageants & Pompous Spectacles From The Earliest Period To The Present Time*, newly edited by William Hone with copius index, London 1845, 100. Note that there are two previous editions of Joseph Strutt's work, the first appeared in 1801; the second was published in 1810, the year Joseph Strutt died.

> In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, folk football faced new challenges. Britain was becoming urbanised and industrialised. The search for work was forcing many people to move from small towns and villages to the expanding cities. Their everyday lives were turned upside down. With long working hours and cramped living conditions, and with countless fields being replaced by streets and buildings, they had little time or space for recreation.
> By now, there was a powerful law enforcement system, helping the authorities to suppress football more effectively than before. [...] Also, Shrove Tuesday, the focal point of the folk football calendar, was no longer a holiday in all areas.[182]

Ironically, with the British folk football seemingly in decline, the game had been saved by those classes that initially frowned upon it, since it was the public schools' and universities' merit of having transformed an unstructured plebian pastime into an organised game with its own distinctive rules as Peter Seddon accurately asserts.[183] Thus the foundation of the Football Association and the codification of its rules in 1863 paved the way for a wide corpus of football literature catering to different tastes and needs.

4.2 Literary representation from 1863 to 1992

When studying the rise of football literature after 1863, foremost reference has to be given to Peter Seddon's foundational work *A Football Compendium*.[184] Although no longer up-to-date (the latest edition dates from 1999), his contribution provides the most concise and thorough overview on football's literary representation so far and proves so valuable for an indepth study of the subject. Regarding the sheer number and the diversity of publications on football that have gradually, yet consistently emerged over the years, it seems impossible to provide a concise overview on it within the scope of this chapter and the objective of this thesis. In a nutshell, it is safe to say that the majority of works dealing with football are factual in nature. A lot of works have been dedicated to the history and development of the game, particularly concerned with its origins and its growth. Others focus on club histories, frequently published on occasion of a club's anniversary, where a historical account on the club's development and activity was required. Also based on a statistical background we find a wide range of books on cup competitions, both on international and national levels as well as reference books such as *Rothmans Football Yearbook*, next to

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[182] Graham Hughes, A Develyshe Pastime: A History of Football in all its forms, Cheltenham 2009, 18.
[183] See Arthur E. Cunningham & Cynthia McKinley (eds.), *A Football Compendium*: *An Expert Guide to the Books, Films & Music of Association*, Boston Spa ^{2}1999 (compiled by Peter J. Seddon), 1. See also Walvin, 31.
[184] Arthur E. Cunningham & Cynthia McKinley (eds.), *A Football Compendium*: *An Expert Guide to the Books, Films & Music of Association*, Boston Spa ^{2}1999 (compiled by Peter J. Seddon). This work will be cited as 'Seddon' hereafter.

football encyclopedias, dictionaries and bibliographies. Moreover, there is a vast amount of practical guide books covering aspects like coaching, training, fitness, rules or refereeing. Finally, and increasingly important, ever since the late 1960s we find many academic studies on the cultural, social, economic and legal dimension of the game. So far most of the academic work has been concerned with sociological issues of spectatorship, fan culture as well as hooliganism and crowd control. Less factual in nature but equally considered non-fictional, a huge proportion of football literature consists of player, manager or collective biographies.[185] Although scarcely covered in the late nineteenth century and the Inter-War years, this genre became increasingly popular in the 1950s as players and their respective life-styles attracted more and more publicity.[186] Consequently the number of autobiographies rose significantly up to a point where even footballers of lower-celebrity status felt urged to put pen to paper.[187] Richard Holt on the ever increasing wave of autobiographies:

> Hence the conventional sports biography did not play a major role in the making of the sporting hero until the second half of the twentieth century. [...] Most sportsmen acquired their reputations through sporting gossip combined with match reports in which particular moments of brilliance would be recorded, culminating perhaps in feature articles about outstanding individuals. It was during the second half of the twentieth century that the printed book combined with television to become the key to sporting greatness; the former fed unexpectedly well off the latter's democratising of the athletic performance and image. The number of such books grew exponentially, beginning in earnest with George Best, who had seven biographies between 1968 and 1975; then came 11 works on Paul Gascoigne between 1989 and 1994; at present books about David Beckham – the apotheosis of the sportsman as celebrity – are appearing all the time.[188]

To conclude with Bale – most works failed to provide analysis, interpretation and insight.[189] A short excerpt from Ashley Cole's more recent autobiography suggests that things have not necessarily changed for the better:

> It's about a 20-minute drive from my place to London Colney training ground. I must have driven there on autopilot. I had deliberately not got any of the morning newspapers or watched breakfast television. Normally, I'd have an R&B CD blaring throughout the journey, thumping the roof of my black Range Rover, but not that day. It was playing but the volume was down,

[185] Note that the term "collective biographies" usually refers to certain groups such as famous strikers or superstars etc.
[186] Compare Matthew Taylor on the emergence of sports biographies. Matthew Taylor, 'From Source to Subject: Sport, History and Autobiography', in: *Journal of Sport History*, 35:3 (Fall 2008), 469-491, in particular ibid., 475f.
[187] See Seddon, 240.
[188] Richard Holt, 'The Legend of Jackie Milburn and the Life of Godfrey Brown', in: John Bale, Mette K. Christensen & Gertrud Pfister (eds.), *Writing Lives in Sport: Biographies, Life Histories and Methods*, Aarhus 2004, 158.
[189] See the introductory chapter in John Bale, Mette K. Christensen & Gertrud Pfister (eds.), *Writing Lives in Sport: Biographies, Life Histories and Methods*, Aarhus 2004: ,10.

> as subdued as the driver. People often say that nothing seems to bother me, but, while I'm not the deepest of thinkers, I do store quite a lot up inside and the situation must have been seriously weighing on my mind if it made me turn the R&B down.[190]

Fortunately, ever since Pete Davies' *All Played Out and* Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* in 1992 there has been a growing interest in the literary appeal of football writing, too. It comes as a big surprise that even the editors of *A Football Compendium* contribute to the widespread belief of how little fictional writing there actually is. With regard to the quantity of fictional writing Seddon remarks:

> There are some surprising entries in this chapter, but perhaps what is more surprising is how few instances in total there actually are, suggesting that football and literature are not comfortable bedfellows or even casual friends – distant relatives would be nearer the mark. [191]

In terms of quantity this assumption is incorrect since the section covering "Literature & the Arts" comprises 756 entries[192] out of 7487 references of Seddon's *Compendium*. If we exclude those items listed under "Fanzines Compilations & Studies",[193] "Screenplays", "Ballet & Opera", "Art, Design & Photography",[194] "Religious Tracts" and "Educational Aids"[195] in the same section, we are nevertheless able to list 616 items directly linked to fictional football writing. Provided Seddon's figures are accurate, the compendium's "Literature & the Arts" – section makes up the third biggest section in total, only matched by the section "Club Histories" coming first with 2434 entries[196] and the section "Personalities" coming second with 910 entries.[197] What this shows is that we have a rich corpus of fictional football writing, even starting at a relatively early stage, as Horler's novel *Goal! A romance with the English Cup-ties* (1920) is generally considered to be the "first novel written around professional association football".[198] Contrary to popular belief, over the years football fiction has developed a variety of representations most notably in novels,[199]short stories,[200] stage plays[201] as well as poetry.[202]

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[190] Ashley Cole, *My Defence*, London 2006, 60.
[191] Seddon, 485.
[192] See ibid., 485-564.
[193] Ibid., 539-541.
[194] Ibid., 546-551.
[195] Ibid., 559-564.
[196] Ibid., 53-238.
[197] Note that the section "Personalities" refers to biographies of players, managers or collective biographies. See Seddon, 239-323.
[198] Seddon, 505.
[199] Seddon lists 136 adult novels. See Seddon, 497-512.
[200] Seddon lists 31 single author collections short stories and short story anthologies. See Ibid., 512-514. Brian Glanville's collection *Goalkeepers are crazy: a collection of football stories* (1964) is

What's more, the publications are not limited to adult fiction as there is a wide range of teenage[203] and children fiction, too.[204] With the emergence of *fanzines* football writing had created its own literary voice. On the characteristics of fanzines Hill notes:

> These fan-related magazines, often short-lived and usually produced on a voluntary and often fairly amateurish basis, purported to speak as the voice of the terraces, scrutinising the manoeuvrings of club directors, attacking those responsible for hooliganism and racism and defending football against the attacks launched on it by government.[205]

If it's not for the quantity of fictional football writing, the question naturally arises why football fiction has remained largely unknown to a wider readership, or even worse, why it has been largely ignored by it, although the game itself has been an everyday matter in people's lives. Surely, part of the answer stems from the quality of fictional football writing up to the early 1990s. Peter Seddon concedes:

> The number of good novelists who write about football is thus a small one. As if to fill the gap a number of relative novices, some from within the game itself, have boldly tried their hand. Reviews have been at best humorously tolerant, and at worst scathing- delivered with the manic ferocity of an over-the-top tackle leaving the hapless author in a deflated heap, utterly devoid of the confidence to try again.[206]

However, Seddon's comment does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question why we have so many books of such low literary esteem. Exploring this issue, it turns out that the reasons are manifold.

To start with, neither the more educated classes nor distinguished novelists seemed to be interested in reading and writing about a sport that was traditionally associated

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commonly regarded to be one of the finest complete selections of football short stories by one of its most prolific writers. Similarly praised is Nick Hornby's collection of football writing, which contains Roddy Doyle's wonderful account of the Republic of Ireland's journey through Italia 90. See Nick Hornby (ed.), *My Favourite Year. A collection of football writing*, London 1993.

[201] In the category "Plays & Revues" Seddon lists 56 plays. See Seddon, 541-546. The earliest one is George Gray's *The Football King* (1896), yet the most well-known plays are Paul Hodson's adaption of Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* in 1995, Peter Terson's *Zigger Zagger* (1970) and Arthur Smith's *An evening with Gary Lineker* (1992). More recently Roy Williams' *Sing yer Heart out for the Lads* (2002) has been performed at the National Theatre, London.

[202] Seddon lists 41 references of poems and anthologies. See Seddon, 534-538.

[203] Seddon lists 79 teenage novels, whereby Michael Hardcastle is the biggest contributor to this genre, his novels being listed 31 times. It is noteworthy that the teenage football novel reached popularity at an early stage, well-documented by the teenage pulps of *the Aldine football fiction* series, which published 88 books between 1925 to 1931. For further examples see Seddon, 520-521. As we can conclude from the hugely successful *Roy of the Rover* series as well as the *Theo Walcott* series football fiction also proved extremely popular in comic series.

[204] Seddon lists 172 items under the category "Children's fiction and storybooks". See Seddon, 523-533.

[205] Jeffrey Hill, *Sport and the Literary Imagination: Essays in history, literature, and sport*, Oxford et Al. 2006, 117. For Fanzine Compilations & Studies, see Seddon, 539-541.

[206] Seddon, 486.

with low-culture, plebian values and had become notorious for violence and hooliganism.[207] Whilst cricket enjoyed a distinctive literature with a middle- and upper-class readership, football fiction failed to establish its own readership. As Boyle and Haynes claim, this issue also affected the field of journalism:

> Journalists covering working-class sports such as football were often viewed differently from those associated with more middle-upper-class sports such as cricket. In Britain a particularly literary approach to cricket or rugby writing was deemed acceptable, while no such pretensions would be allowed to inform coverage of mass spectator sports such as football.[208]

Hence 'the people's game' was essentially perceived as a working class game up to the 1990s and this class was stereotypically said to be neither keen on reading nor writing.[209] Moreover, the beauty of the game seems hard to mirror. Thus the task of portraying game action adequately, capturing the game's spirit or depicting the atmosphere realistically, poses a challenge many writers cannot match. Hill and Williams argue:

> Literary text (in its broadest sense involving authorship, structure, form, language, audience and theme, whether it be poetry, prose, non fiction or drama) diverges from sport in terms of the former being fixed and that latter being unpredictable. That is, allowing for improvisational techniques in drama, dance and music, the sporting event (albeit bound by rules, most of them written, as well as unwritten understandings about conduct) proceeds until a present limit in a relatively volatile and changeable manner. Whereas writing involves numerous possibilities until the end product is 'finished' and consumed by an audience, the spectator at sporting events values the erratic and seemingly random variables just as the participants seek to limit them.[210]

These problems are also acknowledged by Hornby when he says "I've never particularly wanted to read a football novel. And I'm not sure what the point of such a book would be. Real-life sport already contains all the themes and narratives you could want."[211] Finally, a comparison with American sports writing offers an interesting, yet not entirely convincing argument for the low level of quality fiction:

> The grumblers note that Hemingway, Runyon, Lardner, Mailer and Jack Kerouac were all sports journalists. It was a higher-status profession in the US than in Britain, because Americans never drew as rigid a line between 'high' and 'low' culture. Hemingway, in fact, was

[207] Seddon, 485.
[208] Raymond Boyle & Richard Haynes, *Power Play: Sport, the Media and Popular Culture*, Edinburgh [2]2009, 165.
[209] Compare Simon Kuper in his online article "Sporting Fictions". Kuper's online article available at http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-literature-literaturematters-nov05-simonkuper.htm/ (Accessed 18 February 2012).
[210] Jeffrey Hill and Jean Williams, 'Introduction', in: *Sport in History*, 29:2 (2009), 129-130.
[211] Hornby quoted in Kuper's online article "Sporting Fictions".

> the best paid sports hack of all time, once pocketing $30,000 from *Sports Illustrated* for a 2,000-word piece on bullfighting. [...]
> In American fiction, unlike in British, the athlete had an important job to do: serving as metaphor for the 'American dream'. He was the kid who came from nowhere to great fame because he was a winner, but who always risked having his bubble pricked and deflating in an instant, with nowhere to return to.[212]

These reasons might partly explain why only a handful of football novels achieved literary esteem up to the 1990s.[213] But then again, regardless of their literary quality, what linked most works of fictional football writing was that they were overwhelmingly ignored by "mainstream" literary critics. However, things changed when Pete Davies *All Played Out* and Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* were published in the early 1990s. These well-written and enormously entertaining accounts sparked what Redhead coined the "literaturisation of soccer".[214]

4.3 1992 to the present: Hornby and the popular myth of the 'bourgeoisification' of football writing

Hornby's remarkable fan biography has received by far the most literary praise, since it formed a sharp contrast to ordinary football stories published earlier. His autobiographical novel helped to cast the game into a new middle-class light, triggering the "bourgeoisification" of football writing.

It is next to impossible to understand Hornby's enormous success without reconsidering the wider cultural changes that had occurred in football in the post-Hillsborough era. At the beginning of the 1990s British football enjoyed a period of success starting with the impressive finish of the English team in the 1990 World Cup, its improving public image due to the newly launched Premier League and a decline in hooliganism. This attracted new types of spectators to the game. According to Giulianotti these 'post fans' predominantly hail from the middle-classes, pursuing white-collar occupations with a background in higher education. What sets them apart from more traditional working-class fans is the way they consume the game

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[212] See ibid.

[213] Apart from Brian Glanville's novels *The Rise of Gerry Logan* (1963), *The Dying of the Light* (1976) J.L. Carr's *How Steeple Sinderby Wanderes won the F.A. Cup* (1975) was slightly better received. Out of the realist school of autobiographies Hunter Davies' *The Glory Game* (1973) and Eamon Dunphy's *Only a Game?* (1977) earned literary praise.

[214] Steve Redhead, *Post-fandom and the Millennial Blues: the Transformation of Soccer Culture*, London 1997, 88. For a more in-depth explanation on the term 'literaturisation' see Hill, 118.

and the way they pledge their allegiances to their favourite clubs.[215] Giulianotti argues:

> The old working-class spectators were raised to discuss football intersubjectively, at work, in the pub, on the street or in the home. They attended matches in groups, either with their family or their peers. [...] Conversely, football is experienced in a more solitary way by the new middle classes. Primary and secondary relationships are less football-centred. Football match attendance occurs in smaller groups, especially with female partners. The new football media seek to fill this dialogical hole in a virtual fashion by becoming the source of football chat for new middle-class readers. Female journalists are recruited partly to encourage the 'significant others' of male fans to take an interest in the game.[216]

However, despite the transformation of British football culture Hornby's enormous success still came as a big surprise given that he was an unknown writer at the time of publication. Enquiring about sales figures, Hornby's agent, David Lacey from Penguin Books, told me:

> I'd like to help but unfortunately I don't have the full information. We only took over the book at the end of 2000, and were not the publishers when the book was a number one bestseller. I can tell you that Penguin has sold about 380,000 copies since 2000 (excluding special editions) and there have been 36 reprints of the main edition. My memory (not entirely reliable) is that Cassell had sold over a million copies before we took over publication. I also believe it has been translated into at least 23 languages.[217]

These impressive sales figures of *Fever Pitch* certainly indicate that a broader readership is interested in the confessions of an ordinary male in his mid-30s. Evidently, the question arises why Hornby's book is considered special and what was so innovative about it. Quite simply, Hornby came up with a radically new understanding of what football writing could be like. Going beyond the sphere of on-field action Hornby's tale offers an "honesty about emotion and an awareness of the deficiencies of modern men, an awareness that is charming rather than defensive or apologetic."[218] In fact, *Fever Pitch* has helped to shape a new image of masculinity which later became known as "new laddism".[219] What was essential about this new phenomenon is the way:

> It has come to signify a supposedly post-feminist, non-racist white English masculinity that is somehow already 'politically correct', and therefore does not have to be. Its cheeky sexist and

[215] See Giulianotti, 'Sociology', 148ff.
[216] Giulianotti, 'Sociology', 149-150.
[217] Email response sent to me on 18 April 2012.
[218] See Merritt, Moseley, 'Nick Hornby', in: Jay L. Halio (ed.): *British Novelists Since 1960. Dictionary of Literary Biography 207 (*3), Detroit 1999, 144.
[219] For a defintion of the "New Lad" see the entry "Lads' Literature" in: Margaret Drabble (ed.) *Oxford Companion to Literature*, Oxford ^{6}2006, 566.

> coded-racist remarks are (in true postmodern fashion) ironic; they are not meant to be taken seriously, and anyone who attempts to critique what is expressed is simply dismissed as not having got the joke.[220]

Indeed, Hornby perfectly captures that postmodern irony which makes his account so entertaining. At the same time *Fever Pitch* did not only address male football fans, his emotional writing style centering around issues of maleness, also made it a favourite among female readers, many of them wanting to understand their male partners or males in general.[221] A further innovative aspect, which increased the popularity of the book, was the idea of writing an autobiography embedded in match reports. Here Hornby had been inspired by Frederick Exley's *A Fan's Notes.*[222] Despite being structured in match reports, *Fever Pitch* is about the consumption of football and not about the game action itself.[223] As Hornby points out in the introduction,[224] writing the novel also had a psycho-analytical function, since writing about his excessive fandom helped him to understand his obsession. It is the resulting insights into his mind that set *Fever Pitch* apart from 'conventional' football writing that was traditionally action-packed with little psychological analysis.[225] Moreover, his novel helped to bridge the gap between football as an element of low culture and intellectualism. Being a Cambridge graduate himself and still being able to give an entertaining account of his life as a football fan helped a lot to enhance football's public image and give it a "new intellectual credibility".[226] Rowe observes:

> In the case of football in Britain, for example, stylized gang violence, sharp terrace dress codes and identification with musical genres like ska and punk partially modernized the sports aesthetic. The residue of hippie culture, however, meant that organized sport was widely regarded (especially among women) as an 'uncool' product of competitive individualism, masculine aggressiveness and rule-bound behavioural patterns. To pledge allegiance to a football team, for example, required justification in class and community terms (sticking to one's real, imaginary or exaggerated proletarian roots) or needed to be situated within a

[220] Ben Carrington, 'Football's coming home' But whose home? And do we want it?', in: Adam Brown (ed.), *Fanatics! Power, identity and fandom in football*, London & New York 1998, 106.
[221] See Ralf Bei der Kellen, *The Making Of A Popular Author – Nick Hornby and Fever Pitch*, unpublished MA Thesis, University of Osnabrück 2002, 95. Kellen's work cited hereafter as 'Kellen'.
[222] Hornby on Exley's influence in an interview with Moseley – quoted in: Merritt Moseley, 'Nick Hornby, English Football, and Fever Pitch', 89: "When I saw the book for the first time, for some reason I thought, 'Oh, great this is an autobiography told through reports of matches.' I picked it up and it wasn't, but then I thought, 'Hey, actually that's not a bad idea for a book.'"
[223] Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch*, London: Indigio 1992 (Paperback Reprint 1998), 44: "And as this book is about the consumption of football, rather than football itself."
[224] Ibid., 11: "*Fever Pitch* is an attempt to gain some kind of an angle on my obsession."
[225] See Moseley, 'Nick Hornby, English Football, and Fever Pitch', 93: "The focus of his own psychology, rather than the players (except as he admires or reviles them) or the games (except as he endures or exults in them) helps to distinguish this book from ordinary sportswriting."
[226] Kellen, 73. See also Mußmann, 67.

> general critique of the elite pretensions of bourgeois society. These self-justifications have to be made less frequently and defensively in the nineties.[227]

As Moseley points out, much of Hornby's impact can be attributed to his fine dualistic style, which even became known as "Hornbyresque":

> Here is the paradox, again; that Nick Hornby writes so intelligently about what he says makes him an idiot, that while claiming that his kind of football fan is incapable of analysis, or self-awareness, or mental rigour, he can write with such lucid analysis of his own motives, such awareness of his own shortcomings of generosity and tolerance, such rigorous honesty. He finds the right line between self-exculpation (there is never any self-glorification) and the egoism of exaggerated self-reproach.[228]

After the publication of *Fever Pitch* fan and player novels snowballed quickly.[229]
And yet, the development Hornby had initiated became heavily criticised. According to critics, the 'bourgeoisification' of football writing had backfired. Hornby himself was accused of "having helped turn football into a fashion accessory and of being part of the 'soccerati' that had somehow displaced the sport's traditional working-class following."[230] Hornby in turn, strongly objected to this view and drew attention to a dilemma writers had to face when writing about football in Britain:

> Yet those who write about football still create a whole set of problems for themselves in Britain, many of them relating, predictably, to the subject of class. Sport in Britain has all sorts of class associations apparently absent elsewhere in the world. Cricket and (English, rather than Welsh) rugby union are 'posh' sports, played and watched by 'posh' people, and it is therefore acceptable to write in a 'posh' way about them; but anyone who dares to write about the more traditional working-class sports – football or rugby league, say – in a way that recognizes the existence of polysyllabic words, or metaphors, or even ideas, is asking for trouble, or at the very least a great deal of suspicion. From one side comes the accusation that the writer is a middle-class interloper who knows nothing about the sport and its traditions; from the other the supposition that the writer is slumming it, attaching himself or herself to the sport as a quick and easy way of gaining credibility. [231]

In summary we can say that Hornby's *Fever Pitch* set new standards in terms of quality, literary recognition and public acceptance. This in turn led to a wave of

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[227] David Rowe, *Popular Cultures: Rock Music, Sport and the Politics of Pleasure*, London et Al. 1995, 10.
[228] Merritt Moseley, 'Nick Hornby, English Football, and Fever Pitch', 93.
[229] This development was not only restricted to the British market. Also in Germany h*ornbyresque* fan novels were published. One of the most popular ones is Christoph Biermann's *Wenn du am Spieltag beerdigt wirst, kann ich leider nicht kommen* (1995), translated in English "If your funeral is on a matchday, I am sorry, but I won't be able to make it."
[230] Merritt, Moseley, 'Nick Hornby', in: Jay L. Halio (ed.): *British Novelists Since 1960. Dictionary of Literary Biography 207 (*3), Detroit 1999, 146. To a large extent accusations towards Hornby stemmed from the fact that he edited *My Favourite Year. A Collection of Football Writing* in 1993 that exclusively featured fan stories of writers and intellectuals. Compare Giulianotti, 'Sociology', 151 on this aspect.
[231] Nick Hornby in the introduction of Nick Coleman & Nick Hornby, The *Picador Book of Sportwriting,* London & Basingstoke 1996, 1f.

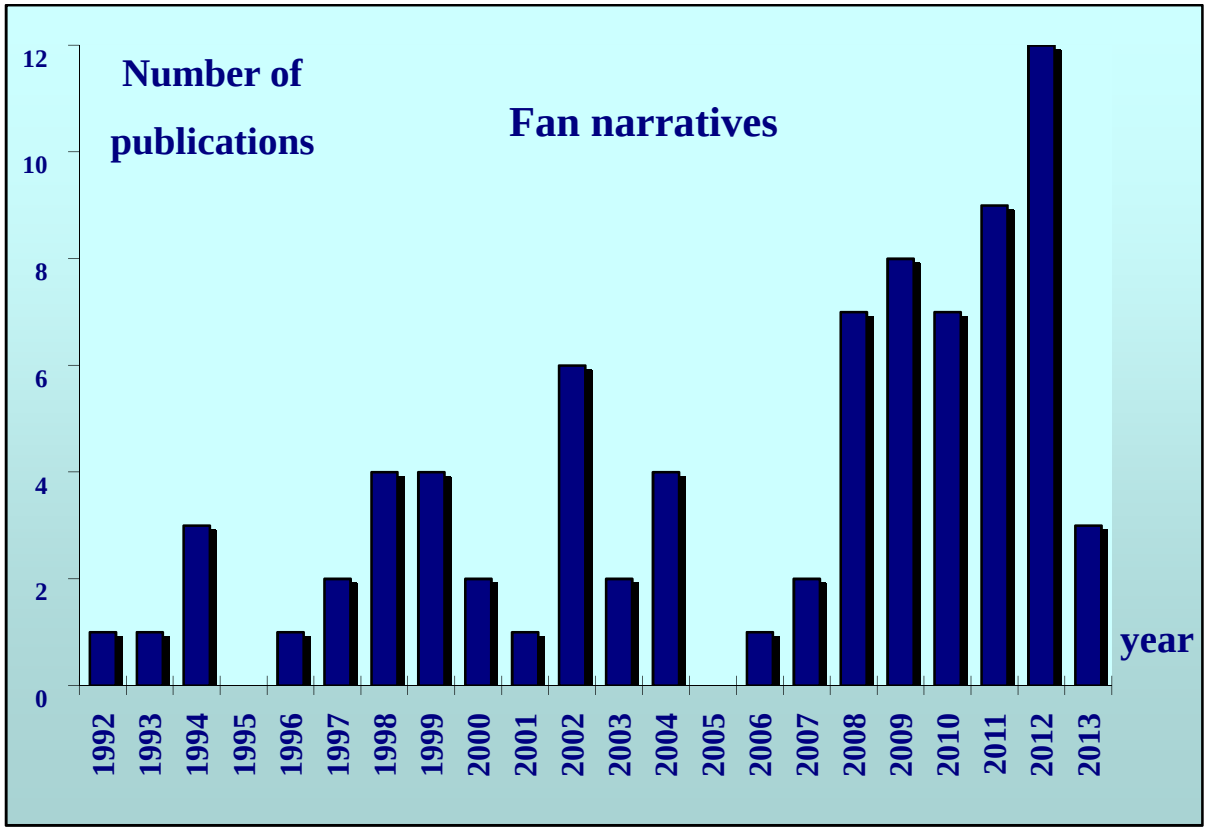
"hornbyresque" fan writings. My own research has shown that at least 80 fan accounts can be identified. While these narratives are differing in scope, they are bound by a common theme – a fan's perspective on the game. As of October 2013 the list of fan writings I was able to identify is as follows:

1. Nicholas ALLT, *Here We Go Gathering Cups in May* (2007)
2. Michael BAILEY, *From Liverpool to Istanbul: A Scouse Odyssey* (2008)
3. Kevin BALDWIN, *Yellow Lines* (2012)
4. Mike BAYLY, *Changing Ends: A Season in Non-League Football* (2010)
5. David BLATT, *Manchester United Ruined My Wife* (2004)
6. David BLATT, *Red Eye: One Man's Attempts to Watch United in 25 Different Countries* (2013)
7. David BULL, *We'll Support You Evermore: Keeping Faith in Football* (1992)
8. Michael CALVIN, *Family, Life, Death and Football: A Year on the Frontline with A Proper Club* (2012)
9. Robert CARTER, *From Salford to Tucson and Back Again: The globetrotting memoirs of a Manchester United fanatic* (2009)
10. Anthony CLAVANE, *Promised Land: The Reinvention of Leeds United* (2010)
11. Christopher COMBE, *You Are My Boro: The Unlikely Adventures Of A Small Town In Europe* (2011)
12. David CONN, *Richer than God: Manchester City, Modern Football and Growing Up* (2012)
13. Charlie CONNELLY, *I Just Can't Help Believing: The Relegation Experience (1998)*
14. Charlie CONNELLY, *London Fields: A Journey through Football's Metroland* (1999)
15. Charlie CONNELLY, *Spirit High and Passion Pure: A Journey Through European Football (2000)*
16. Charlie CONNELLY, *Many Miles... a Season in the Life of Charlton Athletic (2001)*
17. Charlie CONNELLY, *Stamping Grounds: Exploring Liechtenstein and its World Cup Dream* (2002)
18. John CRACE, *Vertigo* (2011)
19. Chuck CULPEPPER, *Bloody Confused! A Clueless American Sportswriter Seeks Solace in English Soccer* (2008)
20. Pete DAVIES, *I lost my heart to the Belles* (1996)
21. Tom DICKINSON, *92 Pies* (2011)
22. Stuart DONALD, *On Fire with Fergie: Me, My Dad and the Dons* (2011)
23. Neil DUNKIN, *Anfield of Dreams: A Kopite's Odyssey From The Second Division to Sublime Istanbul* (2008)
24. Alan EDGE, *Faith Of Our Fathers: Football as a Religion* (1997)
25. Chris ENGLAND, *No More Buddha, Only Football* (2003)
26. Grant FARRED, *Long Distance Love: A Passion for Football* (2008)
27. Stephen FOSTER, *She Stood There Laughing: A Man, His Son and Their Football Club* (2004)
28. Stephen FOSTER, *...And She Laughed No More: Stoke City's first Premiership Adventure* (2009)
29. Stuart FULLER, *Passport To Football: Following Football Around The World* (2009)
30. Giles GOODHEAD, *Us v Them: Journeys to the World's Greatest Football Derbies* (2003)
31. Daniel GRAY, *Stramash: Tackling Scotland's Towns and Teams* (2010)

32. Daniel GRAY, *Hatters, Railwaymen and Knitters: Travels through England's Football Provinces* (2013)
33. Pablo GUTIÉRREZ, *An eventful season (and a half): A personal account of the second spell of Kenny Dalglish as Liverpool FC manager* (2012)
34. Heidi HAIGH, *Follow Me & Leeds United* (2013)
35. Duncan HAMILTON, *The Footballer Who Could Fly* (2012)
36. Daniel HARRIS, *On the Road: A Journey through a season* (2010)
37. Keith HAYNES, *Swansea City 2010/2011: Walking On Sunshine* (2011)
38. Keith HAYNES, *Shine on Swansea City: 2011/2012: A Season In The Sun* (2012)
39. Nick HORNBY (ed.), *My Favourite Year. A Collection Of Football Writing*, 1993
40. Richard KURT, *United We Stood, 1975-94: The Unofficial History of the Ferguson Years* (1994)
41. Richard KURT and Chris NICKEAS, *The Red Army Years: Manchester United in the 1970s* (1997)
42. Richard KURT, *United! Despatches from Old Trafford* (1999)
43. Richard KURT and Steve BLACK, *United in 2000: The Reds Fan's Review of the Season* (2000)
44. Kevin LEYLAND, *Devil Worship: A Fan's Voyage with the 2008/2009 Manchester United Red Devils* (2009)
45. Patrick MANGAN, *Offsider: A Memoir* (2010)
46. Dean MANSELL, *The Away End* (2012)
47. Laurence MARKS, *A Fan For All Seasons: The Diary of an Arsenal Supporter* (1999)
48. Joe MCGINNISS, *The Miracle of Castel di Sangro* (1999)
49. Adam MICHIE, *Orientation* (2012)
50. Steve MIFFLIN, *Exile In The Promised Land* (2009)
51. Simon MORAN, *We are Nippon: The World Cup in Japan* (2002)
52. Michael MOWBRAY, *Route 66: A Journey Around the Football Grounds of Yorkshire* (2012)
53. Conor O' CALLAGHAN, *Red Mist: Roy Keane and the Irish World Cup Blues: A Fan's Story* (2004)
54. Andy PACINO, *Sir Alex, United and Me: A Tale of Footballing Obsession* (2002)
55. Tim PARKS, *A Season with Verona: Travels Around Italy in Search of Illusion, National Character and Goals* (2002)
56. David PAUL, *Anfield Voices* (2010)
57. Harry PEARSON, *The Far Corner: A mazy dribble through North-East Football* (1994)
58. Brian READE, *44 Years with the Same Bird: A Liverpudlian Love Affair* (2009)
59. Dave ROBERTS, *The Bromley Boys: The True Story of Supporting the Worst Football Team in Britain* (2008)
60. Dave ROBERTS, *32 Programmes* (2011)
61. Keith SALMON, *We Had Dreams and Songs to Sing* (2009)
62. James SCOLTOCK, *Barclay Boy: Season in the Sun* (2012)
63. Colin SHINDLER, *Manchester United Ruined My Life* (1998)
64. Colin SHINDLER, *Manchester City Ruined My Life* (2012)
65. Rowan SIMONS, *Bamboo Goalposts: One Man's Quest to Teach the People's Republic of China to Love Football* (2008)
66. Andy SLOAN, *23 Sweet FAs: Round the World with a Football Table* (2006)

67. Oliver SMITH, *The Return of King Kenny – Liverpool FC's 2010-2011 Season from a Fan's Perspective* (2011)
68. Christian SMYTH, *Lost in France: Frontline Dispatches from World Cup '98* (1998)
69. Will TIDEY, *Life with Sir Alex: A Fan's Story of Ferguson's 25 Years at Manchester United* (2011)
70. Jamie TRECKER, *Love And Blood: At The World Cup With The Footballers, Fans And Freaks* (2007)
71. Colin WARD, *Well Frogged Out: The Fans' True Story of France '98* (1998)
72. Dan WATSON, *dancing in the streets: tales from world cup city* (1994)
73. Paul WATSON, *Up Pohnpei: A Quest To Reclaim The Soul Of Football By Leading The World's Ultimate Underdogs To Glory* (2012)
74. Tim WEBBER, *United Nations: Around the Manchester United World in 80 Games (2009)*
75. David WILLEM, *Kicking: Following the Fans to the Orient* (2002)
76. Luke WILLIAMSON, *I Had a Wheelbarrow: a fan's story of a Notts County adventure* (2011)
77. Paul WINDRIGE & Linda HARVEY, *Three in a Row: A fan's eye-view of United's Championship hat-trick* (2002)
78. Mark WORRALL, *Over Land And Sea: A Football Odyssey* (2004)
79. Mark WORRALL, *One Man Went To Mow* (2008)
80. Steve WORTHINGTON, *Once in a Blue Moon: Life, Love and Manchester City* (2010)

Although many of these accounts are not able to match Hornby's witty prototype, the number of writings released after the publication of *Fever Pitch* certainly indicate that the field of fan narratives has become a highly productive genre in its own right. Over the past 21 years publications have emerged gradually, yet consistently. Of late, the number of publications has steadily increased with 46 publications dating from 2008 – 2013. 9 publications in 2011 and 12 publications in 2012 indicate that there is a widespread interest in this genre despite the present popularity of social media which allows other forms of fan mediation. Somewhat expectedly, the narratives dedicated to Manchester United's fortunes make up the largest section with 13 accounts published.



Whilst *Fever Pitch* has proved to be a massive commercial success, uncertainty persists as to the commercial marketability of Hornby's successors. Although some of the narratives selected in my study have gone through numerous reprints, their publishers were reluctant to release exact sales figures when I approached them. Whereas sales figures remain largely unknown with the odd exception,[232] it is safe to say that football writing has become much more diversified in the aftermath of Hornby's perennial bestseller. New subgenres have emerged, most notably the fictional hooligan novel, epitomised by the writings of John King,[233] and the more factual hooligan memoir. These new subgenres turn out to be surprisingly popular – much to the bewilderment of many. This is why a lot of research, particularly within the field of sociology, has been dedicated to hooligan narratives. With regard to the

[232] On the reprint's openining page of J.L. Carr's fictional narrative *How Steeple Sinderby Wanderers Won The F.A. Cup* the publisher tells us: "This is one of 2,000 copies, and, although two hundred and forty-one publications originated at this establishment under another name, is the fourth book published by the Quince Tree Press. See Joseph Lloyd. Carr, *How Steeple Sinderby Wanderers Won The F.A. Cup*, Bury St Edmunds: The Quince Tree Press, 1975. (Reprint 1999)

[233] John King's trilogy comprises the following works: *The Football Factory* (1996), *Headhunters* (1997), *England away* (1998). Especially King's *The Football Factory* has won critical acclaim with both literary scholars and fans alike turning his work into an iconic piece of popular culture. The novel was turned into a film in 2004. Hailed as another classic in the fictional field is Kevin Sampson's *Away Days* (1998). See also the numerous publications by Dougie Brimson, at times co-authored by his brother Eddy Brimson, both in the fictional and non-fictional sector. Compare http://www.dougiebrimson.com/books.html (Accessed 4 January 2013)

factual type, it is to say that these accounts are generally told retrospectively by former 'top dogs' who are now ready for retirement or in the process of redemption. These accounts frequently chart their road to hooliganism as Poulton points out:

> Telling readers "how it was" for them, explaining how and why they got involved, giving an insight into the culture and fashion (the "casual" style) of those involved, with endless accounts of evading the police, running battles with them and opposing firms, and of time served in prison for football-related offenses.[234]

The narratives are said to be boastful in nature, notorious for being thrifty with the truth and generally considered to be poorly written.[235] Yet, despite claims that they are poorly written, Pete Walsh, publisher of Milo Books, asserts somewhat ironically:

> If you think the books are poorly written when they hit the shelves, you should see them in manuscript form. In truth there is a lot of dross now in the genre. Some of the self-published books are awful. And, yes, rewriting is the norm rather than the exception. But then most of these lads are not writers. It is their story that is important, not necessarily their syntax.[236]

It is their content, so proponents argue, that turns these accounts not only into valuable sources of oral social history, but equally into alternative types of match reporting.[237] Coverage of match action is replaced by reports on clashes between opposing firms in and around football stadia. Modelled on a system of claim and counter-claim these narratives question the credibility of others and occasionally deny the credentials of others. Steve Cowens, former core member of Sheffield United's Blades Business Crew, contends:

> I'm not going to suddenly say it's wrong for boys to fight at football. It's up to them. I would be a complete hypocrite to do that. I have fought for Sheffield United and the BBC for most of my life. I have read all the books on football violence, from the never ending Chelsea books to Kevin Sampson's *Awaydays* and Mickey Francis' s [sic] great book *Guvnors*. What really does my nut in are those Brimson brothers. They have written numerous books, supposedly with

[234] Emma Poulton, 'Toward a Cultural Sociology of the Consumption of Fantasy Football Hooliganism', in: *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 25:3 (2008), 338. In the following Poulton's study cited as "Poulton, 'Fantasy' ". A revealing report on the emotional impact of being sentenced to prison in the vague of 'football-related-offences' can be found in chapter 8 of Jay Allan's hooligan memoir. See Jay Allan, *Bloody Casuals: Diary of a Football Hooligan*, Ellon 1989.

[235] Compare Poulton, 'Fantasy', 338.

[236] Pete Walsh quoted in Steve Redhead, 'Little Hooliganz: The Inside Story of Glamorous Lads, Football Hooligans and Post-subculturalism', in: *Entertainment and Sports Law Journal*, 8:2 (2010), 32. Redhead's article available at http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elj/eslj/issues/volume8/number2/redhead (Accessed 05 January 2013). This article cited as "Redhead, 'Little Hooliganz' " hereafter.

[237] In his paper 'Lock, stock and two smoking hooligans: low sport journalism and hit and tell literature.' Redhead coins this type of alternative match reporting "low sport journalism". See Steve Redhead, 'Lock, stock and two smoking hooligans: low sport journalism and hit and tell literature', in: *Soccer & Society*, 11:5 (2010), 627-642.

> the aid of lads' stories from all over the country. The two of them have made a very nice living, thank you, out of football violence with books, videos and TV appearances. They claim to have been boys, yet they haven't got the balls to stick their necks on the line. They now say it's all wrong and they have seen the light. As Watford hooligans they saw nothing anyway! One of them took a bit of a beating and it's, 'Fuck that for a game of soldiers.' Boys don't suddenly turn into angels overnight. It's in you right from the bottom of your trainers.[238]

Given their limited literary appeal, these accounts have surprisingly proliferated over recent years. Whereas the companies that publish hooligan literature were unwilling to offer exact figures when I approached them, sales figures can be traced through other sources.[239] Cass Pennant, a respected member of West Ham's Intercity Firm, revealed in a personal communication with Emma Poulton that he has sold "170,000 and latest figures are due to put me close to the 200,000 mark for 8 bestselling titles; sales of Cass and *[Congratulations: You Have Just Met the ICF*] make up 110,000 of that total".[240] Equally astonishing are the figures provided on Dougie Brimson's homepage:

> A multi-published best-selling author and increasingly sought after screenwriter best known for penning the multi-award winning Green Street, former serviceman Dougie Brimson is one of the UK's most prolific writers.
> With over half a million books sold worldwide, his first title Everywhere We Go (first published in 1996) remains a cult classic whilst his first novel, The Crew, has held the #1 slot on the soccer charts of both Amazon and iTunes for over 17 months and is the most downloaded football related title of 2012![241]

With its focus on violence and male bonding as well as a tendency to objectify women I would assume that these accounts are generally written for a male audience,[242] but we actually know very little about audience reception.[243] Do these accounts exclusively cater to hooligans and former hooligans, or do they also appeal to bystanders? Emma Poulton suggests that both groups are attracted claiming that there is a certain voyeuristic pleasure among the non-combatant consumers. This

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[238] Steve Cowens, *Blades Business Crew: The Shocking Diary Of A Soccer Hooligan Top Boy*, Bury: Milo Books 2001 (Paperback Reprint 2002), 246-247.

[239] I have approached Mainstream Publishing, Headline Publishing and Milo Books with an enquiry about sales figures in April 2012. None of the companies responded to my request. Note that apart from Milo Books also John Blake, Pennant Books and Headhunter Books specialise in the hooligan sector. Whilst John Blake was launched by the journalist John Blake in the 1990s, Headhunter Books (2004) as well as Pennant Books (2005) were founded by two former hooligans, namely Martin King and Cass Pennant respectively. See Redhead, 'Little Hooliganz', 14-17.

[240] Cass Pennant quoted in: Poulton, 'Fantasy', 339. Note that the square brackets have been inserted by Poulton.

[241] http://www.dougiebrimson.com (Accessed 22 July 2013).

[242] Compare Poulton, 'Fantasy', 338.

[243] Apart from topics presented the maleness of tone which pervades these accounts is equally important. See the warning note on the opening page of Jay Allan's *Bloody Casuals: Diary of a Football Hooligan*: "This book contains language that some readers could find offensive. We would respectfully suggest that those who might be so offended do not read any further."

voyeuristic appeal is said to stem from the consumer's ability to immense himself in the hooligan world without risk of injury or criminal proceedings. [244]

In a longitudinal study Redhead and his research team have been able to identify 91 hooligan memoirs.[245] Compared to the 80 narratives that have more ordinary forms of football fandom as their dominant concern, this vast number of hooligan accounts comes as a surprise, since the popular myth of the 'bourgeoisification' of football writing is called into question. The sheer existence of 91 hooligan accounts suggests that the dominance of 'post fans' on the literary output is much more limited than academic writing might imply. Whilst Giulanotti stresses that 'post fans' are at the heart of the production of both fanzines and football blogs,[246] writers in the hooligan domain strive for similar participatory forms of fandom. Thanks to new media they are able to make their voice heard, as many of the writers used self-publishing internet websites like lulu.com in order to get their accounts published.[247] Although experts argue that the genre has had its heyday, some writers have cleverly used their tales to explore previously untapped career opportunities.[248] In fact, it was the popularity they gained through exploiting their tales that transformed them from retired hooligans into highly successful businessmen. Cass Pennant, for example, has not only eight bestselling football fan-related books under his belt, he has also starred in the film about his own life and runs his own publishing company. In addition, he has featured in various TV series, acted as an adviser for Guy Ritchie's acclaimed gangster film *Snatch* and offers motivational talks at festivals, colleges or prisons.[249]

[244] See Poulton, 'Fantasy', 331-349, in particular ibid., 344.

[245] In his longitudinal archival study Redhead has collected 91 books written by self-confessed hooligans or by writers that have questioned them about their hooligan activities. For the list of these works see Table 1 in: Redhead, Little Hooliganz. Note that the list dates from December 2010 and comprises Colin Ward's *Well frogged out* which is not a hooligan memoir according to my understanding.

[246] See Giulianotti, 'Sociology', 149.

[247] See Redhead, 'Little Hooliganz', 17.

[248] Compare Redhead, 'Little Hooliganz', 16: "Ultimately, in 2008, Walsh announced that the company was not commissioning any more of what it termed 'hoolie' books due to the saturation of the market."

[249] See http://www.casspennant.com/index.shtml (Accessed 05 January 2013). For a similar impressive transition from former hooligan to 'literary entrepreneur' see http://www.Dougie brimson.com/ (Accessed 05 January 2013).

Part B: Literary Analysis

5. Fan biographies

5. 1 Nick Hornby *Fever Pitch*[250]

5.1.1 Content

Nick Hornby's autobiographical account *Fever Pitch* is about a fan's life-long obsession with Arsenal London FC. The narrative is carefully structured around a number of match reports which fall into three time frames (1968-1975; 1976-1986; 1986-1992) covering Hornby's transition from childhood to adulthood. Chapters, usually consisting of a few pages only, show a recurring pattern as their titles contain the exact date and the fixture of two teams next to a rather inconclusive or banal title such as "Carol Blackburn – Arsenal v. Derby – 31.3.73."[251] Matches dealt with in these chapters are more than a mere description of on-field action, for they provide a time frame and enable Hornby to relate significant details of his private life to particular football games. Declaring 1968 as his formative year, the year his parents got divorced and his father first took the 11-year-old Hornby to Arsenal's home ground, Hornby retrospectively recounts the importance of Arsenal in his life. Full of enthusiasm, he wittily explains how his love for Arsenal gradually turns into an obsession and how it infiltrates his thoughts and shapes his behaviour. Alongside the humorous insights into a fan's mind he provides an entertaining account of the failings in his private life resulting in depressions after both his relationships and his writing career seem to fail. These aspects are enriched by more theoretical reflections on contemporary shortcomings of English Football.

5.1.2 Narrative style

In the introduction Hornby claims "*Fever Pitch* is about being a fan".[252] Therefore, contrary to readers' expectations of a novel about football, extended match-reporting gives way to insights into Hornby's soul as a fan. Nevertheless, short reports on the games announced at the beginning of the chapter are usually provided. Bei der Kellen is only partly right in saying "In the descriptions of individual games, he often comes across like a radio or TV commentator summarising a game, recapturing the

[250] Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch*, London: Indigio 1992 (Reprint 1998). In the following Hornby's work will be cited as 'FP'.
[251] Only in the introduction this specific pattern is not maintained. More than 60 chapters are dedicated to Arsenal matches.
[252] FP, 11.

energy of the play,“[253] since Hornby himself admits that he lacks the skills of observation needed for accurate commentating on the game. Instead, he is particularly good at capturing the atmosphere on the terraces and describing the multifaceted world of emotions fans go through.[254] So what he offers is a view from the terraces which turns him into the literary voice of many fans. [255] A particularly good example of Hornby's ability to verbalise and vitalise emotions can be inferred from Arsenal's Championship win in 1989, which they achieved in the most dramatic fashion. In fact, it was Michael Thomas' second goal against Arsenal's fiercest competitor, FC Liverpool, in the final minute of the final match that secured Arsenal's Championship title while the Liverpool fans had already been celebrating:

> Richardson finally got up, ninety-two minutes gone now, and even managed a penalty-area tackle on John Barnes; then Lukic bowled the ball out to Dixon, Dixon on, inevitably, to Smith, a brilliant Smith flick-on… and suddenly, in the last minute of the last game of the season, Thomas was through, on his own with the chance to win the Championship for Arsenal. 'It's up for grabs now!' Brian Moore yelled; and even then I found I was reining myself in, learning from recent lapses in hardened scepticism, thinking, well, at least we came close at the end there, instead of thinking, please Michael, please Michael, please put it in, please God let him score. And then he was turning a somersault, and I was flat out on the floor, and everybody in the living room jumped on top of me. Eighteen years, all forgotten in a second. [256]

Part of Hornby's success can be attributed to the focus on the individual spectator, who had been "a remarkably neglected figure“[257] up to the early 1990s. Although *Fever Pitch* is not a novel exclusively tailored for football fans, readers lacking a basic knowledge of football's rules, traditions and history might find it less entertaining. Then again, in Hornby's proper defense it must be said that an introduction to the rules and regulations of the game is by no means his intention, but as he admits himself "to gain some kind of an angle on my obsession.“[258] Hornby addresses the fan directly by the use of the personal pronoun 'we' and thus effectively includes him in the narrative when he states:

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[253] Kellen,15.
[254] Compare Hornby's statement in the interview with Moseley. See S. Merritt Moseley, 'Nick Hornby, English Football, and Fever Pitch', in: *Aethlon* XI:2 (Spring 1994), 90: "I don't think I have the powers of observation that sportswriters have, for a start. You know that thing where they say 'England played last night and there were three passes in the move they scored the winning goal from.' I'm sure I wouldn't have noticed the first two."
[255] Compare Merritt Moseley, 'Nick Hornby', in: Jay L. Halio (ed.): *British Novelists Since 1960. Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 207 (3), Detroit 1999, 144. Moseley's article cited hereafter as 'Moseley, DLB 207'.
[256] FP, 229.
[257] Hill, 122.
[258] FP, 11.

> It is a strange paradox that while the grief of football fans (and it is real grief) is private – we each have an individual relationship with our clubs, and I think we are secretly convinced that none of the other fans understands quite why we have been harder hit than anyone else – we are forced to mourn in public, surrounded by people whose hurt is expressed in forms different from our own. [259]

Yet, he also explains to the ordinary reader why football in general and watching a game in particular is so fascinating:

> I loved the different categories of noise: the formal, ritual noise when the players emerged (each player's name called in turn, starting with the favourite, until he responded with a wave); the spontaneous shapeless roar when something exciting was happening on the pitch; the renewed vigour of the chanting after a goal or a sustained period of attacking.[260]

By comparing his fascination to other areas of life Hornby makes it easier for the general reader to comprehend it:

> The trouble with the orgasm as metaphor here is that the orgasm, though obviously pleasurable, is familiar, repeatable (within a couple of hours if you have been eating your greens), and predictable, particularly for a man. […] Even though there is no question that sex is a nicer activity than watching football (no nil-nil draws, no offside trap, no cup upsets, *and* you're warm), in the normal run of things, the feelings it engenders are simply not as intense as those brought by a once-in-a-lifetime last-minute Championship winner. [261]

Indeed, Hornby skilfully manages to reach his readers on an emotional level. This can partly be attributed to his style commonly labelled as 'conversational writing', which makes "no extravagantly taxing demands on readers' exegetical powers."[262] Above all, other topics addressed in *Fever Pitch* such as growing up, class, race, gender and identity are of general interest and equally help to attract a wider readership.[263]

[259] FP, 109. On this aspect compare also Kellen, 16.
[260] FP, 75.
[261] FP, 230.
[262] Moseley, DLB 207, 144.
[263] See Kellen, 65, 99.

5.2 Colin Shindler *Manchester United Ruined My Life*[264]

5.2.1 Content

Shindler's biography charts his Jewish upbringing in his hometown whilst simultaneously recounting his lifelong affiliation to Manchester City FC (ManCity) and his loathing of Manchester United, ManCity's fiercest rival. Starting with the 1954/55 season he traces his club's rise and fall from First Division mediocrity to a period of Second Division relegation (1962/63-1965/66) up to their golden years winning the First Division Championship (1967/68), the FA Cup (1968/69) and the European Cup Winners Cup (1969/70). Growing up in Manchester in the 1950s, he explains how his childhood had been affected by his mother's tragic death and recounts how his attachment to ManCity helped him to recover. Alongside City's fortunes he recalls anecdotes about his school life and offers insights into his academic path to become a Cambridge graduate. The chronological narrative culminates in a period of success for Shindler when he is allowed to shadow ManCity's team at the beginning of the 1971/72 season while simultaneously receiving a research bursary for his doctoral thesis at the American Film Institute in Beverly Hills. However, in the narrative's final episode Shindler's rather painful affiliation to ManCity turns full circle when he is finally reunited with his school friends while attending a home fixture in the 1995/1996 season, a season ManCity suffered relegation.

5.2.2 Narrative Style

Undoubtedly, the most striking element of Shindler's fan biography is how much space he dedicates to the fortunes of Manchester United, ManCity's fiercest rivals. In the narrative's 13 chapters, each dedicated to one season,[265] ManCity's fortunes are regularly paralleled with those of their more successful intercity rivals. Brick argues that a reference to Manchester United has helped to stimulate public interest and consequently increased circulation figures:

> The writer Colin Shindler, a Manchester City supporter, gave his recently acclaimed autobiography the snappy title 'Manchester United Ruined My Life' (Shindler, 1998). The

[264] Colin Shindler, *Manchester United ruined my life*, London: Headline Book Publishing 1998 (Paperback Reprint 1999). In the following Colin Shindler's work will be cited as 'MUL'.

[265] Note that in the first four chapters several seasons are summed up in a single chapter. Chapter two is exclusively dedicated to cricket, another of Shindler's passions. That is why the fortunes of his favourite cricket team, the Lancashire County Cricket Club, are repeatedly added to the narrative. Starting with chapter five, with the season City was relegated to the Second Devision, the fortunes of City and United are chronicled simultaneously.

> publishers were wise to the fact that with the words 'United' and 'Ruined' on the front cover it was likely to shift a few more units by tapping into the current anti-United *zeitgeist*, than perhaps a book simply about a Manchester City fan might otherwise have been. The appeal of the book lies not in a story of a fan growing up in a city with a historically deep, intense and specific football rivalry, but rather lies in its more general anti-United sentiment.[266]

In line with the anti-United zeitgeist the reader is provided with lengthy explanations why Shindler dislikes ManUnited and why his fan biography about ManCity bears the traumatic title *Manchester United ruined my life.* Thus the reader learns that every time ManCity enjoyed periods of success it was overshadowed by the glory of their fiercest rival. This paradoxical phenomenon peaked the year ManCity won the League while ManUnited won the more prestigious European Cup:

> This has been our greatest handicap for the whole time I have been supporting Manchester City. The shadow cast by the other club in town is indeed a large one, and during the years 1964 to 1968 when the Best, Law, Charlton side was at its peak, we could barely free ourselves of it when we were successful. Less than three weeks after we won the League Championship, United won the European Cup. [267]

While Shindler actively condemns the media hype about United in his account, he effectively relies on it to sell his novel. In fact, the novel's title and its paratextual remark in the opening pages make sure that those who love and those who hate ManUnited are equally attracted to his account:

> Do not attempt to read this book if you are a Manchester United supporter.
> Any Manchester United supporter who causes wilful damage after reading this book cannot use the contents of this book as a defence in law.
> If you have read bad reviews of this book, they will have been written by Manchester United supporters. Bad word of mouth will have originated from the same source.[268]

Criticising United's commercialism and its diasporic fan base passages of schadenfreude towards ManUnited are threaded through the narrative, which are meant to back up his credentials as a supporter of ManCity:

> To my indescribable joy, United went to Lisbon and lost by five goals to nil. I heard the crackly commentary on my transistor radio under the covers after lights-out. It was warmer than a hot-water bottle, less messy than a wet dream and ultimately considerably more rewarding. It was the first time I can really remember crowing about a United defeat. And what a defeat.[269]

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[266] Carlton Brick, 'Can't Live With Them. Can't Live Without Them: Reflections on Manchester United', in: Gary Armstrong & Richard Giulianotti (eds.), *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, Oxford & New York 2001, 14-15. For more on the reasons behind the anti-United sentiment see Brick, ibid., 14ff.
[267] MUL, 152.
[268] See the paratextual remark at the beginning of the account.
[269] MUL, 124.

In addition to ManCity's and ManUnited's fortunes Shindler's account centers around cricket, his Jewish faith, his academic career and his profession as a film director.
In fact, these elements are frequently reflected in his language and regularly related to City's highs and lows. While Shindler's higher education manifests itself in Latin terminology,[270] French sayings and references to classic literature,[271] his Jewish upbringing is revealed through the frequent use of Yiddish phrases.[272] What is more, Shindler even draws parallels between ManCity's fortunes and the biblical fate of the Jewish people. Rather hard to follow for the ordinary reader, yet obvious to Shindler, the new management's successful campaign after City's bitter relegation is linked to Moses and the exodus from Egypt:

> This year, particularly, the story of the Exodus from Egypt made more sense than ever. The previous year, we had solemnly intoned 'This year we are slaves but next year we shall be free men' and here we were, top of the Second Division and in the sixth round of the FA Cup, facing the prospect of a semi-final against United. The miracles the Lord performed to enable Moses to lead his people from Egypt were paralleled by the extraordinary transformation wrought by Mercer and Allison in a few short months. [273]

Being a film director by trade, Shindler's analogies to City are drawn from cinematic backgrounds, too. Thus he illustrates his fatal decision to support underachieving City by comparing it to a Woody Allen film scene:

> In the Woody Allen film *Stardust Memories*, Woody finds himself trapped on an old dingy train crowded with silent losers, a balding fat man, a man crying and two gypsy women with kerchiefs over their heads, staring at him sombrely, disapprovingly. He glances out of the dirty window and sees on the parallel track a sparkling new train crammed with beautiful people, drinking champagne and partying. A gorgeous woman (the young Sharon Stone) holds a trophy up to the window, leaving the imprint of her lips on the glass with her lipstick. Her train starts to pull out of the station. Woody realises he is on the wrong train. He tries to get off the train, but he can't. I don't need to labour the analogy, do I? [274]

While prematch comments are intended to prepare the reader for the next game Shindler reports on,[275] match summaries of eloquent sports journalist Eric Todd move

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[270] See MUL, 87.
[271] See MUL, 169.
[272] See MUL, 133: "I was never told Jews didn't drink, merely that Gentiles did. 'A *shikker* is a *goy*,' was the Yiddish expression. 'A Gentile is a drunkard'."
[273] MUL, 182f.
[274] MUL, 153.
[275] These prematch reports frequently offer information about attendance numbers, newly bought and sold players as well as their transfer sums. See for instance MUL, 192: "The 1966-67 season had opened full of promise. There was just one player of significance added to the staff – Tony Book, a thirty-year-old ex-bricklayer who had played at right-back for Plymouth Argyle, Allison's previous team. Seventeen thousand pounds seemed quite a lot to pay for someone of that advanced age."

the narrative out of Shindler's voice and give weight to the authenticity of Shindler's observations.

5.3 Alan Edge *Faith Of Our Fathers*[276]

5.3.1 Content

This account tells the story of Alan Edge, a lifelong fan of Liverpool FC (LFC). In eight chapters he intertwines his own life story with the fortunes of his favourite club. Edge traces the club's highs and lows starting from Liverpool's Second Division tribulations in the 1950s up to their glory years as English and European champions in the 1970s and 1980s while equally giving extended commentary on contemporary shortcomings of British football. Growing up in a Liverpudlian working-class community in the 1950s the main focus of narration centers around his youth and his gradual development into a fully fledged fan of Liverpool FC. Humorous anecdotes display the dualistic fan culture of the city, which seems to offer little choice when it comes to football allegiances. In fact, as Edge vividly points out, on Merseyside there is either Liverpool Red or Everton Blue to choose from. Turning into a 'Red' when he was a boy, Edge explains how he had to defend his red faith against all Evertonian family members and other persistent 'Blues'. Having grown up in a terraced-housed community Edge outlines the social importance of football for the city particularly through times of economic crisis in the 1970s and 1980s. It is from this perspective that he condemns the current commercialization of the modern game, which, he feels, prices out the traditional working-class fan.

5.3.2 Narrative style

Arguing that football fandom is "simply a surrogate form of religious worship",[277] Edge assigns a para-religious form of devotion to football. Against this backdrop it is unsurprising that the chapter headings of Edge's account allude to Christian practices. With the exception of the first and last chapter the remaining six have been named after Roman Catholic ceremonies. True to his Catholic upbringing he entitles the chapters "baptism", "indoctrination", "confirmation", "communion", "confession" and "penance" and draws a clear analogy between Roman Catholicism and the bond

[276] Alan Edge, *Faith Of Our Fathers: Football As A Religion*, Edinburgh & London: Mainstream Publishing 1997. In the following Edge's work cited as 'FOOF'.
[277] FOOF, 66.

to his club. While the chapter “baptism“ explores Edge’s upbringing in football-mad Merseyside during the 1950s and 1960s, the chapter “indoctrination“ refers to the process of becoming an LFC fan despite strong family ties to Everton FC. The actual initiation rite is his first visit to the “Pen“, the area allocated to Liverpool‘s juvenile supporters.[278] Voices Edge hears as an altar server during evening mass are interpreted as divine approval of his faith and as formal completion of his indoctrination. Unfortunately though, Edge fails to tell the reader what exactly he has heard and why he regards these voices as the completion of his indoctrination:

> There was little doubt in my mind that I was listening to a heavenly chorus. Truly a choir of angels. The entire performance spanned no more than a minute or so and then, as quickly as it had arisen, it faded and was gone. […] Some I dare say, may consider it a form of divine revelation or manifestation. Others, maybe, a divine calling from the Almighty to enter holy orders and the priesthood, or even to follow Father Scragg on his mission to darkest Africa. I prefer to believe now all these years later, that it was simply, in fact a complete vindication of the Redness of my faith – a heavenly sign and seal of approval that my indoctrination was complete.[279]

While his first visit to the Spion Kop represents the “confirmation“ of his faith, the “ultimate footballing communion“ is achieved through sporting victories that are celebrated between “fans and players entirely as one; the united spirit and power of eleven plus fifty-four thousand backed by half a city.“[280] The chapter “confession“ is concerned with his failures as a fan.[281] Unforgivably, he was not in the stadium during LFC‘s greatest triumphs – their FA Cup win in 1965 and the European Cup win in 1977. Even worse, he also failed to pass on his fandom to his children, a failure which is equally inexcusable:

> There is little doubt about my worst failure. It concerns the very faith about which I write [...] The fact is – and believe me – it is something which haunts me day and night, and always will. I have failed to pass on my faith. The very life force which has sustained me and my forefathers since time immemorial will die with me. I have no heirs.[282]

Alluding to biblical sins such as greed and pride Edge hints at the fans‘ ever-rising expectations after the club’s golden years:

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[278] See FOOF, 63.
[279] FOOF, 93f.
[280] See FOOF, 156. The above mentioned “communion“ refers to a victory against Inter Milan in the UEFA Cup semi-finals in Liverpool, shortly after Liverpool had won the FA Cup for the first time in its club history in Mai 1965.
[281] FOOF, 164.
[282] FOOF, 164.

> We found we needed more than just the silverware. The successes had to be accompanied by nigh on perfect football. We would sigh and frown at the slightest error [...] We had become some weird and unique breed of success freaks.[283]

The signing of Graeme Souness as new manager eventually brings the inevitable downfall of Liverpool's fortunes. Consequently the chapter "penance" deals with Edge's protest against perceived wrongs perpetrated upon Liverpool's fans and the city by representatives of the media in the aftermath of Hillsborough. To what extent such analogies seem appropriate remains subject to debate and is, of course, in the eye of the beholder. In any case, Edge tries to outline significant analogies between fandom and religion.

> Take for instance, the basic obligations underlying both ideologies. This requires in each instance the unstinting worship of something sacred to the respective followers – in the case of religion, the One True God, while in that of fandom, the One True Team. In either case, as if to serve emphasis to the closeness of this association, the rites of such homage and adoration are celebrated in comparable places of worship used, in the main, once a week on the respective Sabbaths, where the participants don special clothes and the congregations indulge in ritualised singing, chanting and praying.
> Rather less overt, but equally significant, is the similarity in both the long term goal of each creed, being in both cases to win promotion to a higher division.[284]

Following Edge's train of thought it seems natural that Anfield Road becomes "our church"[285] and a place "where we worshipped".[286] While his new fan scarf, symbolically given to him on Christmas, constitutes the new insignium of his faith,[287] Bill Shankly turns into his "worldly Messiah".[288] Regarding both the use of religious symbols and terminology in football fandom, we have to distinguish between references *to* religion and fandom *as* a religion. Looking at sociological definitions of fandom it seems hard to comprehend in what sense football fandom can be considered a religion.

Contrary to the biographies presented before, Edge does not claim to come from a middle-class background. In fact, Edge proudly expresses Liverpudlian local pride and his own working-class background by threading passages of Scouser dialect into his narrative.[289] His working-class upbringing is presented in an utterly favourable

[283] FOOF, 170.
[284] FOOF, 67.
[285] FOOF, 15.
[286] FOOF, 138.
[287] See FOOF, 107f.
[288] FOOF, 159.
[289] Compare FOOF, 48: "E's got too many brains ter be a Blue, 'asn't'e, Bert?-yer can tell just by lookin' at 'im…"

light, much to the bewilderment of Stevenson, a sociologist, who claims to come from a similar background:

> But as I read these wonderfully benign accounts of a working-class upbringing, I wondered about the truth of the consistent good humour of family and friends, the image of the welcoming working-class community, the whole caring-and-sharing atmosphere, that the author portrays. Edge, I believe, is viewing the past, particularly his own, through thick rose-coloured glasses, in which the hard-scrabble poverty, the rigidity of the working class values and prejudices, the claustrophobic intensity of everyone knowing everyone's business, becomes seen only as benign, pleasant, and full of good humour.[290]

Indeed, what Edge constructs in his narrative is the picture of a working-class community where harmony and heartiness hold sway. This "utopian picture" (Stevenson) becomes most obvious in his portrayal of the Spion Kop, the section for LFC's most diehard supporters. Edges praises its warm atmosphere and its superior qualities such as its fairness and its terrace wit.

> Anyway, the Kop decided to amuse itself. It targeted the Director's box with more than strong hints that they needed a scoreboard (something which Anfield has never had) 'We want a scoreboard' they bellowed over and over again. Next they tried a bit of blackmail – 'Everton have got one' they cried repeatedly. Then on the hoof came the punch line to match the little cameo scenario they had spontaneously engineered by their improvised leg pulling. 'They never fuckin' use it, they never fuckin' use it.' The game stopped as all the players and the officials and the rest of the crowd laughed themselves silly.[291]

Edge's footballing childhood memories echo a similar spirit of community. Reminiscing the loss of a new Frido football when playing with his friends Edge remembers:

> Now and again our frustration would reach breaking point when new balls burst on their baptism. […]
> Ball deaths involving our own Fridos would trigger reactions approaching the utter desolation and pandemonium of an Ayatollah's funeral, as we would all gather around moaning and wailing to await the distinctive dreaded piercing hiss. Such mourning periods would last all of ten seconds before giving away to the explosive release of pent up anger as we would unmercifully hound and barrack the unfortunate soul who was the last to kick the ball prior to its untimely demise.[292]

Whilst everyone that played the game as a child might readily identify with Edge's footballing childhood memories, the lengthy focus on Liverpool's working-class community and its fan base suggests that this narrative is predominantly tailored for a

[290] Chris Stevenson, 'Alan Edge, Faith of our Fathers: Football as a Religion' in: *Culture, Sport, Society*, 5:1 (2002), 120.
[291] FOOF, 130-131.
[292] FOOF, 53.

Liverpudlian readership of similar social background and fan allegiance. For those less acquainted with Liverpudlian football culture, the irony Edge employs will be hard to grasp since far too much knowledge is assumed of the reader:

> My parents and my father's side of the family were Roman Catholics, my mother being a converted Protestant which, I suppose, is a bit like when Ray Kennedy followed Bob Praisely's advice and dropped back from centre-forward to become a left sided midfielder.[293]

What is also striking about Edge's narrative style is its maleness in tone. This is partly due to the crude register he occasionally employs.[294] More importantly, though, it stems from an imagery centering around physical power and destruction. In fact, the first leg of the UEFA Cup semi-final in 1965 is portrayed as a collective battle against Inter Milan. While the team "in blood-red shirts"[295] batters the opponents on the pitch, the fans attack with vocal 'bombardments' off the pitch:

> That night, the 28,000 strong giant foaming tidal wave of humanity which for the entire night tumbled, cascaded and crashed all over the terraces of the Spion Kop like the swelling Southern Ocean at Cape Horn, re-defined the parameters of vocal support. […] Joined by the rest of the stadium to wield a four-sided attack, they created an incessant five hour long tumultuous barrage of chants, songs and sheer glorious bedlam; an unprecedented wall of noise that a school friend of mine was able to hear in the city centre three miles away.[296]

Imagining the ferocity described above, it is no surprise that the "The Italians were shredded like strings of spaghetti" [297] at the end of the match.

5.4 Constructions of football fandom in fan biography

5.4.1 Hornby's generic features of football fandom

For Hornby fandom goes far beyond passionately supporting a team for 90 minutes and can never be equated with fun or entertainment. Quite to the contrary, being a fan is a serious matter revolving around duty and responsibility. It is little wonder that only few people Hornby encounters are fit to qualify as 'real' Arsenal fans:

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[293] FOOF, 68. The same rings true for more general knowledge on English professional football that is required at times to understand Edge's irony. Compare ibid., 20, 34.
[294] See FOOF, 10: "You stupid bastard, Nicholas! You ignorant, two-faced, low-down, lousy, good for nothing, double-crossing, long-haired piece of Scottish dog crap! We didn't want you any way."
[295] FOOF, 154.
[296] FOOF, 154.
[297] FOOF, 155. On the similarities between the element of play and fighting see also Johan Huizinga, *Homo ludens: a study of the play-element in culture*, Boston [7]1968, 89.

> 'You must meet my friend,' I am always being told. 'He's a big Arsenal fan.' And I meet the friend, and it turns out that, at best he looks up the Arsenal score in the paper on Sunday morning or, at worst, he is unable to name a single player since Denis Compton. None of these blind dates ever worked.[298]

Learning about Hornby's strict requirements the reader consequently wonders what it takes to be considered a fully fledged football fan. To cut it short, attendance at all home games is essential to a loyal fan's commitment and is little more than a "piece of dues paying".[299] This sense of duty inherent in the loyal fan is exemplified by Simon, Hornby's friend and a regular supporter of Cambridge United, a team Hornby additionally supported during his time at university:

> My friend Simon managed only sixteen of the seventeen League games – he smashed his head on a bookshelf in London a few hours before the Grimsby game on the 28th of December; his girlfriend had to take his car keys away from him because he kept making dazed attempts to drive from Fulham up to the Abbey.[300]

Alongside a literal omnipresence at all home fixtures the fan's positioning on the terraces is crucial. Thus it is the move from "Schoolboys' Enclosure" to the North Bank of the 15-year-old Hornby that should give weight to his credentials as a fan.[301] As a consequence a whole chapter has been dedicated to it. Since Hornby's social and educational background does not make him the average Arsenal supporter,[302] he is particularly worried about being accepted there.

> Supposing the people around me found out I wasn't from Islington? Supposing I was exposed as a suburban interloper who went to a grammar school and was studying for Latin O-level? In the end I had to take the risk. If, as seemed probable, I provoked the entire terrace into a deafening chant of 'HORNBY IS A WANKER' or 'WE ALL HATE SWOTS, HATE SWOTS, HATE SWOTS' to the tune of 'Dambusters' March'.[303]

Bearing these fears in mind, his move is called "Graduation Day"[304] indicating a level of newly acquired maturity and considered a rite of passage.[305] Such commitment

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[298] FP, 152.
[299] FP, 184. As Hornby admits he is primarily a home game supporter. See FP, 149 and 191.
[300] FP, 149.
[301] Highbury's North Bank was commonly regarded to be the section for Arsenal's most vocal supporters. Compare FP, 73.
[302] The Oxbridge graduate Hornby is obviously well aware that he does not represent the typical Arsenal supporter. Yet he legitimizes his presence on the North Bank by claiming "when it comes to my love for and knowledge of the game, the way I can and do talk about it whenever the opportunity presents itself, and my commitment to my team, I'm nothing out of the ordinary." See FP, 96.
[303] FP, 74.
[304] FP, 73.
[305] FP, 75. In 1989 Hornby bought a season ticket for the seats after having stood on the North Bank for over fifteen years. Compare FP, 232.

does not only document a fan's loyalty to his club, it also generates a "sense of belonging".[306] The intensity of it derives from the sacrifices each fan is willing to make for his club.[307] Yet, at the same time this "sense of belonging" represents something exclusive that can easily be lost. Indeed, this is what Hornby fears if he misses a single game:

> I am frightened that in the next game, the one after the one I have missed, I won't understand something that's going on, a chant or the crowd's antipathy to one of the players; and so the place I know best in the world, the one spot outside my own home where I feel I belong absolutely and unquestionably, will have become alien to me.[308]

It is only in the stadium where Hornby believes that he is able to witness moments of unforgettable "epiphany"[309]:

> During matches like the Everton semi-final, although nights like that are inevitably rare, there is this powerful sensation of being exactly in the right place at the right time; when I'm at Highbury on a big night, or, of course, Wembley on an even bigger afternoon, I feel as though I am the centre of the whole world. You can't find this outside a football ground; [...] but when I am at Highbury for games like these, I feel that the rest of the world has stopped and is gathered outside the gates, waiting to hear the final score.[310]

In line with the deprivations and hardships endured the fans feel equally entitled to claim their share of the club's fortunes.[311] While the players and managers come and go, developing no affiliations or loyalties, it is the fans' emotional commitment that provide the vitality of organism.[312] Therefore fandom is not a passive state. It is a process of active participation which has been appropriately described by Hornby as "football watching becomes doing."[313] It is perfectly mirrored by the narrator's personal claim of Arsenal's FA Cup win against Liverpool FC in 1987:

> This Wembley win belonged to me every bit as much as it belonged to Charlie Nicholas […] and I worked every bit as hard for it as they did. The only difference between me and them is that I have put in more hours, more years, more decades than them, and so had a better

[306] Compare FP, 64: "This sense of belonging is crucial to an understanding of why people travel to a meaningless game in Plymouth on a Wednesday night."
[307] For further reading on this aspect see Raphael Honigstein, *Englischer Fussball: A German's View of Our Beautiful Game*, London 2009, 25.
[308] FP, 215.
[309] Uwe Baumann, 'Fußball als Therapie: Der Fußballsport im modernen englischen Roman', in: Uwe Baumann & Dittmar Dahlmann (eds.), *Kopfball, Einwurf, Nachspielzeit: Gespräche und Beiträge zur Aktualität und Geschichte des Fußballs*, Essen 2008, 203.
[310] FP, 199f.
[311] Compare FP, 65: "Unless I had suffered and shivered, wept into my scarf and paid through the nose, it was simply not possible to take pleasure in or credit for the good times."
[312] See Hill, 127.
[313] FP, 186.

> understanding of the afternoon, a sweeter appreciation of why the sun still shines when I remember it. [314]

What Hornby particularly enjoys is when acquaintances connect Arsenal's great triumphs and deep despair with him.

> And this too is an appeal that football has for me, although I could never claim to be a definition of Arsenal [...]. This appeal is one that emerged slowly over the years, but it is a powerful attraction nevertheless*: I like the thought of people remembering me on a regular basis*. [...] And I love that, the fact old girlfriends and other people you have lost touch with and will probably never see again are sitting in front of their TV sets and thinking, momentarily and all the same time, Nick, just that, and are happy and sad for me. Nobody else gets that, only us.[315]

5.4.1.1 The dark side of fandom: From passion to obsession

In the novel Hornby describes his form of fandom as "obsession",[316] since he claims that the intensity of his passion for Arsenal has transcended ordinary fandom.[317] Therefore Hornby's understanding of "obsession" is subjected to a close analysis in order to assess the appropriateness of this term and to reveal its different meanings. Even as an 11-year-old boy it is the spectators' frustration that captivates him most in the first game he attends:

> What impressed me most was just how much most of the men around me *hated*, really *hated* being there. As far as I could tell, nobody seemed to enjoy, in the way that I understood the word, anything that happened during the entire afternoon. Within minutes minutes of the kickoff there was real anger ('You're a DISGRACE, Gould. He's a DISGRACE!' 'A hundred quid a week? A HUNDRED QUID A WEEK! They should give that to me for watching you.') [318]

Unsurprisingly, he comes to the conclusion that "the natural state of the football fan is bitter disappointment, no matter what the score."[319] In his case this is mostly due to the recurring rhythm of Arsenal's unsatisfactory performances on the pitch and his own inability to break away from his team. The idea of predestination, his own fate being closely connected to Arsenal's fortunes is also mirrored figuratively when Hornby claims he "was chained to Arsenal."[320] He is, however, absolutely aware that there is no chance of salvation as "Each humiliating defeat […] must be borne with

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[314] FP, 187. On the feeling of belonging compare also FP, 44 and 64.
[315] FP, 194f.
[316] FP, 11.
[317] See FP, 24: "I had gone way beyond fandom."
[318] FP, 20.
[319] FP, 20.
[320] FP, 35.

patience, fortitude and forbearance; there is simply nothing that can be done, and that is a realisation that can make you simply squirm with frustration.“[321]

Several textual passages indicate that frustration and pain are two sensations Hornby deliberately seeks when watching a game of football. What's more, he claims that this attitude is quite representative for the ordinary fan.[322] In practice though, it means he is not able to appreciate the beauty of the game as long as his team doesn't win:

> Gazza's free kick against Arsenal in the FA Cup semi-final at Wembley was simply astonishing, one of the most remarkable goals I have ever seen… but I wish with all my heart that I had not seen it, and that had he not scored it. Indeed, for the previous month I had been praying that Gascoigne would not be playing, which emphasises the separateness of football: who would buy an expensive ticket for the theatre and hope that the star of the show was indisposed. [323]

Such is the impact of frustration and pessimism that its portrayal evokes images of terror:

> The last two of those four semi-finals against Liverpool nearly killed me. In the third match, Arsenal took the lead in the first minute and hung on to it for the next eighty – nine; I sat and stood and smoked and wandered around for the entirety of the second half, unable to read or talk or think, until Liverpool equalised in injury time. The equaliser was like a shot from a gun that had been aimed at my head for an hour, the sickening difference being that it didn't put an end to it all like a bullet would have done – on the contrary, it forced me to go through the whole thing again.[324]

Admittedly, Hornby's extreme form of fandom is rather hard to comprehend for less obsessive football fans. Trying to paint a clearer picture, he refers to this form of fandom as an “addiction“ and, true to the nature of addictions, it can only be cured by means of abstinence.[325] In Hornby's case, however, his passion for the Gunners turns out to be too strong so that he finally gives in to temptation sealing off his fate symbolically with the purchase of a season ticket.[326]

Several times Hornby describes his obsessive fandom as the “great retardent“[327] in his life, a passion that has turned into “tyranny“.[328] Indeed, this imagery does not

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[321] FP, 35.
[322] FP, 135: “I go to football for loads of reasons, but I don't go for entertainment, and when I look around me on a Saturday and see those panicky glum faces, I see that others feel the same.”
[323] FP, 134.
[324] FP, 118. Also compare the mental and physical effects Hornby's obsession triggers. See FP, 24: “On matchdays I awoke with a nervous churning in the stomach, a feeling that would continue to intensify until Arsenal had taken a two-goal lead, when I would begin to relax.“
[325] See FP, 93.
[326] See FP, 168.
[327] FP, 106.
[328] FP, 213.

seem too far-fetched. Similar to despotic rulers who dominate the lives of their subjects, his passion for football infiltrates all areas of his life. Due to the fact that his life revolves around Arsenal's fixtures his social life is heavily affected. Hornby, who is aware of this, nevertheless expects others to understand, since his passion should be treated as a disability:

> Family and friends know, after long years of wearying experience, that the fixture list always has the last word in any arrangement; they understand, or at least accept, that christenings or weddings or any gatherings, which in other families would take unquestioned precedence, can only be plotted after consultation. So football is regarded as a given disability that has to be worked around. If I were wheelchair-bound, nobody close to me would organise anything in a top-floor flat, so why would they plan anything for a winter Saturday afternoon.[329]

It goes without saying that this sort of fandom must inevitably take a heavy toll on his relationships. So when his girlfriend and wife-to-be attempts to turn into a similar diehard Arsenal fan, he feels obliged to provoke a row, which firmly reestablishes him as the dominant fan in his relationship:

> I behaved badly to prove a point, and inevitably we had an argument (about going to see some friends for a cup of tea), and once it had started I knew that Arsenal was all mine once again, […] and I can safely and smugly say that I am top Arsenal dog in this house, and that when and if we have children it will be my bottom exclusively that fills our season-ticket seat.[330]

Such fixation on Arsenal might partly explain why Hornby is less concerned with the physical well-being of his future children, but fears instead they might support another team once they are born.[331] In fact, the reader gets the impression that for Hornby football is far more important than his partner or family. This becomes particularly obvious when Hornby's partner passes out while watching a game of Cambridge United and Hornby feels unable to provide first aid:

> With twenty minutes to go, Exeter went into the lead, and my girlfriend (who together with her girlfriend and her girlfriend's boyfriend had wanted to experience at first hand the dizzy glory of promotion) promptly did what I had always presumed women were apt to do at moments of crisis: she fainted. Her girlfriend took her off to see the St John's Ambulancemen; I, meanwhile did nothing, apart from pray for an equaliser, which came, followed minutes later by a winner. It was only after the players had popped the last champagne cork at the jubilant crowd that I started to feel bad about my earlier indifference.[332]

[329] FP, 213.
[330] FP, 174.
[331] See FP, 130.
[332] FP, 104f.

The textual passages presented might provoke some hearty laughter among readers, but at the same time they clearly demonstrate how Hornby's obsessive fandom negatively affects his behaviour patterns. Egoism, ignorance and indifference as the most obvious flaws resulting from his passion are not a secret to him, yet he willingly accepts them and is reluctant to change. Even wide-ranging political events such as the First Gulf War in 1991 have little impact on his Arsenal fixation:

> It was an interesting experience, watching a football match with the world at war; one I had never had before. How was Highbury to become the centre of the universe, with a million men preparing to kill each other a thousand miles away? Easy. Merse's goal just after half-time earned us a 1–0 win, which would not in itself have been enough to distract attention away from Baghdad; but when Warren Barton's free-kick got Wimbledon a result up at Anfield, and we went top of the League for the first time that season, everything became focused again. Eight points behind in December and one point clear in January… By a quarter to five, Saddam was forgotten, and Highbury was humming.[333]

It doesn't come as a surprise that his passion for Arsenal has a rather negative effect on his career ambitions. Though qualified enough to secure a place at Cambridge University, his commitment to Arsenal frequently distracts his mind so that "any of the privileges a Cambridge education can confer on its beneficiaries would bypass me completely."[334] A future job that interferes with Arsenal's fixture list is obviously not acceptable for him. For Arsenal's first Championship win after 18 years he is even prepared to trade off and sacrifice his breakthrough as a writer:

> The script, a pilot for a projected sitcom, had got further than usual; there had been meetings with people from Channel 4, and great enthusiasm, and things looked good. But in despair after a bad result, a home defeat by Derby on the final Saturday of the season, I offered up my work (the acceptance of which would have rescued a career and self-regard heading for oblivion) on some kind of personal sacrificial altar: if we win the League, I won't mind the rejection slip. The rejection slip duly came, and hurt like hell for months; but the Championship came too, and now, two years later, when the disappointment has long gone but the thrill of Michael Thomas's goal still gives me goose pimples when I think about it, I know that the bargain I made was the right one.[335]

Last but not least, Hornby's contemplation about a 'premature death' during mid-season and his wish to have his ashes scattered over Arsenal's ground convincingly substantiates the overwhelming importance Hornby assigns to his club:

> I do not wish to die in mid-season but, on the other hand, I am one of those who would, I think, be happy to have my ashes scattered over the Highbury pitch. […] It doesn't seem a bad way

[333] FP, 239.
[334] FP, 100.
[335] FP, 112f.

> to spend eternity, and certainly I'd rather be sprinkled over the East Stand than dumped into the Atlantic or left up some mountain.[336]

Studying the textual references provided above we can conclude that the term "obsession" is fitting for Hornby's form of fandom. It is the presented destructive components that turn his passion into an obsession. Arsenal's ever-changing fortunes have a severe effect on his emotional balance as well as his physical well-being and therefore do affect his private and professional life. Hornby's chosen comparison to a disabled person being wheel-chair-bound[337] might seem disrespectful to some, yet it quintessentially captures the role Arsenal plays in his life. Similar to a physical disability, Arsenal prevents Hornby from being self-reliant and independent. As strange as it might seem to the ordinary reader, Hornby's fixation on Arsenal leads him to the conclusion that Arsenal's highs and lows somehow reflect those of his private life.[338] Indeed, the narrative does include textual passages where Arsenal's fortunes somehow intersect with Hornby's private matters. This perception particularly rings true for Hornby's relations to women and his career ambitions. To Hornby's mind the breakdown of his relationship with Carol Blackburn, the first girlfriend he mentions in his novel, inevitably had to result in Arsenal's bitter 1–0 defeat against Derby thus drawing a line between his personal misery and Arsenal's missed opportunity of going top of the First Division.[339] He even draws a parallel between the transfer of his favourite player, Liam Brady, whom he worshipped and adored,[340] and the end of his long-term relationship seven months later.[341] For in the same way Arsenal does not manage to find an appropriate replacement for Brady, Hornby is not able to commit to his numerous relationships afterwards.[342]

Equally, Arsenal's moments of glory, e.g. the unexpected win of the FA Cup against Manchester, trigger a boost of energy in Hornby and consequently contribute to his successful university graduation:

> I floated through my finals as if I had been anaesthetised with a benign, idiocy-inducing drug. Some of my fellow-students, grey with sleeplessness and concern, were perplexed by my mood; others, the football fans, understood and were envious.[343]

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[336] FP, 72.
[337] See FP, 213.
[338] See FP, 67.
[339] FP, 84: "How could we possibly win or draw, with me feeling like this?"
[340] See FP, 120.
[341] See FP, 123.
[342] See Anne Mußmann, *Nick Hornby's „Fever Pitch": Der Erzähler auf der Tribüne – oder Fußball essen Seele auf*, unpublished MA Thesis, University of Bielefeld 2005, 29.
[343] FP, 115.

It is noteworthy here that Arsenal's fortunes do not only reflect his own, but he identifies with player's abilities and projects them onto his own personality. Having decided to become a full-time writer he regards himself as the literary equivalent of Arsenal's new goal-getter Charlie Nicholas, initially hailed as "the Cannonball Kid" by the press.[344] In the same way that Nicholas fails to make an impression in his first season at Arsenal, the efforts of the "Cannonball Kid of television drama" are equally doomed to fail.[345] The lack of success in his writing career and his inability to build up a long-term relationship lead to depressions, which Hornby tries to solve through counseling. Ironically, it is Arsenal's victory against Tottenham in the semi-finals of the rather unimportant Littlewoods Cup[346] that helps to free him from his long-term depressions. Although Hornby has got to admit that there is little to feel depressed about in his private life,[347] his ironic reflections on the parallels drawn do not reveal whether he feels embarrassed about them:

> The depression that I had been living with for the best part of the 1980's packed up and started to leave that night, and within a month I was better. Inevitably part of me wishes that it had been something else that effected the cure – the love of a good woman, or a minor literary triumph, or a transcendent realisation during something like Live Aid that my life was blessed and worth living – something worthy and real and meaningful. It embarrasses me to confess that a decade-long downer lifted because Arsenal won at Spurs in the Littlewoods Cup (I would be slightly less embarrassed if it had been an FA Cup win, but the *Littlewoods*!)[348]

In summary we can say that the findings presented here have substantiated Hornby's claim. The episodic structure of the narrative fits well into Hornby's symbiotic relationship to Arsenal. For in the same way the narrative does not follow a simple linear progression, Arsenal's highs and lows reflect Hornby's own inconsistencies.[349]

5.4.1.2 The bright side of fandom: Football as therapy

So far only negative aspects of Hornby's fandom have been discussed. Yet, the findings presented up to this point are incomplete, since they only partly reflect the many facets of Hornby's fandom. Indeed, for Hornby football fandom is not only an

[344] See FP, 147.
[345] See FP, 148.
[346] That is The Football League Cup, commonly known as the League Cup bearing the name of the respective sponsor at the time. Since 2003 it has been named Carlington Cup.
[347] FP, 177: "I had loads of friends, including girlfriends, I was in work, I was in regular contact with all the members of my immediate family, I had suffered no bereavements, I had somewhere to live." Actually it is his own aimlessness that triggers his depressions.
[348] FP, 181.
[349] See Hill, 129.

"obsession" or "the great retardent", it also a kind of therapy for personal problems in his private life.

While it can generally be agreed upon that a fan's identification with his favourite football club is a common phenomenon around the globe, Hornby's narrative explains in detail how Arsenal manages to provide a sense of identity for him.

Looking back at his childhood and the separation of his parents Hornby recounts his first visit to Highbury against Stoke City, which is more than an initiation to Arsenal, since it equally constitutes a solution to the "one-parent Saturday-afternoon-at-the-zoo problem".[350] Thus regular visits to Arsenal's ground provide a frame for Hornby's relationship to his father.

> Saturday afternoons in north London gave us a context in which we could be together. We could talk when we wanted, the football gave us something to talk about (and anyway the silences weren't oppressive), and the days had a structure, a routine. The Arsenal pitch was to be our lawn (and, being an English lawn, we would usually peer at it mournfully through driving rain); the Gunners' Fish Bar on Blackstock Road our kitchen; and the West Stand our home. It was a wonderful set-up, and changed our lives just when they needed changing most.[351]

After his father has moved to France, regular visits to Highbury continue to form the backbone of his life offering him a form of consistency.[352]

Impressed by an atmosphere of "overwhelming maleness" where men are allowed "to shout the word 'WANKER!'," [353] Highbury is the place for Hornby "to fill a previously empty trolley in the Masculinity Supermarket."[354] Speaking less metaphorically, visits to Highbury help him to observe patterns of male behaviour, which are particularly important as Hornby grows up without a father.[355] Furthermore, they provide him with both a male identity and a male role, which he willingly acts out at home despite the fact that he is still a teenager:

> On Saturdays, it seems to me now, we enacted a weird little parody of a sitcom married couple: she would take me down to the station, I'd go on the train up to London, do my man's stuff and ring her from the forecourt call-box when I got back for a lift home. She would then put my tea on the table and I ate while I talked about my day and sweetly, she would ask questions about a subject that she didn't know much about.[356]

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[350] FP, 16.
[351] FP, 18.
[352] Note that the following aspect draws upon Kellen's findings. See Kellen, 22. .
[353] FP, 19f.
[354] FP, 80.
[355] See Anne Mußmann, *Nick Hornby's „Fever Pitch": Der Erzähler auf der Tribüne – oder Fußball essen Seele auf*, unpublished MA Thesis, University of Bielefeld 2005, 21-25. Mußmann's work cited as 'Mußmann' hereafter.
[356] FP, 52.

Interestingly, Hornby longs to be a part of the Arsenal fan community, which might partly be related to his own social background for he claims that "The white south of England middle-class Englishman and woman is the most rootless creature on earth, we would rather belong to any other community in the world."[357] What he loves most about the terraces apart from male camaraderie is the temporary loss of his suburban, middle-class roots:

> But those who mumble about the loss of identity football fans must endure miss the point: this loss of identity can be a paradoxically enriching process. Who wants to be stuck with who they are the whole time? I for one wanted time out from being a jug-eared, bespectacled, suburban twerp once in a while; I loved being able to frighten the shoppers in Derby or Norwich or Southampton (and they *were* frightened – you could see it).[358]

Moreover, the tough atmosphere on the terraces serves as a 'school for life", because it sensitises the middle-classed Hornby for socio-economic differences in England. It is Highbury where he first encounters "the planet Real Life, the planet Secondary Modern, the planet Inner City"[359] once his Arsenal scarf has been nicked and he has been beaten up by a group of coloured youths.
Whenever he finds himself in a new environment, Hornby is able to use football as an easy way to integrate and socialise.

> The benefits of liking football at school were simply incalculable […]. The main thing was that you were a believer. […] And so transferring to secondary school was rendered unimaginably easy. […] As long as you knew the name of the Burnley manager, nobody much cared that you were an eleven-year-old dressed as a six-year-old.
> This pattern has repeated itself several times since then. The first and easiest friends I made at college were football fans; a studious examination of a newspaper back page during the lunch hour of the first day in a new job usually provokes some kind of response.[360]

Working as a teacher at a later stage in his life Hornby uses his knowledge about football to establish friendly relations to his students. Such an instrumentalisation of his passion turns out to be extremely handy since it even earns him respect from more complicated students.[361] It is no wonder that his love for Arsenal eventually

[357] FP, 47.
[358] FP, 54. Later on Hornby feels ashamed about his "teenage hooligan pretensions" (FP, 79). Throughout the narrative he stresses that he has got no sympathy for hooliganism whatsoever.
[359] FP, 40. For a different interpretation of this textual passage compare Mußmann, 22.
[360] FP, 22-23. Hornby also mentions the downside effects of such symbiotic associations, for instance if Arsenal have lost. See FP, 27: "When I pushed open the door to the prefab, I heard somebody shout 'Here he is!', and I was submerged under a mob of screaming, jeering, giggling boys, some of whom, I noted darkly before I was knocked to the floor, didn't even like football."
[361] See FP, 138f.

results in his closest friendship to Pete, another Arsenal supporter.[362] Obviously not mentioned in the narrative, yet most important of all, it is exactly this autobiographical narrative about his football passion that establishes him as a writer on the literary landscape.

5.4.2 Colin Shindler as fan – commonalities and divergences to Hornby

5.4.2.1 Commonalities

In the first chapter of his narrative Shindler intertextually refers to Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* as source of inspiration for his own biography.

> Thanks to the innovation of football fanzines, Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* and Danny Baker's phone-ins, millions of us know that we are not alone in our obsessiveness. The interesting thing is that every story is the same and yet every one is different.[363]

A closer look at Shindler's account reveals that in addition to similarities in their vitae football takes up similar functions in their lives. The most striking similarity in their private lives is the fact that both attended Cambridge University. It is here where they first fall in love. Break-ups in their first relationships have an equally traumatic effect on each of them. Seeing his ex-girlfriend with a new partner in Cambridge Shindler grieves:

> Every time we met, particularly when she had this tall Australian in tow, it was like a dagger had been inserted into my ribs. These feelings of loss, rejection and pain were to remain my constant companions for almost three years.[364]

After graduation both of them try to pursue a career in the media, Hornby as a free-lancing writer and Shindler as a screenwriter in the film industry.[365] Furthermore parallels can be identified in the way they both construct and mediate fan identity. For both of them the connection between fan and club becomes an irreversible bond as Shindler points out here:

> If favourite players are transferred elsewhere or supporters move house to a different part of the country, that hardly constitutes reasonable grounds for changing teams. You can add a local team as an adjunct to your primary purpose, but you can no more stop supporting your first love than you can stop when they go through months or years of bad results.[366]

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[362] See FP, 152.
[363] MUL, 5.
[364] MUL, 260. Compare Hornby: FP, 123: "[…] The Lost Girl, haunted me for a long time, five or six years."
[365] See FP, 112.
[366] MUL, 53.

Analogous to Hornby's initiation to Arsenal, Shindler's passion for ManCity was triggered by coincidence. His uncle Laurence had taken the 3-year-old Colin to a rugby match of Belle Vue Rangers. After Rangers' bitter 52–0 defeat and their immediate liquidation as a direct consequence, the boy seemed to be fascinated by blue shirts and consequently turned into a ManCity Fan:

> Unfazed, I asked when we could see my heroes again, only to be brutally informed that the match I had seen was the last one ever to be played by Belle Vue Rangers, who at the moment of the final whistle had gone out of existence. I cried the bitter tears of a three-year-old. I could only be comforted by the prospect of supporting another which played in blue. [...] Most people have relatively straightforward reasons for choosing a football team to support. Usually it is because a particular team has been recently successful (Manchester United) or because it has been handed down like a tribal ritual from father to son (everyone else). I have always taken a perverse pride in the fact that my addiction grew out of failure – well, not just failure, obviously, more in the nature of a team so inept that they courted and achieved total extinction. It was, though I did not appreciate it at the time, an excellent preparation of future events.[367]

In the same way that football matches serve as a frame of reference for Hornby, ManCity's games help Shindler to memorize highs and lows of his private life: "My daughter was born in March 1975, between the League Cup final defeat by Wolves in 1974 and the League Cup final victory over Newcastle in 1976."[368] On top of this, football fulfills similar functions in their lives. Thus the wider context of football fandom serves as rite of passage for both of them. Growing up in a tight-knit Jewish community, Shindler's visits to ManCity's homeground become his "first real exposure to the non-Jewish world"[369] while Hornby's visits to Highbury serve as his first encounter with "Planet Real Life".[370]

Although Shindler is English, he repeatedly maintains that he does not feel fully integrated due to his Jewish faith.[371] Regular visits to ManCity, however, provide him with a feeling of belonging outside the confines of his Jewish social settings. Having chosen ManCity as his favourite club, he feels convinced that his choice has been appropriate since the team's characteristic features seem fitting for a Jew: "I have always believed that City, with their lovingly preserved penchant for self-destruction

[367] MUL, 13
[368] MUL, 302. Using football seasons as a time frame is a typical feature of the football fan according to Hornby. FP, 116: "Football fans talk like that: our years, our units of time, run from August to May (June and July don't really happen, especially in years which end with an odd number and which therefore contain no World Cup or European Championship)."
[369] MUL, 33.
[370] FP, 40.
[371] See MUL, 33.

and self-deprecating humour, were the only team for a Jew to support."[372] In the same way that he relates ManCity to his religion, he also believes that its moods reflect the fortunes of his family. Consequently he maintains that a decade of footballing despair in the 1950s foreshadows a period of death and decline in his own family. The liquidation of Shindler's family business[373] and the sudden death of his mother in 1962 serve as a case in point. In the same way that Hornby's visits to Highbury helped to compensate for his father's absence Shindler's passion for ManCity assumes a therapeutical function, too. Regular visits to the ground help Shindler on his slow emotional recovery after the tragic loss of his mother:

> The only time during the whole week when I came alive was for a few hours on Saturday afternoons. […] Maine Road – and, on alternate Saturdays, Old Trafford – became my home. I was at one with the crowd, sharing a common experience, a common purpose. What had been a passionate interest in my team developed in that season of 1962-63 into a fanatical obsession. I had seen the occasional game before, but now, in the absence of my mother, Manchester City filled the vacuum in my life. City gave me a reason to carry on living. The whole ritual of going to the game became important.[374]

5.4.2.2 Divergences

Shindler describes his commitment to ManCity as "insanity"[375] and "obsessiveness",[376] thereby corresponding to Hornby's chosen terminology. A close reading, though, reveals substantial differences in the mediation of their respective fandoms.

Overall, Shindler does not manage to maintain his fan credentials as impressively as Hornby. In fact, the reader finds it much harder to regard Shindler's form of commitment as "insanity".[377] While even the episodic structure of *Fever Pitch* clearly indicates that Arsenal is Hornby's lifeline, Shindler often dedicates more space to the ManUtd's fortunes than to his favourite club.[378] Attempting to give weight to his fan credentials, Shindler appears particularly unbelievable when claiming that news about the assassination of Bobby Kennedy refers to one of ManCity's players with

[372] MUL, 9.
[373] See MUL, 60.
[374] MUL, 101.
[375] MUL, 6.
[376] MUL, 5.
[377] Compare D.J. Taylor, 'Shindler's Park', in: *The Spectator*, 280:8857 (9.5.1998), 35: "One emerged from Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* with a feeling that soccer compensated for some missing element in the author's life. Here I was never convinced that Shindler cared as much as he said he cared."
[378] See MUL,123f. While Shindler only dedicates twelve lines to ManCity's fortunes the report about ManUtd covers five pages.

the same name.[379] Taking Shindler's PhD studies in contemporary American History into account, Shindler displays far too much interest in politics throughout his narrative.

Above all, Shindler does not provide sufficient textual evidence that his form of fandom has turned into a form of "insanity". In fact, there are hardly any textual references showing how the love for ManCity negatively affects his behaviour, or his social or professional life.[380] But it is exactly these negative effects on Hornby's pattern of behaviour that turn his passion into an obsession. Of course, Shindler is confessional in tone as well, but only when it comes to personal flaws that are not related to football fandom.[381] We are not told whether Shindler's passion has a negative impact on his behaviour. In contrast to Hornby, football does not represent the "great retardant". Hornby's fixation on Arsenal resulted in a state where "any of the privileges a Cambridge education can confer on its beneficiaries would bypass [him] completely."[382] Shindler, however, fully participates in university life – be it as a writer for the university paper or a member of a theatre group.[383] Yet, above all, it is Shindler's academic determination[384] that distinguishes him from Hornby's lack of perspective.[385] Moreover, Shindler's account differs from Hornby's in its maleness in tone and its construction of masculinity. Contrary to the image of the 'new lad', Shindler does not drink,[386] indulge in nightlife, nor does he mention numerous relationships with the opposite sex.[387] We only learn about two long-term relationships, one of them being with his future wife. Equally missing in Shindler's narrative is the ironic macho attitude Hornby occasionally displays.[388] Instead,

[379] Compare D.J. Taylor, 'Shindler's Park', in: *The Spectator*, 280:8857 (9.5.1998), 35.

[380] At some stage Shindler admits that he lost his part time job as an ice cream vendor, because he didn't want to miss a game and claims that he had been daydreaming during lectures at university, which led to a "rocky start" of his academic career. See MUL, 211-214. However, these aspects can hardly be regarded as negative effects for his career path.

[381] MUL, 257: "My failure as a scholar was followed sharply by my failure as a lover."

[382] FP, 100.

[383] See MUL, 216-217.

[384] After having failed his "Historical Tripos Part 1" as an undergraduate, Shindler immediately identifies the American film as his future field of research. He manages to receive a bursary at the American Film Institute to pursue his PhD studies on "The relationship between Hollywood films and American history between 1919 and 1941." See MUL, 255ff.

[385] Compare FP, 111: "I had no ambitions for myself whatsoever before I was twenty-six or twenty-seven, when I decided that I could and would write for a living, packed my job in and waited around for publishers and /or Hollywood producers to call me up and ask me to do something for them sight unseen."

[386] See MUL, 261.

[387] MUL, 207: "My lack of a girlfriend kept me away from dancing and nightclubs." Compare FP, 123: "And I had a string of relationships over the next four or five years, some serious, some not."

[388] FP, 86: "And yet how was I supposed to get excited about the oppression of females if they couldn't be trusted to stay upright during the final minutes of a desperately close promotion campaign?"

Shindler repeatedly portrays himself as an aficionado of classical music and similar pursuits of high culture.[389]

5.4.3 Alan Edge as fan: commonalities and divergences to Nick Hornby

5.4.3.1 Commonalities

Looking at Edge's intention to explain "why people like me turn into knee-jerking football crazy lunatics,"[390] we can see a first similarity between Edge and Hornby as both of them seek to offer explanations for their passions. The sheer necessity for explanation derives from the terminology they use to describe their respective forms of fandom. Thus Hornby describes it as "obsession" while Edge refers to it as "madness".[391] A further commonality stems from the unique importance both narrators assign to their clubs. Both regard their fandom as "the lengthiest emotional commitment" in their lives[392] and refer to it as "love".[393] To those without any affiliation to football clubs such claims might seem alien, but both narrators are able to substantiate their assertions by providing conclusive lines of argumentation:

> It is, I think widely accepted that most people need some sort of constant in their lives, a base to which they know they can always return. For most of us, home, family and friends form a major part of that base but, sadly for various reasons, not all can remain constant – friends, even spouses, come and go, loved ones die, children leave home, very few of us remain in the same house and neighbourhood, in many cases including my own, our neighbourhoods are destroyed, and many folk move away altogether, some even emigrate.[394]

As shown earlier, Arsenal becomes Hornby's lifeline, the driving force behind his daily routines and behaviour patterns. Looking at the lines above, it turns out that LFC provides a lifeline, too. While Arsenal's triumphs help Hornby to overcome personal crisis, Edge assigns both Liverpool and Everton FC important social functions for a wider Liverpudlian community. Especially through times of recession in the 1970s and 1980s, Edge portrays his club as the only stable entity in a rapidly changing social landscape under Margret Thatcher:

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[389] MUL,116: "We arrived in the middle of the Salzburg Festival but managed to aquire tickets to hear a string quartet playing Haydn's opus 76 no. 3."
[390] FOOF, 14.
[391] FOOF, 14.
[392] FOOF, 18. Compare also FP, 11: "Why has the relationship that began as a schoolboy crush endured for nearly a quarter of a century, longer than any other relationship I have made of my own free will?"
[393] See FOOF, 18: "Fandom is most definitely an affair of the heart. I, in common with all fans, actually feel a deep and strong emotional love for my 'club'. I love it unflinchingly and always will." Compare FP,15: "I fell in love with football as I was later to fall in love with women."
[394] FOOF, 58.

> Thatcher had attempted to destroy Liverpool not in the open way Adolf Hitler had tried, with bombing raids. Her way had been masked by veils, opaque to many, though not to us, of 'laissez faire', free competition, 'sink or swim' and 'lame ducks'. Ably assisted by her propaganda machine, her hidden agenda had been for us to become the flagship sacrificial lamb of her new found 'out with the old' plaything and, as if to order, a certain Mr Derek Hatton together with his motley crew, was destined to play right into her hands, transforming her despicable deeds into some sort of phoney ideological warfare in which the people of Merseyside were the losers on all counts.[395]

Thus, it is LFC's enormous success on a European scale that provides Scousers with a sense of local pride despite the city's drastic economic decline under Thatcher. In this regard LFC's footballing glory years also serve as therapy, yet not only for individuals as in Hornby's case, but also for a wider Liverpudlian community:

> Thank God, through all the onslaughts, one thing remained intact. Football gave the city a lifeline to distract us all from what was really happening, enabling those with nothing to at least get something, losers to become winners, wrongs, if not righted, then at least partially compensated for.[396]

Against the backdrop of economic hardships the topophilic relationship between fan and club is perfectly mirrored by the literary presentation of the Spion Kop:

> On the Kop, we became the kid brothers of a huge, densely packed family cutting a swathe through Liverpool society – young scallies to grand dads, doctors to dockers, bus to ochestra conductors. Like young fledglings in the bottom of a nest, we were snug and secure. We were with our own kind; each of us an integral part of a vibrant whole. We sang as one, laughed and cried as one, joked, roared, yelled, bawled, whistled, ranted, raved, swayed, jostled, surged, steamed and sweated all as one, all part of pulsating embankment of human vitality and energy.[397]

Hence Edge assigns particular importance to the homeground for social identification processes within the Liverpudlian community. Deeply impressed by its supposedly egalitarian element, the Spion Kop is pictured as a sort of utopian paradise where the "community spirit"[398] rules and equality thrives. Thus within the framework of Liverpool's home fixtures class distinctions and age barriers are put on hold. While the fans' daily struggles to make ends meet cannot be solved, these fears can at least be pushed aside during Liverpool's home games. Scrutinizing the social

[395] FOOF, 196.
[396] FOOF, 167.
[397] FOOF, 124.
[398] FOOF, 125. Consider also the crowd composition of the Kop Edge draws attention to. Ibid.: "In those days, the Kop was virtually 100% Scouse since outsiders had not by then been attracted by the success which was to follow in subsequent years; the punters were Liverpudlian by team and birthright."

importance Edge assigns to the Spion Kop, his criticism against the dispossession of the working-class fan becomes immediately obvious. What Edge‘s criticism illustrates is that contemporary English football can only be regarded as the ‘people’s game‘ as far as its consumption is concerned, yet by no means its control:

> As the Nineties progressed, there was a major shift in all this. Two major new players emerged to challenge the old ethos of fandom. The problem with these new participants was they were only too aware of the high stakes involved and they were intent on sweeping away our traditions and changing for ever the complexion and composition of the game’s bedrock – namely us. The money – men and media had got hold of fandom by the wallet and were determined to shake it around until their coffers were swelled, their fortunes realised and our faith had become unrecognisable to that practised by our fathers. ‘Football is now big business’, was to become one of the cliches of the Nineties and though as far as the fans were concerned it has always been so, the difference now was its magnitude and importance were being measured in terms of monetary profit and loss, not the strength of emotional ties.[399]

A further commonality between Hornby and Edge can be drawn from the symbolic move to their respective fan blocks. In fact, Hornby dedicates a whole chapter to his relocation to the “North Bank“ and emblematically calls it “Graduation Day“, whereas Edge declares his relocation to the Kop as “confirmation of his faith“.[400] Both narrators feel equally attracted by the density of football crowds. Whilst Hornby states that he “was only too happy to experience the loss of identity that crowds demand,“[401] Edge declares:

> For all the puffing and panting and pushing and shoving, all the crushing and discomfort, the wringing wet clothes and tired aching limbs, all the sheer, spent exhaustion which threatened to swamp us, this was no claustrophobic nightmare; no trip to hell and back. In fact, (and why else would we go through it?), it was quite the opposite; it became a truly exhilarating and unforgettable occasion, inducing an overwhelming sense of oneness and attachment.[402]

A close reading of *Fever Pitch* has shown that a fan’s willingness to sacrifice for the club is proof of his loyalty. We can find the same phenomenon in *Faith Of Our Fathers*. It can most clearly be seen from the narrator’s childhood memories when he and his friend are being bullied and mugged by a gang of youths while attending home games in Liverpool’s juvenile section. Despite this self-induced trouble the young fans are still happy to put up with it for the sake of supporting their club:

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[399] Extended treatment on this issue is given in the final chapter “Epilogue”. See FOOF, 204ff, particularly 205.
[400] FOOF, 123.
[401] FP, 178.
[402] FOOF, 149.

> On one occasion they even took a shine to the shoes my mate Paul was wearing – brand new 'chisel toes' he'd just got from the catalogue. They just took them off him and left him standing there crying in his stocking feet and he had to go home like that and his parents had to carry on paying out each week for his stolen pair and a new pair to replace them, which had to be ones nobody would really like so they wouldn't get pinched again. Looking back, we must have been masochists to have put up with it all. I mean it wasn't as if anyone ever held a gun to our heads to make us go, so it was all effectively self-induced torture.[403]

For both of them lust for frustration and pain are integral parts of fandom. Yet, the way they cope with these phenomena differs considerably. Hornby handles disappointment and frustration in an introverted way,[404] whereas Edge manages through diatribes[405] and blowups.[406] Admittedly, swearing and cursing after devastating performances correspond to the ordinary fan's behaviour. Nevertheless, some of Edge's actions exceed the ordinary level of fandom. Such is the case when he actively intervenes against perceived wrongs perpetrated upon LFC by representatives of the media:

> I am fortunate enough to track down my quarry, often only through sheer persistence or ingenious methods of subterfuge which I have been forced to devise and perfect over the years, since most sensible persons understandably try to avoid intense idiots like me.[407]

Bursts of fury, occasionally directed towards children, confirm the appropriateness of the term 'madness' for Edge's form of fandom:

> Why even the briefest of sightings of a young kid on the street in a Man United kit (especially Eric Cantona's old black number seven shirt), has sometimes been enough to make me leap from my car, like some maniac Jesuit missionary redeeming a lost pagan soul, to confront one of these sad creatures for not supporting their local team.[408]

5.4.3.2 Divergences

As outlined earlier, Hornby also supports Cambridge United FC alongside Arsenal.[409] The idea of supporting a second team is irritating to Edge, since this contradicts "the

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[403] FOOF, 65.
[404] FP, 109: "Many fans express anger against their own team or the supporters of the opponents – real, foul-mouthed fury that upsets and saddens me. I have never felt the desire to do that; I just want to be on my own to think, to wallow for a little while, and recover the strength necessary to go back and start all over again."
[405] Compare the letter of protest to LFC's chairman Peter Robinson after the Reds' disappointing performances. See FOOF, 189.
[406] See FOOF, 10.
[407] FOOF, 180.
[408] FOOF, 12.
[409] FP, 98: "I was not being unfaithful to Arsenal, because the two teams did not inhabit the same universe."

core of true fandom – one fan, one club for life.“[410] Besides, to Edge’s mind a coincidental visit to a random stadium can never decide which team a fan is going to support for the rest of his life. The initiation rite, however, is in many ways similar to Hornby’s. For it is his father who takes the seven-year-old to “Liverpool’s Second Division ’obscurities’.“[411] Yet, Edge maintains that the process of falling for a football club is a matter of genetic predisposition:

> There was no actual time or place enabling the birth of such fandom to be pinpointed; no catalytic trip to Anfield [...] no precise moment when we suddenly saw the light or had the call. The plain fact is all of us were fans from before we can remember. Quite simply, the random selection of a team to follow, however attractive that team may have been, was never on the agenda. It was in the genes, at very least in the blood.[412]

While an accidental visit to Highbury, initially meant to solve the “one-parent Saturday-afternoon-at-the-zoo problem,“ turned Hornby into a lifelong fan of the *Gunners,* Edge’s road to fandom has been mapped out by “hereditary instinct and family influences.”[413]

Looking at the narrators’ visits to the stadium we can notice different patterns of behaviour and motivation. In Hornby’s case it is the lust for frustration that drives him to the stadium, whereas Edge portrays his visits as enjoyable social happenings collectively experienced with friends. Therefore Hornby’s assertion “The natural state of the football fan is bitter disappointment, no matter what the score”[414] cannot be confirmed by Edge’s depiction. Home game attendances are far from being a pain for Edge. While Liverpool’s poor performances still represent a major source of annoyance, he is full of praise for the joyous atmosphere of the *Spion Kop*.

> Most of them were up for the crack; quite simply, they wanted to enjoy themselves. And so the Kop became like one giant local ale house packed solid with 28,000 Scousers ready for a laugh where there was no chance of reaching the bar unless you were a contortionist but, in compensation, you could chat and joke with all the friendly and familiar faces who surrounded you and as a special bonus providing you were as tall as a Harlem Globetrotter, you could watch a decent game of footy.[415]

As can be inferred from the lines above, it is the aspects of entertainment and amusement that shape his portrayal of the *Spion Kop*.

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[410] FOOF, 45.
[411] FOOF, 62.
[412] FOOF, 23.
[413] FOOF, 25.
[414] FP, 20.
[415] FOOF, 126.

5.5 Fan biographies as mirrors of change in British football culture

The narratives at hand do not only offer various constructions of British fandom. Since they usually cover a wider time-span ranging from the 1960s up to the 1990s, they can alternatively be read as critical commentary on the transformation of postwar Britain and its leisure culture. As such they are increasingly relevant to the sports historian and sociologist. Scrutinizing the game's changes as portrayed in the accounts, several factors attributed to the transformation process of British football culture can be identified, most notably the introduction of all-seater stadia in the post-Hillsborough era, a growing dominance of the game through broadcasting companies and, above all, the game's rapidly increasing commercialism in the 1990s. Obviously these developments are all intertwined with each other and each narrative contains different literary responses to them as well as varying degrees of emphasis. While Shindler's account sheds little light on these issues, Edge's and Hornby's narratives have proved to be more fruitful when it comes to studying perceived changes in British football culture.

Interestingly, all of the narratives contain passages that illustrate how football gradually became part of pop culture in the 1960s. As Shindler suggests this was partly due to the emergence of a spectacular young ManUnited side. In fact, the media hype triggered by Best's brilliance on the field and his escapades off the field helped the game to establish itself as part of the entertainment industry.[416] In Edge's case attending LFC's home games on Saturday evenings makes up an integral part of the whole Saturday night entertainment spectacle since the Spion Kop used to be "a natural breeding ground for humour and an outlet for the banter" in the sixties.[417]

This idealistic picture Edge paints was to be blurred by a phenomenon that ultimately changed terrace culture at the end of the 1960s. Hence both Edge and Hornby attribute football's thuggish image in the decades to follow to football hooliganism. Though Edge stresses that hooliganism was by no means representative of the ordinary fan behaviour at the time, it had had severe effects on the public perception of the average fan.[418] Equally, it made following one's team much harder and

[416] See MUL, 180: "When George Best returned from Lisbon the following day, he was photographed by the tabloids wearing a large sombrero, provoking the inevitable caption, 'El Beatle.' Manchester United, led by George Best's sexuality, had entered the world of show business."
[417] FOOF, 126.
[418] See FOOF, 142: "Despite what people say though, it really was only ever a minority who caused the trouble and none of them knew a football from a testicle. Still, it used to look bad on the telly and all the fans got tarred with the same brush."

frequently, quite dangerous.[419] Hooligans bringing the game into disrepute are therefore denied true fan status by Edge[420] as well as Hornby. Both blame poor policing strategies and Thatcher's inefficient ID scheme for the persistence of the problem.[421]

Regarding two of the greatest tragedies in football's postwar history, namely Heysel and Hillsborough, the two narrators offer contrastive literary responses to them. Both of these responses prove valuable to the sports historian when examining the impact of these tragedies on contemporary English football fans. While Edge portrays the Heysel tragedy as an act of hooliganism carried out by a limited number of "loonies",[422] Hornby's assessment is more balanced as he does not push the blame on individuals. Instead he identifies socio-cultural behaviour patterns and self-critically claims that it was essentially ordinary English crowd behaviour routinely practiced across the country which caused the tragedy.

> In the end, the suprise was that these deaths were caused by something as innocuous as running, the practice that half the juvenile fans in the country had indulged in, and which was intended to do nothing more than frighten the opposition and amuse the runners. The Juventus fans – many of them chic, middle-class men and women – weren't to know that, though, and why should they have done? They didn't have the intricate knowledge of English crowd behaviour that the rest of us had absorbed almost without noticing. When they saw a crowd of screaming English hooligans running towards them, they panicked and ran to the edge of their compound. A wall collapsed and, in the chaos that ensued, people were crushed to death. [...] Some of the Liverpool fans who were later arrested must have felt genuinely bewildered. In a sense, their crime was simply being English: it was just that the practices of their culture, taken out of its own context and transferred to somewhere that simply didn't understand them, killed people. [...] But the kids' stuff that proved murderous in Brussels belonged firmly and clearly on a continuum of apparently harmless but obviously threatening acts – violent chants, wanker signs, the whole petty hard-act-works – in which a very large minority of fans had been indulging for nearly twenty years. In short, Heysel was an organic part of culture that many of us, myself included, had contributed towards.[423]

Reflecting on the Hillsborough disaster, Edge chooses a personal approach, whereas Hornby takes up a more analytical perspective. While the latter one partly attributes infrastructural reasons for the tragedy and discusses consequences to be drawn, much of Edge's account highlights the effects the tragedy had on Liverpool. In

[419] See FOOF, 142f: "You didn't wear a scarf for certain away games if you had half a brain – the London games, Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle, Villa – because every club had a bunch of nutters hellbent on trouble. [...] Intimidation and violence became the name of the game; confrontation and aggression the odious substitutes for fun and humour."

[420] See FOOF, 143: "Later, the skinheads and boot-boys gave way to more casual looking and organised thugs and then to the so-called 'firms'. Not a single one of them was ever a true football fan. They came only for the 'buzz' of trouble and to inflict pain on others."

[421] Compare FOOF, 144 and FP, 224.

[422] FOOF, 145.

[423] FP, 155-157.

particular, Edge alerts the reader to the negative media coverage of his hometown in the aftermath of Hillsborough. When accused by journalists of "mawkish sentimentality"[424] in the Scousers' public mourning, Edge issues a letter of complaint to one of the journalists thus speaking on behalf of all Liverpudlians. He particularly condemns the journalists' injustice towards Liverpudlians:

> They could neither identify with nor relate to the reaction of the people of Liverpool. Nor did they want to. It was not how they would have reacted and so, in their ignorance and bigotry, they had offended the dead and the living. They had derided them; condemned them; discredited them. They had filled their pages and perhaps, appealed to their target audience. They had insulted the people of a city who cared, who dared to show warmth and feeling.[425]

Hornby in turn, has fewer personal connections to the tragedy, which grants him a less emotional response. Whilst principally admitting the police's gross failure in the tragedy,[426] he also identifies the outdatedness of English stadia infrastructure as another reason for the tragedy. Thus he concludes that the disaster could have happened in any English stadium.[427] The consequences to be drawn are rigid: In order to guarantee crowd safety, recommendations of the Taylor Report need to be fully implemented thus turning the grounds into all-seater stadia. In turn, this would result in higher admission prices, which eventually would mean that football's traditional fan base would be eroded.[428] While Hornby generally accepts that this would be a mistake, he nevertheless maintains:

> Using these price increases to swap one crowd for another, to get rid of the old set of fans and bring in a new, more affluent group is a mistake.
> Even so, it is a mistake that clubs are perfectly at liberty to make. Football clubs are not hospitals or schools, with a duty to admit us regardless of our financial wherewithal. It is interesting and revealing that opposition to these bond schemes has taken on the tone of a crusade, as if the clubs had a moral obligation to their supporters. What do the clubs *owe* us, any of us, really. I have stumped up thousands of pounds to watch Arsenal over the last twenty years; but each time money has changed hands I have received something in return: admission to a game, a train ticket, a programme. Why is football any different from the cinema, say, or the record shop?[429]

With this assessment Hornby stresses the customer approach to the game, accepting the redevelopment of stadia to the benefit of more affluent spectators. This is where Edge is completely at odds with Hornby. To Edge a football club has a wider

[424] FOOF, 181.
[425] FOOF, 188.
[426] See FP, 217.
[427] See FP, 218.
[428] See FP, 219ff.
[429] FP, 222.

topophilic significance to its surrounding community. Hence it owes an allegiance to its local community and cannot be measured in terms of entertainment value.[430] It is against this backdrop that both Edge and Shindler heavily criticise ManUnited's policy to see the club primarily as "a high profile public company,"[431] thereby neglecting its local ties in favour of a more affluent global fan base.[432] In addition, both utterly reject the media canonisation towards ManUnited that has gone along with the club's global popularity.[433] This explains why the contemporary anti-United zeitgeist is prominently featured in their narratives. Ironically, though, Manchester United's radical commercial approach only foreshadowed the path their own clubs were to follow in the future, much to their later discontent.

In fact, the anti-United movement portrayed in the accounts alerts the reader to another aspect of the game's changing landscape – that is its rapid commercialisation in the 1990s. As British top flight football turned into 'big business' orchestrated by BSkyB, clubs were faced with ever-rising costs through inflated players' wages and transfer fees particularly after the Bosman ruling. While all narrators disagree with the game's commercial exploitation, Edge condemns it most critically and maps out a gloomy future. In fact, he claims that football has lost its soul since it is no longer measured in the strength of emotional ties but in terms of monetary profit. According to him this is most clearly displayed by the clubs' fast growing merchandising systems:

> To cater for the burgeoning market – and the bellies – the cramped club shops were replaced by spacious souvenir supermarkets. Sponsorship and advertising deals, swish restaurants, executive boxes, corporate entertainment and conducted guided tours were suddenly in vogue, complementing perfectly the steady shift to the altogether more bourgeois environment which football had undergone since the enforced introduction of all-seater stadia.[434]

The main threat he sees for British top flight football is its allegiance to pay TV. While professional clubs will continue to rely on Sky's money infusions to compete, Sky's interest in British football will only last as long as the game remains profitable.[435] To

[430] See FOOF, 210: "In Liverpool's case, it seems this is because they feel that they owe an allegiance to the local community, with its inherent social and economic problems".
[431] FOOF, 209.
[432] See MUL, 24: "City's revolving door in the manager's office gives the fans a sense of involvement in the club affairs. What can United fans do but buy the shares, buy the season ticket, buy the cheap-day return to Manchester from whichever remote part of Europe they live in?"
[433] See FOOF, 199f as well as MUL, 204-205.
[434] FOOF, 207.
[435] See FOOF, 211f.

what extent Edge's prophecies will ring true, remains to be seen in the future.[436] In any case, the doubts and objections Edge voices here effectively mirror the thoughts of many a fan, particularly of those less affluent.

What's more, here Edge quintessentially captures the objection of the game's more traditional following to the clubs' new middle-class fan community. Thus true to his working-class background, Edge takes a very sceptical stance towards football's "newly found friends and admirers."[437] Indeed, he openly questions their loyality since it is "dependant upon trends or the quest for glory of one sort or another and often subject to the whims of family duties and, of late, the counter attractions of cosier more middle class pursuits and leisure activities."[438] Opposed to these middle-classed 'interlopers' are the game's 'genuine fans', an endangered species, "who can no longer afford to contribute to those very wages as they were once only all too willing to do."[439] Interestingly, Hornby contemplates the same issue; yet refutes the superficial perception of the ordinary fan:

> I am aware that as far as my education and interests and occupation are concerned, I am hardly representative of a good many people on the terraces; but when it comes to my love for and knowledge of the game, the way I can and do talk about it whenever the opportunity presents itself, and my commitment to my team, I'm nothing out of the ordinary.[440]

In many regards Edge's and Hornby's positions mirror two colliding attitudes towards British football fandom in the 1990s when flaunting one's fan allegiance was no longer limited to the working-class domain. So Edge's cliché-ridden picture of the game's 'bedrock' and Hornby's mere reasoning on the authenticity of his fandom shed light on another issue of contemporary British football culture – namely the debate about the cultural politics of football. This debate essentially revolves around the question of who is entitled to claim the 'cultural ownership' of the game. Even now this issue remains debated and gaps are far from being bridged.[441]

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[436] FOOF, 212: "The impending digital/pay-per-view/one-club channels revolution will lead us only to a world of virtual football where actually travelling to a stadium to see the game 'live' will become a novelty."
[437] FOOF, 17.
[438] FOOF, 17.
[439] FOOF, 17.
[440] FP, 96.
[441] For further study see chapter 8 "The Cultural Politics of Play: Ethnicity, Gender and the 'Post-fan' Mentality in: Giulianotti, 'Sociology', 146-165.

Irrespective of the positions each narrator holds on this issue – what they all share is an overwhelming sense of powerlessness towards the institutions that control the game:

> The League will let anybody do what they want – change the time of the kick-off, or the day of the game, or the teams, or the shirts, it doesn't matter; nothing is too much trouble for them. Meanwhile the fans, the paying customers, are regarded as amenable and gullible idiots. The date advertised on your ticket is meaningless: if ITV or BBC want to change the fixture to a time more convenient they will do so. In 1991, Arsenal fans intending to travel to the crucial match at Sunderland found that after a little television interference (kick-off was changed from three to five), the last train to London left before the game finished. Who cared? Just us, nobody important.[442]

Above all, it is the fans' lack of inclusion in the decision-making processes that really constitutes a source of discontent.[443] Therefore, all narrators regard the rise of fanzine culture in the 1980s as a new era of self-awareness as it provided the fans with a platform to have their say and voice their anger.[444]

5.6 Conclusion

The presented narratives are self-reflective accounts of life-time football fans. Retrospectively charting their road to fandom alongside the achievements of traditional accomplishments such as career and family the given accounts mirror long-term developments of their clubs. Both Shindler's and Edge's short-sighted belief that their clubs would not be bought in the future – equally voiced in their novels – alert the reader to the fact that their accounts are subjective perceptions at specific points in time. As such they are particularly valuable for sports historians since these primary sources mediate and capture the fans' fears, hopes and expectations at a specific point in time.

The selected fan biographies are written by and primarily dedicated to British football fans. Little explanation is provided when it comes to the game's rules and regulations. Detailed knowledge about past players, events and teams is required and simply assumed as given. Hence these narrators expect a football-knowing readership. The novels are primarily targeted at a male readership as they are predominantly male in tone. Female characters featured in the accounts are of little significance when it comes to the protagonists' football passion. They appear as

[442] FP, 197.
[443] See FP, 217.
[444] See FOOF, 216f.

mothers, relatives or girlfriends. While mothers and relatives do much to foster the narrators‘ passion for the game, especially at the beginning stages of their fandom, featured girlfriends either admire or condemn the narrators‘ passion but generally find their level of commitment hard to comprehend. Yet, little is revealed about female feelings – about the way fandom affects them or their relationships. Admittedly, mediating female feelings is not the core objective of the presented narratives. Instead the main objective is to describe and explain the narrators‘ passion for football in general and the love for a club in particular. However, these accounts can alternatively be read as attempts to deal with issues of masculinity in ‘post-feminist‘ times.

Although they do contain narrated match action, they are predominantly concerned with the narrators‘ consumption of football, focusing on the emotional and behavioural reactions triggered by a passion that according to them defies logic. Interestingly, the intensity of feelings for their clubs is described with the term “love“, whereas the downside effects of their commitment is either referred to as “obsession“, “insanity“ or “madness“. Indeed, the fascination of fandom is predominantly reflected in the emotional intensity it creates. Hence Arsenal’s and ManCity’s fortunes turn into metaphors for Hornby’s and Shindler’s own lives. Further evidence for the game’s transcendental qualities can be derived from football’s therapeutic function, be it as compensation for Hornby’s missing father, Shindler’s deceased mother or Liverpool‘s economic decline. However, it is primarily the portrayal of those negative side effects of fandom that are beyond rational explanation which reinforce their image of ‘authentic‘ fans. The level of reflexiveness and the quality of explanation provided for the human inadequacies alongside fandom is what sets Hornby’s novel apart from the other two. Yet, all of the narratives are significant in offering various constructions of British fan identity. Due to the subjective nature of the narratives it seems out of place to question whether their mediated expressions of fandom are representative of the ‘ordinary‘ fan.[445]

For the wider study of the transformation of British football culture they are particularly interesting on two accounts. On the one hand, these fan biographies narrate a wider time span usually covering the 1960s up to the 1990s. This enables the reader to grasp a better picture of how British football culture changed and how football fandom has been affected by it. On the other hand, the chosen fan

[445] Mußmann claims for instance that Hornby’s fandom exceeds the commitment of the ‘ordinary fan‘ – obviously ‘ordinary‘ is a rather subjective term. Compare Mußmann, 78.

biographies contain different perspectives on the game. While Edge's fan biography mirrors the perspective of the traditional working-class fan, Hornby's and Shindler's accounts reflect voices of the game's middle-class following commonly labelled as football's 'post fans'. Interestingly, Edge as a classic working-class fan takes a critical stance towards football's new middle-class fans.[446] Hence his diatribe against football's "newly found friends"[447] can be seen as a literary response to a central issue in contemporary British football culture. Quintessentially, this issue revolves around the question to whom the game effectively 'belongs'.

Identifying common features, all narrators strictly oppose hooliganism and share a sense of disillusionment with the game against the backdrop of clubs' foreign ownership, ticket pricing and an eroding fanbase. Substantial criticism is raised against the game's striving for economic profit, particularly at the top end. Here Edge's account stresses the fan's topophilic relationship to his club highlighting the club's wider social function as a community asset and its importance in maintaining a sense of local identity. On top of this, his account alerts the reader to the question of whether football should strictly be regarded as business or whether its social significance makes it too precious to be subjected to the practices of the free market. With the game's economic exploitation and the pricing out of the game's bedrock, Edge fears the end of terrace culture. While terrace culture has not vanished even a decade after the publication of his novel, Edge effectively mirrors fears of many fans, particularly those of the game's working-class following. Feeling disillusioned and unsatisfied with the current state of the game, Edge is nostalgic in tone, reminiscing about the supposedly golden age of football in the 1950s and 1960s, and thereby addresses football fans of similar age and attitude. Sadly though, despite criticising football's more recent developments, he does not provide any solutions or real alternatives.[448] What is particularly irritating about Edge's account is his attempt to act as a mouthpiece for the whole city of Liverpool,[449] the poorly constructed war imagery as well as the occasional lack of coherence in the storyline.[450]

[446] Compare FOOF, 16f.
[447] FOOF, 17.
[448] See Edge's comments on current developments in British topflight football in the final chapter "Epilogue". FOOF, 204ff.
[449] See FOOF, 183-184.
[450] Compare FOOF, 81, 132, 197.

6. Season Travelogues

6.1. Tim Parks *A Season with Verona*[451]

6.1.1 Content

Having been a compassionate home-game supporter for many years the British expatriate Tim Parks decides to chronicle the 2000-2001 season of his local football club Hellas Verona FC. In an attempt to understand how the Italians, particularly the Veronese, relate to football he attends every match of Hellas' 34 games in *Serie A*, Italy's top division. His personal account of Verona's fortunes exceeds the ordinary perspective of a fan, since his status as a well-known writer grants him access to club officials, allowing him to travel with the team and mingle with the players. Yet, what fascinates him most is the *Brigate Gialloblù*, Verona's diehard fans of the *Curva Sud*. Notorious for being right-winged and for their racist chants, they are said to make monkey sounds whenever a coloured player of the opposing team receives the ball. Despite Parks' disapproval of such racist acts the academic is thrilled by their thuggish behaviour when traveling with the Ultras on crowded buses or trains. Proud to infiltrate the Brigate, its members eventually accept him. It is from these varying angles that Parks witnesses Verona's breathtaking battle against relegation that culminates in a decisive play-off against Reggio. In the end the team's escape is so dramatic that only the application of the away goals rule seals survival in the league.

6.1.2 Narrative style

Parks' decision to chronicle the 2000/2001 season has indeed been a wise one as Hellas narrowly escapes relegation. The linear narrative carries the reader from game to game, thereby building up excitement with every chapter as struggling Verona gradually slump into the relegation zone. To fully grasp the ever-present threat of relegation, Parks displays the team's position in the table after each matchday. Further explanation on *Serie A* relegation rules[452] and regular summaries serve as constant reminders that Verona's survival is at stake. To heighten Verona's potential fall, Parks parallels Hellas' fortunes with those of intercity rivals Chievo

[451] Tim Parks, *A Season with Verona: Travels Around Italy in Search of Illusion, National Character and Goals*, London: Secker and Warburg 2002 (Vintage Paperback Reprint 2003). In the following Parks' work will be cited as 'SV'.
[452] See SV, 162.

Verona, a team climbing up from *Serie B*, thus threatening Hellas' position as the city's top-flight club:

> The growing fear is that Chievo will get into A while Hellas Verona crash into B. And this fear is galvanised by the apprehension that the world at large, the great wide world of TV and political correctness, finds Chievo Verona a more palatable phenomenon than Hellas Verona. Chievo have a couple of black players. Chievo supporters do not indulge in racist chants.[453]

Though the narrative essentially revolves around Verona's struggle for survival in Italy's top division, Parks has carefully embedded his own perspective on Italian culture and politics, most notably issues of racism in Verona.[454] With a sharp eye for observation his commentary reflects typical English humour:

> Wojtyla, decrepit with Parkinson's, had been expected to watch just half of the game, but then insisted he must see the whole thing, this has pleased the journalists immensely. 'He remembers fondly,' they enthuse, 'when he used to kick around a ball as a kid.' Papa Wojtyla then confesses that he never watched a game before, a real game in the stadium. Seeing him helped to his seat, finding it difficult to hold his head up, I can't help feeling that he's left it a bit late.[455]

Apart from recurring observations on the makeup of Italian society, the 34 chapters of his narrative follow a repetitive pattern briefly described as prematch build-up, matchday report and postmatch comment. Since Parks reports on almost all the matches,[456] he employs different techniques to minimize repetitive accounts. Thus the prematch build-ups include statistics and press quotes whilst equally echoing the fans' hopes and expectations:

> 'Every game is a last-ditch now,' says Perotti. 'Every match must be played like a Champions' League final.' Wondering what the coach was doing to prepare the team for this level of tension, I go to check out the team in training the day before the match. The players are standing in a circle passing the ball around while two in the middle have to dash back and forth to intercept it. Laurensen plunges this way and that. He has the energy and awkwardness of a young horse. Apolloni is laughing, joking. Leo Colucci intercepts a ball with his hands and pretends he hasn't. What me? Despite the team's precarious position they are having a great time. Why not? The players are not going to die when we go down. Football is a sport. They are healthy young men on a spring morning. Never have I felt so strongly the

[453] SV, 256.
[454] Verona's apparent opposition against multiculturalism is both exemplified and questioned by Parks' reporting on the Marsiglia case, involving the Jewish teacher Marsiglia who is later found guilty of having forged both his qualifications and the racist attack on him.
[455] SV, 90.
[456] Although *Serie A*'s 34 league games would perfectly match the book's 34 chapters, not every chapter is dedicated to a game nor is every game reported on. At times one chapter contains three matches (see the chapter *Caporetto*, SV, 353-365), at times several chapters are dedicated to one encounter (see SV, 202-247). Exceptionally, game reports are entirely dismissed and if so, the omitted matches have been particular unpleasant reminders of Hellas' incapabilities. See SV, 96.

> gap between the hopes and fears of the supporters and the pleasures of the players' routine.[457]

Postmatch comments often center around false referee decisions video-checked by Parks and his son Michele[458] or, alternatively, the team's poor performances evoking both the narrator's and the supporters' anger on "The Wall", the fans' inofficial website:

> It wasn't until the following evening on my author tour in Munich that I conjured up the necessary mental energy to check The Wall. Once again, someone had found exactly the analogy that both expressed the dismay and made it easier to bear: 'Supporting Verona yesterday was like being in love with a whore.'[459]

However, most attention is dedicated to the actual matchday, but not to the match action itself. In fact, a considerable amount of space is given to Parks' travels with the notorious Brigate, their ill-treatment by police and the hardships they endure when supporting Hellas.[460] This is not to say that match action is completely missing as the narrator employs paratactical reporting to capture the speed and excitement of on-field action:

> Mad run to celebrate under the triumphant *curva*. General delirium, inevitable yellow card for leaving the field of play. Doesn't matter. Calm down. Hold on. Fortunately the red-and-whites are mediocre. It's us on the attack again. Mutu goes down.[461]

Yet, in the stadium the emphasis clearly lies on atmosphere and crowd reactions:

> '*Dagliela*!' shouts the girl behind me. 'Pass it to him.' She's on her feet screaming. '*Dagliela BENE*!'
> On the pitch Martino Melis lifts his head. But he can't hear her. She's only one voice. Thousands of others are chanting: '*Su Verona, dai, dai!*' Melis is dithering again.
> '*Ma dagliela*!' she weeps. '*Dagliela bene*!' Give it to him right!
> Too late Melis sees the opening and passes. The ball runs long. The girl collapses in disappointment. A moment later she begins: 'Pull him down! Pull the bastard down, *Dio povero*!' She's suffering. Mazzola can't hear. '*O mongolo*,' comes the familiar call from a few rows further back.'[462]

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[457] SV, 377.
[458] SV, 333: "But down in the basement where we keep our TV, my son just can't get over Vieri's dive. He's watched it a dozen times on the video.'He dived, He dived! And Morfeo last week, pretending he'd been hit when he hadn't. How can they look at themselves in the mirror? Why don't the guys who give out the suspensions do anything about it? They could easily say, OK, Vieri dived, out for a game.'"
[459] SV, 364.
[460] SV, 121-125.
[461] SV, 341.
[462] SV, 248. Compare also the fan Parks portrays on ibid., 126f.

While internal monologues[463] help to reveal Parks' emotional commitment when watching Hellas, it is these sharp observations on Italian fan behaviour that make up a major part of his narrative. Fascinated by the country, and true to his status as expatriate, he purposefully adds Italian phrases to his narrative, thus capturing both the flavour of Italian fan psychology and national character. Consequently, Parks' regular use of Italian as well as his frequent elaborations on philosophy and anthropology[464] lead to the conclusion that his novel is primarily directed at an educated readership whose interest in football is equally matched by its desire to explore foreign languages and cultures. Whereas the frequent use of Italian makes reading a little tiring for non-Italian speakers, Parks' conversational voice turns the novel into an entertaining read.

6.2 Joe McGinniss *The Miracle of Castel di Sangro*[465]

6.2.1 Content

Hearing that the football club of the small Abruzzese town of Castel di Sangro has miraculously gained promotion to *Serie B*, Italy's second highest professional football league, the established American writer Joe McGinniss decides to follow the club in the coming season. Despite his lack of football knowledge and even less understanding of the Italian language, the *Scrittore Americano* is warmly welcomed by team and management. True to Italian hospitality McGinniss is provided with an interpreter and given privileged access to the team. He is allowed to live and travel with the players whilst all expenses are covered by the club. Positioned inside the lines McGinniss develops strong ties to the players and to the manager turning into a confidant for many of them while equally attempting to advise the manager Jaconi on tactics and team selection. Yet, what promises to be a true fairy tale eventually turns into a nightmare when McGinniss learns about the ruthlessness of the club's officials. As his Italian language skills improve and he grows more and more passionate about his team, he openly protests against the club owner, Signor Rezza, and its president,

[463] SV, 412: "Twenty minutes into the second half, Parma equalised. There are no words for what follows. I'm so depressed. You were happy it was fixed, Tim. You were happy that the game was set up. And now you're appalled that it isn't set up. And appalled that you should wish it was. Appalled that, once again, for the seventeenth, repeat *seventeenth*, time this season, you have made a long journey to see Verona fail to win away."

[464] See SV, 250. Compare also Parks' interpretation of Giacomo Leopardi's football poem within the novel. See SV, 135-139.

[465] Joe McGinniss, *The Miracle of Castel di Sangro*, Broadway Books (Paperback edition), New York 2000. McGinniss' work will be cited as 'MCS' hereafter.

Gabriele Gravina. Initially inivited to hail their glory by telling their success story, McGinniss increasingly positions himself against them while openly accusing them of unpaid promotion bonuses, drug trafficking and dilettantism. Although the team miraculously wins the relegation battle, he leaves his adopted team in distress – disgusted by their moral conduct when he learns that Castel di Sangro have fixed the final league match so that the opponent can gain promotion to *Serie A.*

6.2.2 Narrative style

In 41 chapters McGinniss linearly recounts Castel Di Sangro Calcio's road to *la Salvezza*, the team's successful struggle to survive in Serie B during the 1996/1997 season. The story is divided into two parts. Whereas the first five chapters serve as exposition briefly outlining the narrator's obsession with football, Castel's gradual rise to professionalism as well as the narrator's reception in his new town, the remaining chapters are predominantly dedicated to the daily lives of Castel's professionals, their training and travelling routines and reports about their league games in *Serie B*.[466] Whilst the first part covers the overwhelming part of *l'andata* and ends with the narrator's return to the USA for Christmas after the tragic death of two players,[467] the second part is largely concerned with *il ritorno*, the second half of the season. Interestingly, the highs and lows of the team throughout the season are mirrored by the weather. Before the final game against Bari, where McGinniss finds out that the match has been fixed and consequently leaves his team in dismay, an approaching storm foreshadows the team's moral downfall:

> This was the true sirocco, well known and much dreaded in Sicily and along the southern coast of Italy, but virtually unknown as far north as the Abruzzo. When it did blow, however, the older and wiser residents of the town were known to say that it brought evil to where evil had not been before. It was truly an ill wind, which in the Abruzzo might rise only once or twice in a generation, but when it did, there was no escaping its ill effects.
> And it was blowing full force as we boarded the bus for Bari on Saturday morning. The player who had spoken to me on Thursday night simply looked at me and shook his head. Then we were off, into the mouth of the dragon.[468]

Game action is exclusively reported from McGinniss' perspective. What is particularly striking about McGinniss' game reports is his highly subjective way of presenting

[466] However, not every match is reported on as the narrator is absent in the United States twice. Consequently only match results are provided. See MCS, 122, 240, 271.
[467] The tragic deaths of the players Di Vincenzo and Biondi in a car accident also correlate with the sporting low point of the season as Castel has been 400 minutes without scoring at this point in time. See MCS, 233f.
[468] MCS, 386f. Compare also MCS, 163, 236, 311.

game action as he frequently disagrees with manager Jaconi's line up.[469] Players whose abilities he is strongly convinced of are portrayed in an extremely positive light, whereas players he dislikes are portrayed negatively. This can be illustrated best by the portrayal of his favourite player Lotti, who fails to establish himself as first-choice goalkeeper, but whom McGinniss praises above lords:

> Torino was one of only half a dozen *Serie B* teams to have scored more than forty goals by that point in the season. They could let fly from anywhere and everywhere, and they did.
> But Lotti coped. With brilliance, intelligence, and a degree of fortitude never before witnessed by the people of Castel di Sangro (who, after all, had seen the Genoa match only on television), he repelled every Torino shot, even as they fell upon him like hailstones. *La Gazetto dello Sport* said the next day,'They should build a monument to this man in the central square of this town, and all who love *calcio* should come and bow before it every day.' Yes, he was that good.[470]

By contrast, unskilled or unfinished players are subjected to harsh criticism:

> This was not possible! Rimedio starting against *Torino*? *Mannaggia*, talk about feeding Christians to the lions, talk about a boy among men! Rimedio was barely twenty-one, and in only five matches all season had even played enough to warrant a rating. [...] Good God, this was Osvaldo's most damaging decision yet. [...] Rimedio was a problem, being outrun and outmaneuvered time and again by Torino midfielders and attackers who simply had too much skill and experience for him. This put extra pressure on our defenders, and as a result, Luca D' Angelo eventually committed a foul at the very edge of our penalty area.[471]

As the season is drawing to a close the league table is regularly displayed both to heighten suspense as well as to indicate the obstacles Castel have to overcome on their road to salvation.[472] Despite the fact that the club avoids relegation early and has rarely occupied a relegation place,[473] the narrator does a lot to portray Castel's relegation battle as *il miracolo*. In doing so the narrator belittles Castel's team both directly and indirectly.[474] Early in the storyline the manager of the team, Osvaldo Jaconi, confides to McGinniss that the team is without ability:

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[469] MCS, 233: "And Danilo Di Vincenzo, the man who'd scored our first goal of the season and also our most recent – though it had been *six weeks* ago – seemed now a permanent fixture *in panchina* for reasons known only to Jaconi, who had taken to fielding lineups better suited to shuffleboard than to *calcio*."
[470] MCS, 349f.
[471] MCS, 346-348.
[472] MCS, 295 (eleven matches to go), 340 (five matches to go), 352 (four matches to go), 360 (three matches to go), 365 (two matches to go).
[473] Compare MCS, 122, 146, 257, 271, 340, 353, 360.
[474] MCS, 201: "Add the eleven players he fielded to Jaconi himself, and you had probably the dozen dullest drudges in all of professional *calcio*."

> But I must have misunderstood. Perhaps there was a word that sounded like *umiltà* but meant something more along the lines of, say, talent? Possibly a word on the order of *capacità*, or ability. This was what he must have meant.
> '*Sì*,' I agreed.'*Peccato*! *Nessuno è molto capace*. *Forse solo Lotti*.' It's a pity. No one has much ability. Maybe only Lotti.
> Jaconi pounded a fist on his desk. '*Umiltà*!' he shouted. '*Non capacità*. *He detto umilità*!'
> Okay, I'd been right the first time: he had said *umiltà.*
> '*Sicuro nessuno ha le capacità*! *Quello non è il problema*! *E'che mancano d'umiltà*!' Of course, no one had ability! They weren't s*upposed* to have ability. If they had ability, they wouldn't be here.[475]

What's more, in one of the first conversations with the club owner, Senior Rezza, McGinniss also learns that the club president, Gabriel Gravina, has "assembled a squad of ballerinas. And Signor Rezza is not a fan of the ballet."[476] Even dialogues with players on trial that offer an outsider perspective are employed to reveal the team's inabilities:

> 'Kids in a school yard,' Addo said to me at halftime. 'Kick the ball and run and hope maybe someone kicks it back. These are not tactics, these are ten players each playing by himself. If two of them happen to combine for something useful, it is only coincidence, not a plan.'[477]

Comparisons to other opponents before the game highlight the underdog status of the team. However, in his attempt to portray the team as "lilliputians"[478] and their salvation as a miracle, McGinniss only partly admits that the team possesses all the relevant characteristics to stay up in *Serie B*. For he fails to acknowledge several aspects that clearly put the team in the position to stay in the league. First and foremost, Castel's team features experienced Serie B players. Equally, Jaconi has proved to be a capable manager as he has led the team to promotion twice. Moreover, the team is clearly able to bounce back from a string of defeats. And last but not least, the team enjoys a crucial home advantage on the bumpy pitch of Castel di Sangro.[479]

Comic effects are created through the incongruities between the public image of a professional football team and the personal shortcomings of its members that his insider perspective reveals. Thus we learn of players that underperform in away

[475] MCS, 107.
[476] MCS, 104.
[477] MCS, 161.
[478] MCS, 141.
[479] Compare MCS 43, 111, 243, 247.

matches due to an apparent homesickness[480] and a manager that proclaims in print "Show must go one".[481] Players are frequently portrayed as naive and child-like:

> Wednesday night at Marcella's I was approached by the Three Musketeers-Cristiano, Rimedio, and Biondi – who told me they would like to visit America after the season. [...] They smiled politely. Then Biondi got to the point. 'But where will be the women?' [...]
> Listen, every day the papers in New York and Boston are filled with the stories of beautiful young women who say their strongest desire is to unlace the boots of a true Italian *calciatore* and kiss his feet.'
> 'Sì!' Rimedio said, immediately captivated by the image. But Biondi was a cooler customer. He said, 'That is their *strongest* desire, maybe we do better in Sardinia.'[482]

Every now and then a player's stupidity is addressed, yet described rather diplomatically:

> Tonino [...] was without doubt among the most extroverted, warm-hearted, and gregarious members of a notably open and social team, but no one would have termed him an intellectual.
> One night, after my language skills had improved considerably, I came upon him puzzling over a Nintendo game he'd just rented.
> 'A problem, Tonino?' I asked. He looked at me with genuine worry.
> 'Oh, Joe, this one is going to be the most difficult yet. I cannot even understand the instructions!' He handed me the box to show me just what he was up against. I looked at it quickly. Then I handed it back. 'Tonino', I said, 'these are in Spanish.'[483]

More generally, comedy is created by the language barrier as in the case of Gravina's confidant who tries to order pills to enhance the president's sex life. The reported incident in imperfect Italian English reveals much about the patronizing attitude McGinniss takes towards the supposed simplicity of Castel di Sangro's local population.[484]

> 'Sex pills?'
> '*Sì, sì, sì, esatto.'* The man was perspiring, and it had to be from nervousness because even with a coat on, he could not have found my apartment overly warm.
> 'But how do they work?' I asked. 'what do they do?'
> Angelo took a deep breath and then apparently decided to tell all.
> 'No peels,' he said, 'you fucks, you stop. *Ciao, buona notte*. Wit' peels, you fucks, you fucks again, you fucks again. All the night. All the day. You fucks like the fucker machine. Every lady is 'appy.'[485]

[480] See MCS, 149.
[481] MCS, 236. Note that the original spelling has been kept.
[482] MCS, 175f.
[483] MCS, 81.
[484] Compare also the letter McGinniss received from a character called Giuseppe who is supposed to pick him up from the airport as well as the encounter with the owner of the local hotel. See MCS, 13 and 66f.
[485] MCS, 336.

With regard to the readership addressed it seems obvious that McGinniss primarily targets a sports-orientated American readership. This can be inferred from the terminology used[486] and more general introductions to the rules of football.[487] Various American sports are floated through the account functioning as points of reference to facilitate comparisons.[488] This has also been confirmed by McGinniss in an email to me. He writes:

> There was more interest in the book in the U.K. and in Germany and Holland than in the U.S. Nonetheless, because I wrote it originally for an American audience I included explanation of rules and history of the game which would not have been necessary if I were writing for a European audience.[489]

6.3 Chuck Culpepper *Bloody Confused! A Clueless American Sportswriter seeks Solace in English Soccer*[490]

6.3.1 Content

Having worked as an American sports journalist for 18 years, Chuck Culpepper is fed up with the inner workings of American professional sports. In search of something new he discovers English Premier League football while on holiday in London in 2005. Yet, his first attempts to see some on-field action are doomed to fail. Much to his great astonishment he has great difficulty in obtaining tickets for Premier League matches as he learns that these are not available without a ticketing buying history. Determined to find out more about football and the way English fans absorb its culture, he decides to adopt a Premier League team chronicling its fortunes for the 2006/2007 season. This adoption process, stretching from February to October 2006, turns out to be more complicated than expected. Categorically refusing the Premier League's 'Big Four',[491] he eventually opts for 'Pompey', that is Portsmouth FC, a club troubled by financial and sporting struggles over the past 50 years. From his homebase London, a place he moved to for the sake of love, the American takes the reader on a journey across the English football landscape exploring its complexities.

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[486] See MCS, 19. McGinniss constantly refers to the game as "soccer".
[487] MCS, 22.
[488] MCS, 38: "To win the *Serie A* championship is to have won the World Series, the Super Bowl, and the NBA championship all rolled together." Compare also ibid., 61.
[489] Email interview see appendix.
[490] Chuck Culpepper, *Bloody Confused!: A Clueless American Sportswriter Seeks Solace in English Soccer*, New York: Broadway Books 2008. Hereafter Culpepper's work will be cited as 'BC'.
[491] Namely Manchester United FC, Liverpool FC, Chelsea FC, Arsenal FC.

His richly depicted travel experiences naturally include regular visits to Fratton Park, Pompey's vociferous homeground, as well as trips to Pompey's away clashes all across the country. Despite his rapidly growing enthusiasm Culpepper finds it hard to mingle with Pompey's bedrock. Apart from his mysterious "soccer guru" Tom, who introduces him to the game's pecularities, the reader gets to know only a handful of other fans Culpepper socialises with. Yet, despite being a novice to the game, Culpepper happily indulges in British fan culture particularly through chanting and drinking. Whereas he expected a relegation struggle at the beginning of the season, his seasoning snapshot ends in one of Pompey's most successful seasons over the past 50 years with the team finishing in 9th position, only two points short of UEFA Cup qualification.

6.3.2. Narrative style

The 36 chapters of the narrative chronicle Culpepper's discoveries about British football culture and linearly chart his process of becoming a fan. Here the first chapter serves as a crucial starting point with the sportswriter on the verge of burnout bemoaning the poor state of the American sports scene. Hence the narrator finds himself in search of something new to rekindle his passion for sports. The remaining 35 chapters fall into three parts with three different time frames.

Chapters two and three expose Culpepper's first experiences around British football culture. Although the time span he reports on is fairly brief, this part can well be taken as the narrator's initiation process to the game. It is during his 2005 summer holiday that he comes to watch Wigan play Sunderland, witnessing his first Premier League match action. Upon his return to England six months later the second part of his account largely revolves around his team selection process in the second half of the 2005/2006 season. In search of his prospective club he widely reports on scouting different teams all across the country, whereby the struggling side of Portsmouth gradually turns into one of his favourites.

The main part of his account, comprising chapters 10 to 36, is concerned with the Premier League season 2006/2007, the actual season he plans to chronicle. Once his club choice has been made at the beginning of the season,[492] he starts following his team on the most regular basis. Adopting a play-by-play approach Culpepper reports almost weekly on Pompey's clashes in true diary-style fashion. Typically

[492] See BC, 65.

providing date, weather and attendance for the fixtures,[493] prolonged match action is rather limited. Instead, his account centers around his 'fan apprenticeship progress',[494] travel arrangements and anecdotes about the difficulties of obtaining match tickets:

> I saw that tickets remained available, so I called up Monday morning, but they would not sell me one because I lacked a ticket-buying history. I tried the idiot-American-tourist-from-New York routine, but they did not buckle. I refrained from asking if it counted that I stood outside the stadium during a match with Wigan one Saturday in August 2005 eating fish and chips and cursing myself.[495]

Postmatch comments by Pompey's manager, Harry Redknapp, are frequently threaded through Culpepper's account. Yet, the reader is left in the dark about why he refers to him as "Uncle Harry".[496]

With regard to his narrative style two aspects are particularly noteworthy: that is, the strong anti-American bent in his narrative and his fascination for everything essentially British, or more precisely English. Hence he pulls no punches when he openly and repeatedly accuses his own nation of ignorance, decadence and wastefulness. At best his 'America-bashing' can be ironic, at worst abusive, particularly to fellow countrymen, who are either portrayed as capitalistic or mentally challenged:

> With Americans sharing a common inability to view a map and spot, say, Louisiana – this helps explain why it took us four days to get food to starving Americans after Hurricane Katrina – Americans certainly could not point out Wigan. [...]
> 'Home or away?' I had never heard such a personal question from behind a ticket window. I hailed from a land in which they'll sell us nameless single-game tickets so long as we seem to have a modicum of apparent human features, such as a wallet and at least one hand for reaching into it. I hailed from a land in which "segregation" is invariably a bad word conjuring bygone times of shocking idiocy.
> What a jolt, then, to learn that home and 'away' (visiting) English fans sit segregated, that two sturdy lines of security officers in fluorescent yellow adorn the edges of visiting cheering sections, and the word 'segregation' has one definition that's not macabre.[497]

As if to please the English, he constantly stresses their cultural superiority due to their supposedly richer cultural history. To his mind this rings especially true for the

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[493] Compare for instance BC, 108f.
[494] See BC, 109: "I found my reaction strangely involuntary. It was official: I had become somewhat the person I had belittled for years, the fan for whom the caprices of games could prompt helpless hopping."
[495] BC, 234.
[496] BC, 142.
[497] Culpepper, BC, 15. Evidently Culpepper turns a blind eye to the issue of violence in British stadia that triggered the 'home or away' – question in the first place.

world of football. Hence the English fan culture is hailed as the “wisest, savviest old fan culture on earth.”[498] In fact, Culpepper never mentions the existence of the game in the US. The narrator conveys the impression that Americans can only experience the ‘real deal’, that is the true beauty of the game, in its motherland. This in turn reveals much about the fascination he experiences for British football culture. He is particularly intrigued by more traditional patterns of football fandom, predominantly its naughty chants and the element of swearing. Consequently both of these elements are repeatedly threaded through his narrative and given extended treatment. It is because of this that match action is usually kept short with the main focus on crowd behaviour:

> I heard her utter only three things during the match.
> The first: ‘Move!’ [...]
> The second thing she uttered: ’F—ing move!’ [...]
> The third thing I heard her say: ‘F—ing wankers!’ [...]
> I had -*never*- heard the English word ‘f—’ used in so many creative forms, despite prior residence in New York, despite spending an inordinate chunk of life near sports fans, and despite seeing almost every Martin Scorsese film. At Newcastle that day I heard it as a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, conjunction, preposition, pejorative, subjunctive, and maybe even a gerund. I heard it hollered without compunction within earshot of children, which would be taboo in the United States. Eighteen months later, two kindly lads who supported the wee Brentfort club off the western edge of London would teach me that some English fathers teach their children that there’s stadium language and there’s language for everywhere else, but at this point I felt stunned.[499]

To illustrate the otherness of British football, the accomplished sportswriter draws frequent comparisons to favourite American sports and floats them as comparative models. At times this can be informative because it helps to put English football into a wider frame and a more global perspective.[500] However, these comparisons can also become tiring if the reader lacks the required knowledge of the respective American game. This leads us to the question of the intended readership. To those in the know his revelations about the secrets of Premier League football might be boring, unless one is interested in outsider perspectives on the game. Admittedly, the experienced sportswriter tries hard to come across as an American interloper pretending to have no knowledge at the beginning stages of his road to fandom, and therefore has to engage in a “seasonal education” process. That said, as Culpepper admits himself in the ‘Acknowledgement’ section, he had been carefully guided by his agent during the “England venture“. Hence when he pretends to be an absolute novice in a game he

[498] BC, 7.
[499] BC, 20-21.
[500] Compare BC, 96, 151, 205-206, 212.

constantly calls “soccer”, we should not forget that what is being presented to the reader is a meticulously researched account. This fact helps to place phrases such as the following into their proper context: “The first half went goal-less, but somebody named Gary O’Neil scored in the fifty-fourth minute after somebody named Benjani Mwaruwari rampaged up the right and slid him the ball.” [501]

To what extent his self-proclaimed state as the ‘confused’ novice is portrayed realistically against the backdrop of his rich experiences as a sportswriter covering a multiplicity of sports, obviously remains a matter of opinion. Indeed, one seriously wonders how many times the narrator willingly puts up with standing outside the ground unable to gain entry simply because he lacks a ticket-buying history. Yet, at the same time Culpepper’s presumed inexperience clearly caters to those unfamilar with British football. An intruder himself, he takes the football novice by the hand and carefully introduces him to the game. Little football knowledge is assumed as given. Hence, the reader finds a map of England listing all the Premier League clubs as well as an author’s note, which provides a general introduction to the way the British game is structured and administered.[502] A British fan writing a seasoning snapshot on the national game probably would have taken far more knowledge for granted.

6.4 From page to stage: Fans as media celebrities

When the “*famoso scrittore americano*”[503] heard about Castel di Sangro’s promotion to *Serie B*, he had already been a well-known author in the field of true crime writing. In fact, he refused a one-million-dollar offer to report on the O.J Simpson trial[504] in order to write about the miraculous team of Castel di Sangro instead. Concerning his decision to spend 9 months with the team of Castel di Sangro, McGinniss wrote to me:

> My initial motivation was curiosity about the experience, so foreign to everything I'd ever done before, would be like. [sic] It also allowed my new-found enthusiasm for football to intersect with my professional life. I chose Castel di Sangro because the story already had a fairy-tale quality: the town was so remote, so small, so unlike the major cities of Serie B. The people in the town, and in all of Italy, made me fall in love with the place.[505]

[501] See BC, 45. On his experience as a sportswriter see BC, 7.
[502] Compare the narrator’s introduction on the rivalry between Pompey and Southampton. See BC, 92-93. Further examples see also BC, 14, 39-40.
[503] MCS, 69. Note that McGinniss‘ first book, *The Selling of the President* about President Nixon’s presidential campaign became a massive success in 1968. He is also the author of other non-fiction bestsellers such as *Fatal Vision*, *Blind Faith*, *Cruel Doubt* and the *Last Brother*.
[504] MCS, 105.
[505] Email interview see appendix.

Understandably, his presence in the small town arouses curiosity as “print journalists and television crews swarmed all over” him upon his first attendance of a training session.[506] In fact, his celebrity status is repeatedly emphasized throughout the narrative since he is not only given privileged access to team and officials, but also becomes a regular on the *tribuna d’onore*[507] and is allowed to eat and travel with the club free of charge.[508] What is most striking is the impression that he seems to indulge in the apparent media hype around him and even does a lot to actively promote it:

> I had been invited to the *Guerin Sportivo* annual awards dinner the following night. In Italy this was the closest one could get to an Oscar ceremony. [...] The magazine had invited me, I presumed, because it had recently published an article about me and therefore must have considered me a minor celebrity.[509]

Being frequently interviewed by regional and national press, McGinniss evokes the impression that he is actually the one in the spotlight, not the fabulous team of Castel di Sangro. At one stage this is even confirmed by the narrator: ”The fact was, as we moved toward the year’s darkest days, it was only my presence in Castel di Sangro that continued to bring Gravina and the team the favorable publicity he craved.”[510] Admittedly, these words imply a certain degree of self-centeredness on his part. Whereas Parks’ narrative revolves predominantly around the fortunes of his team and the state of the Italian game, McGinniss’ account essentially centres around him. This notion is repeatedly reinforced and becomes particularly obvious before the decisive matches to avoid relegation. Although the narrator has the access he needs to tell the reader how the players cope with this enormously stressful situation, the focus remains on him:

> I could scarcely separate my dream life from the waking moments of my day. For weeks I’d been clinging by my fingernails to the edge of a cliff that presented self-control and rationality, but now my grip was finally giving way.
> *Il Messaggero* wrote of me: ’He suffers, he is among the most ardent of *tifosi* even if his tone of voice is calm. ’I went straight to Osvaldo with that one. ’So you see?’ I said. ’It could be worse. Imagine if I ever got excited!’[511]

[506] MCS, 71.
[507] MCS, 181f.
[508] See MCS, 197.
[509] MCS, 303.
[510] MCS, 197.
[511] MCS, 368.

Somewhat pretentious are McGinniss' attempts to portray himself as Castel's most diehard fan. Due to his privileged status his claim to be an integral part of Castel's traditional fan community must be little more than bewildering to its long-term supporters. While seated in the VIP section when attending his first match in the season, he claims:

> I could see that hundreds of other Castel di Sangro fans – the ones able to afford the more expensive midfield seats and thus not forced to watch from the more distant *curva* – were staring at me. As they heard my last "*Bravo!*" and saw my upraised arms, they, too, began to shout and cheer, waving at me and grinning.
> My heart filled with joy. Finally, at the age of fifty-three, I had been united with my people.[512]

Similar to McGinniss in many ways, Parks is an academic teaching at Milan university[513] but also an acclaimed British writer.[514] Such is the state of his popularity that he has been invited to a reception with Her Majesty The Queen.[515] Furthermore, his ties to the Italian media economy enable him to appear in talkshows[516] or feature in articles of the prestigious *Gazzetta dello Sport*:

> Tim Parks! Me! I lead a group of fans. It's written there in the dreamy rose-pink of the *Gazzetta dello Sport*. I am an important person in the world of Veronese football, though I have no idea what the significance of 1 February 1987 might be.
> No sooner have I finished reading this news than the mobile is ringing. My wife tells me that three national TV stations have called inviting me to participate in talk-show debates on Verona, football and racism. Naturally, I refuse.[517]

Hence it is his popularity and the objective to write a book about Hellas Verona FC[518] that allows him to meet both players and club president.[519] Despite such privileged access he decides against a season shadowing the team. Instead Parks builds his story around his travels with the 'common' ultras. Yet, this does not turn Parks into one of them. His celebrity status can be seen most clearly after his writing intentions have been exposed and he is once more offered privileged treatment as a result:

> When I wrote my article for *La Stampa* I had made it clear to the editor that I wanted no mention of the fact that I was planning a book. The paper published the piece under the headline: 'Writer among the Hooligans: Parks Writes Book on the Brigade Gialloblù. [...] How

[512] MCS, 64.
[513] SV, 344.
[514] Tim Parks is the author of several works of fiction. His novel *Europa* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1997. He won the Betty Trask Award in 1986 for his first novel *Tongues of Flame.*
[515] SV, 74.
[516] SV, 168.
[517] SV, 273.
[518] See SV, 205ff.
[519] See SV, 207f, 289, 380.

> would the *brigate* react? Would they feel spied on? Would they feel irritated by this apparent claim to be one of them? Could I travel with them again?
> And did I want to? Catania is 1,200 kilometres from Verona, about as far as you can go in Italy. I have never been there before. Tentatively, I phoned the Zanzibar, hoping that there might be a plane chartered. 'They're going by bus', the barman tells me. 'Leave a phone number and we'll contact you.' A young woman called. After explaining that the bus would leave at six-thirty Friday evening, taking a total of sixteen to eighteen hours to reach Catania, she suddenly said, 'But you have an accent. You're English.' 'Yes.' 'You must be Tim Parks. I saw in the paper.' 'Yes.'
> An hour later she phoned again. 'There's only one seat left and three people on the waiting list, but the place is yours if you want it. We want you to come.'[520]

Contrary to McGinniss Parks does not really indulge in this privileged status. Even when he is granted exclusive access to the press gallery in Turin's Lo Stadio delle Alpi,[521] he feels out-of-place and ill-at-ease.[522] Portraying himself as a man of the terraces, he stresses how much "he should have been there with the boys."[523] Although both enjoy similar status – what sets Parks apart is his modesty of self-representation. While McGinniss constantly stresses his importance, Parks is much more reluctant to do so. Therefore the overall tone in Parks' narrative is less boisterous and self-centered. Whereas Parks likes to mingle with the diehard fans, genuinely enjoying their company, McGinniss barely mentions other fans and if so, only as an anonymous mass.

Along with their celebrity status comes an insider perspective. The major difference between McGinniss and Parks is the way they present confidential information. Since McGinniss' presence in the team is taken for granted,[524] he is able to offer a behind-the-scenes look into Italian professional football. Hence he is able to display inner conflicts between the team and the board of directors. Furthermore, he openly describes Signor Rezza's and Gravina's more criminal activities with running the club. Often his style becomes investigative, the tone accusatory and morally superior:

> Not only I but all Castel di Sangro was outraged by the *Società*'s decision to sell 25 percent of the match tickets to our opponent. It was unheard of. Literally. I asked and I asked, and everyone's answer was the same: no *società*, at any level, had ever before tried to milk extra profit from such a crucial match by permitting one-quarter of the home seats to be filled by supporters of the visitors. [...]

[520] SV, 164f.
[521] SV, 144ff.
[522] See SV, 151: "The ref blows his whistle. Juve have won! [...] 'Verona are a bunch of also-runs,' comments the prim woman to my right. It is a terrible thing to watch a game with people who are not eager to create the same illusion you are. Like trying to worship God with an atheist. I am tempted to tell her to fuck off."
[523] SV, 159.
[524] See MCS, 74: "I should consider myself from the start as *uno di noi*, which even I understood as 'one of us,'" Compare also Ibid., 379.

> As the teams took the field, the 2,000 morons from Pescara who had been permitted entrance to the stadium – to *our* stadium – began sending up flares that produced blue smoke. *Blue! Their* color! That greedy bastard Rezza.
> I thought briefly of walking over – he was seated only about twenty yards to my right – and telling him what I thought of him and his *Camorra* connections and his rotten-to-the-core *Società* and his drug-smuggling nephew-in-law.[525]

The narrator is caught in a moral dilemma forcing him to decide between a writer's creative autonomy and the protection of the players' privacy. Yet, as he openly admits, this would not prevent him from giving a very critical account of those that provide the source of his literary imagination:

> I was scrupulous about saying only the most benign things. One could, I suppose, view this as hypocrisy on my part, but I felt that my more complex, not say negative, reactions were works in progress and that they were strictly my business until the time came for me to write my book. It was enough for the moment to tell the people what they wanted to hear: that I'd come to the Abruzzo to write a beautiful story about wonderful, humble people who had dared to dream and who'd then seen their dream become reality.[526]

Despite McGinniss' claim that "I did not include in the book anything of a personal nature that anyone shared with me privately," textual evidence might suggest otherwise to many readers.[527] In the light of the intimacy of McGinniss' revelations it is comprehensible that some of those McGinniss portrayed later felt discredited by his account, particularly if they had put their trust in him.[528]
Having learned from the outcry McGinniss' narrative has provoked, Parks' account is much more sensitive. Questioned by a representative of Hellas Verona about his motives for writing, Parks reports:

> 'Well, we are a little worried, to be frank, about what your plans are.' He mentions an American writer who has written a book about the Serie B team Castel di Sangro. 'He lived free with them, all expenses paid for the whole season, then filled his book with unpleasant details about their private lives.'[529]

[525] MCS, 369, 375.
[526] MCS, 198.
[527] Compare for instance MCS, 152f. Quote taken from email interview. See appendix.
[528] In his email response McGinniss names Jaconi and Gravina as those who were very upset about the book. Note that McGinniss' revelations were not the only ones that have been ill-received. Hunter Davies, who was allowed to spend a whole season with the first team of Tottenham Hotspurs in 1972, describes a similar outcry in the introduction of the new edition of his famous book. Compare Hunter Davies, *The Glory Game: The New Edition Of The British Football Classic*, London 2007 (Mainstream Paperback Reprint with amendments).
[529] SV, 209.

Admittedly, the access he was given to the team was much narrower in scope, as he does not engage in day-to-day business with players or management.[530] Nevertheless, events in the narrative that could turn too personal or intimate are cleverly depersonalised. This can be inferred from Parks' metafictional contemplations about a conversation in a prematch meal before the game against Lecce:

> How can I write down what was said at Friday dinner, without appearing to be ungrateful, without appearing to write the merest gossip, above all without Professor Agnolin shaking his noble grey head and saying, I knew we should never have invited that writer?
> Let's do it this way. Let's say that there are eleven staff accompanying the players on the trip: Agnolin, Foschi, Perotti, Speggiorin, Fiorini, Beppe the masseur, Marco the work-out expert, De Palma who trains the keepers, the older man who handles the gear, Fillipini the team doctor, and Massimiliano who handles the press. Then let's say that I'm sitting at a table with five of these guys of whom I will name but one, Agnolin himself. And I name the professor for the simple reason that he took no part at all in the conversation, but concentrated, somewhat gloomingly, on maintaining his diet. [...] It begins, childishly enough, with the word *pompelmo*, a grapefruit. Someone says that grapefruits are particularly good for you because they eat up negative cholesterol. Someone replies that *pompini* are even better for getting rid of negative energy. A *pompino* is a blow job. [...] Etc. Etc. It goes on and on with spiralling scabrosity. It's actually one of the funniest group male conversations about sex I've ever heard. And participated in. I wouldn't want to be left out. And even as it's happening I'm furious that I won't be able to report it with the flourish and detail it deserves, won't be able to characterise the various approaches, attach this or that phrase to this or that person. Because this is such a tediously Catholic country and the press would scream scandal.[531]

Though lacking in details about players' private lives, the background information Parks supplies when traveling with the team still offers an insight into the inner workings of Italian professional football.[532]

While the element of privileged access to teams and players represents an important motive in both Mc Ginniss' and Parks' narratives, emphasizing their celebrity status, similar access is a matter of a business routine for Culpepper. Despite his status as a sportswriter, Culpepper refrains from publishing delicate details about players' private lives.[533] In fact, for the American sportswriter such privileged access comes at a heavy cost. Working as a sportswriter cannot only be tedious, but equally tiring and stressful.

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[530] Only for the match against Lecce he is allowed to travel exclusively with the team. (Compare ibid., 205-246.) Apart from this he meets the players Martin Laursen (See ibid., 307-309), Luigi Appolloni (See ibid., 354-358) and Italiano (See ibid., 380-382) for an interview and is able to interview the club owner Pastorello (See ibid., 289-293).

[531] SV, 221f.

[532] Consider for instance the revelations of Hellas' kit man Marco, who tells Parks that players' shirts are given to the linesmen and referee for of charge before the game. See SV, 242f.

[533] Compare BC, 26.

> Another time, because the office begged when it really didn't have to, I flew ninety minutes from New York to Indianapolis on a Saturday morning, drove three hours north from Indianapolis to South Bend, saw a football game between Notre Dame University and the U.S. Naval Academy, returned to Indianapolis by 2:00 AM, woke by 6:00, caught a twenty-minute flight from Indianapolis to Cincinnati, connected to a five-hour flight from Cincinnati to San Francisco, took a one-hour taxi (traffic) across the San Francisco Bay to Oakland, and saw a Sunday afternoon NFL game between the Jets and the Raiders. Covering an afternoon basketball game in Nashville, Tennessee, then driving four hours through wee-hour snow flurries to St. Louis for an NFL playoff game, when the boss didn't even ask for the playoff game?[534]

After 18 years as a sportswriter Culpepper is fed up with "free media credentials, free media shuttle buses, and free media buffet lines."[535] Hence he decides to give it a break and explore more ordinary forms of football fandom – a cosmos entirely unknown to him so far. As Culpepper admits himself in his account, up to that moment he had actually loathed and belittled elements of ordinary fandom such as cheering and applauding. But once he indulges in it himself, he seems to like it immensely:

> I closed my jaw and bolted upward along with a few thousand strangers in the Milton End and maybe 17,000 strangers in this old rodeo ground, and I got to hop up and down and up and down, a fine act I presumed bygone in my life, an act people don't practice enough. It felt uncontrollable. This had transcended the occasion. In video footage of the goal, I can't necessarily see myself back there, but I can see our entire row going mad. If I slowed down the video and looked carefully, I might well see my own mouth spewing foam.[536]

Relieved from the burden of forced objectivity as well as the pressure to report on the events, he utterly enjoys prematch conversations. Indeed, Culpepper is thrilled by prematch rituals such as having a pint in a pub. He acknowledges the advantages of socialising with other fans at once claiming: "To a wayward sportswriter, these hours proved so magical, so alleviating of life's puny worries, that I realized at once I'd spent two decades missing something."[537] He even experiences moments of epiphany:

> *Benjani, whoa-ohhh,*
> *Benjani, whoa-ohhh,*
> *He comes from Zimbawe*
> *He's gonna score today...*
> My love for this I could not overstate. To me, this song almost justified following the bilge of sport on a regular basis. Here I was, an American, joining part of England in expressing our love for an African. Here we were in Hampshire, a crowd of mostly white people who had been to Zimbabwe an aggregate next-to-nil in all our 20,165 lives, some of whom knew it only from media coverage as having a lousy president, yet we serenaded a Zimbabwean.[538]

[534] BC, 47.
[535] BC, 7.
[536] BC, 89.
[537] BC, 26.
[538] BC, 210.

Evidently, it would have been possible to write an account about a season with Pompey from the press boxes. Yet, Culpepper decides deliberately against the privileged access he would have been entitled to as a journalist. Instead he wants to mingle with the crowd and puts the people in the spotlight. In this regard he is similar to Parks, who actually prefers traveling with the *Brigate*.

6.5 The outsider perspective: Tracing foreign football cultures

Although the two accounts on Italian teams are given by foreigners, their narratives take quite different approaches. While McGinniss follows his team entirely from within, Parks predominantly travels with the hardcore *Brigate*. At first sight both of them appear as well-integrated foreigners, yet a close reading shows that they still remain strangers in the Italian world of football. The same rings true for Culpepper's account. He openly claims to be an interloper or greenhorn in his new-found passion. Taking a closer look at McGinniss, it turns out that the narrator is also a novice in the game itself. Contrary to the football fans in the novels presented before, his fascination for the beautiful game does not stem from a lifelong commitment passed on from one family generation to the next, but simply dates from the 1994 World Cup in the United States.[539] Having never played the game he lacks deeper understanding, particularly in terms of tactics and with regard to the Italian philosophy of the game. This explains why some of McGinniss' football-related assessments are rather debatable in spite of his enthusiasm and his rich knowledge of statistics.[540] Although the narrator attempts to portray himself as an expert of *il calcio*,[541] several aspects in the narrative reveal how differently McGinniss perceives the European game. Above all, his understanding of football, a sport he constantly calls "soccer", is predominantly shaped by an American sports philosophy.[542] As a result he strongly disapproves of Jaconi's defensive tactics, which are doomed to fail even though

[539] See MCS, 19f.
[540] His knowledge is purely fact-based. The one-sidedness of his expertise is best captured by Jaconi's sharp remark about him: "'Joe: the trouble with you is that you knows every thing. But in the same times you knows nothing that you talks about.'" See Ibid., 140.
[541] McGinniss acts as a player agent for Massino Lotti, since his "judgement comes highly recommended." See MCS, 264f.
[542] See MCS, 377: "The American basketball truism that the best defense is a good offense is by no means inapplicable to *calcio*, but in the school for *allenatori* at Coverciano such doctrine apparently was considered heretical."

Castel has an away fixture.[543] In cases where they do succeed, McGinniss leaves no doubt that his tactics would have been equally successful.[544] Though not having any coaching experience whatsoever, he even advises the experienced manager Jaconi how to play. Instead of believing in Jaconi's judgements, McGinniss places the utmost trust in players' ratings given by journalists. To him these ratings are to be treated and trusted as if they were objective marks, seemingly true assessments of a player's performance:

> We'd already beaten them, 1–0, and that had been with De Juliis in goal. Granted, they'd never been beaten *in casa*, but in seventeen home matches they'd been held to a draw eight times.
> To me, the approach seemed obvious: Go after them aggressively from the start, shaking their *in casa* confidence by throwing at them Spinesi and Russo and Franceschini, none of whom they'd seen in January. With Lotti in goal, we could afford the risk.
> *Va da sè* – it goes without saying – Jaconi did not see it my way. He began with a 4-5-1 formation, which, for reasons I could not begin to fathom, did not include Spinesi, who had scored two goals within the past month, who was growing in skill by the hour, and whose cocky temperament was made to order for a difficult away match such as this. Instead, our lone attacker was the slow and predictable Pistella, who'd scored only two goals all season, whose composite pagelle of 5.68 was by far the lowest among any of our regular players.[545]

Contrary to McGinniss Parks adopts a much more critical attitude towards the seemingly random way journalists assess players' performances:

> How do the journalists do this? How can they watch twenty-two players all at once and reduce such a complex group experience to a series of numbers corresponding to individuals, as if a player's performance wasn't largely determined by those around him and against him? One answer, I discover in the press room, is consultation: 'Do you think 6 is OK for Inzaghi?' 'Oh God, he missed a sitter again. He hasn't scored for weeks.' '5.5 then.' 'I'm giving him 5.' [...] They want to judge, to take control of the experience, to dress even the most elusive impressions and complex dynamics in the peremptory authority of numbers; but no one must be offended too greatly, nor praised too highly. For that would expose the judge to criticism.[546]

McGinniss' fundamental belief in statistics probably explains his rather unusual "relative-strength-of-future-opponent calculations"[547] as the season is drawing to a close. Yet, most entertaining of all is the narrator's approach to let a computer game, which applies his tactical selections, play out the decisive game against Pescara in

[543] An interesting explanation for the popularity of the destructive tactics of *catenaccio* in the Italian leagues is provided by the German journalist Honigstein. For more on this see Raphael Honigstein, *Englischer Fussball: A German's View of Our Beautiful Game*, London 2009, 24.
[544] See MCS, 300: "And with our win over Cesena (which could have been achieved far more easily if we had used my line-up and formation, though I did not intend to debate this with Jaconi) we leapfrogged over four teams."
[545] MCS, 362.
[546] SV, 154.
[547] MCS, 296.

front of the team.[548] Taking McGinniss‘ rich ‘coaching expertise‘ into account, it must be stressed that luckily enough for the sporting ambitions of Castel‘s team Jaconi has constantly refused to listen to McGinniss‘ advice.

By contrast, his American countryman Culpepper does not pretend to be an expert on the game.[549] Willing to find out more about it, he is determined to learn and engage in a “seasonal education“ process. Much to the bewilderment of more traditional British fan beliefs, he is convinced that he can actually choose a club. This club selection process is managed in the most rational fashion. Hence at the beginning stages of his ‘football apprenticeship‘ he sets up a list of prospective favourite clubs with a club choice deadline, although the season he wants to report has already started.[550] While he has initially been attracted to Pompey by the noise created at the club’s homeground,[551] his reasons to support them throughout the 2006/2007 season are rather ‘unconventional‘ in comparison to more traditional patterns of British fandom:

> Portsmouth had attributes besides Mendes‘s goal and a sister city in Virginia. I found the nickname ‘Pompey‘ appealingly plucky, and I liked the presence of about twelve explanations for the nickname’s origin. I liked that people chanted the same ‘Pompey Chimes‘ that fans chanted 110 years prior, so that I might one day chant the Pompey Chimes and imagine it was 1898 and everybody was wearing only black-and-white clothing, thereby connecting me to history. Further, it dawned on me through careful research that Portsmouth was a seafaring town with a navy heritage. Not only had I come from a seafaring (if sleepy) metropolitan area with a navy heritage, but the idea of Portsmouth made me think of my maternal grandfather, a tugboat captain with a gruff demeanor and a big heart and mammoth forearms.[552]

Even the choice of his favourite player is not so much based on the player’s sporting performance, but heavily influenced by his biography.[553]

His decision to support Pompey is largely motivated by aspects of entertainment and excitement, hoping that “it might be fun to ride the relegation tightrope“[554] after Pompey has avoided relegation in the previous season. Whilst his unorthodox process of turning into a proper English football fan is portrayed ironically, it nonetheless holds up a mirror to a society which defines authenticity of fandom

[548] See MCS, 367.
[549] Compare BC, 142: “The game accounts from Middlesbrough’s visit to Portsmouth would say that Sol Campbell had played wonderfully, and I saw nothing to discredit that even though I cannot rate defensemen or, for that matter, strikers, midfielders, goalkeepers, trainers, or water personnel.“
[550] Initially, he briefly flirts with Newcastle United F.C but then declines. See BC, 22 and 62.
[551] See BC, 34.
[552] BC, 62-63.
[553] Compare Culpepper’s anecdote about Glen Johnson, his prospective favourite player, trying to steal a toilet seat in a store despite being on £ 30,000 a week. See BC, 127f.
[554] BC, 91.

according to a set of fixed conventions and behavioural patterns. The easier it is for Culpepper to find his favourite team, the harder it is for him to become an integral member of the fan community. Although rapidly building up strong affiliations to the team and referring to Pompey's supporters as "my people" or "my brethren",[555] he barely gets in touch with other fans.[556] This in turn shows the reader that English fandom is depicted as something exclusive, carefully shielded against intruders from outside. It is against this background that he declines from passionately celebrating a goal at the beginning stages of his fandom.[557] Such is his portrayed insecurity that he even asks fellow fans' permission for the communal "we" when speaking about Pompey.[558] His thorough un-British approach to football fandom is made painstakingly clear to him when a Newcastle fan shouts to him while disembarking from the train:

> As I moved along the platform one of the guys leaned out the open Tube doors and exclaimed:
> 'It's not a choice!'
> I felt that old pang of guilt as the interloper who'd wandered into someone else's country and treated his profound emotional attachment like some quiz question.[559]

The self-perceived state of interloper, however, has a beneficial effect on his account as it helps to critically scrutinize traditional British concepts of fan identity and place them in a more global perspective. While Culpepper admires English fan loyality,[560] the ideal of the sacrificial true British diehard fan is seriously questioned once compared to American standards:

> Now, it can baffle a greenhorn American to hear English way fans lauded as the 'truest' of fans. Sure, away fans have gotton up and gotton out of the house and refrained from sedentary afternoons spent bitching through a TV screen because the referee just missed a handball obvious from here to Glasgow. Sure, away fans make the effort so that they can ruin

[555] See BC, 81, 85, 92, 137.
[556] We are not told whether he travels to away-fixtures with a group of fans. This, however, seems rather unlikely since his account portrays him as a more or less isolated fan, which – given the brief period of his fandom, the lack of social connections in Portsmouth's surrounding community – is perfectly understandable. In fact, he claims to have his first-ever conversation at a Portsmouth game with a person next to him on 6 January, 2007 – half way through the season he reports on! Although Culpepper symbolically moves to Fratton End at one stage, the part for Pompey's most diehard fans, he does not report on any closer social relations that develop from this. As he himself admits, the first personal relations to fellow Portsmouth fans he develops as late as March 2007. Compare chapter 18 in BC, 121-124 as well as ibid., 174.
[557] Compare BC, 94.
[558] For Culpepper's uncertainty to use the term 'we' and his request for permission to do so see BC, 102, 226.
[559] BC, 214.
[560] Compare BC, 56.

> their afternoons bitching in person about the obvious handball. Away fans make the drive or ride the train or ride a bus that has no bar or no loo. Away fans risk urinary tract infections.
> It's just that it can take time to appreciate the grit of away fans when you hail from a gigantic country wherein college kids make ten-hour drives to football games, then drive home all through the night taking turns napping while risking their grade point averages, their lives, and the lives of others.[561]

A close reading of Parks' narrative reveals that Parks portrays himself as an intruder on two accounts. On the one hand, the British expatriate considers himself a stranger in his adopted Italian hometown even after twenty years of residence in Verona.[562] On the other hand, the rough fan culture of the *Brigate*, Verona's most diehard fan group, is alien to the well-educated, middle-class home-game-supporter Parks. With regard to the latter, we learn that Parks is thrilled by their thuggish reputation and consequently curious to explore it. As he tries to infiltrate them, Parks' non-Veronese background arouses suspicion in their tight-knit community. Initially, the narrator finds it hard to get access to the group. Though he quickly manages to establish his credentials,[563] Parks is questioned by a member of the *Brigate* about his identity on his first trip with the group:

> 'Who are you?' Albe asks.
> I explain that I'm an English fan of Verona. Strictly a home-game fan. This trip is just an aberration. 'The season has started so late and I need to see some football.'
> 'If you're working for Papalia,' he tells me, 'I promise you we'll kill you. We'll chop you in bits.'[564]

What fascinates him most is the civic pride the Brigate displays, a pride he apparently is not entitled to show as a foreigner in Verona.

> I'm struck by the fact that I have spent twenty years here, my whole adult life really. All the taxes I have paid I have paid here, *Dio can*. A fortune! I have brought up my kids here. I too have a right, I tell myself, to this civic pride.[565]

Thus, by mingling with those born and bred Veronese, he gets a share of their local pride. Moreover, within the framework the Brigate provides, his status as a stranger is not immediately recognizable. Of course, this does not imply that Parks is entirely

[561] BC, 163.
[562] SV, 292: "I remark that I myself have been in Verona twenty years and have always been treated as if I were in transit: sooner or later, like every other foreigner, I would do the honest thing: go away and leave them alone again."
[563] See SV, 31f.
[564] SV, 22.
[565] SV, 122.

accepted within the *Brigate* itself,[566] although he occasionally tries to evoke this impression.[567] What's more, positioning himself inside the lines his outsider status enables Parks to make sharp observations on the *Brigate*'s fan behaviour. As a result he observes that in the wider context of football fan culture social conventions of decent behaviour seem to be put on hold:

> A boy came rushing across the compartment and slammed down the window. He was slim, handsome, perhaps seventeen, with blond hair expensively cut round a centre parting and a fine chiselled face. Leaning out of the window, be [sic] began to shout at the line of policemen only a yard or two away. 'Shits! Thugs! Worms!! Turds! Communists! Go fuck yourselves!'
> If a young man were to do this on any ordinary day in any ordinary street of northern Italy, the abused policemen would arrest him at once. Instead, within the framework football provides, the men in uniform gazed back impassive, their padded jackets full of weapons. 'Fascists! Slavs! Kurds Bastards! *Terroni*!'
> Then the boy realised his mobile was ringing. He pulled it out of his jacket pocket. 'No Mamma, we're still in the station at Vicenza.'
> How sweet his voice was now, how empty of tension or anger!
> 'No, we didn't have much homework this weekend. I've already finished.'[568]

Interestingly, in the course of the narrative the middle-classed Parks, stranger to violence and right-wingery, is fascinated by the behaviour of the *Brigate*. Hence, we are told that traveling with the Brigate has become addictive.[569] In fact, the writer and academic seems thrilled by their thuggish conduct and their reluctance to obey the law. Vividly painting a picture of it, he fails to condemn it.

> 'Oh, butei, the ticket inspector's coming.'
> 'Don't believe it.'
> The inspector had unlocked the door from the main part of the train and was working his way down the compartments. Nobody had imagined he would have the balls. I was in a compartment with one of Forza's group at this point, a huge man, Boio, who together with his girlfriend had pulled the seats down into beds and was trying to get some sleep. When the inspector opened the door, Boio lifted a yellow-blue cap from his face, half-opened his eyes, said, 'Don't take offence inspector, but the sad truth is we've decided not to pay.' The man nodded. 'I have to ask of course,' he said politely. 'We understand,' Boio said. 'It's your job. Don't take offence.'[570]

[566] See SV, 169: "All the boys are there. Fondo, Il morto, Forza, Cain, the pleasant young man with the short phocomelic arms. They notice me, give a nod of acknowledgment. It was presumptuous on my part to imagine they would give a damn about my presence, about my writing books."
[567] Compare SV, 345, 359, and particularly 386.
[568] SV, 129.
[569] See SV, 270: "My mind is full of chants. I'm constantly whistling the triumphal march of *Aïda, 'Alè, forza Verona alè*' or 'Guantanamera', '*Non si capisce ma come cazzo parlate*!' Even at the breakfast table, even in the corridors at the university. *Forza gialloblù*, *gialloblù*, *giallobluuuuu*! And after every away game the bus rumbles on longer and longer in my head. Stevanin! Stevanin! The bottles clink backwards and forwards on the tidal run of my thoughts."
[570] SV, 387.

While Parks merely describes the culture of the Brigate, McGinniss openly criticises the criminal circumstances surrounding his adopted team. Apart from his constant protest against Gravina and Rezza's incompetence and illegal affairs, McGinniss[571] is appalled by the team's apparent match-fixing in its final match. Threatening to disclose the match-fixing scandal in his book, McGinniss leaves the team in bitter disappointment calling the team's enormous achievements into question.[572] Whereas McGinniss' loathing of such practices can be understood as a sign of moral integrity, it equally shows that he has failed to understand the inner workings of the Italian game.

6.6. The rocky road to fandom: an alternative type of tourism?

Borrowing from Dart, the term 'travelogue' can be seen as a "record of travel incorporating the events, sights and people encountered either as part of a journey or while being based in another place."[573] Indeed, it is mainly through their fandom-related travels that the narrators explore foreign countries. Therefore the term 'travelogue' can be meaningfully applied to the narratives at hand. Culpepper, for instance, finds unexpected beauty in the English countryside when visiting Torquay, United's homeground:

> Technically, that'd be Torquay United, reposing down there with twenty-five points, five points adrift of Wrexham and Macclesfield Town, and ninety-one spots and three leagues adrift of Manchester United. Once an American has identified the word 'Torquay,' the second act is to learn the location of this mystical Torquay, and that's when I began to do some studious studying, I learned that Torquay graces the English Riviera portion of Devon, that strand of southwest England that juts out into the sea, and that's when I learned there's such a thing in the world as the English Riviera.
> The English Riviera turns out to be utterly lovely, even if February does not necessarily count among the prime times to visit the English Riviera. When you walk through central Torquay down to the mall and behold the Tor Bay, you have come upon one of the most beautiful sights in England, in my opinion.[574]

Yet, despite their keen interest in the country, these narrators must not be perceived as ordinary tourists. Unlike ordinary tourists, ever so willing to boost a city's economy, they act as travelling football fans – and as such they are immediately identified as

[571] Compare McGinniss' letter of complaint and his polemic. See MCS, 196, 268.
[572] See MCS, 393.
[573] Jonathan Dart, ''Here We Go, Here We Go'. Football Fans' World Cup Travelogues', in: *Sport in History*, 29:2 (2009), 313. Dart indicates that his own definition derives from Holland and Huggan's findings. Yet, such a definition cannot be identified in their work. Compare Patrick Holland, Patrick & Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing,* Ann Arbor ^{2}2002.
[574] BC, 158.

potential troublemakers and consequently treated with suspicion as soon as they arrive. This in turn explains the narrators‘ negative portrayal of the police in their accounts. But Culpepper is rather puzzled by the treatment he receives:

> So I inadvertently wound up walking alongside the police, and even though I had no affiliation save for a club so far south it’s just shy of France, they seemed to have surfeit of officers, so I had six protecting me while traffic stopped and drivers might’ve seethed.
> I, dumb American, had my own police escort out of Preston. To me, it defied all known logic, and I enjoyed it utterly. I even felt amazed anew at the train platform, where they steered the Birmingham fans into their own segregated cars, and one of the police officers said I could sit anywhere by explaining to another – no really – ‘He’s normal.‘[575]

Parks‘ feelings towards the police can best be described with loathing and aversion:

> And however calm we are, however relaxed, or sometimes despondent, they always have their truncheons in their hands, tightly gripped. Perspiring abundantly in the suffocating heat of Napoli Centrale, one holds a tear-gas launcher on his arm. Another raises his video camera to follow every move we make. Walking down the platform, the *brigate* are singing, ‘*Pizza quà, pizza là, Napoli va a cagà!*‘ Pizza here, pizza there. Napoli piss off.
> We’re taken to a side-entrance to be frisked. ‘No flagpoles.‘
> ‘What?‘
> ‘You heard. No flagpoles.‘
> ‘But we bought them on purpose. It’s a choreography for the team.‘
> ‘Crap. You’ve only come here to cause trouble.‘
> ‘That’s not true. We’re here for the team.‘
> ‘Crap.‘[576]

Visiting foreign grounds might well result in impressions that radically divert from tourists‘ more classic conceptions of these cities. When *Castel’s* team clash with *Venezia* away from home, McGinniss contemplates the reason why it is so hard to locate *Venezia*‘s homeground, a ground that can only be reached by boat:

> Still, in Roma, Napoli, Milano, Firenze – the cities, other than Venezia, most visited by tourists of all nations – *calcio* was a palpable presence. The teams of those cities traditionally were among the strongest in the world, and if one were to spend significant time in any of them, conscious effort would be required to pretend that these teams did not exist. [...]
> One could spend weeks in Venice and leave the city entirely unaware that it was home to a professional soccer team. [...]
> It was cultural. Not the simple snobbery that might be found in Rome or Florence, but the more delicate and subtle sense that Venice had not only a history but a contemporary identity separate and unique from the rest of Italy and that, to the extent this was true, *calcio*, that quintessentially Italian athletic activity, did not belong. Thus, while tolerated as long as it did not make a nuisance of itself, *il calcio* was relegated to the outermost fringes of Venetian life.[577]

[575] BC, 233.
[576] SV, 397.
[577] MCS, 227-228.

Somewhat surprisingly, McGinniss is able to experience the Venetian strive for fractionalism through the prism of football here – an experience that might have escaped a foreigner on more conventional paths of tourism. In a similar vein, it is the element of Italian civic pride that recurs in these narratives. Parks, for example, is delighted when he hears the *Brigate* chanting about their supposed linguistic superiority:

> There's always a comic moment at the stadium when the fans get on to the language problem. 'Pà-à-uh-a! Pà-à-uh-a!' the Veronese chanted in Bergamo, imitating the way the locals pronounce that key word *pastasciutta*. And then they broke out into the song that at some point gets sung at every game. The tune is the old favourite 'Guantanamera'. The song has but one idea.
> 'Non si capisce ma come cazzo parlate,
> Non si capi-i-i-sce ma come cazzo parlate!'
> Which briefly translates as: 'We can't understand what the fuck you're saying.' And implies: the centre of the world is our city, our language, our accent.[578]

To cut it short, exercised actively, football fandom becomes a looking glass through which a foreign culture can be experienced and understood. Many of the countries' wider social, political and economic issues are reflected through fan culture. Thus within the framework football provides, Parks and McGinniss repeatedly dwell on Italy's North-South divide, both of them stressing an increasing readiness for criminality and aggression the further south one goes in Italy.[579] As participant observers both of them share a fascination for an emotional excitability apparently ingrained in Italian life and seemingly mirrored in its football culture. Parks explains:

> Asked to comment on what he has learned in his first months of Italian football, the Croatian Mario Cvitanovic, a worried-looking boy with dark, close-set-eyes beneath a fashionable centre parting, reflects: 'Here in Italy, after every game, you are either in paradise or in hell.'
> He's right. That is what Italians want. A constant alternation between *trionfo* and *tristezza*; *vittoria* and *vergogna*. When you think about it, even those four or five teams that finish the season with neither a negative nor positive result, neither in Europe nor in Serie B, will either be appalled that they missed entry to the big competitions or elated that they have just escaped relegation.[580]

In a similar vein, McGinniss argues:

> In Italy, and especially in the world of *calcio*, a state of crisis is considered the norm. So much that the word *crisi*, as applied to some player or team, can be found almost every day in *La Gazzetta* or in one of the other sporting papers. In a country in which fifty-six governments

[578] SV, 168.
[579] Compare SV, 356, 362 and MCS, 255.
[580] SV, 162.

> have fallen since the end of World War II, the people become accustomed to *crisi*, and like *voce* (rumor), only one in a hundred ever amounts to anything in the end.[581]

Although the individual perceptions are limited in scope, these cross-comparisons nevertheless contribute to a wider understanding of Italian nationhood. Whilst McGinniss claims to refrain from political commentary at all,[582] the expatriate Parks rarely adds it to his account despite having much more authority to do so. But when he does, it largely revolves around the impact of Catholicism and issues of xenophobia in Italy. Observations on political affairs are then threaded in a subtle, more anecdotal manner:

> Over the same uneventful weekend the Vatican invites pharmacists nationwide not to dispense the day-after pill and not to stock it. The government has just included the abortion pill in its list of medicines that physicians can prescribe. The magazine *Panorama* shows two ladies coming out of mass. 'What do you think of the day-after pill?' one asks. 'Day after what?' the other replies.[583]

Travel writing seems to be mutually beneficial. While the reader is taken on a journey exploring the country's pecularities, the narrator's outsider perspective can help to redefine and relocate identity, be it as an individual or a citizen of a country. Accordingly, Culpepper states:

> That's what I learned about myself at that moment: having emerged from a U.S. birth canal, I'm simply not conditioned to celebrate eighth place, especially after a chance to vault to sixth fails to lend my side even the slightest apparent inspiration. What's that old poll result about American children who'd finish, say, tenth in the world on a math test but when asked where they suspected their country would finish, always answered, 'First'? I had come along in that.[584]

6.7 Conclusion

Comparing the seasonal travelogues at hand with the fan biographies scrutinized before, substantial differences can be identified – particularly in terms of narrative style, scope and focus. Whereas the former ones are primarily concerned with chronicling the narrators' life-long commitments, the latter ones are limited to

[581] MCS, 208.
[582] Compare MCS, 171: "For better or worse, I'd made it clear from the start that politically, in America, I was *di sinistra*, a left-winger, but that I felt it would be inappropriate for me to express opinions (such as that Berlusconi was a greedy, corrupt, fascist pig) about the political affairs of Italy."
[583] SV, 102. On the aspect of xenophobia see ibid., 61. The story of Jewish Religious-Instruction teacher Marsiglia who forged a skinhead attack on himself is reoccuringly threaded through the narrative. With Parks' account unfolding Marsiglia is gradually exposed as a liar. The Marsiglia plot is intended to question Verona's right-wing reputation carefully constructed by the media.
[584] BC, 168.

seasoning snapshots. Whilst the likes of Hornby chart their road to fandom alongside more conventional milestones of traditional achievements such as career and family, the seasonal travelogue is much more limited in scope. By focusing on a single season details about personal matters non-related to the sphere of football are either minimized or omitted.

With Tim Parks and Joe McGinniss we find well-established writers behind these seasonal travelogues. Carefully outweighing other options, their decision to chronicle a season has been a deliberate one, taken with the firm intention of producing a literary artefact ready to be sold to a wider readership. In true diary-style fashion narration occurs in simultaneous manner with the season gradually unfolding, thus creating high levels of uncertainty as the narrator does not know what the future holds. This mode of narration forms a stark contrast to fan biographies as these are definitely written retrospectively. The writing process is repeatedly reflected metafictionally with relevant contractual and financial agreements offered to the reader.[585] While the narrator's relation to the homeground is of central importance in fan biographies, the element of travelling is crucial in seasonal accounts. Consequently extended treatment is given to the fan's travelling experiences, in which different stadia and their surroundings are explored. Since all selected narrators do not hail from the country they report on, their outsider perspectives make the accounts particularly insightful. This is by no means restricted to observations of the countries' foreign football culture, but equally rings true for impressions of the countries' wider social, political and economic dimensions. Here fandom provides the framework through which the makeup of nations can be observed. Obviously, these observations are mostly anecdotal, usually lacking any empirical evidence. Whereas Parks' topophilic affiliation to town and club comes closest to the conventional model of British fandom,[586] both McGinniss' and Culpepper's approaches radically divert from it. With no former club affiliation whatsoever, the two novices rapidly transform into passionate football fans. Yet, while it seems almost certain that Parks will continue to support his chosen club in the future, the reader is left in doubt whether McGinniss or Culpepper will keep up their allegiances when they return to the USA. Sadly though, Castel di Sangro's football team went out of existence in the years that followed. Whilst McGinniss seems to have turned his back on Italian football, he told me that his general affection for football has remained:

[585] See Culpepper's Acknowledgements, but also MCS, 104 and SV, 384.
[586] See SV, 104.

> I remain passionately interested in the game, and watch matches from England, Scotland, France, Germany, Spain, Argentina and Brazil regularly. I have become a Barcelona fan, and am in mourning today because of yesterday's loss in *El Clasico* [587]

Interestingly, Culpepper is perfectly aware that his approach to fandom has been rather unconventional, still his humbleness mocks the classic expectations of British diehard fandom. In doing so he reflects a prevailing hierarchy of British fandom and alerts the reader to the fact that fandom is not necessarily open to everyone.

[587] See MCS, 345. Statement taken from email interview see appendix.

7. World Cup Travelogues

7.1 Colin Ward *Well Frogged Out*[588]

7.1.1 Content

With the likes of David Beckham and Michael Owen in the national team, Ward chronologically recounts how England fans are full of expectation for France '98 after failing to qualify for the World Cup 1994. Yet, before charting England's progress in the actual World Cup finals the reader is taken on a roller-coaster journey along the English qualifying campaign. Starting his account in May 1997, a week before the game against Poland in Katowice, he maps out England's road to qualification. As England can't face another disappointment, it has to finish first in its group, above group rival Italy. Setting out to explore the English world cup dream, he travels to Poland and Italy for England's decisive clashes facing harsh police treatment, hostility and violence there.

Once qualification has been sealed with a crucial 0–0 draw against Italy in Rome's *Stadio Olimpico*, the World Cup fever sets in only to be overshadowed by the ticket shortages for English fans. Travelling alongside the English fans in France he vividly portrays a wide range of characters mirroring the problems they encounter. Above all, it is the fans' anger at paying way over the odds to obtain match tickets on the black market which angers the narrative voice. In between England games Ward heads home to London, travelling back and forth only to return in the nick of time to capture the World Cup spirit in the towns of Marseilles, Toulouse, Lens and St. Etienne – the locations of England's World Cup clashes. Mingling freely with fellow supporters Ward's focus lies firmly on the English fans – their hopes and fears as well as their perception through the English press and the French host nation. Apart from the unfair treatment by French authorities it is particularly the cliché-ridden, sensationalist coverage of English fans by the English press that Ward bemoans. Attempting to clear the name of those that were injustly accused of hooliganism by the English press, he presents his eye-witness account of what happened during the riots at Marseille surrounding England's opening match against Tunisia.

As the World Cup proceeds, Ward exposes how the riots in Marseille affect the ordinary English fan, since he has to put up with severe obstructions by those that organise the spectacle in France. With bars and restaurants shut down at the venues

[588] Colin Ward, *Well Frogged Out: The Fans' True Story of France '98*, Edinburgh & London: Mainstream Publishing 1998. Ward's work cited hereafter as 'CW'.

England play, following the team becomes much harder for its supporters. Upon England's tragic defeat against Argentina in the knock-out stages, Ward returns to England in frustration, barely interested in the remaining matches. With England out of the World Cup the narrative ends with a grim outlook on the team's future perspective as France '98 seems to have cemented England's reputation as 'good losers'.

7.1.2 Narrative style

When scrutinizing the style of Ward's narrative, two elements stick out. First, it is an almost uncritical appraisal of English football fandom, especially the way it is enacted and mediated when England play abroad. Second, it is an almost hypocritical diatribe against the English press corps due to their biased portrayal of the first. In an attempt to exemplify the unfair reporting on English fans, he quotes the headlines of selected English tabloids in the aftermath of the Marseille riots, which were not necessarily triggered by the English:

> 'Vindaloonies' – *The Daily Star*
> 'A disgrace to England' – *The Sun*
> 'So ashamed of our yob fans' – *The Express*
> 'Louts, thugs and mindless' – *The Mail* [589]

On travelling alongside those that are responsible for such misguided portrayal, it comes as no surprise that Ward tries to ridicule these sport writers in public:

> On the plane from Krakow I was allocated a seat next to a charming, effervescent Polish lady. Although she was around 35, she had a clear, fresh complexion with ice-blue eyes. She was an interior designer who was making a fortune in England. I regaled her with stories about England, while she told me about interior design. By chance, sitting behind me were Alex and Joe, the economy journalists. I got the feeling they were earwigging my conversation so I threw in a story about the unscrupulous English Press. What really brought a smile to her face was when I told her that the two men behind me were famous for indulging in the Polish hotel bar hospitality, and as I winked at her, I flashed the card that Pat had given me with a picture of a shapely, half-dressed lady under the name Salon Masazu. The card could hardly left anybody in doubt as to the sort of club in question. I added that the two Pressmen behind had given me it at the airport and recommended I visit it. She turned around and looked at them smiling, as people do when they perceive others have done something risqué.
> 'They are very naughty boys,' I said in my best Kenneth Williams voice, which made her roar.
> When she offered me her business card I turned round and asked Joe and Alex if it was all right to offer her Salon Masazu's calling card. Joe and Alex never said a word, but looked at me with disgust – without the rest of their journalist colleagues present now they didn't dare hurl any abusive language at me.[590]

[589] CW, 111.
[590] CW, 61-62.

Similar to previous works discussed in this collection, Ward reminisces a supposed ‘golden age‘ of football, where money did not dominate the game and players were not subjected to the most unbearable weather conditions just for the sake of satisfying TV requirements. Above all, it is the loyal diehard fan that is worst hit by football’s commercial revolution and consequently suffers most. He is particularly concerned about the public image of the English fan. Trying hard to fight the media-spread image of English fans as hooligans, he portrays those he encounters as vociferous and boozy, but essentially harmless.

> Huge armoured wagons raced along and stopped abruptly; the back doors were flung open for fully equipped and armed riot police to jump out and stare aggressively at the benign England fans having a drink. One bar near the station was shut for no other reason than prejudice, the crime of the England fans being that they were enjoying themselves too much.[591]

Stressing the peaceful nature of English fans, he draws upon biblical analogy. Hence one of the chapters is somewhat paradoxically titled “Lions and Christians“ alluding to the fact that England face Italy in Rome:

> People drink for different reasons. Today the England fans drank time away because staring us in the face was the irrefutable fact that the Christians would have to go into a hostile atmosphere and survive: something that had never previously been achieved in the Colosseum.[592]

Although he strongly objects to the cliché-ridden condemnation of English football fans and bemoans the police violence targeted at these, he does not actively condemn violence directed at the police. Reading between the lines, he implicitly seems to approve of it:

> Matty took stock: he was in the front line now. He spotted an Italian policeman with his visor up. He sprang across the rows of empty seats and felt his fist land plum on the nose of the Italian policeman. Bullseye. Cop that you plimsoll-wearing, backfiring-rifle Italian coward!
> As he retreated, police came after him. One policeman ran but slipped and fell heavily. In went the boots until his Italian colleagues rescued him. They called for a stretcher and the twitching policeman was rushed through the front gates one England fan shouted, ‘I hope you die, you bastard.‘ There were plenty there who felt the same.[593]

As the lines above suggest, the narrative suits those thrilled by graphic portrayals of violence and aggression. It caters to a war-interested readership with a clear-cut notion of English history. Unique characteristics of English fandom are explained

[591] CW, 72.
[592] CW, 76.
[593] CW, 80.

through English history as England's past is seen as a history of conquest and resistance with the English as a warrior nation:

> As the fans milled around a feeling was in the air which only seems to surround England fans. Fun for fun's sake and pure joy are never on board with England fans.
> There was something violent inside the England fans, a sort of lingering darkness which gives the English fans a pre-match, brooding menace. Perhaps it is their approach to life and football, for in their hearts there is a dark side which seems absent in other fans. [...]
> This menace cannot be portrayed by a news camera because the thing that makes the England fan is the same thing that built the Empire and gave Europe breathing space in 1940 when Britain stood alone against the terrible evil of Hitler.[594]

Against this background outbursts of violence are a recurring feature in Ward's narrative,[595] so are war references that are repeatedly threaded through the account. Whereas some war references are simply unbefitting,[596] other allusions, especially to Auschwitz, are deeply offensive to all victims of the Nazi dictatorship.

Lobbying for more undercover staff, the English police issued official warnings prior to the World Cup stating that thousands of English hooligans would storm through France:

> I thought back to Poland and Auschwitz and how the German propaganda machine had painted the Jews and saw similarities. Weren't the same people who only a few weeks previously were battered innocents in Rome now being painted thuggish lowlife?[597]

Along with the strong national pride the narrative voice displays comes the occasional belief in England's superiority. It is little wonder that the presentation of other nations, either through the narrative voice or other characters, is at times ignorant and at times offensive.

[594] CW, 179.
[595] Compare CW, 112-113.
[596] Before the decisive qualifying match against Poland the narrator claims: "Once more England's fate would be inexorably entwined with that of Poland." See CW, 23.
[597] CW, 91.

7.2 Simon Moran *We are Nippon*[598]

7.2.1 Content

In the first ever Asian World Cup the tournament finally comes to the doorstep of Japan-based journalist Simon Moran. Being married to a Japanese woman, the English expatriate finds his loyalities divided. Upon gaining accreditation as a freelance photo-journalist Moran is given the opportunity to attend both Japanese and English games. And Moran seizes that opportunity with an overall attendance of 13 live matches including the final Brazil vs Germany. Such presence in the stadia comes at a heavy cost as the Osaka resident has to travel 6,400 miles across Japan to cover all the games. Yet, his efforts are not in vain since his extensive travels help him to paint a broader picture of the World Cup atmosphere and vividly inform the reader of what it is like to be on the scene. Although he supports Japan and England, their defeats in the second round of the World Cup are received rather unemotionally, because his major focus of observation lies on the international fan community, their reception by the Japanese host nation and the process of bridge building during the World Cup. Yet, Moran's World Cup diary is far from being an uncritical appraisal of Japan's staging of the tournament as he also scrutinizes the tense relations to co-hosting Korea, Japan's hooligan paranoia as well as FIFA's scandalous ticket merchandise practices.

7.2.2 Narrative style

Framed by an opening prologue and a concluding epilogue Simon Moran chronologically recounts his World Cup experiences in 24 chapters. Strangely though, chapter 13 is missing without further explanation. A keen observer and a fluent speaker of Japanese himself, he embraces Japanese culture and likes to share his knowledge of Japanese people, politics and history with the reader.[599] Hence, World Cup coverage is restricted to events in co-hosting Japan, match reports of selected World Cup games are usually curtailed to a few pages, whereas the reports on qualifying campaigns are entirely omitted.[600] On pages titled "The Road to

[598] Simon Moran, *We are Nippon: The World Cup in Japan*, Hyogo: S.U. Press 2002. Moran's work cited hereafter as 'SM'.

[599] The pride the English expat takes in Japan can easily be inferred from the chosen title of his account – To him the phrase 'We are Nippon' is more than just the popular football chant of Japanese fans but a personal statement of inextricable commitment to his adopted country.

[600] In his second chapter, however, Moran gives extended treatment to the bidding campaigns of the two host nations Japan and South Korea prior to the World Cup. See SM, 11-15.

Yokohama“, group tables and match results are regularly displayed after each matchday, thus enabling the reader to keep an overview on the progress of the tournament.[601] Occasionally the narrative is moved out of Moran's voice as he employs “five human lenses“.[602] These characters help to echo the atmosphere in Japan, report on matches and assess performances of teams and players. Impressions of the World Cup in Japan are captured by numerous photographs of celebrating fans, either hailing from abroad or from Japan.[603] A map of Japan and a glossary of terms come in handy for the reader since more general information on the country is provided.[604] Having settled in Japan as early as 1995, the English expat belongs to the few that hold an outsider perspective, but have resided long enough in Japan to comment on the impact of the World Cup with authority. In line with other 'low profile journalists' he gives weight to the commercial exploitation of the World Cup, predominantly by FIFA itself and other sponsoring companies. Whilst bemoaning the commercial exploitation of the World Cup is a common feature in such accounts, Moran's approach comes across as rather narrow-minded. Accusing local bars and businesses of money-grubbery is illusional:

> All the customers would have to worry about would be the price of their bar bill. Pints of Guinness, Kilkenny's and lager are sold at ¥850, around £4.60 each. A plate of fish and chips costs ¥700, around £3.80. When a plate arrives, the fish turns out to be two frozen fillets, six of which can be bought in the supermarket for ¥300, accompanied by eight chips.[605]

Moran's long-term residency enables him to provide a refreshingly balanced image of his adopted country “without using clichéd reference to samurai, ronin and sumo,“ [606] as he himself happily admits. Against this background it is somewhat unbecoming of him that he falls back on stereotypical perceptions when portraying the German football team:

> German manager Rudi Voeller who will later concur in a television interview. 'It was a professional foul, he had to do it or they would have scored. He placed himself at the service of the team and the whole of Germany.'
> Whether this exact thought had crossed Ballack's mind, only he will ever know. Perhaps it was an intentional, goal-saving foul, or perhaps it was just an instant reaction. Either way, Ballack

[601] See SM, 52-53, 89-90, 110-111, 149, 161, 179. Note that Yokohama was the place where the World Cup final was played on 30 June 2002.
[602] SM, 7.
[603] See the gallery of photographs taken by Moran, shown between pages 96-97.
[604] For the map of Japan see SM, 6. Moran's glossary of terms contains explanations of Japanese terms and also provides short annotations about Japanese history. See SM, 189-190.
[605] SM, 169.
[606] SM, 4.

> has sacrificed himself for the good of the team. He receives a yellow card, his second of the tournament and should Germany progress, he will miss the final. Voeller, meanwhile, confirmed what everybody has long suspected, that the Germans are cynical, cold-hearted and ruthless.[607]

Such stereotypical portrayal comes utterly unexpected, mainly because Moran derides all things nationalistic in his account. In fact, it's a cosmopolitan air that surrounds his narrative. This cosmopolitan attitude of the Osaka-based Englishman explains in turn why he frowns upon travelling English fans displaying 'ordinary features of Britishness and English fandom'. Indeed, with an air of superiority it seems as if Moran is ashamed of his fellow countrymen:

> Hurrying along, I pick up three lost Englishmen, who are standing in the middle of the street. One of them, wearing a red England away shirt, stretched tightly over his enormous beer-belly, his white face pink from too much sun, is asking a taxi driver where they can watch the football.
> 'Excuse me, where can we watch the football?'
> '*Aimu so-ree, ai donto speeku Eengureeshu*.'
> The taxi driver had obviously been studying.
> 'You know, football.' The beer-bellied Englishman adds cheerily as he kicks the air to demonstrate his country's national sport, as unconvincingly as England had in the second half against Sweden. [...]
> The taxi driver smiles and swats his hand to and fro in front of his face, as if batting away some unwelcome smell or annoying insect, indicating he doesn't understand.
> The Englishman is not put off.
> 'You know, television.' He draws an imaginary television in the air by joining his index fingers together in front of his face and making an imaginary box, as if introducing a television program in badly-contested game of charades, repeating. 'Television, television.'
> The taxi driver looks on, puzzled in the extreme, struggling manfully to prevent his face giving away his thoughts.
> 'Who is this strange, fat, white man, and what on earth is he gesturing about?'[608]

When studying these lines the question about the targeted readership of Moran's account arises. Unarguably, those he ridicules with an air of superiority will definitely be put off by his diatribes against their own kind, particularly when they have spent a fortune to support their team. To me Moran had a rather widely-travelled, cosmopolitan readership in mind when composing his World Cup diary. Yet, at the same time his narrative also caters to English-speaking Japanese taking pleasure in all bearings related to the English. The in-depth knowledge he displays on Japan is particularly intriguing to those that know next to nothing about this country and its people. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about his football-related knowledge. Stating in his acknowledgement section that "players and stadium names were referenced by the excellent BBC Sport World Cup 2002 website," it is surprising to

[607] SM, 172-173.
[608] SM, 65.

learn that a certain Darren Hargreaves was part of the English squad.[609] A reader would expect a FIFA-accredited freelance photo-journalist covering the World Cup, while simultaneously composing a World Cup diary to be familiar with the name of England's Owen Hargreaves. Equally problematic is Moran's evaluation of Brazil's performance in the World Cup: "Brazil won their fifth World Cup. They were written off before the tournament started, but it was no surprise when they won."[610] Astonishingly, no explanation is given whatsoever why it has actually been unsurprising that Brazil managed to win the World Cup in the finals against Germany. This is unsatisfactory, particularly because Moran's match report of the final leading up to this statement implies otherwise.[611] Also puzzling is his approach to employ five human lenses attempting to offer "the perfect illustration for those who couldn't make it."[612] Match coverage through these human lenses actually creates a set of problems for all those that have not watched the games portrayed as these readers effectively depend on the subjective assessments of these 'human lenses'. Sadly though, the readers learn next to nothing about them.[613] Consequently their expertise in football matters is terribly hard to judge and their trustworthiness called into question. The overall impression of the narrative is that Moran's World Cup account was published rather hastily in the aftermath of the event, presumably to cash in on the hype surrounding such a tournament. This would also explain the missing chapter and the unverifiable claim on the book's jacket that he has seen 14 games.[614]

[609] See SM, 71.
[610] SM, 187.
[611] Compare the chapter 24 "The World Cup Final – Brazil vs. Germany", in particular SM, 183-184.
[612] See jacket of SM.
[613] Who exactly these 5 human lenses are, is not expressed explicitly in the narrative. Judging from the photographs displayed in the middle of the book, it could be the following friends and acquaintances: Mayama Hitoshi, a chef at Mohejitei, a family-run *izakaya*, a Japanese bar. Takeuchi Koichi running the Osaka Supporters Club (OSC). Pak Chong Dae, a member of the OSC, Alfred Weinzierl, a German expat working at the Centre for Multicultural Information and Assistance in Osaka, and finally, Shintani, a Japanese engineer and 'ladies man'. Compare SM, 17-20, 113-122.
[614] After repeated inspection it must be stated that Moran has only been to 13 matches, contrary to the publisher's claim of 14 live attendances. The missing coverage of one game Moran claims to have attended might result from the lack of chapter 13. At the end of chapter 14 Moran states: "I've now been to eight games." (Compare SM, 122). Yet, a closer inspection of the preceding chapters clearly reveals that he has only been to 7 matches. The live matches he reports on are: England vs. Sweden (Chapter 5), Japan vs. Belgium (Chapter 6), England vs. Argentina (Chapter 8), Japan vs. Russia (Chapter 9), England vs. Nigeria (Chapter 11), Japan vs. Tunisia (Chapter 11), England vs. Denmark (Chapter 14), Brazil vs. Belgium (Chapter 16), Japan vs. Turkey (Chapter 18), Brazil vs. England (Chapter 19), Senegal vs. Turkey (Chapter 20), Brazil vs. Turkey (Chapter 23), Brazil vs. Germany (Chapter 24).

7.3 Jamie Trecker *Love & Blood*[615]

7.3.1 Content

Choosing the World Cup draw in Leipzig 2005 as his starting point, the seasoned sports journalist Jamie Trecker starts his coverage with a flashback of his personal experiences in Seoul during the previous tournament in Japan and South Korea. Once the World Cup has kicked off, he chronicles the sounds and sights of an international festival whose atmosphere he finds joyous and infectious. Given a free railway pass Munich-based Trecker travels to Germany's major cities providing an overview on their history while equally covering the World Cup scene in stadia, beer gardens and public places. True to his position as Fox Sports' leading soccer columnist, he hasn't got his mind set on a single team. Instead he offers the most diverse coverage of World Cup matches widely reporting on European, African and American teams, although epileptic fits prevent him from attending matches he had initially planned to watch. Given the privileged access Trecker is granted to the games, his match reporting is actually downsized to a minimum. Instead Trecker takes the World Cup frame to paint a broader picture of the German host nation and of a sport that has clearly been neglected by the overwhelming majority of people in his home country. Hence he uses this event to introduce his readers to tactics and traditions, qualification procedures, basic rules and regulations, the rise and demise of the game in the USA and, above all, the way the game is administered at the top end, both by FIFA, on an international scale, and UEFA, on a European scale. Upon sharing his personal impressions from the World Cup final in Berlin, Trecker's account finishes on a critical note calling for a complete makeover of the World Cup as many top players arrive at the tournament utterly exhausted due to the many club competitions they have to face.

7.3.2 Narrative style

What sets Trecker's World Cup account apart from Ward's and Moran's is that it clearly lacks distinctive diary style. This is somewhat understandable as he does not follow a specific team, so there is no specific fixture list that could serve as a structuring pattern. In fact, with its appendix, index and bibliography Trecker's work rather resembles a compendium for those uninitiated to the game. This impression is

[615] Jamie Trecker, *Love And Blood: At The World Cup With The Footballers, Fans And Freaks*, Orlando et Al.: Harvest Books 2007. Trecker's work cited as "JT" hereafter.

reinforced by the many footnotes repeatedly threaded through his narrative. These are written in a more educational vein and help those less familiar with the game to grasp its basics, understand its history and appreciate its most notable players.[616] Directly addressing his readers, Trecker patiently takes them on a journey and gradually introduces them to the history of the World Cup, its qualification process and other tournament procedures:

> By now you may well be asking, What is this "draw" thing, anyway? In a nutshell, the draw is a big ceremony where the nations that have qualified for the tournament learn their group seedings. It's the beginning of the World Cup finals, and the end of the qualification phase. The fact is, the World Cup is not a one-off event, but the point of a four-year continuum.[617]

From comparisons drawn and explanations given it is safe to assume that Trecker's narrative has clearly been intended for an American, sports-orientated readership. This can easily be taken from the short excerpt below, where Trecker explains the concept of relegation and promotion to his readers:

> The easiest way to understand the concept is as follows: Say the Cleveland Browns have another awful season. Instead of playing next year in the NFL, they are forced (because they are so bad) to play in either NCAA D1 or the CFL (Canadian Football League). In turn, whichever team won the NCAA title or the Grey Cup gets to come up into the NFL.[618]

It seems as if the seasoned sports writer is so keen on sharing his fact-filled football knowledge that he actually neglects his intended literary endeavour – that is reporting on the World Cup and its matches. Rather exceptional for a piece of popular sports writing tailored for a general audience, the reader finds additional information on the game supplied through numerous footnotes. At one stage only three lines of proper text are given, whereas 36 lines of footnotes are dedicated to the concept of

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[616] Although Trecker's explanations might sound entertaining to those in the know, his clarifications of phenomena such as 'own goal' border on the absurd: "*Own goal* is a term used to describe a goal scored by a player into his own net. It's rather shameful." JT, 17. Further explanations on football basics such as "2-3-5 formation", the concept of offside and "professional foul" are also provided. See ibid., 106, 127, 198. In his account Trecker equally features "weird trivia", dealing with teams at the top level that do not wear kits based on the colours of their countries' flags. See ibid., 25. Exceptional players such as the likes of Rooney and Zidane are presented in more detail. See ibid., 100ff and 223ff. A brief overview on the history of the World Cup is given as well. See ibid., 72ff.

[617] JT, 23. For in-depth explanation on the qualification process see JT, 23-24.

[618] JT, 56. Note that he also gives extended treatment to the US team, its history, qualification campaign as well as profiles of different players and coaches. Moreover, he comments critically on the effects of the World Cup held in the USA in 1994 whilst equally tracing the development, promotion and acceptance of the sport in the USA. For intensive coverage of these topics see JT, 33-55, 132-139. See also the interlude titled "When Soccer Was Important" (JT, 145-156) dedicated to the rise and fall of The New York Cosmos, still the best known US football side around the world.

"offside".[619] Indeed, in the ten chapters of his account he is more than economical with his match reports. On the semi-final between France and Portugal, one of the most crucial matches of Germany 2006, Trecker simply remarks: "A game so unremarkable I am sparing you a description of it."[620] Instead of providing lengthy coverage of the World Cup clashes, Trecker shares his impressions on different German towns and regions freely mixing historical commentary with socio-economic observations.[621] To what extent the socio-political impressions he portrays are accurate, pretty much depends on the reader's own preconceptions as well as his insights into German culture and history:

> Later I would decide the emotion I felt from the East Germans was not hostility but loss. Fifteen years after the collapse of the state, there remained a palpable mourning, whether for the safety net of the socialist state, or, more commonly, for something very fundamental that had long ago been forcibly removed, namely privacy and the freedom to be left alone.[622]

Despite Trecker's tendency to portray Germany as a nation still struggling from the aftermath of World War II, Trecker's account is worth reading, not so much for his coverage of the actual World Cup, but due to the account's almost encyclopedic value in the field of football's global history and culture. And what's more, Trecker is positioned inside the lines, well-connected to those that pull the strings inside various football-governing bodies. It is this insider knowledge that enables him to offer a behind-the-scene look which goes beyond the ordinary fan perspective. Acknowledgments such as the one below suggest that Trecker belongs to those that can report on shortcomings of football's governing bodies with authority:

> There are a number of people at the team, league, Federation, and FIFA levels who I would thank publicly, but I am positive they do not want their bosses to know they talk to me. They know who they are. To them: Thank you, and I greatly appreciate all of your information and candor.[623]

[619] See JT, 127.
[620] JT, 216.
[621] See Trecker's personal impressions as well as his social, political and historical commentary on places such as Leipzig, Hamburg, Munich, Kaiserslautern, Nuremberg, Berlin. See JT, 26-30, 32, 85-89, 168, 183-185.
[622] JT, 118. Note that Trecker's observations rely on two visits to Leipzig. Although also other journalists, so Trecker reports, bemoan an apparent "inborn 'Ossi' unfriendliness," Trecker clearly neglects the younger generations growing up in Eastern Germany after the German reunification process. Are these mourning for the socialist welfare state, too?
[623] JT, 244.

Apart from the insights into the politics of football, years of covering the game all across the globe have turned Trecker into a sharp observer of the game's standing and condition.

7.4 Between bridge-building and proxy war: The World Cup and its impact on national identity

Taking place every four years The FIFA World Cup holds a special place among sporting competitions all across the world. To many it is unique not just for the sake of football. Despite claims by critics that the quality of football being shown in the UEFA Champions League might actually exceed the overall quality of games played throughout the World Cup, it's the public spectacle, the global attention and the economic dimension of the World Cup that turns it into a cut above the rest. To Trecker it is "the planet's biggest event. Not sporting event – *event*, period."[624] In his assessment Trecker is quick to offer an explanation for its importance both for players and fans as well as the fascination that results from it:

> Husbands have mortgaged their homes to attend it. Careers are defined by it, and athletes have been murdered for fucking it up. Some countries have even declared national holidays just for *qualifying* for the tournament – Trinidad and Tobago. [...] Sure, the NFL claims the Super Bowl will get a brawny 350 million TV viewers worldwide, but that's peanuts compared to the Cup. The *draw* for the first round of the Cup got that. Can you imagine 350 million people turning in to watch a bunch of paunchy men pulling pieces of paper out of bowls? Yet, somehow they do.
> Going into 2006, FIFA estimated that over half the planet would watch the World Cup finals; sociologists put the number closer to three-fourths. Virtually every television on the planet, at some point during the six-week finals, would display a World Cup match.[625]

It goes without saying that an event with such enormous sporting, economic, social and political impact elicits a variety of literary reactions by those that attended World Cup tournaments and then put pen to paper chronicling their experiences. One aspect that recurs in the three narratives selected is the phenomenon of 'internationalisation' – namely a desire to engage in mutual understanding and indulge in a multinational celebration bound by an atmosphere of gaiety. It is precisely this international spirit that sets the World Cup apart from individual club-based competitions. While fans tend to cheer on their own clubs in national and transnational team competitions, the international community of fans is much more

[624] JT, 6.
[625] JT, 6.

likely to regard the World Cup as a public spectacle and behave accordingly. Thus it is this event that sets the stage for mutual understanding and respect for other nations. Indeed, all the narratives at hand contain passages of international bridge-building:

> The English fans, dressed snazzily, if tastelessly, in World War I-era German helmets, had spent most of the day trying to outdrink the Costa Ricans, who, in turn, had already outdrunk the Tunisians, at least one of whom was passed out under a table. Both groups were singing the "Olé Olé" song [...].
> As the streets teemed, all of Germany descended into gleeful chaos. I made my way to my flat, through a pack of Dutch fans wearing bright orange Viking helmets and long lederhosen, sending up two stereotypes with one blow. I turned on the TV to see a quarter of a million fans partying at the Brandenburg Gate in what was the biggest mass demonstration Berlin had seen since the fall of the Wall.
> I'd be kept up all night by fireworks and drunken fans, as some Germans vainly tried to retain some semblance of order.
> They would fail. The World Cup was here.[626]

Obviously Trecker's phrases above also highlight the carnivalesque element such a global spectacle triggers. In a joyful atmosphere of costumery, dance and marching bands stereotypical patterns of behaviour in the stadia are put aside, thereby calling widespread perceptions of the ordinary 'thuggish' football fan into question. Upon a three-nil lead against Denmark in the second round during the World Cup in Japan Simon Moran observes to his great surprise:

> In the stands, the England supporters, the feared hooligans from before the tournament, have broken with stadium protocol and, whilst singing, 'Let's all have a disco, let's all have a disco, la, la, la, hey, la, la, la!' are doing the conga. Soon enough, all the sections all the tiers of all the stands have joined in, the Japanese joining in with their new friends, these white, beer-bellied, shaven-headed strangers, the black Londoners, the Asian Yorkshiremen, the Singaporean Chinese, ex-pats from Trinidad, Hong Kong and Indonesia, hoist the local children onto their shoulders as Japan and England are joined together in a Cuban dance. If this isn't a summer festival, if this isn't fun, never mind the rain; if this isn't half-drunken, badly-timed dance step on the dance floor of internationalisation, it will never happen.[627]

But at the same time the accounts also offer an almost opposite perspective. As the World Cup touches upon the national soul, the tournament provides fans and players alike with a sense of identity and an opportunity to show patriotism. Especially in Germany, where a display of national pride had long been frowned upon, the tournament serves as the perfect setting to reengage in a new-found patriotism. This has been accurately observed by Trecker during his stay in the country:

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[626] JT, 65-66.
[627] SM, 119.

> During the Nazi regime, citizens were compelled to fly the Nazi flag. I saw a picture of the street I stayed on, the Frauenstrasse, circa 1939, so bedecked from roof to sidewalk with the red, white, and black swastika that it was difficult to see where the flags stopped and the buildings began. No wonder, then, that in the aftermath of the war the German flag was not widely flown. Many were uneasy with nationalistic displays, well wary of the dangers of extreme pride.
> The day that the 2006 World Cup kicked off, June 9, would be one of the first times since the war that Germans, especially younger ones, would fly their flags unashamedly.[628]

Japan-based Moran reports on a similar phenomenon in his adopted country. Whereas displays of patriotism are compulsory in school, the success of Japan's national football team, coached by the Frenchman Philippe Troussier, serves as a source of inspiration and identification for younger Japanese people. This paves the way for a new-found patriotism among younger members of the Japanese population:

> In magazines and newspapers, young people say it is the first time in their lives that they feel proud, really proud, to be Japanese. They have worn and hoisted the flag for the first time with meaning, rather than it being forced upon them at school ceremonies. It means something to them now, because it is theirs, this is a new kind of patriotism that they have created. A new Japan where, as in the football team, old notions of seniority count for nothing. If you're good enough, you're in. You can even get in if you're foreign, like Alex, the Brazilian, or the Frenchman, whose name, in this new form of nationalism, comes before the name of the country.
> 'Troussier Nippon!'[629]

While other displays of national pride might find only limited acceptance within the entire population, showing allegiance to your country in the wider context of national football seems to create a form of patriotism that is deemed generally acceptable. Here football's unifying impact stems from its ability to generate identity, regardless of gender, ethnic background or faith. This aspect is precisely reflected in Ward's eye-witness account after the French victory in the World Cup final 1998:

> At the final whistle the French went out on to the streets for the biggest party since General de Gaulle walked triumphantly back into Paris after liberation from Germany. Looking at the faces of happiness amid the deafening sound of mass car horns, the true power of football came through. Here was a country with racial strife and division but the French team was only one colour, Les Bleues. The skin colours reflected the widest racial mix of any team ever to win the World Cup – Senegal, New Caledonia, Algeria – they came from all over the world yet because they had played football as a team, nobody saw colour or origin. That night, everybody was French and across France, everybody was just a celebrating football fan.[630]

[628] JT, 89.
[629] SM, 103-104.
[630] CW, 216-217.

Looking at these quotations, it is somewhat surprising to notice that the literary reactions are precisely in tune with FIFA's official line. In a similar vein, the FIFA claims about its commitment:

> Football is no longer considered merely a global sport, but also as unifying force whose virtues can make an important contribution to society. We use the power of football as a tool for social and human development, by strengthening the work of dozens of initiatives around the globe to support local communities in the areas of peacebuilding, health, social integration, education and more.[631]

Although the three narrators at hand all agree on the fact that cheering one's national team boosts national pride, fostering a modern form of patriotism, none of them offers an explanation why this type of patriotism is deemed socially acceptable. In my opinion the reason for this phenomenon is related to the core values football has come to be associated with. Above all, characteristics traditionally assigned to the game such as 'fair play', 'sportsmanship' and 'tolerance' are positive. In a sport that actively enhances humanitarian values, displays of patriotism (chanting, flying the flag etc.) are bound to a fixed occasion, limited in time and context, and therefore easily accepted. That is not to say that the game itself, especially at the international stage, has not been taken advantage of to foster nationalism. Because of football's status as the most popular sport in the world and the resulting media attention, much prestige is assigned to the fortunes of one's own national team. As there is not a single event that touches the national soul like the World Cup, it provides poorer, less developed countries with an opportunity to compete against more developed countries in a setting that matters. It is the international stage of world football where a victory goes way beyond the field of sport. Germany's postwar win of the World Cup in 1954 is probably the best example to understand how such sporting victories can sustain a country in times of political and economic hardship. Looking at the pride that goes along with wearing the national shirt and singing the national anthem undermines the Orwellian reasoning that the game on the international stage is able to mimic transnational conflict or even warfare. Unsurprisingly, the motive of proxy warfare is echoed in these World Cup travelogues. At several stages through their accounts the idea of proxy warfare is addressed through a specific fixture. Japan-based journalist Moran gives extended treatment to the Japanese-Russian rivalry. Emphasizing the importance of the game, he quickly sums up the causes for the

[631] http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/organisation/mission.html (Accessed 28 December 2012).

rivalry of these two countries. Hence the reader learns that Japan gained naval supremacy in 1905 after having sunk most of Russia's Baltic fleet, thereby seizing the the majority of Sakhalin's Kuril Islands only to lose these in the last days of World War II.[632] Against this backdrop it is no surprise that the clash between Japan and Russia during the World Cup 2002 is taken advantage of by political nationalists on either side:

> Before Japan played Russia at the Yokohama International Stadium on June 9, Russian 'ultra-nationalist' and one-time potential presidential candidate, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, said that whoever won should retain possession of the islands. A 4–0 win to Japan would return the four islands to them. A 1–0 win to Russia would give them Hokkaido or Okinawa.
> Japan's very own supreme nationalist, Tokyo governor Ishihara Shintaro, had earlier said much the same thing, claiming a Japanese win would help claims to regain the islands. He went on to say that this was an excellent chance for everyone to celebrate their country and 'ethnic race'.[633]

Colin Ward in turn takes up a slightly more romantic stance also advocating the idea that an international football match could be considered appropriate to ease bilateral conflicts. Ahead of the politically-loaded quarter-final clash between Argentina and England during the World Cup 1998 he claims:

> With close on 30 million people watching the match in England and joining in the singing of the National Anthem, a football match began. Because that's all it was: a match between 22 athletes with the utmost respect for each other. Before the match the players shook hands. The Falklands and the land disputes and the mineral rights of the South Atlantic became utterly irrelevant. If it weren't for politicians, then this is how conflicts could be sorted – in the ultimate field of combat where sportsmanship and honour come to the fore and the only deaths are deaths of dreams.[634]

As fanciful as Ward's suggestion might seem, it's hard to imagine what kind of unbearable pressure such sporting 'combats' would place upon the players. Most certainly the outcome of such decisive games would pose a threat to life and limb of the referee. On top of this, it's hardly necessary to mention that such ideas would collide with FIFA's ideal of peacebuilding if territorial gains or losses were at stake. Nevertheless plans such as the ones portrayed above clearly indicate the unique importance globally assigned to the sport and the political dimension of the game. On a personal level, though, the overwhelming impression of the narrators is a well-

[632] For more on this see also http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11664434 (Accessed 30 October 2013).
[633] SM, 82.
[634] CW, 203.

meaning, beneign atmosphere among fans hailing from different countries. Even in the wake of the game between Argentina and England during the group stages of the World Cup 2002, a game that has been massively hyped by the British and Argentine mass media, Moran is puzzled by the spirit of respect he encounters:

> At the bottom of the steps down from the stadium, an Argentinian stands, his shirt off and draped round his shoulders, the crest facing forward. He holds a hand-written sign above his head. The sign has two-outstretched hands, one from Argentina, one from England, clasped together and shaking. On his forehead is a black love-heart inside, which are drawn the flags of both countries. The message is clear. I stop and shake his hand, we give each other the thumbs up, slap each other on the back. With no common language, not a word is spoken and I continue walking. It feels good, a moment of spontaneous, hand-drawn, low-budget internationalisation.[635]

7.5 The plight of England: English fans and journalists at the World Cup

Over the past four decades British football fans have regularly been associated with crowd disorder. Ever since the 1990s, however, issues of violence and hooliganism have been redirected from domestic club football and increasingly been linked to national football. With their focus firmly set on the World Cup, these first-hand accounts are particularly valuable, as they center around the perceptions of England fans abroad. Looking at the opening lines of Ward's prologue the reader is immediatedly alerted to a pocketful of issues revolving around English national football:

> England, the nation which had invented football, and then taken its wonderful passion and given it to the rest of the world including Brazil, had not competed. For some it was heinous, for others it was retribution because England fans were the dregs of the earth. The sad fact of the matter was that England had not competed in three out of the past six World Cups. No government fell, nobody was sacked, yet everybody professed to care.[636]

What Ward's observation clearly implies is dissatisfaction with the way the English game is played, coached, administered and its followers portrayed and perceived.
Relating Ward's criticism to the focal point of my dissertation, the accounts show that following the national side in England seems to be different from following English club football-based on the notion that the level of identification with the English team does not seem to match the level of identificaction with domestic counterparts. Whilst English club football generates a passion most would label 'enormous', the England

[635] SM, 75.
[636] CW, 7.

team does not manage to do likewise. Comparing the commitment shown by the Japanese team in its opening match with the performance of the England team in its opening game, Moran claims:

> I feel part of this more than I did when Sol Campbell scored two days ago. Maybe it's the atmosphere in the crowd, maybe it's because I'm only yards away from the goal, maybe it's the players, who are running themselves into the ground in a way that I've never seen England do, but I feel very much a part of this.[637]

Over the years the erosion of support for the English national team has stemmed from a variety of factors – most notably from disappointing management resulting in poor team selection and performances, the lack of support of English fans through the English FA, particularly abroad, and an increasing frustration with wider issues of sponsorship.

For many fans the English national team has never quite managed to ignite a spirit through which a collective English identity could be achieved. Whereas the majority of fans feel that they don't have a choice when it comes to club allegiance, they are much more critical when the English team is concerned. After all, the topophilic element of club football with its strong focus on consistency – meeting the same faces often from neighbouring communities, cheering the same players, is missing when it comes to the English national side.[638] As Trecker observes, only a certain player type, equipped with characteristics regarded as quintessentially English, is deemed worthy to represent the country, and hence becomes accepted unconditionally by the fans:

> To those nostalgic for the past, Rooney is seen as being the epitome of the working-class footballer and a certain classic 'Englishness': He is envisioned as tough, self-sufficient, and fair-minded, with a lovely girlfriend. [...]
> Unsurprisingly, while the elegant Beckham came to represent English football with his 'metrosexual' look, Rooney's belligerence and straightforward, head-down style of play is more appealing to many Englishmen of a certain class. In their eyes, Rooney is a tough, sure, but he never gives up or rolls around faking an injury. Whereas Beckham is a remote tabloid figure, Rooney, despite being handsomely paid, is 'one of the lads' – and an English lad in the way that a David Beckham, a Peter Crouch, or, a Michael Owen never really can be. Beckham is seen as posh and overpaid; Crouch is a figure of comedy; and Owen, despite easily being the best technical player on the team, doesn't play the 'English style'.[639]

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[637] SM, 49.

[638] For more on the topophilic aspect see John Bale, 'The Changing Face of Football: Stadiums and Communities', in: Jon Garland, Dominic Malcolm & Michael Rowe (eds.), *The Future of Football: Challenges for the Twenty-First Century*, London 2003 (Reprint), 91-101.

[639] JT, 110-111. Compare also the way Ward juxtaposes David Batty's missed penalty in the match against Argentina during France '98 to David Beckham's red card in the very same game. CW, 209-210: "Batty had the craggy look that many fans have: in another deal of the cards, he could have been sitting in Marseilles with his shirt off and tattooed body, yet now he had to score to keep England in the

Leaving those out that embody the English game, can naturally trigger harsh criticism on behalf of England fans and consequently weaken the position of the manager in charge of the English team. This can best be exemplified by the reactions Ward reports on when Glenn Hoddle refuses to select national hero Paul Gascoigne for France ’98:

> The announcement of the final England 22 produced the biggest talking point since a Labour government ousted the Tories – Paul ‘Gazza‘ Gascoigne was left out of the final squad. Gazza had played in his first and last World Cup in Italia ’90. True, he’d been struggling with his fitness due to a number of injuries and yo-yo weight problems, but [...] Athleticism *doesn’t* win important matches in World Cups – flashes of sublime skill and inspiration do, but Glenn wasn’t listening to anybody because his self-belief had become a dangerous arrogance. [...] Two days later Teddy Sheringham was spotted in a disco at 6.45 a.m. with a drink and a blonde. Fans understood the need to relax. We weren’t a nation of monks. All this deprivation was for foreigners who were used to it. After all, we’ve seen what a dysfunctional Royal family we have produced from a reclusive existence in single-sex schools. Fans needed Gazza, who needed a drink or two to relax. If we could play, we’d all be Gazza. [...] To every travelling fan there was no doubt. Gazza should have gone because he was one of the lads and England had always relied on the lads in previous French campaigns.[640]

As can be seen by Gazza’s case, a fan’s identification is primarily sparked by individual players, whose on-and-off field characteristics turn them into ‘one of the lads‘. This is not to say that England’s performances do not trigger excitement, fascination and satisfaction among England fans. Yet, to arouse these sensations controlled performances won’t do – typical English characteristics such as passion, endurance and the willingness to bounce back have to shine through. If the team performs according to these expectations, they are supported unconditionally. With England one man down against Argentina in the knock-out stages of France ’98 after Beckham has been sent off, Ward observes a joint effort of fans and players:

> The English fans in the ground responded by putting up a constant wall of sound while the English players built a wall of steel. The Berlin Wall could never prevent people getting through but this English wall with the linchpin Adam in the centre prevented anything from passing. The English, with their backs against the wall, responded with a rearguard action in the best tradition of the country’s stoicism under siege.[641]

World Cup. He was in a no-win situation and amongst the 30 million watching, you would have been hard-pressed to find a volunteer to take his place at that second. It wasn’t badly struck but when Roa the keeper threw himself in the right direction as soon as the ball left Batty’s boot, the dream died. Nobody leaving the stadium that evening blamed Batty because they didn’t want that penalty. Beckham had let everybody down by being sent off for his petulance. Beckham would go back with his good looks to his multi-million pound deals and pop star fianceé while we would stagger back to real life like Frankenstein’s monster.”

[640] CW, 97-98. Note that Hoddle had become a main target of criticism due to his thorough un-English approach to football with his relentless emphasis on tactics and technical skills in an attempt to inspire self-belief among the players.

[641] CW, 206. Whilst Colin Ward is quick to praise all ‘English’ characteristics shown by the English players and equally condemns the referee’s unfair decision of having an English goal disallowed

Taking into account that England belongs to the few ‘great‘ footballing nations that are said to have regularly been underperforming and underachieving for the past four decades, the neutral observer is left wondering what makes England supporters follow their national side abroad in such large numbers despite the long line of sporting disappointments.[642]

To the narrators it all comes down to the way England fixtures nowadays provide a platform for a type of nationalism that seems to have been discredited in England in the vague of Cool Britannia’s new political correctness. It is only within the confines of international football where more archaic forms of patriotism are deemed acceptable. Patriotic displays are depicted as being reminiscent of the past, pervaded by a sense of loss, frequently alluding to the glory days of the British Empire. Nowhere better can this be captured than in the conversation between two travelling England fans Ward overhears on his flight to France.

> ‘Oy, Grandad! Those Froggies are tear-gassing our boys. We’ve got to get down there and reinforce our boys. Bloody ‘ell! We’re fighting them on the beaches. It’ll be like Dunkirk all over again.‘
> ‘Dunkirk was a defeat,‘ replied Grandad, wearily.
> ‘Read your history, Grandad, it was a great victory. We showed them Krauts how to organise a day trip to England on a cross channel ferry,‘ replied Steve excitedly.
> Once the plane touched down the lads were off and sprinting across the concourse. The last time Terry saw them was when they shouted to a confused taxi driver to get them to the frontline ‘pronto pronto.‘[643]

Further quotations are hardly necessary to understand how travelling English fans regard themselves as members of an English army defending the honour of St. George.[644] In the light of such boisterous displays, which in turn shape the way

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against Argentina, he is rather reluctant in his portrayal of elements rated thoroughly un-English, such as Michael Owen’s dive against Argentina. He merely states: “The young hope of this new England surged forward into the box and went down under the slightest of touches. Once more the referee pointed to the spot.” CW, 204.

[642] Judged against the backdrop of the country’s size, there is an ongoing debate on whether England have actually been underperforming over the years. Irrespective of their sporting performances in recent years, Moran’s account informs us that they have been welcomed most sensationally by the Japanese host nation. Moran claims that, although he didn’t show his best performances during the tournament, David Beckham was still the most popular star in the World Cup due to his stylish looks, his celebrity wife and his gentle way with people. Yet, the adoration of the Japanese people was by no means limited to Beckham, as the Japanese fans embraced the whole team. SM, 91: “On Awaji Island near Kobe, where England were based for the duration of the tournament, the locals took England to their hearts. They got their hair cut in the shape of the St. George Cross, opened an England football museum and put a handmade gold lion on the roadside. England thanked them by asking for a 14-feet high fence to be built around the training pitches so no one could see in.”

[643] CW, 103-104.

[644] An attitude of imperial Britishness among England fans is equally reflected in the songs being sung during England games. Ward and Moran both report how pride swells up among England fans when

English patriotism is perceived around the world, it comes as no surprise that many English people feel not entirely at ease when claiming to be English. This unease is articulated by the more cosmopolitan Moran:

> Days earlier, while watching England struggle to manage a draw in a friendly against South Korea, Will and I discussed our mixed feelings of patriotism and nationalism. We support England, but shy away from expressing it too loudly. Will thinks everyone has similarly mixed feelings.
> 'Nobody wants to be English. They're all embarrassed. Everyone says they are English, but...'[645]

What makes acknowledging to be English so hard for someone like Moran is the fact that a collective English identity does not derive from sporting glory, but from an implied chauvinistic nationalism, based on the notion of imperial superiority.

> Darth Vader would have been an England fan. England fans mass together and sing with an aggression which frightens. The same mentality which was needed to conquer and control the Empire which the sun never set upon could not be bred out in four generations.[646]

Ward's words above alert the reader to the pecularities of English fandom regularly coming to the fore when England play abroad. Whilst fans of other nations also have a history of involvement with football violence, the narrators sense a lingering climate of aggression and provocation among the English fanbase. Part and parcel of this peculiar cocky English attitude is the occupation of streets and places surrounding the football ground. 'Conquest' of such places is then to be celebrated by massive alcohol consumption alongside vociferous chanting. As chronicled by the accounts at hand – to those less acquainted with the English way of celebrating, this behaviour seems either menacing or provocative. Consequently English fans find it harder to be welcomed by the hosting nations. But Moran's observations equally demonstrate that English fan behaviour is seriously shaped by surrounding circumstances. Once embraced and welcomed, English fans readily depart from more aggressive forms of fan behaviour:

> On the way out, two large England fans are talking. They are really angry at the result, at the Swedes for having the gall to equalise and outplay England in the second half. Really, really angry. They are shouting obscenities and the veins stick out on their necks. Somebody will have to pay.

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renditions of 'Rule Britannia', 'God Save the Queen', 'I'm English Till I Die' are being sung or the tune of 'The Great Escape' is being clapped. Compare CW, 54, 80, 152 as well as SM, 40, 70, 117.

[645] SM, 30.

[646] CW, 179.

> Further down the steps, the queue has slowed and they seem to have calmed down a little. At the bottom of the stairs, the volunteer staff line the exits to send the spectators on their way.
> '*Otsukare sama deshita* – thanks for your hard work!'
> '*Omedeto gozaimasu* – congratulations!'
> 'Thank you! Goodbye! Please come back soon!'
> The two fans don't know what to make of it. They shake hands with the staff and meekly make their way outside to join the queue for the shuttle buses.
> 'Ah well, maybe not, then. How could you cause any bother for people as nice as that?'[647]

While both Ward and Moran readily acknowledge the English swaggering attitude, equally admitting that English fans do not enjoy conviviality the same way fans of other nations do, they never hesitate to stress that public paranoia has carefully been orchestrated by the media. With regards to France '98 Ward reports:

> Things started to go wrong when it became obvious that the people of Toulouse were getting very frightened about the impending arrival of the England fans. Early arrivals from Marseilles were greeted by massed ranks of media. Just as the bell ringer used to announce the arrival of the removers of the dead during the Black Death epidemics, so the arrival of such a huge media entourage meant that the barbarians were indeed coming, bringing destruction and aggression in their wake. [...]
> In common with every other fan in Toulouse the total shutdown had come as a complete surprise to me. Normally there was always a restaurant or some other bolthole where refuge could be found, but this was like London in the blackout. Taxis sped past with their green pre-booked light showing. The CRS stood watching the taxi queue, both looking impassively at each other. 'Inert' was how the scene could be described. Normally taxi drivers never pass up the chance to earn some money but the propaganda machine had been so powerful that even taxi drivers had decided it was too risky to chance picking up England fans.[648]

In a similar vein, yet with even more dramatic emphasis, Moran claims:

> Another such device to get the opponent down for subduing was the net gun, a Spiderman-like contraption that shoots heavy nets over hooligans to entrap them. The device was tested on actors posing as hooligans – English hooligans, wearing England strips and waving England flags – successfully ensnaring them from a distance of 16 feet.
> More dress-rehearsals were held at stadiums where mock riots, again featuring actors in England shirts, were conducted to give the police a little target practice.
> In Osaka, the stones on the railway lines that run near Nagai Stadium, where England would play Nigeria, were glued down lest they be hurled anywhere. Leaflets were distributed to houses as far as five miles away from the stadium, telling residents to look out for hooligans, to pull down any shutters they had and not to leave things such as bicycles and pot plants outside. [...]
> In Miyagi, a local politician warned of foreigners selling cocaine and heroin and burning parked cars, while Konno Takayoshi, of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, the party of Prime

[647] SM, 41. In the light of statistical evidence Moran comes to a positive conclusion maintaining that the Japanese approach of welcoming the English whole-heartedly has worked successfully. SM,187: "England made a new name for themselves, too, or rather lived up to their old one as gentlemen. Not one England fan was arrested for public disorder and a survey by an Osaka company also found that 56 % of women were said to feel more friendly towards England as a result of the World Cup. There was trouble, but really very little. A total of 93 World Cup-related arrests were made – 60 of these were Japanese people, and only 13 were British."
[648] CW, 142-143, 158-159.

> Minister Koizumi Junichiro, said that the country should, 'also brace against unwanted babies being conceived by foreigners who rape our women. We must prepare for the worst.[649]

As can be seen by Moran's depiction of police preparation procedures preceeding the World Cup in Japan – to the host nation football related disorder has become synonymous with English fandom in spite of similar phenomena in Italy, Argentina or Germany. Likewise, Ward's portrayal of the zero-tolerance approach by French authorities seems to affect England fans only, despite Scottish and Germans fans behaving disorderly as well.

> As I boarded the plane it was obvious that the Scots on board were drunk beyond description, but they were being applauded nevertheless as funny Scots. I found their in-flight, pathetic renditions of 'Scotland the Brave' and comments about English people abusive. [...]
> As the flight taxied to a halt at St Etienne, the sight that greeted us was one of huge rows of CRS and armed police. As the well-behaved English walked off, we all thought we were going to see the Scots getting a belting from the riot police, yet I have never seen a flight shut up so quickly. It was a miracle that those Scots managed to walk across the tarmac.[650]

Given that these claims are accurate, it comes at no surprise that many England supporters feel unjustly accused and guilty by association. It is against the background of such perceived injustices that England fans are then shown as willing to fight back. Witnessing the violent outbreak in Marseilles, Ward observes a siege mentality among the England fans who are ready to defend their ground:

> Quite what happened around 4 p.m. on the Quai des Belges, and who threw the first bottle will be discussed forever (even those who were there are undecided), but a march past of some Tunisian flag-waving fans sparked off a short flurry of punches followed by an ungainly charge of English beer bellies pursuing the fleeing Tunisian fans along the Quai de Rive Neuve. Marseilles is the repository of France. Beneath the beautiful veneer of yachts, luxury restaurants and wealth is the toxic waste of a forgotten underclass of French Africans. The French Africans and Tunisians soon responded by throwing bottles and the England fans were quick to reciprocate. The massed ranks of cameramen and TV crews were on the scene within seconds. This was the moment they had been waiting for.[651]

What is clearly problematic about Ward's report is his attempt to excuse the behaviour of England fans near the Vieux Port area in Marseilles. In a more apologetic approach he characterises them as benign, well-meaning, yet misunderstood football enthusiasts. Thuggish behaviour is then explained by beer, sun and English attitude:

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[649] SM, 56.
[650] CW, 143-144.
[651] CW, 107.

> The English lads were just having a punch up and being English. England on tour, piss-up and punch-up: one doesn't necessarily follow the other, but now it's happening, let's have a laugh. They just wanted to dish out a few smacks in the teeth who dared to insult England, not hurt anybody. The French Africans, however, had other ideas. They intended to up the ante.[652]

Such biased portrayal of a seemingly harmless 'bulldog spirit' must not only question his reliability as a narrative voice, but equally undermine his accusations towards French authorities and the English Football Association. Concerning the French authorities, Ward does not only bemoan that they "didn't understand the basic *modus operandi* of the English drinking psyche."[653] What's more, he criticises the complete shutdown of bars and restaurants in Toulouse, a town England was scheduled to play its second group match in, while equally complaining about England fans being subjected to unfair trials as well as biased police treatment. Ward's polemic renditions in the aftermath of the riots in Marseilles reveal much about the readership he is trying to target and simultaneously reinforce doubts about his credibility:

> I spoke to Paul Hayward of the *Daily Telegraph* who was with his colleagues watching the CNN news.
> 'It looks pretty bad. They are blaming the English for starting the trouble,' he stated to me on the phone.
> All through the day the image of James Shayler flashed up on the screen. The barbarians, epitomised by this image, were indeed in town. The next day James Shayler got three months in prison while others got two months after a fair trial of ten minutes. *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* indeed – for that's what it said on the front of the coins in those lad's pockets. The proud French sentiments of liberty and justice are obviously irrelevant if you are a drunken England football fan. The French police were not looking for anybody involved with the throat slitting of the England fan. One fan even pleaded not guilty but his defence was denied him when he was asked this one question.
> 'Are you an English football fan?'
> And when he answered that he was, the response was no different from the rest:
> 'Send him down, three months, guilty as hell.'[654]

According to Ward's assessment, the English police and government seem to approve of the French approach, thereby betraying the interests of many decent England supporters. As a result these feel let down by their own FA.[655] Due to the priority assigned to cooperate sponsorship in ticket distribution, many England fans find themselves without a ticket. Struggling to obtain entry to the matches they are then left vulnerable to black market practices. Yet, despite the fans' willingness to pay over the odds for England venues, they feel deceived by their own government:

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[652] CW, 109.
[653] CW, 144.
[654] CW, 115-116.
[655] See CW, 123.

> Harry and the boys hunted high and low for tickets, but to no avail, and decided to go whether they had tickets or not. As soon as the UK Government caught on that this was the prevalent attitude among fans, they spent £1 million on a TV advert which stated that fans buying black market tickets would not gain entry because the ticket would have the owner's name on it. On the other hand, the French said that fewer than 40 per cent of tickets would have names on them and that they had no plans to check everybody's.[656]

Likewise, English state authorities are accused of squandering tax payers' money by sending undercover police across the channel for no apparent purpose:

> Can you imagine it, just standing around drinking lager all day, joining in the songs about England, insulting foreigners, getting involved in whatever argy-bargy breaks out, and then a guaranteed entry into the matches. Then you file a stupid report the next day
> '... identified a suspect by his NF tattoo, drinks lager... observed another suspect drinking lager and chanting papal obscenities ...' – and it's all paid for by HM Government! Sometimes if they're charged with following one person in particular they get pulled in by the local plod and get a bender for free. Who says the police force doesn't prosper under a Labour government? They're practically fighting to be invited to France '98 as an undercover, especially to the trip to Marseilles. Lager on tap and whores paid for by HM government![657]

What makes matters worse for England fans is the biased coverage by the English media. Ward complains:

> Strange people, the English press corps. They have a collective mentality; when they speak it seems to be as one voice. It is almost as if they think collectively, like the Midwich Cuckoos, able to read each other's thoughts. Only the select few seem able to stand out and have a differing view of life and football. Usually, the day before a match England are marvellous, unbeatable, strong resilient athletes, and the next day, if they lose, they are prosaic, predictable, second best. What a difference a day makes! At least they're consistent when describing the fans, though. We have not right to be anywhere, least of all on foreign soil watching our players, our country. If they had their way fans would pay their money, cheer into a karaoke box transmitted to the pitch and then go home early, so the players wouldn't be distracted by such mundane things as the fans applauding.[658]

Craving for sensation, members of the English press corps seem only interested in the criminalisation of England fans:

> 'Nothing has been going on today,' he said. 'It's been really good natured with absolutely no arrests anywhere in the city. Everybody has behaved really well.' I could see the look of disappointment in his eyes as though he didn't want to believe it.
> 'Bet you don't bloody well report that though, you tosser. That's not news to you wankers, is it?' shouted one of the irate fans. The BBC reporter went hastily through the barrier into the press enclosure with the catcalls still ringing in his ear, never looking back.[659]

Interestingly, Moran describes similar attempts by journalistic counterparts in Japan:

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[656] CW, 92.
[657] CW, 91.
[658] CW, 14.
[659] CW, 152.

> A camera crew from a local Sapporo TV station accompanied a police patrol car around the city. Lots of drunk England and Argentina supporters are seen, singing and dancing in the streets. A call comes over the radio and the patrol car rushes off to where seven or eight policemen are grappling with an England fan who is being arrested. Here is a hooligan being detained, the TV station says, and look how big he is, it needs that many officers to restrain him.
> It later turns out that the man was arrested for taking someone's hat from his head, after which they got into an argument.[660]

Ward finds the criminalisation he witnesses particularly upsetting, since he has been personally affected.[661] Needless to say, Ward's account is replete with diatribes against all those representatives of the media whose half-truths and twisted words create a distorted image of the ordinary England fan.[662] Perpetuating the media-induced image of the English football thug, Ward criticizes acts of staged reporting after the violence in Marseilles:

> The blonde female bar owner was photographed and asked to pose from various angles for the cameras. How many different angles can you photograph a broken window from? Was it really necessary for the photographer to lie on the floor to get one? Next, the lady was asked to recreate the moment when the crazed England fan ran along breaking her windows with a piece of metal table support. It was like a film set with directors barking orders. Lights-camera-action![663]

In the mirror of twisted words and half-truths being written about England fans, disapproval of the English press coverage would seem justified at first glance. On second thought, however, pure contempt appears inadequate. Whilst Moran labels representatives of the English tabloids as thugs,[664] a close study of Ward's account elicits a more balanced picture. Trying to learn more about the English press corps, he is introduced to their personal predicaments. Journalists are clearly put off by Hoddle's behaviour to deny respected pressmen their fair share of information in an attempt to 'cocoon themselves'. Against this backdrop Ward quotes a journalist as saying:

> I mean, we have no divine right to be able to speak to the players but some of the Press have an immense history of friendship. They [Press boys] spend three months ghosting the players' autobiographies or speak to them on the phone for hours doing their columns, listening to their gripes and their wives moaning when their husbands are out late at night; then they are told they can't talk to them. The first thing the players do when they get a paper is look for the transfer news. If they get an inkling that there might be something in it, they phone their favourite journalist who phones around for them, getting confirmation one way or the other.

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[660] SM, 66.
[661] See CW, 116.
[662] For a sociological study on this issue see Emma Poulton, 'English Media Representation of Football-related Disorder: 'Brutal, Short-hand and Simplifying'?', in: *Sport in Society*, 8:1 (2005), 27-47.
[663] CW, 117.
[664] See SM, 116.

> Some players even phone their Press mates for a chat, when things are going badly at their clubs or they have had a big fall-out with their manager.[665]

This statement unmistakably reminds us that professional football does not exist in a void, it comprises far more than the game itself. Apart from players and managers as acting agents, both media and supporters play influential roles in shaping and defining it.[666] Within the confines of professional football players, teams and clubs depend on these two factors, be it as a promotional tool or a source of revenue. The media in turn rely heavily on professional football as public spectacle and a never-ending source for journalistic coverage. Thus professional football is a convenient way of filling pages, satisfying the needs of mass audiences. What could in theory be a mutually beneficial alliance between the English press and English top-flight football has gradually developed into a relationship of mistrust. The reasons for this are manifold. First and foremost, English journalists are caught up in a fiercely competitive market with a constant pressure to deliver stories. With regards to Glenn Hoddle's press conferences one journalist bemoans:

> Glenn would only give one press conference, and that was yesterday. In the past, the manager has held the press conference at the journalists' hotel and given the boys an update on the Friday, but Glenn bussed us all into the middle of nowhere and gave us a series of one-liners which told us everything he felt we needed to know but actually told us nothing. [...]
> He holds back and that unnerves some of the boys because they haven't got an angle to build a story. I have never seen so many Press men at one match before either. Every paper has three journalists, some four, and today they have got nothing to write, yet are having to file stories all day because every one they file is not deemed good enough by the editors.[667]

If there's little sports-related information on offer, reporting on technical and tactical issues of the game gives way to more sensationalist coverage of personality-related news. Somewhat puzzled, Trecker observes how English journalists turn their attention to the WAGs, the players' wives and girlfriends, during the World Cup 2006:

> Symptomatic of the need to have all-encompassing coverage of the national team, members of the media basically stalked them, detailing their shopping, spending, and "Baden Baden" behavior. Between reports of the photographers literally falling over themselves for action shots and the women drunkenly stumbling about, the coverage became a carnival. [...]

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[665] CW, 186. Note that the brackets inserted stem from the source quoted.
[666] Note that the findings above draw upon Gianluca Vialli's perceptive observations on the troubled relationship between the media and top-flight football in England and Italy. Vialli's chapter 10, titled "A Virtuous Cycle? How Football and the Media Use Each Other", is particularly insightful as it features comments of Marcello Lippi, Marcel Desailly, David Platt, Sir Alex Ferguson, José Mourinho and Sven-Göran Eriksson on this issue. For more information see Gianluca Vialli & Gabriele Marcotti, *The Italian Job: A journey to the heart of two great footballing cultures*, London 2006, 310-340.
[667] CW, 35.

> According to the press, shopping and sleeping off the night before dominated the group's activity calendar, and the tabloids conscientiously reported each purchase made.[668]

Yet, satirizing and sensationalizing does not stop with fans and WAGs. Players and managers are equally affected. Fearing to get 'stitched up' players, managers and clubs have become more cautious about what they tell the press corps:

> Undoubtedly, Glenn Hoddle had learned from his predecessors: footballers would no longer be giving interviews to the friendly journalists – every time they wanted to say something, they would have to go through the Press liaison officer who made sure no questions overstepped the FA mark.[669]

Whereas Ward claims that much of the journalists' predicament is self-inflicted,[670] more seasoned journalists Ward talks to argue that a great deal of this precaution stems from Pete Davies' legacy:

> Pete Davies got accreditation to write a book on the World Cup. No writer had ever been given the access he had. At the first press conference, he upset the pecking order of all the old hacks like Joe and Kevin by asking a smart question which interrupted the proceedings. A lot of the guys didn't like him, wouldn't have anything to do with him but one or two took pity on him when he seemed to be struggling. After all, they had expense accounts while he had a small advance to work with. Some of the senior guys with the big expense accounts took him to dinner, and invited him to their little circle. When writers in the lower echelons saw him being accepted it seemed okay to allow him some leeway so others chipped in with favours. Jane Nottage was asked to help him since his clothes were ponging, so she got his shirts put in the laundry with the other FA laundry. It was off the record and done on an "FA don't need to know" basis. When his book, *All Played Out*, was published, he boasted of stitching up the FA by getting his laundry done. It could have cost Jane her job. He even rounded on the people who helped him: the guys who had fed him and shown him the ropes were slaughtered in print, accused, among other things, of being drunks and sleeping with prostitutes.[671]

Undeniably, these lines reveal much about the inner workings of the sports press.[672] Apart from the obvious fact that there is a strict pecking order which must not be violated, the English press corps is painted as a tight-knit community sticking together. Removed from their families, caught up in fierce competition in a cut-throat industry, some journalists openly confess that they are fed up with their job, yet have to carry on just to make ends meet.

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[668] JT, 113-114.
[669] CW, 46.
[670] See CW, 47.
[671] CW, 48-49.
[672] Compare the assessments of Patrick Wasserziehr, one of Germany's leading sports journalists, who has been a sports commentator with Sky Sports for almost 20 years. The interview with him can be found in the appendix.

> Then there are older guys like me who have worked their way up from the bottom – we haven't got any qualifications or natural writing talent, so these young blokes like you come along with their fancy fuckin' degrees and threaten our existence. What we do have, though, is our contacts. I can count on players and managers out there who are my friends. They give us inside information and tips because they like us. We're not in to this career building; we're just hanging on to pay our mortgages: We're shitting our pants. Look at me, I'm getting too old for all this shit then some fucking writer – a wanker like you – comes along to tell the truth about us. The truth – don't make me laugh. The truth is boring. Ours is a hard life, doing things we don't like, writing things we don't agree with. Don't think you're above all that – if you had the bottle to sit where I sit, you'd find out. Anybody who says different is a liar. Then you lot, the fans, have a pop at us.[673]

As these confessions imply, seasoned journalists find their positions under threat for a variety of reasons. Instructed to write in more confrontational manner, sport journalists suffer from a loss of credibility among managers, players and fans alike. Above all, they face an increasing number of academics engaging in low-profile sport journalism. This new breed of journalists seriously questions their business ethics, thereby challenging standard reporting practices and non-sports-related conventions of journalist behaviour. As a case in point Moran asserts:

> Having been buoyed by the goodwill on the train, outside the station and on the way to the stadium, I quickly lose a little faith in my fellow countrymen. A large group of English photographers has commandeered the seats in the centre of the room. All of them are wearing shorts and most of them have shaven heads. With their dirty shoes up on the chairs and the camaraderie of a group of Club 18-30 holidaymakers in Majorca, they swap jokes about tits, cocks and farting, which one of them delights in lifting his right buttock from his seat and doing, much to his friends' amusement. They seem like a group of immature, overweight, balding schoolchildren on a school-trip to the park on the first day of summer. I want neither to be associated with their nationality nor their profession.[674]

While the accounts offer numerous incidents where journalists revel in the fans' predicaments spreading half-truths, textual passages in which England fans are seen performing according to media expectations should equally not be forgotten:

> A camera crew came up and started filming. James Shayler, a 34-year-old father of three, responded by singing to the camera at the top of his voice while slapping his St George stomach tattoo to show how proud he was of his country.
> '*Ingerland Ingerland Ingerland*.'
> Then he upped the decibel level until he was screaming at full blast.
> *INGERLAND INGERRRLAND*.'[675]

In all fairness it must be said that judging from public demand and circulation figures, human-interest stories are effectively what the British public asks for. This in turn

[673] CW, 45.
[674] SM, 38.
[675] CW, 106.

questions a society that publically derides sensationalist press coverage, yet at the same time enjoys the thrill that stems from it.

7.6 The cup of plenty: FIFA's stewarding of the World Cup

Despite its label as a 'festival of fun', literary reflections on the World Cup are replete with comments of disapproval on the event. Much of this disapproval stems from the role FIFA takes up in staging the tournament. In this respect sources for contempt are numerous. Above all, it is FIFA's approach to boost the market potential of an event initially intended to foster peace building and mutual understanding. While FIFA's approach to bring world-class football action to regions previously 'untapped' is principally a good one, it's the quality of football that suffers under it – so Moran claims:

> The World Cup attracts more television viewers than any other sporting event, and it is this audience FIFA wants to target. [...]
> This market can be reached far more effectively if countries with weaker national teams, but huge television audiences, qualify. Hence the World Cup was held for the first time in Asia and Blatter said he was 'delighted' that China had qualified.
> No doubt the Chinese attending the games in Korea, and watching on television or at home were equally delighted. China went to lose all their games, as did Saudi Arabia and Slovenia. Given that FIFA expects, it says, the very best from its referees and players, can the inclusion of sides like Saudi Arabia and China justify the exclusion of the Netherlands or even Wales and Scotland?[676]

Although cohosting promises to be a very efficient way of maximising the World Cup's market potential, it has a devastating effect on the prospective hosts as the two rival nations Japan and South Korea are forced to go on costly bidding campaigns:

> Both countries embarked on expensive bid campaigns, wining and dining the 24-member decision-making committee, funding expensive trips to the would-be host countries and showering them with gifts. FIFA Vice-President, David Will reportedly said the campaigning had reached a 'ridiculous' level and that all that was missing were brown envelopes stuffed with cash.[677]

Given the literary responses, the decision to split the World Cup between two nations caught up in fierce hostility seems to have backfired, at least with regard to easing Japanese-Korean relations. Contrary to FIFA's aims to promote peace and mutual understanding, cohosting has apparently done little to ease tensions between these two nations, neither of which can afford to lose face. This cannot only be elicited from

[676] SM, 165-166.
[677] SM, 12.

the angry outbursts of Japanese supporters threaded throughout Moran's account,[678] but equally inferred from Trecker's reference to the manga "Hating the Korean Wave", one of Japan's top-selling books, which chronicled how South Korea 'cheated' to finish above Japan at the World Cup.[679]

Once the event has been awarded and marketing rights sold, Trecker draws attention to the fact that FIFA adopts a hands-off approach with risks and responsibilities being passed on to the host nation and its taxpayers. The staging is conducted through a Local Organizing Committee (LOC). This committee is in turn closely shadowed by FIFA experts, providing guidance for a proper staging of the tournament. As Trecker adequately outlines, this approach puts FIFA in a comfortable position:

> FIFA contributes nothing to the staging of the Cup itself, or to all the 'improvements' FIFA requires countries to make to their stadiums, roads, hotels, and so on. The hosts must hope that the increased tourism, prestige, and retail sales offset those costs. [...]
> This gives FIFA wonderful deniability and causes real headaches for the LOC, for if something goes wrong, despite the fact that FIFA's been enmeshed from day one, FIFA just blames the LOC and most folks believe them.[680]

A shocking example Moran provides reveals how this approach can create a whole set of problems for unexperienced representatives of the host nation struggling to satisfy expectations:

> Their pre-arrival had been fraught with difficulties. Okamura Osamu, the head of the local government's base camp, complained that his workload was too great. He said that he had been asked to give the Senegalese gifts of cash and a bus. The wrangling caused him so much distress that he committed suicide, leaving a note for his family apologising, saying that he was tired and that his work had been difficult because the way of thinking in Senegal and Japan were different.[681]

Yet, at the same time all accounts clearly show that staging the World Cup is far from being regarded as a burden among prospective host nations. On the contrary, hosting the tournament is seen as the ideal opportunity to show a new face to the world, both in economic and political terms. Trecker claims:

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[678] Consider the comments of Moran's friend Takeuchi's on the Japanese-Korean rivalry. See SM, 159: "I hate Korea, not the country or the people, but Japanese football fans can't support the Korean national team. I can't understand people wanting them to win. I just can't understand it. I don't understand about the war or any of that, but as far as the football is concerned, Korea have always been our main rivals; they hate losing to us, and we have always thought we have to beat them. When we lose in the World Cup, everyone says we should support them and I'm sorry, but I just can't do that."

[679] Compare JT, 80. For more information on the manga see http://www.japanfocus.org/-Mathew-Allen/2535 (Accessed 11 October 2012).

[680] JT, 77-78.

[681] SM, 28.

> The tournament that most closely paralleled the 2006 World Cup was the Berlin Olympic games. German readers will likely take umbrage with this, but both events were used by the German government to present a 'new' Germany to the world; both events took place during times of financial hardship and ethnic tension; and both tournaments were staged by groups that largely turned a blind eye to some of the seamier aspects of the events they were staging.[682]

Against this backdrop, hosting the event is such a prestigious matter that prospective host nations are willing to do what it takes to secure the tournament in the bidding campaigns. It is within this wider context that Trecker claims FIFA has not lived up to its creed "fair play for all", since he labels its decision to award the World Cup 2006 "scandalous" and FIFA's promise of fair play "fundamentally rotten".[683] Although South Africa's bid for 2006 was officially backed by Sepp Blatter, FIFA executives secretly agreed that the World Cup could not be awarded:

> To a country in financial chaos, and the rich proceeds the group has come to expect would not be forthcoming. And Blatter, though perhaps not the FIFA executive, knew that FIFA's longtime sports marketing partner, ISL/ISM, was on the verge of financial collapse, and about to take with it a sizable chunk of FIFA's money.[684]

Thus, according to Trecker's reasoning – FIFA has defaulted on its own promises with its reckless emphasis on profit.[685] Undeniably, the stagecraft of the event provides excellent business opportunities. Needless to say, the narrators oppose all companies that try to milk the moment.[686] Above all, it is the increasing dominance of official sponsorship pervading the event that the narrators attack. Indeed, corporate sponsorship has an immediate effect on the fans as a lot of tickets are no longer allocated to the fans but allocated to corporate sponsors:

> Getting into the games was proving difficult for the average fan. One in six tickets went to Cup sponsors such as Budweiser or Hyundai.

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[682] JT, 71.

[683] See JT, 72. Trecker's hefty accusations rely on the findings of investigative journalist Andrew Jennings. Note that awarding the World Cup to Germany was effectively triggered by a hoax of Martin Sonneborn, the chief editor of the German satirical magazine *Titanic*. For background information on Sonneborn's deed see the interview with him in the appendix.

[684] JT, 82.

[685] Compare FIFA's core values as announced on its homepage: "We believe that, just as the game itself, FIFA must be a model of fair play, tolerance, sportsmanship and transparency." See http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/organisation/mission.html (Accessed 13 October 2012).

[686] An example Trecker provides does indeed suffice to highlight how rigoroursly the event has been exploited by marketing strategies. JT, 70: "June's German edition of *Playboy* had soccer balls on its shiny green cover instead of the usual half-naked coed. Apparently German men are more turned on by the thought of soccer than by scantily clad women. Could this be why everyone is so depressed? It was too much. At the supermarket, I saw people go out of their way to avoid buying World-Cup tie-in items. One guy tore through a whole pyramid of bottled water just to get one without Michael Ballack's mug on it."

> A further one in nine, despite being counted in the general sale pool, went to 'hospitality,' or corporations and the extremely wealthy. According to FIFA, of the 3.07 million available, 1 million went right off the bat to sponsors, hospitality, and global TV. Another 276,000 went to German fans via their Football Association, and roughly 20 percent of seats went to folks like yours truly, a member of the international media. All in all, the chance of a fan getting in to see his team was remarkably low. A credible estimate was that only 8 percent of tickets in the stadium went at face value directly to a fan.[687]

Consequently, ticket distribution practices are perceived as unfair, particularly if general tickets are very hard to come by and sponsor tickets end up with the 'wrong' people – namely those who do not care about the game or touts who try to squeeze out as much money as possible from the 'real' fans.[688] Apart from ticket distribution ratios, Moran accuses merchandising companies of malpractice. He writes:

> When the teams come out to warm up there is a huge roar. In contrast to the friendly at Kobe, the English are making a lot of noise and the Japanese are joining in. There are small pockets of yellow amongst a stadium that is painted in broad strokes of red and white. England are at home.
> There are rows and rows of empty seats. A ticketing problem has meant that 8,000 seats are unsold and outside the ground, fans without the money or will to pay the touts for tickets are yelling in frustration as they can see the empty seats from outside. The touts are equally frustrated and, not wanting to lower prices for the upcoming Argentina game, rip up their unsold tickets.[689]

While gaining entry to the game proves costly to the fans, the tight grip of commercialisation is far from being lifted once the ground is about to be entered. Trying hard to protect official sponsorship, FIFA attempts to ban unofficial articles of companies that try to get free advertising through a false association with the tournament. Banning unauthorized material can then turn into a peculiar experience for the fans. From Germany' 2006 Trecker reports:

> Heineken was apparently so miffed that folks showed up wearing rival gear to a pre-Cup friendly with Cameroon that officials forced spectators to take off the lederhosen and throw them away before entering the stadium.
> Grossbrauerei actually won a court decision in Holland forestalling such high-handed tactics in the future, but money talks, and when Dutch fans showed up in Stuttgart on June 16 for Holland's next game, against the Ivory Coast, they were greeted by burly security personnel who forced anyone wearing the orange shorts to take them off. Dumpsters outside the grounds were filled with orange cotton pants, and a lot of Dutch fans watched the game in their underwear.[690]

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[687] JT, 121.
[688] See SM, 126: "The sponsors' tickets, however, had no name printed on them. Perhaps because sponsors and their guests are intrinsically trustworthy, or perhaps so that, if any unused tickets ended up being passed onto touts or troublemakers they couldn't be traced back to the sponsor."
[689] SM, 38.
[690] JT, 129. Compare a similar criticism Moran voices in a chapter titled "Auntie FIFA". See SM, 163-167.

Whilst a ban of companies which try to ‘ambush‘ the event appears fairly reasonable from an economic stance, FIFA’s approach to restrict fan celebrations for the sake of revenue streams defies belief for Trecker:

> Even Brazil’s famously buoyant fans, who often come armed with instruments and drums, were only grudgingly allowed to bring their music into the stadium after long discussions with the German World Cup organizing committee and FIFA. It was finally decided that these fans would be allowed to play, seeing as that activity is one of the most magnetic about a soccer match... but only if they stopped for the various advertisements and “infotainments“ piped in over the PA. Wolfgang Niersbach, the vice president of the local Cup organizers, admitted to reporters that such a restriction probably killed the mood, but what could be done? The air time had been bought and paid for.[691]

Looking at the criticism voiced, the reader gets the impression the event has actually become too commercial, spearheaded by an organization tainted with allegations of corruption and malpractice. For the sake of profit the event is shamelessly exploited. Unless “prepared to sell the family silver,“[692] the real fans are priced out. The people’s game has been prostituted to corporate sponsorship, suffering from a vast number of people attending games with no real interest whatsoever. Examining the discoursive patterns, one wonders how much of the narrators‘ criticism is actually substantiated. Admittedly, provided Andrew Jennings‘ findings are correct, there are massive shortcomings in the ranks of FIFA with individuals repeatedly violating FIFA’s Code of Ethics.[693] Admittedly, in the light of tickets given to hospitality, ticket distribution seems a farce with the average fan left vulnerable to black market practices. However, the supposedly good old days with a World Cup reaching out to each and every fan are nothing but a myth. In fact, before the days of satellite TV and mass tourism, the World Cup was a remarkably closed event. Before the days of flight bargains only the well-off and privileged were actually able to afford a trip to a distant country or even a foreign continent. In this respect not much has changed as Moran observes himself in Japan.[694]

Attending the World Cup in distant countries or foreign continents has always been a costly business and will continue to be in the future. But it speaks volumes about the fascination of the beautiful game that ordinary fans are willing to put up with the ever-

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[691] JT, 130.
[692] CW, 90.
[693] For more on FIFA’s Code of Ethics see:http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/administration/50/02/82/codeofethics2012e.pdf (Accessed 12 October 2012).
[694] See SM, 67. Trecker in turn also reminds the reader that except for Belgium, France, Yugoslavia and Romania even European teams were not able to attend the inaugural World Cup tournament in Uruguay in 1930 due to expense and travelling difficulties. See JT, 73.

increasing commercialisation when being ripped off does not stop them from attending. Likewise, football's popularity will continue to be recklessly exploited by FIFA and its partners in the future. This has been sufficiently addressed in all the accounts at hand. What has rarely been hinted at, but deserves mentioning nonetheless is that FIFA's responsibility goes beyond organising the event.[695] Helping to develop the game all across the world, FIFA relies on revenue streams from TV and sponsors. Whether the money is spent wisely or not on its many *Goal Projects* is open to debate, but what matters first and foremost is that a considerable amount of the revenue stream is reinvested into development projects.[696] As such FIFA's funding has a positive impact on local communities, particularly among smaller associations. Above all, one should not forget that hosting the World Cup usually boosts a host nation's economy despite the fact that the nation's taxpayers step in for the investments in infrastructure.[697]

7.7 Conclusion

Examining the narratives has helped to paint a broader picture of an event hailed as the greatest show on earth. In line with the focal point of this dissertation it was the English fans that warranted most attention. Whereas the English fans have regularly been linked with crowd disorder, close readings of these accounts testify that they have frequently become targets of violence and abuse themselves. This stems from the zero tolerance approach police have adopted when tackling 'the English disease'. Passionate and knowledgable about the game, English fans are far better than their reputation. However, all narrators concede that patterns of English fandom depart from the conventional carnival approach typically displayed by fans of other nations. While Moran is ill-at-ease with the swaggering attitude of English fans, Ward adopts a more apologetic, yet uncritical stance by explaining thuggish behaviour by beer, sun and the English bulldog-spirit. From what the narrators observe the English do tend to react with higher levels of aggressiveness, but only when cornered and provoked. This in turn perpetuates their reputation as thugs while equally increasing English hooligan paranoia abroad. In fact, it is the English press that contributes much to the

[695] Trecker vaguely hints at this aspect. Compare JT, 75.
[696] Compare the official statement on FIFA's homepage about the 'Goal Programme', which was launched 14 years ago by Sepp Blatter to fund development projects. See http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/footballdevelopment/projects/goalprogramme/news/newsid=1709864/index.html (Accessed 11 October 2012).
[697] See JT, 76.

criminalisation of the English fans. Horror stories obviously help to raise circulation figures. Unsurprisingly, many fans despise the ‘gutter press‘ for their tongue-in-cheek approach. Riddled with twisted words and half-truths, press coverage of football is no longer taken seriously, neither by the fans nor by players or managers. Fearing to ‘get stitched up‘ the latter ones have become very cautious about what to tell the press. The confrontational stance by the media, which is much derided by Moran and Ward, shows in turn that press coverage of football is dominated by the English tabloids. Indeed, it is the tabloids that set the tone with their emphasis on sensation with the quality papers seemingly happy to join in. Due to the emergence of low sports journalism, epitomised by the likes of Moran and Ward, seasoned sports journalists find their positions increasingly under threat, their business ethics questioned. Thankfully, Ward’s account provides room for the journalists to make their voices heard. Trapped in a cut-throat industry with constant pressure to deliver stories, these apparent ‘bad boys‘ suffer immensely from the limited access given to players and managers.

Furthermore, analysis of the narratives has shown that the carnivalesque atmosphere of World Cups facilitates international understanding. For the length of the tournament hosting countries turn into ‘Planet Football‘ – a seemingly utopian place equipped with its own rhythm, symbols and, of course, its own language. Here patriotism can be displayed without becoming ill-conceived due to the humanitarian values the game has become associated with.

Analysis of World Cup travelogues would be incomplete without considering FIFA’s role in staging this event. Indeed, each of the narrators gives extended treatment to FIFA’s stewarding of the game. Riddled by allegations of corruption and financial irregularities, FIFA finds itself massively under attack. Whilst Moran and Ward predominantly bemoan FIFA’s hypercommercialisation of the game, only Trecker acknowledges that the organisation reinvests part of its revenue streams into development schemes. Surely, criticism about hypercommercialisation never seems out of place, but at times the criticism Ward and Moran engage in is hypocritical given the reasons for their personal attendance. Compelled to win back the game from corporate sponsorship they claim to represent the ordinary fan. Trying to make their voices heard, the prevailing mood of their narratives is accusatory, reminiscent about a past in which the World Cup was not owned by ‘hospitality‘. But the aspect they fail to mention is that they exploit their tales for cash letting their ‘love‘ intersect with their

professional life.[698] By doing so they contribute to the very commercialisation they officially frown upon. In contrast to many of their fellow fans, not once do Moran and Ward end up without a ticket. Acting as a photo journalist entry to the matches comes free of cost for Moran. But little are we told about his activities as a photo journalist. Instead, the reader rather gets the impression that he seizes the opportunity to experience the World Cup free of charge. Whereas the professional sports journalist Trecker displays indepth knowledge of the game‘s tactics, its players and its history, both Ward and Moran come across as far less knowledgeable about football.

[698] Compare Ward’s statement quoted in: Redhead, ‘Little Hooliganz’, 49: “Colin Ward, author of a number of football hooligan books for publishers like Mainstream, has argued that he stopped when he realised that ‘he was not making any money out of it’.”

8. Footupias

8.1 Charlie Connelly *Stamping Grounds*[699]

8.1.1 Content

Leafing through the pages of an old travel book in a London bookshop, Charlie Connelly's attention is drawn to Liechtenstein – a tiny principality sandwiched between Austria and Switzerland. In search of a new writing project, the freelance writer decides to explore Liechtenstein's qualifying campaign for the World Cup 2002. Drawn in a group with Austria, Spain, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Israel, Connelly sets out to follow Liechtenstein during their seven remaining fixtures against these nations hoping to understand how team and country relate to the beautiful game. Given the size of the 4th smallest country in the world with its 32,000 inhabitants and the fact that only a limited number of Liechtenstein inhabitants are eligible for the national team, it does not take him long to grow increasingly fond of a team that only boasts six lower league professionals and a bunch of semi-professionals, whose training sessions have to fit into their working week. Yet, the enthusiasm Connelly publicly displays for one of the most unsuccessful teams in the world is rare in a country in which football is perceived as little more than a hobby. Predictably, Connelly is warmly welcomed by the Liechtenstein FA and easily befriends several of their players. Hailing from a nation where big business has come to dominate the game and success is only measured in results, the Englishman is intrigued by the team's constant commitment despite the likely risk of perpetual defeat against their mighty opponents. Following the team for a year Connelly realizes that Liechtenstein's success cannot be measured in victory or qualification, although, at the time of writing, Liechtenstein are no longer the pushovers they used to be when they entered competitive international football in 1994. He comes to understand that for a team predetermined for the role of David against Goliath in practically every match it is primarily the dedication to the cause that instills a sense of pride in their players, the love for their country that keeps them going enabling them to stand tall even in defeat. Despite Liechtenstein's defeats in all their qualifying matches without scoring a single goal, Connelly's account finishes optimistically as Liechtenstein's results have steadily improved thanks to the pioneering work of manager Ralf Loose.

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[699] Charlie Connelly, *Stamping Grounds: Exploring Liechtenstein and its World Cup Dream*, London: Little, Brown Book Group 2002 (Abacus Paperback Reprint ^{2}2005). Hereafter cited as 'SG'.

8.1.2 Narrative style

With four football-related travel books under his belt,[700] the experienced travel writer finds himself attracted to Liechtenstein, even more so as no one has written at length about the tiny principality before.[701] Writing about Liechtenstein's World Cup qualifying campaign seems promising to Connelly as it combines the quest for geographical exploration as well as his penchant for the sporting underdog:

> Liechtenstein is so small that the centre pages of its most popular tourist brochure show a map of the entire country and its alpine environs. To give you an idea of the scale, this map of a nation has children's playgrounds marked on it. Liechtenstein has no airport, probably because by the time any planes had landed and skidded to halt they'd be in Switzerland. [...]
> But amid the principality's snow-capped peaks, quirky industry and bulging bank vaults Liechtenstein's national football team enters every World Cup and European Championship qualifying competition. And in football it's not just the size that Liechtenstein is disadvantaged. The country has no league and only seven football clubs, all of whom play in the lower divisions across the border in Switzerland. Of Liechtenstein's population of around 32,000, over one third are foreign nationals and thus ineligible for the national side. [...] Liechtenstein's national team thus faces odds as insurmountable as the alpine peaks within its borders if the climb were to be attempted in flip-flops.[702]

Basing the framework of his account on seven remaining matches, he wants to use these as a tool "to get to the heart of Liechtenstein."[703] This is an ambitious aim given the low number of matches and the fact that he doesn't spend the year in Liechtenstein, but travels back and forth from England. Above all, what is it one can report on a country that is "just sixteen miles long and less than four wide?"[704] Surprisingly though, Connelly manages to offer a highly entertaining, yet thoroughly informative portrait of team and country. Portraying Liechtenstein as *terra incognita* on the opening pages, he lets his narrative unfold in linear fashion inviting the reader to join him on his journey to gradually discover Liechtenstein and its people.[705] Although he claims to know next to nothing about Liechtenstein, he does not approach the subject matter entirely unprepared. Before setting off to Lichtenstein he "dived in and out of the bookshops looking for Liechtenstein like a Tasmanian devil in

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[700] Note that Connelly has published the following travel-related football narratives preceding the present novel: *I Just Can't Help Believing: Going Down The Relegation Experience* (1998), *London Fields: A Journey through Football's Metroland* (1999), *Spirit High and Passion Pure: A Journey Through European Football* (2000), *Many Miles... a Season in the Life of Charlton Athletic* (2001).

[701] See SG, 16: "Books on Liechtenstein are few and far between, especially those written in English. Even the established travel guides give the country short shrift."

[702] SG, 1-2.

[703] SG, 48.

[704] SG, 1. Compare also the map of Liechtenstein he attaches.

[705] In epistolary manner Connelly even features the initial email exchange between him and the General Secretary of Liechtenstein's Football Association. Compare SG, 18. In fact, emails are a recurring feature of his account moving the action out of his narrative voice. See also SG, 194, 252, 273.

search of a self-help guide to relaxation techniques,“[706] eventually stumbling across Barbara Greene’s book *Valley of Peace: The Story of Liechtenstein.* Excerpts from Greene‘s account help to build up expectations evoking fairy-tale associations of a country the narrator is ready to depart for.

> In the very centre of a storm-tossed and weary Europe lies the Principality of Liechtenstein – a little island of peace. Life is unhurried there: it flows like a slow-moving river on which hardly a ripple can be seen. The people are courteous and friendly and an atmosphere of quiet calm lies over the country.[707]

Whilst the statistical figures Connelly provides from *Liechtenstein in Figures 2000*[708] seem to emphasize Liechtenstein’s fairy-tale characteristics, he tries to paint a more balanced picture that goes beyond the conventional tourist perception. It is against this backdrop that he introduces the reader to Liechtenstein’s history, a history “dominated by famine, war, greed, disease.“[709] Indeed, the narrator challenges the idyllic picture drawing attention to Liechtenstein’s constitutional controversy,[710] emerging ecological issues[711] and intrigue within Liechtenstein‘s Football Association.[712] In search of Liechtenstein’s soul he blends personal impressions with experiences of long-term residents enabling him to embed issues which require detailed background knowledge that can only be ingrained with time. With a keen eye for observation, he digs out Liechtenstein’s cultural peculiarities, puzzling the reader more than once.[713] Particularly insightful in this respect is a lengthy conversation he features between him and Sheila, an English expat who has been living in Liechtenstein since 1956. Through her long-term residency she can report with authority on the citizens’ mentality. It is her expertise that enables the reader to grasp a better understanding of Liechtenstein’s more recent development. Sheila is quoted as saying:

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[706] SG, 15-16.
[707] SG, 16. Note that Greene’s book was published in 1947.
[708] See SG, 75.
[709] SG, 21. In fact, Connelly dedicates a whole chapter to Liechtenstein’s history. See ibid., chapter 2, 20-29.
[710] At the time of writing the ruling monarch Hans Adam II demanded constitutional changes threatening to move the family back to Vienna if his will was not granted. His proposals, including the right to dissolve the government and appoint judges himself, were believed to move Liechtenstein further away from democracy towards autocracy. As can be taken from Connelly’s afterword, two-thirds of voters in the referendum gave Hans-Adam II the increased power he had desired. For more information on the constitutional changes see SG, 49, 96, 243, 323.
[711] See SG, 75.
[712] See chapter 22 on this issue. SG, 272-287.
[713] Compare for instance Connelly’s description of the Malbuner Eselfest – an annual donkey festival in the mountains, including races and a donkey beauty-contest. See SG, 200ff.

> ‘I do think there is a danger of the rapid growth here spinning out of control. We’re being overrun by foreign banks, and there are hardly any private homes in the centre of Vaduz now. The place is dead in the evenings as a result. [...]
> ‘On the other hand, Liechtenstein is very influenced by the Föhn, the warm wind that sweeps through the valley. I think this affects people psychologically and is why so many people here drive like maniacs, for example. Many people become depressed, and Liechtenstein does have a high suicide rate. We also have our share of problems with drugs and alcohol, the same as any other country.
> ‘The people here are very nice, but the friendliness has its boundaries. In England if someone you know came to the door, you’d invite them in for a cup of tea, but that’s very rare in Liechtenstein [...].[714]

Frequently compared to Bill Bryson, his narrative is conversational in tone, full of references to popular culture that are easy to relate to. The many personal anecdotes Connelly includes in his account clearly show that Connelly does not take himself too seriously:

> ‘Ah, I see you’ve been upgraded,‘ said the clerk. Now I had heard about airline reps scanning check-in queues for people they deemed suitable for upgrade, and had never experienced this privilege before. I looked down at my scuffed trainers, baggy green combat trousers that were frayed at the back where they were too long for me, my grey casual jacket with the blob of black grease on the forearm courtesy of a train door, stroked my unshaven chin and said, ‘Um ...why?‘ [...]
> Once everyone had boarded, and after I had instructed a stewardess to pull the curtain that separated business class from economy so I might not catch tuberculosis or nits from the riff-raff, I set about playing with the buttons.[715]

With this self-deprecating humour the Englishman combines the trivial with the political. Meeting the ruling monarch of Liechtenstein on National Day, a day the monarch invites his subjects onto his premises, Connelly describes his royal encounter in slightly ironic fashion:

> And then I realised that I really didn’t know what to say next. His Serene Highness Prince Hans Adam II *von und zu* Liechtenstein looked at me expectantly, while a rivulet of sweat ran down the side of his face to form a saline bulb at his chin. Our hands were still clasped together, and the droplet of sweat detached itself from his face and splashed on to my forearm. Later it struck me that if I’d been unwittingly developing any horrible diseases, I was probably now cured.
> I still can’t believe what I said next. I put it down to a combination of nerves at meeting royalty face to sweaty face, the blazing midday sunshine and the three glasses of free beer I had now consumed. So please bear this in mind when I tell you that I nodded over the Prince’s shoulder at the castle and said, ‘Nice house.‘ A bit like nodding at the Statue of Liberty and saying to the President of the United States, ‘I like your gnome.‘
> Prince Hans Adam II nodded again and said, ‘*Oh, ja*?‘ ‘Um, *ja*,‘ I responded. ‘Sank you,‘ he said and released my hand.[716]

[714] SG, 98-100.
[715] SG, 195-196.
[716] SG, 237.

Apart from providing witty commentary on social and political realities in the tiny principality, Connelly gives unprecedented literary attention to Liechtenstein's footballing affairs. Whereas the team's day-to-day business is covered through newspaper reports of Liechtenstein's leading sports journalist Ernst Hasler,[717] Connelly paints the broader picture with a detailed overview on the game's development in the past,[718] its current state and its future ambitions.[719] Easy access to staff and players comes in handy since this puts Connelly in the position to audiotape interviews with players and staff alike. While Connelly's blow-by-blow game coverage is a common feature of ordinary sports writing,[720] the insider knowledge he is able to draw from the interviews he features turns his account into something more exceptional. Owing to the heterogeneity of Liechtenstein's national team he manages to capture both amateur and professional perspectives on the game.[721] Featuring those that represent Liechtenstein's future hope or past achievements he gives the reader an idea of what it feels like to play for this country.

8.2 Pete Davies *I Lost My Heart To The Belles*[722]

8.2.1 Content

After winning the Women's FA Cup and the Women's National Division league title in the 1993/94 season there is little left to compete for. Yet, when three of Doncaster Belles' best players move on to Liverpool Ladies, defending pole position seems an exciting challenge to Belles' long-term team manager Paul Edmunds. With several youngsters coming through the ranks, he is optimistic to build an equally strong side.

[717] Writing for the *Liechtensteiner Vaterland*, one of the two national papers in Liechtenstein, the sports editor Ernst Hasler has to fill five broadsheet pages with Liechtenstein sports news every day. Compare SG, 149.
[718] See SG, 50-59.
[719] On these aspects see the extended interview with Markus Shaper, the General Secretary of the Liechtenstein Football Association. SG, 59-62.
[720] For the rather lengthy blow-by-blow presentations of the qualifying matches see SG, 85-92, 109-114, 139-142, 152-157, 181-187, 259-268, 295-297. In contrast to previous fan narratives his account focuses less on atmosphere in and around the games, quite simply because his adopted team lacks the necessary fan support. To build up tension nonetheless, he turns his attention to Liechtenstein's line up whilst equally adding prematch press comments made by players and coaches alike. In similar way he adds postmatch comments to his account.
[721] Connelly includes nine interviews with representatives of Liechtenstein football in his narrative. Among these are General Secretary Markus Shaper and national team manager Ralf Loose as well as different Liechtenstein players. Out of the seven Liechtenstein internationals interviewed the likes of Peter Jehle, Daniel Hasler, Martin Stocklasa and Mario Frick are professional footballers while Frédéric Gigon is a semi-professional schoolteacher, Patrick Hefti a bank manager and captain Harry Zech a winemaker by trade.
[722] Pete Davies, *I Lost My Heart To The Belles*, London: Heinemann 1996 (Mandarin Paperback Reprint 1997). Davies' work cited as 'DB' hereafter.

Chronicling Belles‘ season, journalist Pete Davies quickly realizes that the current squad cannot make up for the loss of three decisive players. Short of funding and blighted by injuries, the team’s season is also clouded by England‘s World Cup campaign. Despite their dominance in the previous season England’s enigmatic manager Ted Copeland only selects three of Doncaster‘s players for Sweden ’95 – much to the bewilderment of the club‘s talented players. Even worse, the manager’s decision to strip Belles‘ captain Gill Coulthard of the England captaincy has left her deeply demoralised, affecting Coulthard’s commitment for her own club. Under the given circumstances the Belles find themselves in poor form, incapable of competing at the top end. Upon losing their decisive matches in the league and the FA Cup against eventual winners Arsenal Ladies, signs of resignation come to the fore, although their team spirit off the pitch remains immaculate. When all hopes of retaining both titles are gone, the Belles‘ season peters out into meaningless conclusion with a disappointing third-place finish in the league.

8.2.2 Narrative style

Given unprecedented access to a women’s topflight team, writer Pete Davies covers Doncaster Belles‘ 25th season devoting 23 chapters to their fortunes.[723] Starting with an *in medias res* beginning, the narrative adopts a classic chronological approach.[724] Surprisingly though, exact references to time are scarcely found. Due to the lack of league tables Davies‘ match reports carry an element of fragmentation, leaving the reader in uncertainty about the Belles‘ position in the league as well the relative strength of their opponents.[725] While the match reports might appear fragmentary, the narrative frame is structured by reemerging themes. Above all, it is the disastrous conditions these top athletes have to face. Illustrating the painful realities of women‘s football, Davies dedicates a substantial part of his narrative to personal profiles of players and management alike. Attempting to find out what the game means to them

[723] The last of the 24 chapters is dedicated to the women’s World Cup in Sweden at the end of the 1994/95 season. Whilst the overall focus is on the Belles’ league and cup campaigns chapter 8 provides a detailed overview on the history of women’s football in the UK.

[724] In a prelude titled “impressions“, Davies‘ narrative starts off with a snapshot of Belles‘ third match against Wolverhampton Wanderers. Hereafter the narrative resumes a chronological order starting with the first game in the actual chapter 1.

[725] Due to the lack of league tables or fixture lists the reader is actually left in doubt about the names and the exact number of teams that belong to the league. In fact, it requires a certain degree of research to find out about this. Equally, the use of nicknames such as “Wolves“ indicates that the given narrative clearly caters for those with an intrinsic background knowledge of British football. Moreover, reports on the league games are discontinuous. The return matches against Millwall Lionesses and Leasowe Pacific are missing. A reason for this cannot be found.

and what they have to sacrifice for it, Davies visits the players‘ homes and families, even coming around their workplace examining how they slot things around their favourite pursuit. When embedding these profiles in his account, major attention is given to the question of how the women got attracted to football in the first place and how they have coped with stereotypes and ignorance ever since.[726] Although Davies occasionally hints at gender-specific differences in approaching the game, he tries hard to portray the women as tough and resilient as men have traditionally been perceived. This is achieved through a strong emphasis on the physical side of match action and the women‘s ability to withstand pain:

> Gail said she was shaking all over. So was Des, after Sammy Britton elbowed her in the temple; so was Gill, after a ferocious shot thumped off the top of her head and knocked her out. A stretcher came, she went behind the goal, sat on it, got up again.[727]

The recurring motif of endurance also serves dramatic purposes as listing the injured lets the Belles‘ quest to retain their titles appear even harder:

> When you think it can’t get worse, it always does. Wilfreda Beehive got the squad and their travelling companions into the service at Watford Gap, and Paul gave me the injury list. As well as Gail and Joanne, Ann Lisseman was out; the calf kicked by Wolves had swollen up hugely, she’d been in hospital and nothing was broken, but the swelling wasn’t going, and now they were talking about a blood clot. As for the eleven who would play, five of those weren’t fit either – Kaz, Channy and Debbie Biggins in goal were all carrying dodgy ankles, Skiller’s knee still wasn’t right, and Micky Jackson had a back pull. All in all it was like Wilfreda Beehive shouldn’t be going to Potter’s Bar, she should be making for the nearest out-patients instead.[728]

Shadowing the Belles on and off the pitch, Davies creates the image of a tight-knit community with the women acting in an assertive, self-determined way. Their assertive manner is reflected by the earthy humour Davies captures. Following two players that went looking for a new car to get them to their games, Davies observes:

> On used lots in dingy ‘burbs slippery salesmen talked down at them like they were children, like they wouldn’t have money, like they wouldn’t know cars. On a windy hilltop they found a

[726] Giving these outstanding, yet largely unknown players the attention they deserve, almost every team member is given her personal portrait. As far as the management is concerned, Davies offers more detailed portraits of team manager Paul Edmunds, of founding member Sheila Edmunds and of chairman Robert Kantecki. Attempting to give a comprehensive picture to the reader, light is shed upon the characters’ wider socio-economic background, their family relations as well as their outer appearance and psychological disposition. The profiles presented are based on Davies’ personal observations and interviews conducted. A typical example of such characterisation can be inferred from Chantel Woodhead’s case. See DB, 113-121.

[727] DB, 175.

[728] DB, 62-63.

> white Nova with hubcap trim and go-faster stripes (‘Right posey,‘ grinned Broadhurst) and Lowe lifted up the covers to get at the metal round the spare tyre in the boot, and started pressing down hard. She said, ‘They go through at the back sometimes, these Novas.‘
> Broadhurst snorted. ‘How do you know that then? You been shagging in one of these and your arse went through and hit the floor, did it?‘ [729]

His observations attach particular importance to the women’s more ‘laddish‘ forms of conduct, easily ‘out-bloking‘ their male counterparts. Documenting a night out with the Belles and their female fans, Davies reports:

> This lad tried to start a conversation about the relative merits of Doncaster’s male and female football teams, all the old stuff about how, in the end, men were better.
> Belles swerved away after Kaz and the lad found himself with Helen Garnett in his face. She told him, ‘I can piss faster than your lot can go down wing.‘
> Taken aback he said, ‘Best season we’ve had in a while, come on.‘
> She raised her hands and cried, ‘And John the Baptist has scored!‘ – then left him baffled and affronted in her wake.[730]

Their blokish conduct is closely intertwined with a subject repeatedly threaded through his account – the impact of a BBC documentary on the public image of the team. While broadcasting the programme contributes much to the Belles‘ wider popularity, recorded scenes of ‘untamed‘ celebration in nightclubs and bars alike lead to an official scolding on behalf of the FA, which is believed to affect the players‘ prospects for Sweden‘ 95.

> The Belles got a letter from the FA too – a letter from the Chief Executive, Graham Kelly. The documentary on the BBC, he wrote, had been regrettable in its content and timing, unacceptable for its language and behaviour, and a disincentive to parents and teachers. Kelly concluded, ‘I need not emphasise to you the potential consequences for your club should such behaviour ever be repeated.‘[731]

These words explain why Davies subsequently devotes much attention to the players‘ doubts about how the documentary might affect their international career. Aside from football-related themes, Davies‘ narrative is noteworthy for the social criticism it reflects. Regarding Doncaster Belles as a microcosm, he uses the team as a lens to portray the effects of Thatcherism on Lancashire and its people. Freely interspersing situations of the present with memories of the past Davies frequently adopts authorial perspectives. He is particularly concerned with characters‘ inner workings, with their thoughts and feelings as they are put face to face with the effects

[729] DB, 96.
[730] DB, 248.
[731] DB, 205.

of Thatcherite economics. About Kaz Walker, Belles' prolific scorer, the reader learns:

> Kaz Walker worked in Income Support for the Department of Social Security in Rotherham.[...] She dealt with people wanting money, people she'd promised would get their benefits, people who were desperate – so they weren't coming at her in a nice frame of mind, and the amount of abuse she got was unreal. But then, the amount of work she had was unreal too, they could have doubled the staff and not kept up with it all. She'd be in there knowing she had all these people to pay, she'd know she wasn't ever going to get to them all, she'd be on and off the phone, pick it up, put it down, people screaming, I ain't got me money, where's me money, people just *screaming all day*... and she was quite easy-going, Kaz Walker, she wouldn't ever have thought she'd get stressed out about her job. But this'd get to anybody.
> So she thought about football all the time – not just playing, but what she'd do for training each night when she got home.[732]

Given the depressing social realities Davies pictures, the sober tone of his narrative hardly comes as a surprise. In his quest to present a seemingly unfiltered version of dressing room reality, the reader frequently finds Davies on the edge of action, readily departing from more authorial perspectives, merely witnessing events.[733] When chronicling sights and sounds around a matchday, he is particularly drawn to the banter and tension of dressing room routine:

> The ref was knocking on the door to call them out when Flo ran through it; a cousin had brought her. Breathless, she started scrambling into her strip as the team filed out; Paul watched them go then said to her, heavy with angry irony in the empty, kit-littered room, 'When you're ready, Flo.'
> Behind his back as he left she mouthed at him, *Fuck off*.[734]

Only rarely does he allow his feelings to affect his unemotional manner of reporting:

> I remember how, stung by another offside decision I couldn't believe, I sprang up on the dirt by the sideline screaming, 'Bollocks. *Bollocks*.' Then I found I was looking at myself stood there shouting that, brain frothing in this near-empty, ratty, only-just-not-burnt-down little Third Division ground thinking, What are you doing? You're thirty-six, married, got two kids, and here you're losing all control over a dodgy linesman? Sheila said, 'It's all right, Pete. Football can do that to you.' But it was more than that, it was so much more.
> I'd lost my heart to these people. I loved the way they played, and I loved the way they loved to play; I loved the way they made themselves something special out of football.[735]

[732] DB, 31-32.
[733] Contrary to previous accounts in this study, the reader learns very little about the narrator's private background as he does not place himself at the centre of attention. Seldom does he become part of the action departing from his observational position.
[734] DB, 125. Whilst Davies' match coverage comprises scenic blow-by-blow descriptions, the narrator attaches particular importance to Paul Edmunds' motivational teamtalks either before the game, in half-time or after.
[735] DB, 264-265.

While such comments clearly document Davies‘ increasing affection for the team, extended commentary on the quality of play is left to more authoritative voices. Watching the Belles for the first time, Mark Bright, then a professional with Sheffield Wednesday, is quoted as saying:

> ‘Naive? Not in any way. They could be tighter about offside, maybe – but no. I see the little things that go on in the professional game, nudges, obstruction, running across people, rushing the keeper, protecting the ball when it’s going out of play – they’re doing all that. Making it hard for people to get free on the ball. Then the commitment in the tackle’s been excellent; the referee could have been a bit firmer at times, I’ve seen studs showing here. There’s been things that in the men’s game would have been a yellow card.‘[736]

Owing to Davies‘ biased position a similar strategy is chosen to comment on Joanne Broadhurst’s omission from Sweden ’95. Featuring the comment of Vic Akers, team manager of Arsenal Ladies, Davies voices his disapproval of Copeland’s decision indirectly.[737]

8.3 Paul Watson *Up Pohnpei*[738]

8.3.1 Content

Coming to terms with his own limitations, the semi-professional footballer Paul Watson finally gives up on his childhood dream of playing for England. Yet, upon hearing a TV commentator’s absurd announcement that England could still qualify for Euro 2008 if Andorra beat Russia, he and his friend Matthew become captivated by the idea of playing internationally for one of football’s ‘underdogs‘. In search of a country whose standards are low enough to facilitate an international career, he and his flatmate Matthew Conrad skim through the rankings identifying Pohnpei as one of the weakest football teams in the world. In fact, the tiny Micronesian island in the South Pacific has never registered a win, having lost their last international game against Guam 16–1 almost a decade ago. When they find their attempt to become naturalised citizens denied by Pohnpei’s strict citizenship regulations, they still contact the Pohnpeian FA with the view to coaching the team. What started as a crazy idea suddenly becomes more realistic when Charles Musana, the representative of Pohnpeian football, happens to be in London telling them that his

[736] DB, 39.
[737] See DB, 291.
[738] Paul Watson, *Up Pohnpei: A quest to reclaim the soul of football by leading the world’s ultimate underdogs to glory*, London: Profile Books 2012. In the following cited as ‘UPP‘.

FA needs a football coach to revitalise the game. Leaving behind his job in London, Paul and his friend Matthew embark on a three-week scouting mission to explore their coaching opportunities. Yet, the obstacles they encounter 8,000 miles from home are by no means restricted to the island‘s bumpy sports fields. While the complete lack of funding does not come unexpected, the islanders‘ chaotic kickarounds make them realise that the game is still in its infancy on the island. Thrilled by the challenge of establishing a football culture on an island that is said to be riddled by one of the highest obesity rates in the world, they accept their nominations as Pohnpei’s official new football coaches. Yet, upon returning from their scouting mission, matters become more complicated when Matthew gets accepted into the University of Southern California, leaving Paul to his own devices. Urged by a feeling of responsibility, Paul decides to return to Pohnpei on his own to rejuvenate the game. Without any previous coaching experience the 25-year-old struggles to get a grip on proceedings as only a handful of players with a rudimentary knowledge of the game turn up for training sessions. Whilst initially cutting an awkward figure as a coach, he is able to establish his credentials over the course of time winning the players‘ hearts. Supported by Jim Tobin, the local chief of the Olympic Commitee, as well as Dilshan Senarathgoda, Pohnpei’s most able football player, he manages to set up a league consisting of five teams. Running the league helps him to select Pohnpei’s most gifted players for their newly created national team. Once Paul has been able to arrange an international match between Pohnpei and Guam, his coaching efforts intensify training his players five times a week including gym sessions early in the morning. Despite these labours their enthusiastically awaited international tour is on the verge of cancellation when a sponsor does not materialise in time to pay for the team’s flight tickets. Only a last minute £10,000 sponsorship deal clinched with a company of Matthew’s acquaintance finally seals off their international tour to Guam and saves Paul from the enormous pressure of being labelled a false prophet.

Much to the relief of Pohnpei‘s players and coach alike the team’s efforts finally pay off as they are able to secure a 7–1 victory against the Crushers, one of Guam’s second division teams. Yet more importantly, their first competitive victory has gained football a new respectability on the island and instilled an immense national pride among the players. Having transformed Pohnpeian football from occasional kickabouts into a well-established and organised sport in little more than 18 months,

Paul returns to England, leaving the destiny of Pohnpeian football in the hands of Dilshan Senarathgoda, Micronesia's first professional football coach.

8.3.2 Style

Whereas the pun "Up Pohnpei" in Watson's title echoes an immediate reference to British football culture,[739] the term "quest" in the novel's lengthy subtitle appeals directly to the readers' sense of adventure. Indeed, exploring the largely untapped football culture on this far-flung island satisfies the readers' more exploratory instincts, particularly if Pohnpei's geographical and customary peculiarities are charted along the way.[740] Since the place of action is largely restricted to the island,[741] Watson's colourful descriptions of island life enable the reader to get a better understanding of Pohnpeian culture. True to Pohnpei's remoteness, Watson's account mirrors typical elements of desert island fiction. In Robinsonesque manner he gradually realises an increasing disconnectedness with the 'outside world'.[742] Above all, it is the relaxed 'island mentality' that clearly captures the narrator's attention, for the islander's laid-back mentality stands in stark contrast to the Western concept of streamlined efficiency. Hence Paul Watson is somewhat surprised when he learns that one of his players, a taxi driver by trade, has brought one of his clients to a training session:

> As Denson got out of his battered yellow taxi, I realised with a start that there was somebody in the back seat. The stranger was a few stone overweight and chewing methodically on betel nut, pausing occasionally to spit the foul red juice into a Coke can. He certainly wasn't a footballer.
> 'That's my fare,' Denson explained, catching me staring. 'He's going to Nett, so I'll drop him off when I go back after training.'

[739] 'Play Up Pompey' or the Pompey Chimes is chanted by fans of Portsmouth FC at home games.
[740] The reader is provided with a world map showing where exactly the Federated States of Micronesia can be found.
[741] Except for the *in medias res* beginning in the prologue, the narrative comprises 10 chapters of chronological narration covering a time span from November 2007 up to June 2010. It also contains an epilogue titled "Extra time" as a follow-up episode. Whilst a training session led by Pohnpei's new coach Dilshan Senarathgoda is depicted in this episode, the reader does not learn when the action described here is supposed to have taken place. Out of these 10 chapters chapter 1, part of chapter 8, as well as part of chapter 9 and 10 locate the action outside Pohnpei. The only two other settings appearing in Watson's narrative are his hometown London and the island Guam, an American military outpost and the destination of Pohnpei's international tour.
[742] See UPP, 94: "I'd completely stopped checking the Bristol City scores. For the first week or so I had worked out the time difference and stayed up until 3 a.m. refreshing the live-match feed, but after a couple of weeks I had lost track of who we were playing. It was partly the anti-social hours, partly the poor quality and very expensive internet connection [...]." In addition, Watson, the white intruder, struggles to come to terms with climate conditions on the island. Compare UPP, 108-113.

> Denson seemed so unconcerned at leaving a paying customer in his cab for the best part of two hours that I decided to let it lie.[743]

Whilst such incidents puzzle Watson, they equally affect his own behaviour as he gradually adopts a similar laid-back attitude. When offered a car Watson declares:

> I had only one problem: I couldn't drive. I'd had a few lessons here and there back in the UK, but the cost had always prevented me from getting anywhere near a licence. In any Western country I would have politely refused Jim's offer, but on an island where the average driving speed was 20 mph and most people openly chewed betel nut while driving, I felt that I was just about as qualified as anyone.[744]

Although Watson's humorous observations on Pohnpei's supposed 'backwardness' are scattered across his narrative, he displays particular concern not to come across as some sort of neocolonial missionary.[745] This becomes evident when his plan to raise attention for his team backfires once Watson's initial press release has been hyped up by British tabloids turning Pohnpei's team into a laughing stock.[746] It is in this context that his frequently mentioned struggle for acceptance gains particular emphasis:

> As I sat down to take my boots off I caught sight of a creased piece of paper on the ground with a picture of someone in a Yeovil shirt on it. I unfolded it with a stab of panic. It was a printout of our story from the *Sun*: 'Brits to Coach "Worst Ever Side"'. I went bright red. The players were talking in Pohnpeian and I was certain they were spitting abuse at me. The look on my face must have been pained enough to bring a worried Dilshan over.
> 'Have the players seen this?' I asked, showing him the paper. 'Oh, um, yes they did,' Dilshan said. 'One of the International FC players, Jeff, printed it out and showed it to them before you came back.'
> I felt a wave of nausea. When I gave my little speech about setting up a league they had probably been looking at me with hatred rather than support. Why hadn't they let on? Were they planning their revenge?

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[743] UPP, 116-117.

[744] UPP, 103. Note that chewing betel-nut has an intoxicating effect and is the most popular drug on the island. It seems as if experiencing Pohnpeian culture has really broadened his horizons. Upon returning to London he suddenly notices the downsides of life in a supposedly 'civilised' megapolis. See UPP, 169: "London suddenly seemed an alien environment. Minutes after I returned to Heathrow I had seen a man knock a woman over in a fight for a luggage trolley. Cars seemed to hurtle past at Formula I speeds, dogs were attached to leads and there were people *everywhere*. Out of habit I greeted a stranger on the street with a nod; he looked at me with a mixture of fear and disgust. While I always felt like a Londoner on Pohnpei, now I suddenly felt like an islander in London."

[745] See UPP, 82.

[746] From the media attention his story attracts in the UK, Britain's penchant for the sporting underdog can be inferred. Waiting for media response to his press release, Watson reports: "We didn't have to play the waiting game for long. Within minutes Lizzie forwarded an email from the *Fulham & Hammersmith Chronicle* asking for more details. The paper's sports specialist, a lovely chatty Northerner called Paul, told me it was the most interesting email he had received in his twenty years in the job. Our full-page article in the *Chronicle* was to prompt an avalanche of coverage. Within twenty-four hours we had appeared in the *Daily Mail*, the *Sun* and the *Daily Telegraph*." UPP, 59-60.

> ‘It’s OK, most of them just laughed it off,‘ Dilshan said. ‘They know you’re here to help. Joseph was the only one who got really angry. He tore the page up on the spot.‘[747]

Closely intertwined with Watson’s struggle for acceptance is his quest to lead Pohnpei to their first international victory. Emails Watson frequently embeds chart the progress of his mission. However, this epistolary approach is predominantly used to chronicle the setbacks Watson and Conrad encounter on their mission. A shocking response by the East Asian Football Federation concerning Watson’s inquiry about assistance reads:

> RE: Football in Micronesia
> Do not send any more unsolicited emails to this address.
> Firstly, any email sent directly to me will be disregarded unless you approach through the correct channels. This is a gross error in protocol.
> Secondly, all email communications must arrive from the secretary of the Federated States of Micronesia Football Association along with evidence of his election and the by-laws of the organisation, so that a verification chain can begin.
> We will disregard any further emails unless they meet these specifications.[748]

Whereas football matches served as a structuring pattern in previous narratives and provided the basis for the distinctive diary-style characteristic of these accounts, Watson’s narrative is guided by a list of objectives that need to be achieved. Set up by Watson and Conrad back in London, the to-do list essentially captures the central issues that govern the narrative. It reads:

> 1) Get sponsor.
> 2) Set up league.
> 3) Pick Pohnpei team.
> 4) ~~Play~~ Win international fixture.
> 5) Unite disparate islands as one Micronesian team, qualify for FIFA funding and usher in new age of contentment and prosperity.[749]

The narrative contains comparatively little match reporting. Given the fact that football has not managed to gain a proper foothold on Pohnpei, this does not come as a surprise, particularly if one of the major challenges of Watson’s grassroots project is

[747] UPP, 90-91. Watson’s remark “someone with a Yeovil shirt on it“ (UPP, 91) needs further clarification here. As can be seen from the relevant article in the *Sun*, the players sporting Yeovil Town shirts are effectively Pohnpeian. For the Pohnpeian players were given shirts of Yeovil Town FC and Norwich City FC upon Watson’s and Conrad’s arrival, courtesy of these two English clubs that were the only clubs to support their cause. Compare UPP, 6. Whereas Charlie Connelly and Pete Davies have attached photographs of teams and players to their accounts, Watson’s account lacks a similar feature.
[748] UPP, 136. Compare also the answers he receives from Bristol City, the club Watson has supported all his life, or the response from the English FA. See UPP, 30, 170.
[749] UPP, 76.

to initiate a league.[750] If game action is inserted, its portrayal departs from the more ordinary fan perspectives. Watson primarily adopts a manager's perspective as many of his on-field observations center around talents that could possibly be recruited for a Pohnpeian team:

> Another less than friendly face had arrived in the form of Micah – the Pit Bull who had seemed hostile at my introductory meeting. I was surprised to see that Micah was really very good. He flew up and down the wing and naturally had a good eye for a pass. He was perfect winger material.[751]

Whereas the beginning stages of the project are portrayed in optimistic tone and favourable light, the atmosphere becomes increasingly overshadowed by Watson's nagging worry of being labelled a false prophet. Having publicly announced that a Pohnpeian state team would embark on an international tour to Guam without any real idea of how to fund it, Watson suddenly feels an immense pressure to deliver:

> The 'news' that we were going abroad spread like wildfire. Most of the players had never left the island, and immediately went home and told everyone who would listen that they were headed for Guam. The island rumour mill churned violently. Jim Tobin had called and told Dilshan and me to report to the Olympic Committee office the next day.[752]

With Watson's honour at stake the once idyllically pictured quest turns into an immensely stressful race for funding. Fearing that all efforts have been in vain Watson's revelations about his inner-self clearly indicate that he is running out of patience:

> I had spent a long time planning a session the whole squad could get something out of, and now all we had was six very late players and a sodden pitch. We practised a few crosses. I left them to play three on three and drove home having barely spoken a word. Dilshan could see that I wasn't happy. I knew I was taking things too personally, but it was hard not to. It was a long time since I'd had paid employment and any meagre savings I'd accumulated had long

[750] In chapter five Watson finally declares that he has recruited five teams for the Pohnpeian football league. These teams are International FC, the Island Pit Bulls, the Island Warriors and a so called SDA team, recruited from international staff of the Seventh Day Adventist School, see further UPP, 98-102. Although Watson offers match summaries of the first two match days (ibid., 107-110), the proceedings of the league are pretty much ignored over the course of action. In fact, dwelling in England he only hears about the league's final through Dilshan's report. Compare UPP, 180. Apparently, the amount of game coverage linearly increases with the importance Watson attaches to the games he chronicles. Thus the final test match of his Pohnpeian state team against a Pohnpeian international All Stars side is given much more coverage than any previous game. Compare UPP, 143-151. Similar attention is given to the matches against the three Guamanian teams Watson's team faces, namely Rovers, the Crushers and Guam under-19s. Compare UPP, 234-237, 241-245, 247-250.

[751] UPP, 88. In like-minded fashion impressions of training sessions he later conducts as a coach frequently centre around players' individual progress. Compare for instance UPP, 141-143, 157-158.

[752] UPP, 138.

> since evaporated. I had borrowed money from Lizzie, my parents and my brother and that had slowly disappeared too. I had been living on plain pasta for three weeks after blowing the last of my spending money on our trip to Nahlap. I'd lost a noticeable amount of weight and looked – and felt – like a ghost.[753]

Luckily, in spite of Conrad's absence and the lack of funding, Watson can always fall back on Dilshan, the most reliable of Pohnpei's players. Whereas the reader learns comparatively little about Pohnpei's other players, Dilshan is the most complex character of the Pohnpeian side.[754] With his intrinsic knowledge about the 'island ways' Dilshan even turns into a confidant for Watson helping the intrepid explorer to deal with Pohnpeian mentality. Attempting to gain support from John Ehsa, the governor's cousin and captain of the Warriors, Watson reports the following incident:

> 'We want to set up a league for Pohnpei. This is Paul. He's from England and is coaching our local guys to make them good, ' Dilshan said. 'We were hoping the Local Warriors might play.'
> 'I think they will play,' John said. 'If there is a competition they will want to play.'
> John moved towards me and stopped far too close to me for comfort. Suddenly he thrust out his hand and grabbed mine.
> 'Thank you for coming here,' he growled. 'Anything you ever need is yours. I love football. Anything you like.'
> And the meeting was over. We thanked John and beat our retreat.
> 'It's great they'll be in the league,' I said as we slowly retraced our steps.
> 'The Local Warriors won't be in the league,' Dilshan laughed.
> 'But John just said...'
> 'He was just saving face,' Dilshan explained patiently. 'He couldn't be seen to say no. What he means is that he won't stand in our way if we have a league.[755]

Whereas other characters appear as supportive helpers in their quest,[756] Edwin Sione is presented as an antagonistic force. Not happy with the direction Pohnpeian football is about to take when the two Englishmen arrive, the man that claims to be the Pohnpeian Soccer Coach is portrayed as a bizarre character trying to obstruct their mission:

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[753] UPP, 134. His mood darkens even more when learning that his girlfriend Lizzy has caught swine flu. Compare UPP, 161ff.

[754] Each of the Pohnpeian players that is invited to Guam is introduced to the reader. Although Watson spends a considerable amount of time with them and warms to the players immensely over the course of time, the average portrayal of these players does not go beyond a description of their playing styles and the focus on one or two aspects of their private lives. Much of this one-dimensional type of portrayal can be attributed to a language barrier. Although his players understand and speak English, they communicate in their mother tongue Pohnpeian, which Watson finds hard to understand.

[755] UPP, 85-86.

[756] Among the list of supportive characters Lizzy, Watson's girlfriend, needs to be mentioned first and foremost. She is not only willing to put down a hefty amount of her hard earned money to support Watson financially, but she also champions Watson's quest by inspiring him to carry on with it when Watson is losing faith. Equally Jim Tobin, the general secretary of the Federated States of Micronesia National Olympic Committee, as well as Tino San Gil, the general secretary of the Guamanian FA, are true supporters of Watson's mission. Whilst Jim Tobin manages to secure funding for Watson's accommodation on the island, Tino San Gil officially invites them to Guam and organises their stay on the island.

> In the nervous weeks before our trip we had built up Sione into the key man we would have to deal with if we wanted to become involved in football on Pohnpei in any capacity. I imagined him as a brooding José Mourinhoesque figure, a tactical mastermind pacing the sideline, furiously protective of his patch. He had failed to pick us up at the airport as promised. On an island where just three flights arrive per week, I couldn't help thinking this was an early attempt at mind games.[757]

Thanks to the ridicule employed, the reader quickly realises that Edwin Sione does not pose a threat at all:

> I watched as the great man jogged on the pitch. And then ran towards the ball clucking like a chicken and barking, 'Pass, pass to chicken man.' Within ten minutes, Sione had declared the goalkeeper to be offside and intentionally controlled the ball with his hand, arm and buttocks. I met Matt's eyes and could see him biting his lip trying not to laugh. We began to feel maybe we had overestimated him.[758]

Uncertainty persists concerning how to determine Matthew Conrad's role – is he helper, confidant or protagonist alongside Paul Watson? While the narration culminates euphorically in the accomplishment of the Pohnpeian mission offering a fairy-tale denouement to the reader, it seems hard to assess whether Matthew Conrad can be credited with the accomplishment in the same way as Watson. Although Matthew Conrad attends university in California for large parts of the narration and cannot be present on the island, his impact on the Pohnpeian mission must not be underestimated. Alongside the fact that he embarked on a first scouting mission with Watson he returns to Pohnpei for the decisive period and accompanies the team to Guam. Moreover, it was his thorough research on the internet that identified Pohnpei as one of the weakest teams in the world and it was he who sorted out a sponsor for the team and helped to design an official Pohnpeian shirt, just to name a few contributions on Conrad's behalf.[759] Anyway, for both of them the story turns full circle as the international tour to Guam is the climax of a chain that has been set in motion in 2007.

8.4 Playing against the odds

Whereas previous narratives have overwhelmingly been concerned with thriving fan cultures in the game's most popular leagues, no such elements can be identified in the narratives under inspection. Departing from football's more glamorous events the

[757] UPP, 2. It is important to note here that Edwin Sione has never been a football coach on the island.
[758] UPP, 9-10.
[759] Compare UPP, 19-20, 114, 176-177.

narratives at hand shed light on the trials and tribulations players, managers and fans are faced with when pursuing the game in non-professional realms. That said, speaking of non-professional realms sounds slightly exaggerated in Watson's case as he encounters one of football's remaining *terrae incognitae*:

> Players had no real idea what constituted a foul or how a pair of studded shoes and eighty yards of built-up momentum could damage another human. Tackles went flying in. Red-card challenges that would have sparked a full-team punch-up in an English Sunday League match were followed by a rueful smile and a slight wince.
> There had clearly been precious little, if any, formal coaching on the island. But more than that, as most of them had never seen football on the television, the style of play was bizarre, bordering on alien. Even the least talented child playing football in a British park knows how to look like a footballer, how to spit, to raise their hands in despair at a poor pass or celebrate a goal with a clenched fist. There was none of that here.[760]

Whilst there are enormous differences in terms of the game's development or its public acceptance between the narratives at hand, all of them identify infrastructural issues as one of the major obstacles in the non-professional sphere. Indeed, the facilities portrayed are a far cry from the immaculate facilities modern British topflight players are privileged to enjoy. Whereas Liechtenstein's coach Ralf Loose bemoans the occasional groundsharing with local football club FC Vaduz,[761] fellow manager Paul Watson faces infrastructural problems of more pressing concern. Seeing numerous toads leaping across the pitch on the day of his arrival, he learns – much to his surprise – that even toad-infested pitches are a matter of perspective as a Pohnpeian player is quick to point out the ecological dimension: "'Actually they have a problem with us,' he continued. 'This was their habitat and we built our football pitch on it. The toads have never really come to terms with it.'" Less toad-infested, but equally problematic is the situation for the Belles, albeit for different reasons. Davies' depiction of the appalling conditions women face despite playing in England's top tier alerts the reader to the FA's poor stewarding of the game:

> Liverpool, like Belles, were left scrambling for a pitch, any pitch – and two of the best men's teams in the country would not, I think, have put up for too long with the venue they'd had to settle for today. But then, it was only women's football...
> The dressing-room was a dank, chilly, ill-lit pit. It had a bare concrete floor, filthy smeared walls, a badly lagged boiler in one corner, ratty coathangers dangling awry from bent clothes hooks, and a monster spider in a hole in the wall. [...]
> The pitch was down a rough track past a jumble of crumbling sheds and a clutch of abandoned tennis courts, all brown, dug earth and torn, rusting wire. The surface was hopelessly bumpy, tussocks of grass patched through with streaks of bare dirt; the centre spot was a barren crater. [...]

[760] UPP, 7-8.
[761] See SG, 219.

> Laughing, we looked about; the pitch, it appeared, had another significant defect. There weren't any goals...[762]

These lines bring the lack of adequate support through football's governing bodies strongly into the picture. Above all, it is FA's half-hearted promise to promote women's football that he criticises:

> They gave you the odd small subvention; they gave you back fifty pence a mile for your away games, not including the first hundred miles. But when the Belles played Liverpool at Scunthorpe in the FA Cup Final in April 1994, and 1,674 people came through the gate, the game was broadcast live in its entirety on Sky, neither the Belles nor Liverpool received a penny. In the men's amateur game, at the FA Vase or the FA Trophy finals, the clubs in thoe got a piece of the gate – so why not the women?[763]

Given the FA's hunger for success and international prestige, such lack of financial support is derided as short-sighted since shortages in funding equally affect England's internationals, thereby limiting the country's prospects for success. As a case in point Davies presents Flo Lowe's position:

> So Sweden, those two weeks of the World Cup – more, with getting together beforehand – the fact was, she couldn't afford it. She'd bought the house a year back for twenty-seven thousand (pence, her mate said) and it was the best part of a week and a half's work every month to pay the mortgage. And they were good about her football at work, they'd switch their shifts round to fit in with her. [...]
> But if she went off for half of June to be an international they weren't going to pay her wages, were they? And England, they gave you £15 a day for being away; you weren't going to pay the mortgage on that, were you?[764]

Sadly though, the sums paid by England's FA also reflect the standing of women's football within British society. Here Davies' account serves as a sharp reminder that football is still a game predominantly exercised, watched and controlled by men. Female players, such as Karen Walker, argue that women's football must not be compared to the men's game, but should instead be judged in its own right. She claims:

> 'You always get them having to compare it, how fast or how good it is – but we've done well, when you look at what little facilities or backing we've had. So rather than just saying, Oh, you're not as good as men, why not look at how good we are as women? And then, a lot of the time, you'll see a men's game on the telly and be honest, it can be absolute garbage; the only reason it looks exciting is the atmosphere from the crowd. Take out the crowd, and it's people playing that fast they're giving the ball away all the time, and is that exciting? So us, we play a

[762] DB, 305-306.
[763] DB, 167.
[764] DB, 103-104.

> different game, yeah – but don't tell me it isn't physical because of that. It hurts just as much when I go in for a tackle, doesn't it?'[765]

In the face of the laughable allowances paid to England's internationals, the reader can easily understand why all the women Davies shadows have to keep their commitment in perspective. Judged against the backdrop of the seemingly endless riches in the men's professional game, it hardly comes as a surprise when Joanne Broadhurst concedes that every now and then she believes to have been born the wrong sex:

> 'A lad I played with at school, he got to play for Sheffield Wednesday apprentices – and I were better than him. That annoyed me, 'cause I wanted to be a professional.' She gave a sad little laugh before going on, 'I just wish I could be like they are, earning all that money for something you love doing. 'Cause a lot of women players could be that good, and earn as much as they do, if they were given the chance. But they're not, are they?'[766]

Positioned inside the lines Davies documents the growing discontent of England's internationals. Whilst the English FA expects a professional attitude from its players, it fails to provide the adequate conditions to facilitate such attitude. Interestingly though, criticism is not only articulated by the players. Belles' manager Paul Edmunds is quoted as saying:

> 'And I think they better sit down and ask themselves why people don't want to play for their country any more. It should be the biggest thing that's ever going to happen to you, to play for England should be the pinnacle – and at the moment, it's not. So either they change their own ways, or they bring someone else in, someone who knows about women's football – someone who knows about managing amateurs, too. Because I don't think they realise what these people put in, all the things they give up, and how much they want to enjoy their football. And if you say to them, you can't have a drink after the game, you can't wear that pair of trousers, you can't eat that sausage for breakfast – well, they'll say they don't need that, won't they? And that's what they're saying.'[767]

Whereas Liechtenstein's players enjoy the full support of their FA, Connelly's account bears witness to similar problems Liechtenstein's players are faced with. Here, problems seem to stem from a lack of acceptance within Liechtenstein's society. In the immensely prosperous country, where people pursue highly successful careers, football is regarded by many as nothing but a hobby. In the light of these surroundings Connelly's account then illustrates how difficult it is for Liechtenstein's

[765] DB, 35.
[766] DB, 57.
[767] DB, 127.

semi-professionals to focus on football. Struggling to get leave from his headmaster for international fixtures, the teacher Freddie Gigon claims:

> I have had a few problems with work and playing for Liechtenstein. But I need football to keep the equilibrium in my life; without sport life would be bad. The school headmaster isn't really happy about me going away like this. I feel that that's because he's not really a sporty man, and if perhaps I told him that I was going to Bosnia to, say, sing with a choir or to act in a play he might say no problem. The president from the LFV always has to speak to him and there are long exchanges of letters. I'm sure he won't accept this for much longer, and will tell me I'm not allowed to go any more.[768]

To add an element of adversity Connelly draws the reader's attention to the lack of national pride surrounding the team. What would have been unthought of in the UK is repeatedly brought into the picture when Connelly attends Liechtenstein's home fixtures:

> As the half-time whistle went I felt exhilarated. A team which contained five teenagers (plus Thomas Beck, just a few weeks into his twenties), and half a team of amateurs had restricted one of the greatest teams in the world to a single goal. I was beaming with pride. A girl sitting in front of me, who had enthusiastically celebrated the Spanish goal ('Why are there Spanish fans sitting here?' Katie had whispered as the girl cheered and clapped, used to the strict segregation of English grounds), turned and started talking to us. 'Spain, what a great team,' she was cooing. As she spoke, I suddenly placed her accent. 'You're from Liechtenstein, aren't you?' I asked. 'Of course,' she replied. 'Then, er, why are you supporting Spain?' I asked. 'Ach,' she said, wrinkling her nose, 'because the Liechtenstein team is rubbish, stupid, no good,' she said. 'Have you been watching the game?' I asked. 'They're playing well, they're only one goal behind.' 'Yes, but Spain have Raul, Mendieta,' she replied. 'Who do Liechtenstein have? No one. They are no good, they lose every game. Rubbish.'[769]

Whereas Connelly's support highlights the typically British penchant for the sporting underdog, the girl's backing of the opposition exemplifies how Liechtenstein's supposed 'home advantage' turns into the opposite with Liechtenstein's citizens laughing off the enormous efforts of their own kind. But being regularly outnumbered by fans of the opposition, Liechtenstein international Patrick Hefti stresses the importance of active support:

> We thought we were in Bosnia! When we arrived at the ground in the coach, their fans were gesturing and spitting at the windows and I thought, am I in Liechtenstein? Is this really a home game? The Bosnians are real fanatics, that's just the way it is, but they were really obnoxious. But, you know, it's motivating in a way.[770]

[768] SG, 223.
[769] SG, 263-264.
[770] SG, 214-215. Note that only once in a game against Austria in Innsbruck Connelly reports about substantial vociferous support by Liechtenstein's fans. See ibid., 157.

What's more, the obstacles Liechtenstein has to face are by no means restricted to the lack of domestic fan support. Skeptics around the world argue that football's smallest nations such as Liechtenstein, Andorra or San Marino should not compete with more established nations in one group. Instead, they should go through a pre-qualifying campaign first. Yet, this is fiercely resented by Daniel Hasler, who scored Liechtenstein's first ever goal in competitive football back in 1994:

> It's important for us to play in these qualifications because it helps us improve as players, and our results prove that this is working. If we had to play a pre-qualifying tournament with countries like Andorra it would be a disaster, not least because there would be no money. We had played a friendly with the Faroe Islands a year ago, and there were only about five hundred spectators instead of the capacity crowds we've had for most of our games in the World Cup.[771]

Connelly is equally critical about such school of thought:

> One well-respected British broadsheet columnist had railed against these teams just before I had left Britain, stating that countries like Liechtenstein were only in these tournaments for the money UEFA gives them. He even opined that the smaller nations 'stubbornly refuse to improve', a statement which even the most cursory of research would have disproved.
> Yet the same writers are the ones who wax lyrical about the magic of the FA Cup, and how wonderful it is that non-league sides have the opportunity to pit themselves against Premiership opposition. Has a team from, say, the lower reaches of the Ryman League been 'stubbornly refusing to improve', or is it a question of resources? You decide.[772]

While both statements echo the importance of financial resources, Connelly's elaborations on this aspect help the reader to grasp the benefits of FIFA or UEFA membership for smaller nations.

> The money the association receives as a result of playing in these games filters down to the clubs, who can then improve their facilities and coaching staff, and then have more opportunity to allow young players to reach their full potential.[773]

Whereas sufficient funding usually incites a cycle of improvement among the players, Davies' portrayal of the dilemma Edmunds faces reminds the reader that public interest is an equally important factor, since it is generally intertwined with the element of funding. Hence, without public interest, both players and manager find themselves trapped in a classic catch-22 situation:

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[771] SG, 226.
[772] SG, 226.
[773] SG, 281. The case of Pohnpei illustrates how many political and bureaucratic hurdles need to be overcome in order to obtain full FIFA recognition. The positive aspects of FIFA's funding can be observed from Guam, which is gradually climbing the football ladder thanks to FIFA's funding filtering down to its FA. Compare UPP, 65, 168.

> The conflict was frustrating. The men, they had all week to train – and the women were that good now, they had that much ability and that much potential, he'd have loved the time to work with them like that. But as long as there were no crowds there wouldn't be any income; and as long as there was no income there wouldn't be any time.[774]

Without the large financial incentives offered in the men's professional game and the immaculate facilities offered to the clubs' playing 'assets', it requires a strong intrinsic motivation from all those that are not part of the game's commercial revolution in order to progress as players. Yet, this can only be achieved through a dedication to the game. Ironically, the lack of extrinsic factors, especially financial reward and glory, are identified by Watson as one of the main reasons why people in Pohnpei refrain from playing:

> We had come to Pohnpei in search of a culture where football could exist free of the ugly trappings of the media, fame and fortune, but ironically that was proving the great hindrance to our efforts. In a society where nobody considers football to be a way to get rich, travel the world or lure women, we could only appeal to those who genuinely had an interest in the game, but without being able to watch it on TV or read about it in the newspaper, the locals had no reason to want to play.[775]

Whilst Edmunds bemoans the odd lack of commitment by his players, obviously Watson is hardest hit in this respect as there is no established football culture on the island with a distinctive set of rules and behavioural conventions. He laments:

> Most players only came for one session, or left halfway through, so there was no chance to build the enjoyable, relaxed social atmosphere that arises from playing sport with the same group of people on a regular basis: the nicknames, the in-jokes, the shared experience that so quickly becomes team spirit.[776]

Against the backdrop of the hardships the narrators depict, it is puzzling to see why they are still intrigued by the football cultures mapped out in front of them. Since the teams they follow will never bask in public glory, the reader seriously wonders what makes the narrators embrace them nonetheless.

[774] DB, 303.
[775] UPP, 54.
[776] UPP, 49.

8.5 Finding football‘s lost soul

Much of the fascination for the football cultures they encounter derives from a deeply rooted discontent towards the English Premier League. It is against this background that they identify their teams as focal points where “the heart of the game still beats healthily within the bloated obesity of modern football.“[777] But what exactly is it they bemoan? Well, the criticism voiced essentially revolves around the same malaise: Football has lost its soul, and in the process sacrificed its social heritage. Having published his account in 2012, Watson substantiates his grief:

> But somewhere in the 1990s, football changed. BSkyB brought huge money into the game after 1992, a trend accelerated by American entrepreneurs, oil-rich Arabs and Russian oligarchs, who started buying up clubs and adding to an ever-expanding influx of highly paid foreign stars. TV rights and merchandising quickly smothered a century of tradition. Ticket prices soared, leaving the average fan able to watch his team only whenever Sky deemed fit to broadcast their games while nouveau riche season-ticket holders filled the stands. Footballers were no longer mere employees: they were assets.[778]

Considering that the accounts have been published at different stages in the league‘s young history, it is interesting to learn that even as early as 1994 Davies‘ account mirrors similar disillusionment with the men’s topflight game. Deriding the Premier League’s hyped pomp and pretence, Davies argues that following women’s football helps to put the game back into perspective:

> Money and TV might be turning the men’s game into soap (with astonishing amounts of lather) but in the women’s game you still get real people, playing the real game and nothing more. You don’t have to take out a second mortgage to watch it, you don’t have to buy any merchandise, you don’t have to listen to Jimmy Hill at half-time, you don’t have to worry whether anybody’s bent, you don’t have to watch criminal idiots chucking the furniture on the heads of small children. It is instead romantic, attractive, it’s a laugh, it’s got its head on its shoulders instead of its snout in a brown envelope, and if your lot lose you’re not obliged to believe that the world has come to an end.[779]

Interestingly, the sphere of Premier League football is no longer seen as the pinnacle of a shared cosmos, but a separate world of its own with players and clubs seemingly detached from the realities of fans and amateur players due to mind-boggling sums thrown at them. Somewhere along the line the bond between club and fan has gone missing. This is why Connelly rejoices in Liechtenstein’s surroundings because he

[777] SG, 6.
[778] UPP, 16-17.
[779] DB, 70.

feels valued as a fan again. Indeed, in Liechtenstein his loyalty is appreciated in other ways than revenue streams:

> ‘Hey,‘ said Ralf, ‘there are some of the players.‘ Standing nearby laughing and drinking were Jürgen Ospelt, Hanno Hasler, captain Harry Zech and the suspended stopper Patrik Hefti. Ralf went over and explained that I was travelling from England for every game, and four jaws dropped towards the floor. ‘Were you in Spain?‘ asked Zech. ‘Yes,‘ I nodded. ‘And Innsbruck?‘ said Ospelt. ‘Mm-hmm,‘ I replied with a growing sensation that I was a really, really sad bastard.[780]

Obviously it is also the access to the players that turns his time in Liechtenstein into such a pleasant experience. Thinking about the approachability of players after a night out with them he realizes that a similar scenario would be impossible in England due to the omnipresent media reporting every indiscretion:

> Imagine if England had lost 0–3 at home to Israel, and immediately afterwards Messrs Beckham, Owen, Ferdinand and Neville were seen in London’s premier nightspot throwing beer down their throats and generally having a good time. The papers would go ballistic.[781]

Yet, in an age where football players have turned into celebrities, it is the element of ordinariness the narrators are yearning for – players who set themselves apart by skill and not by lifestyle-players who regard their profession in other ways than financial gain. It is in places like Liechtenstein where the old English amateur ideal comes to life:

> This is a national team that has to fit in its training sessions around the players‘ working week. A team whose manager (a ‘foreigner‘, incidentally) also runs the junior teams and whose selection headaches have included telephoning personal appeals to employers to release players for World Cup duty, and losing his captain for an away World Cup qualifier, because the wine he makes for a living was at a crucial stage and couldn’t be left.[782]

The fact that success in Liechtenstein’s case is measured in other ways than winning shows the reader that football is only partially about winning, but, more importantly, about trying and participating. Connelly finds the attitude of Liechtenstein’s players to be gracious in defeat particularly impressive. Aware of their own limitations, Liechtenstein’s players still stand up and rise to the occasion:

> Zech was grinning broadly, Thomas Beck was waving both fists in the air, wearing Aranzabal’s shirt. Burgmeier trotted off the field with Mendieta’s shirt draped over his shoulder. ‘We Are

[780] SG, 189.
[781] SG, 190-191.
[782] SG, 7.

> The Champions‘ thundered from the PA system. It had been a wonderful performance, and remarkably I could feel tears of pride welling up. The difference between the two teams and the two nations was incredible: Barcelona alone have three time as many season-ticket holders as Liechtenstein has people, yet this tiny nation and its team of small-time professionals, bank workers, a wine-maker, and a schoolteacher had all but matched one of the world’s greatest sides for ninety minutes.[783]

Whilst England’s team is backed by millions of their countrymen, many fans bemoan that England’s internationals are incapable of showing a similar commitment. In fact, it is the pride instilled in Liechtenstein’s players when playing for their country which Connelly finds most remarkable. As a case in point Connelly cites Daniel Hasler claiming:

> I’m so proud to play for Liechtenstein. When I stand on the pitch and hear the national anthem it’s very emotional. It sends a shiver down my spine even after thirty-plus internationals, and it’s a great motivation. If a player doesn’t feel that when representing his country, he shouldn’t be on the field. I love Liechtenstein.[784]

A similar humbleness, albeit a more astonishing one, is portrayed in Watson’s account when he and Matthew give away the Pohnpeian Adidas shirts prior to the team‘s departure to Guam:

> I noticed that most of the players had tucked their shirts away in their bags rather than putting them on. ‘They don’t want to ruin them,‘ Dilshan said. ‘For a lot of these guys it’s the most expensive thing they’ve ever owned. Marvin told me he wanted to wear it to his wedding and I don’t think he was joking.‘[785]

Whereas the humbleness Watson depicts seems out of place in our consumer-orientated societies, his observations might well be read and understood as an antidote against the arrogance displayed by some of the Premier League’s self-important players.

8.6 Conclusion

The very existence of the accounts at hand proves that fans are reluctant to regard a game at the heart of British culture exclusively in terms of men‘s professional football. Whereas the narratives show the vast scale of difference in the non-professional sphere, they are bound by a common displeasure with the current standings of the

[783] SG, 268.
[784] SG, 227.
[785] UPP, 217.

English Premier League. Tired by inflated ticket prices, arrogant club owners and disloyal players the narrators are hungry to explore alternative football worlds. In search of seemingly ‘pure‘ football cultures, not poisoned by commercialism and pretense, they embark on a romantic quest. And indeed, all of them find remedy in the football cultures mapped out in front of them. It is in these settings that they rediscover concepts of loyalty and team spirit. It is here where they feel their presence appreciated again. By highlighting the hardships of the non-professional game, they simultaneously emphasize the privileges of those that play at the English top end. Whilst such musings will surely be well received by fans who are equally disillusioned with the Premier League, suspicion persists as to the generalisability of their observations. In my opinion the particular surroundings professional footballers are exposed to tend to be inadequately neglected. For professionals, be it as players or managers, are under enormous pressure to deliver on a weekly basis. None of the accounts acknowledges that establishing the camaraderie traditionally found in hobby teams is much harder in a climate where starting as a player is essential to make a living. Depreciating Premier League players as ‘disloyal mercenaries‘ is justifiable in the face of those that kiss their club’s badge on Saturday, yet ask for a transfer on Monday. However, it seems to me as if many topflight players are guilty by association. Much of this derives from the sensationalist coverage of the press that creates public images that might not necessarily correspond to players‘ genuine personalities. Admittedly, in many cases the players‘ boastful reputation is self-inflicted. But what can a society expect that treats its topflight footballers as semi-Gods, throwing vast sums of money at them while equally giving them unprecedented media attention? Unarguably, it is primarily the enormous wages topflight players ‘pocket‘ and the resulting lifestyle that sets them worlds apart from ordinary fans. But those that take offense arguing that the game is no longer in its place must critically ask themselves whether their lifestyles would remain the same if signing a single contract turned them into millionaires. That said, it remains debatable whether players are the only ones to blame for the wages on offer, given the significance millions of people attach to the Premier League around the world.

9. Outlook: British fan culture at the crossroads

This study has attempted to examine the personal significance attached to football in people's everyday lives. Equally, it has tried to take stock of football's role in the cultural make-up of societies. Whilst the narratives at hand covered a variety of football cultures, most of them had issues of English football as their dominant concern. By and large, these literary artefacts are reminiscent of the past. Bemoaning the end of terrace culture they express a sense of disillusionment with the Premier League ever since it has been launched. Identifying hypercommercialisation as the Premier League's central malaise they equally foreshadow its demise. Yet, with last season's record occupancy rate of 95% and an average attendance close to 36,000 spectators,[786] the league's predicted decline seems unlikely any time soon. While the accounts echo a clear demand for more control, particularly with regards to ownership and ticketing, Swansea City is currently the only club in the Premier League that is partly owned by fans through its Swansea City Supporters Trust. Whereas Premier League's Chief Executive Richard Scudamore opines that "clubs are sensitive to the costs borne by fans,"[787] the supporters' protest march on Premier League headquarters in June 2013 clearly suggests the opposite. Tied by common grief, rival fans stood united condemning their clubs' greed in lifting ticket prices in spite of the league's latest record signing broadcast deal taking effect in the 2013/2014 season worth more than £5,5 billion. Whilst this protest has been viewed as resolute by supporter groups, it serves as a painful reminder that, despite years of active campaigning, the game's lifeblood is still powerless in patterns of control. The implications of the clubs' reluctance to lower ticket prices are threefold. Firstly, it implies that modern English top-flight football is strictly run on market principles with the clubs' ticket policies predominantly based on demand. Secondly, the clubs' ignorance towards threats of boycott mirrors the fans' declining economic impact on clubs' revenue mix as a whole.[788] Last but not least, it suggests that the fans' loyalty is pretty much taken for granted. Many fans, though, take offence at this as they feel that their loyalty should be rewarded with more affordable prices, particularly in the wake of the league's latest record broadcast deal. Against this set of circumstances it

[786] See Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance 2013 – Highlights, 2. The document is available online at http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-UnitedKingdom/Local%20Assets/Documents/Industries/Sports%20Business%20Group/deloitte-uk-sbg-arff-2013-highlights-download.pdf. (Accessed 27 August 2013).

[787] 2012/2013 Premier League Season Review, 6. The review is available online at http://review.premierleague.com/pdfs/season-review-2012-13.pdf (Accessed 27 August 2013).

[788] Compare Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance 2013 – Highlights, 7.

is obvious why the attitude of Bayern Munich's president Uli Hoeneß towards season tickets prices at his club has gained so much approval within British fan communities:

> We could charge more than £104. Let's say we charged £300. We'd get £2m more in income but what's £2m to us?
> In a transfer discussion you argue about that sum for five minutes. But the difference between £104 and £300 is huge for the fan.
> We do not think the fans are like cows, who you milk. Football has got to be for everybody. That's the biggest difference between us and England.[789]

Indeed, the Premier League is the most expensive of Europe's top football leagues.[790] Its clubs, however, argue that the prices charged are desperately needed to recruit top quality talent. On average, 70% of a Premier League club's turnover is currently spent on players' wages, whereas the wage/revenue ratio was only 48% in 1997.[791] In fact, ever since the inception of the Premier League and the Bosman ruling players' power has been on the rise resulting in dramatic escalation in pay. Dave Boyle asserts:

> Since the creation of the Premier League in 1992, top footballers' salaries have mushroomed, rising by 1508% to 2010. At the same time, players further down the football leagues have not been as fortunate, with pay rising by 518%, 306% and 233% respectively for the next three divisions.
> All have done much better though than the average British citizen over the same period, whose own income has risen by just 186%.[792]

Whilst these pay rises leave the majority of Championship clubs and below with no option but to overspend, Premier League clubs face tight profit margins limiting their investment in measures of sustainability such as youth development or ground improvement.[793] As to the fans, the widening gap between a worker's average income and a top-light player's skyrocketing salary has contributed much to the belief that the game is no longer in its place. The resulting alienation from English football at the top end can be perfectly observed by the narrators' fascination for the non-professional sphere in the accounts selected. But is English top-flight football really in such a gloomy state as the accounts imply?

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[789] Uli Hoeneß quoted in http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-2318209/Bayern-Munich-season-tickets-low-104-putting-Premier-League-shame.html (Accessed 27 August 2013).
[790] Note that, at the time of writing, Arsenal charges £985 for its cheapest season ticket. For a ticket price comparison between Europe's top leagues see appendix.
[791] See David Boyle, *Football mad: are we paying more and getting less?*, 8. David Boyle's work is available online at http://highpaycentre.org/files/hpc_06_07.pdf (Accessed 27 August 2013).
[792] David Boyle, *Football mad: are we paying more and getting less?*, 6.
[793] See Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance 2013 – Highlights, 3.

Long-term fans would argue that the vibrancy of the stadium experience has deteriorated due to the introduction of all-seater stadia. Yet, no longer clouded by hooliganism, stadia are now in much cleaner and safer state. That said, those that seek the old charms of traditional English football grounds will only find them in the lower echelons of the football pyramid today. Before the inception of the Premier League the government's official attitude towards football was rejective – epitomised by Margaret Thatcher's infamous ID scheme plans. Nowadays David Cameron hails the Premier League "as one of Britain's greatest exports to the world."[794] The fact that more than 800 million homes around the world have received Premier League football in the 2012/2013 season shows that the 'people's game' has effectively become 'the 'peoples' game' at least in terms of digital consumption.[795] The British can take pride in the global popularity of the Premier League as one of its major national icons, only matched in its global appeal by the British monarchy. Vast sums of money and almost unlimited media coverage have turned the Premier League into a global brand with characteristic features such as multinational ownership and a truly international workforce. Its value as a brand is reflected in its sponsorship deals and broadcast revenues. Such is its economic impact that it generates £1,2 billion in taxes each year.[796] Those that see the game's social heritage threatened and refuse to measure it in economic terms must nevertheless concede that the standard of play in English top-flight football has greatly improved in the wake of the Premier League's new financial means. Foreign world-class players joined the Premier League at the peak of their career, providing a new face for English football. Best exemplified by Arsene Wenger's impact on 'Boring, Boring Arsenal' the arrival of foreign managers frequently turned English teams with little flair into fine passing sides.[797] The presence of top-notch imports served as a trigger for development among British homegrown players as the overseas arrivals were simply too good to be kicked off the pitch. Undoubtedly, part of the league's global fascination stems from the quality of play and the pace of performance. Yet, an equally important part of the attraction derives from the unique atmosphere of English grounds. This atmosphere has always been created by the game's lifeblood, namely knowledgeable fans vociferous in their

[794] 2012/2013 Premier League Season Review, 7.
[795] See ibid., 7.
[796] See ibid., 7.
[797] Compare also the experiences of former professional Lars Leese, keeper of FC Barnsley during the club's brief spell in the Premier League in the 1997/1998. See interview with Lars Leese in the appendix.

support and quick-witted in their chants. If the Premier League wants to keep its singular reputation, it must provide the game's accessibility for these fans. It must maintain the balance between those that create the ground's vibrancy and those that absorb it. For too many fans, in particular the young, the live experience of Premier League football has been confined to watching in pubs or private homes. Attractive pricing structures must be set up that turn matchday attendances into something ordinary for the average fan instead of something exceptional. Irrespective of the charms to reach out to a global fanbase, clubs must embrace supporters from their local surroundings and make them feel wanted again. As long as a feeling of exchangeability persists among those that claim traditional allegiance, clubs cannot expect to be supported in times of hardship. Although the Premier League appears to show resilience in the light of financial crisis, their clubs' collective net debt of £2,4 billion[798] suggests that a financial meltdown is not as unlikely as many would believe, particularly in the face of UEFA's Financial Fair Play Rules. Given the circumstances of the modern game, a financial meltdown would probably result in a drain of talent, a loss of glamour and consequently a decline in popularity. While it seems unlikely that the game's 'Prawn Sandwich Brigades' will remain as loyal as the clubs' bedrock, one thing is for sure: Premier League's future acceptance within fan communities and, indeed, British society will largely depend on the league's ability to turn the common fan into one of its main beneficiaries alongside clubs, players and Sky television.

[798] Premier League collective net debt in summer 2012. See Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance 2013 – Highlights, 11.

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11. Appendices

11.1 Email interview with Charlie Connelly

The interview was conducted on 3 April 2012 with additional response from 5 April 2012.

Dominik Wolf (DW): *How would you classify your own work? Is it travelogue, ethnograph or predominantly a piece of football writing?*

Charlie Connelly (CC): I've never really thought about classifying my work: in practical terms that's done by the publishers and bookshops and I'm happy to leave it to them. My intention, as it is with all my books, is simply to tell a good story. I guess that as a football team is the heart of the story it's a football book. Having said that, I also wanted to use the football team as a prism through which to look at the people, history and culture of Liechtenstein as few people in the UK know anything about the place, something that could equally make it a travel book, I guess.

DW: *What impact did Stamping Grounds have on your (writing) career?*

CC: I found myself enjoying the cultural and historical aspects of the book more than the football aspects, so for me personally I guess the biggest impact was that it nudged me away from writing about the game and into other areas that interested me.

DW: *Your account is similar to what could best be coined 'the seasonal genre', typically associated with the likes of Joe McGinniss. A defining feature of these seasonal accounts seems to be that a 'stranger' arrives at previously unknown place and 'adopts' a local football team there. Within the course of the narrative the narrator grows increasingly fond of his adopted team and develops very close ties to it. In Stamping Grounds you portray a similar phenomenon. With hindsight, what triggered or sparked your enthusiasm for Lichtenstein's national squad?*
What made your affection grow towards the team and the country?

CC*:* I was curious about Liechtenstein's football team – I was keen to find out what motivated them and what place the team had in the context of the nation as a whole. Liechtenstein was a place I knew nothing about, so I was beginning from a complete standing start. Hence I was able to go to the country without any preconceptions or agenda. I was also keen to find an example of what is loosely termed and loosely defined as 'the spirit of the game'. My own team Charlton Athletic were in the English Premier League at the time and, although Charlton as a small club retained their sense of community and self-awareness it was getting boring travelling to identikit out-of-town modern stadiums watching us play against expensively-assembled teams whose players regarded their shirts as nothing more than the current flag of convenience. I hoped I'd find something in Liechtenstein to reassure me that there was still something 'real' about football other than the drive to make money. I'd found it to some extent in places like the Faroe Islands and Luxembourg in a previous book but it was a subject I wanted to explore in even more depth as a through-narrative rather than different chapters about different places as I had before SG. Where I was lucky was that Liechtenstein is a fascinating, quirky little country with some amazing, friendly people who have interesting things to say about a range of subjects both in and outside the football team.
On a practical level, with it being such a small country it made things much more straightforward in terms of getting to know the place and its people. Also, with most of the players at the time being semi-professionals playing in regional leagues, getting access to them was so much easier than it would have been with most international footballers. I can't imagine many World Cup teams would have let me travel on the bus with them, for example. As the players had a life outside football they were much more candid than the media-trained superstars. Also, I felt having a life outside football

made them much more rounded as people and hence their opinions carried more value, in my opinion, and hence made Stamping Grounds a better book than had I followed a 'bigger' team.

DW: *Stamping Grounds is labelled 'non-fictional' as it clearly refers to 'real life events and people'. How would you challenge the notion that it is still in parts a 'fictionalised' account?*

CC: If by 'fictionalised' you mean 'things that didn't really happen' I'd be amazed if there was a notion that it's even in parts a fictionalised account. It's more than a decade since I wrote it, but the odd minor exaggeration for comic effect aside (ordering a large beer in the pub, for example: obviously I wasn't washed out of the door on a wave of spilled beer) I can say with complete certainty the stories and people I found needed no embellishment from me. Everything in that book happened as described. Absolutely everything.

DW: *The reason I asked whether your account was partly fictionalised was based on the assumption that you had to reconstruct events and conversations with the people you encountered. Unless you audio-taped these conversations, this must have been quite difficult for you as you had to rely on fictional strategies to reconstruct these conversations. Above all, some conversations must have been held in German. How did you manage to portray events/conversations as authentically/realistically as possible?* [799]

CC: All the major conversations in the book (with people like Patrik Hefti, Ernst Hasler, Peter Jehle, Ralf Loose, Stefanie, Mario Frick etc) were recorded on audio tape; conducted in interview style, so I just transcribed the tapes to write them up in the book. They were all in English too – I was very lucky that most people in Liechtenstein, certainly the people I spoke to, seem speak [sic] very good English as my half-forgotten schoolboy German would not have been up to the task. The only time this looked like becoming an issue was with Harry Zech when I spoke to him at his winery, as he wasn't confident about his English. Patrik Hefti came with me to help out if he needed a few words and phrases translated but as it turned out he was fine. So yes, I was very lucky there.
Hence it was very easy to portray these scenarios and conversations as I was able to write them up exactly as they happened in the words and voices of the people concerned. Obviously I was taking extensive notes of all the things I did, places I visited and the matches I watched so between the tapes and my notebooks I was able to write the book as accurately and as faithful to the actual events as possible. I'd take notes as I went, and at the end of each day I'd spend time going through them and checking I'd not forgotten anything, then write them up into chyapter [sic] form as soon as I got home.

DW: *Did you have any particular readership in mind when writing the book? And, from the feedback you have received – who is majorly interested in Stamping Grounds?*

CC: I had no particular readership in mind, I just set out to tell a good story in the best way possible. If as a writer you start trying to second guess your audience you'll end up with a bad book – all you can do is trust your own instincts and judgement and hope that they chime with readers. I leave things like target audiences to the publishers: the fact they've commissioned a book in the first place is enough to tell me it's probably a story worth telling that people will want to hear. Most, if not all of the feedback I've had over the years has been from football fans, with a surprisingly large proportion coming from outside the UK. I still receive e-mails about the book now, which is amazing when you consider it was published ten years ago. Hopefully that means there was some kind of timeless aspect to the story – the notion that everyone loves an underdog perhaps.

DW: *Apparently, you have turned your back on football writing – would you say the genre of 'football fan narratives' is worn out?*

CC: To be honest Dominik I have absolutely no idea whether the football fan narrative has been exhausted as a genre because I don't read it and don't follow it. As I mentioned earlier I moved away

[799] Note that this additional question was asked on 5 April 2012 and Connelly's subsequent answer sent on that day.

from writing books about football because I found myself enjoying the non-football parts of Stamping Grounds more than the football parts. It was just a natural progression for me to move on to writing about other things. I didn't consciously wash my hands of football writing, there was no moment where I said, "that's it, I'm finished with this", it's simply that parts of that book caused me to widen my writing horizons and the next idea I had for a book I wanted to write happened not to be connected to football. So I'm probably not the right person to ask about the genre as a whole. I think so many books came out in the nineties and early 2000s that it would have been impossible to sustain that level of output, but as long as there are good stories to tell that are told in an interesting and engaging way then there will always be a place for such books.

11.2 Email Interview with Joe McGinniss

The interview was conducted on 22 April 2012.

Dominik Wolf (DW): *How would you classify your own work? Is it travelogue, ethnograph or predominantly a piece of football writing?*

Joe McGinniss (MG): I simply tell stories and let other people worry about classification.

DW: *What impact did The Miracle of Castel di Sangro have on your (writing) career?*

MG: Very little.

DW: *Your account can be attributed to what could best be coined "the seasonal genre". A defining feature of these seasonal accounts seems to be a 'stranger' arriving at a previously unknown place and 'adopting' a local football team there. Within the course of the narrative the narrator grows increasingly fond of his adopted team and develops very close ties to it. In The Miracle of Castel di Sangro you portray a similar phenomenon.*
What was the initial motivation behind the idea of spending a season with this team – a profound interest in the game or a promising literary endeavour? With hindsight, what triggered or sparked your enthusiasm for Castel's team? What made your affection grow towards the team and the country?

MG: My initial motivation was curiosity about the experience, so foreign to everything I'd ever done before, would be like. It also allowed my new-found enthusiasm for football to intersect with my professional life. I chose Castel di Sangro because the story already had a fairy-tale quality: the town was so remote, so small, so unlike the major cities of Serie B. The people in the town, and in all of Italy, made me fall in love with the place.

DW*: Your book is labelled 'non-fictional' as it clearly refers to 'real life events and people'. Yet, you still need to rely on the devices of fiction to reconstruct events and conversations held. Regarding the conversations, this must have been a complicated process as most of them must have been conducted in Italian. How did you record or reconstruct conversations?*
At times it is the striking prose employed that turn your account into far more than factual representations of place and people. This tempted reviewers to suggest that Signor Rezza, apparently a 'flesh and blood' person, is a "character straight out of a Mario Puzo novel." How would you challenge the notion that The Miracle of Castel di Sangro is still in parts a 'fictionalised' account?

MG: I was constantly taking notes. In the evenings and early mornings I would transcribe these, translating into English. No one who knows the town or the people ever suggested that anything was fictionalized. I don't bother challenging assertions made my [sic] reviewers.

DW: *In The Miracle of Castel di Sangro you claim to uncover the messy reality behind the public image of the club owner, Signor Rezza, and the president, Gabriele Gravina. On top of this, you reveal some rather unpleasant details about players' private lives. Taking into account that you were given privileged access to a professional football team, players confided in you and you were allowed to stay there free of cost – why did you decide to portray players and staff in less-than-favourable light? What would you object to the claim that a revelation of such intimate details is actually a breach of confidence? Have you had any feedback from team or management ever since the publication of your book? Are you still in touch with former team members or its staff?*

MG: I write true stories. My responsibility is to my readers. But I did not include in the book anything of a personal nature that anyone shared with me privately. Incidentally, I did not stay free of cost. I paid monthly rent for my apartment. Gravina was very upset by the book, as was Jaconi and certain other players. But many players liked it and praised me for it. Spinosa actually came to the U.S. and lived in

my home for several months and I maintained close relations with Lotti and Franceschini Altamura and several others for years.

DW: *You provide a lot of information on the rules and regulations of the game – Did you have any particular readership in mind when writing the book? And, from the feedback you have received – who is majorly interested in The Miracle of Castel di Sangro?*

MG*:* There was more interest in the book in the U.K. and in Germany and Holland than in the U.S. Nonetheless, because I wrote it originally for an American audience I included explanation of rules and history of the game which would not have been necessary if I were writing for a European audience.

DW: *Apparently, you have turned your back on football writing – would you say the genre of ' football fan narratives' is worn out?*

MG: I have not turned my back on football writing, but no one will pay me to do it. I certainly don't feel the form is in any way worn out.

DW: *Are you still interested in the game?*

MG: I remain passionately interested in the game, and watch matches from England, Scotland, France, Germany, Spain, Argentina and Brazil regularly. I have become a Barcelona fan, and am in mourning today because of yesterday's loss in *El Clasico.*

11.3 Interview with Patrick Wasserziehr – Sky Sports commentator

Patrick Wasserziehr, born in Bonn in 1966, is one of Germany's leading sports journalists. He has been working as a match commentator for the pay-TV broadcaster Sky Sports and its German predecessor Premiere for more than 20 years, covering the German Bundesliga as well as the UEFA Champions League. He has also covered every World Cup since 1994. Wasserziehr hosts his own show *Sky 90*, debating current football issues with well-known pundits such as Franz Beckenbauer.
The interview was conducted in the Grand Elysée Hotel Hamburg on 14 August 2013.

Dominik Wolf (DW): *Wie sieht eine typische Arbeitswoche in Ihrem Leben als Skykommentator bzw. -moderator aus?*
Patrick Wasserziehr (PW): Gehen wir jetzt einmal von der richtigen Saison aus, in der alle Wettbewerbe laufen und fangen beim Sonntag an, weil da meine Hauptsendung ist. Ich moderiere Sky 90. Das heißt, dass ich am Sonntag nach München fliege, dort meine Sendung habe und am Montag wieder an meinen Wohnort nach Hamburg zurückfliege. In München bin ich häufiger bei Konferenzen, wo wir das Ganze nachbesprechen und dann wieder planen und vorbesprechen. Wenn die *Champions League* stattfindet, starte ich oft am Dienstag oder Mittwoch zu einem der *Champions League* Spiele. Am Wochenende bin ich hin und wieder auch in der Bundesliga eingespannt. Und in der Zeit dazwischen erledige ich redaktionelle Arbeit. Das heißt, dass man sich mit aktuellen Ereignissen beschäftigt, hierzu viel telefoniert und viel liest. Dazu gehört auch, sich mit handelnden Personen zu treffen, um sich aus erster Hand zu informieren, wie die Dinge sind. Im intensiven Austausch mit der Redaktion klärt man, wo es Ansätze für gute Themen gibt: Wie bauen wir eine Sendung auf? Welche Schwerpunkte setzen wir? Welche Gäste laden wir ein? Es ist also keine typische Woche von 9 bis 17 Uhr. Sie ist geprägt durch das Wochenende und auch davon, dass vielleicht doch mal ein Anruf abends um 21 Uhr kommt, auf den man den ganzen Tag gewartet hat, wenn es etwa um die Zusage eines Gastes geht für meine Sendung. Es gibt aber auch mal Phasen, wo man entgegen der üblichen Arbeitswoche dienstags frei hat oder Zeit hat.

DW: *Was ist für Sie guter Sportjournalismus?*

PW: Guter Sportjournalismus ist zunächst mal unabhängig. Da bin ich von der alten Schule. Ich bin geprägt worden von Leuten wie Harry Valérien und Ernst Huberty, aber auch von zwei oder drei Sportjournalisten, die man nicht so gut kennt. Guter Sportjournalismus versucht, neutral zu sein. Er ist unvoreingenommen. Er ist kritisch. Das heißt, dass er auch hinterfragen sollte, wie die Dinge wirklich sind. Bei uns im Fernsehen übertragen wir viele Sachen live, da will man natürlich auch Emotionen und Begeisterung vermitteln. Das ist aus meiner Sicht durchaus mit diesem Ansatz des Sportjournalismus zu vereinbaren, aber ich zucke immer zusammen, wenn ich Kollegen höre, die bei der deutschen Nationalmannschaft von „Wir" sprechen. Ich halte es mit Hanns Joachim Friedrichs, der gesagt hat: „Mache dich nie gemein mit einer Sache, auch nicht mit einer guten". Und ich bin schon immer der Meinung gewesen, dass eine gewisse Distanz wichtig ist, um das Ganze besser beurteilen zu können. Wichtig ist auf der anderen Seite, dass man gelegentlich einfach eine gewisse Nähe braucht, um Dinge besser beurteilen zu können. Da man viel mit Menschen zu tun hat, ist es auch ganz normal, dass man mit dem einen etwas mehr anfangen kann und mit dem anderen etwas weniger. Aber darüber hinaus sollte man es schaffen, Leute zu faszinieren und ihnen zu vermitteln, was das Schöne, das Spannende, das Fröhliche, das Traurige an einem Spiel oder an einer Saison ist.

DW: *Sie haben selber für den damaligen Regionalligisten VfL 93 Hamburg gespielt. Für wie sinnvoll halten Sie es, dass der im Fernsehen kommentierende Journalist selber auf einem gewissen Niveau Fußball gespielt haben sollte?*

PW: Es hilft definitiv, ist aber nicht das allein seligmachende. Denn sonst müsste jeder Weltklasse-Fußballer später auch ein Weltklasse-Reporter werden. Das ist aber nicht so. Es ist ein weit

verbreiteter Irrglaube, dass das reine Fußballfachwissen und die reine Sportpraxis, wenn wir es jetzt mal vom Fußball lösen, das alles Entscheidende ist. Es hilft, aber die Begeisterung für die Medien, der Umgang mit Sprache, das Gespür für Menschen oder die Neugier auf eine interessante Geschichte ist mindestens ebenso wichtig. Ich konnte mich natürlich ganz gut in den Sport und die Spieler hineinversetzen. Auch wenn ich selber in meiner aktiven Zeit mehrere Klassen tiefer gespielt habe, sind bestimmte Abläufe, Mechanismen schon vergleichbar. Insofern hat es mir auf alle Fälle geholfen – gerade in Bezug auf die Akzeptanz der Spieler. Der eine oder andere, zumindest von den Spielern aus meiner Generation, weiß, dass ich selber gespielt habe und das steigert natürlich schon die Anerkennung.

DW: *Als Sportjournalist konkurrieren Sie mit anderen Vertretern Ihrer Zunft um Informationen. Wie gelingt es Ihnen oder Ihren Kollegen, ein Vertrauensverhältnis zu Spielern, Trainern oder Funktionären aufzubauen, um auf diesem Wege möglichst exklusive Informationen zu erhalten?*

PW: In der live Situation habe ich die Möglichkeit, Fragen so zu stellen, dass mein Gegenüber mal etwas mehr von dem raus lässt, was man kennt. Als Beispiel ließe sich der Auftritt von Uli Hoeneß bei Sky 90 nennen. Die Sendung, in der er damals Louis van Gaal kritisierte, ist ja auch in die Bundesliga-Geschichte eingegangen. Das ist eine Sternstunde gewesen, die man so nicht planen kann. Ich muss grundsätzlich durch meine Art der Fragestellung versuchen, auch mal zu provozieren. Ich nutze Informationen, die ich gezielt einsetze auch, um Dinge zu erfahren, die neu sind. Ich habe den Ruf, auch kritisch zu fragen. Viele können damit durchaus gut umgehen, weil sie häufig selber die Herausforderung suchen. Wenn man kritisch fragt, muss das Ganze fundiert sein. Wie erreicht man das Vertrauen? Es gibt immer wieder Gespräche, die wir „off record“ führen. Das sind Gespräche, in denen Dinge auch mal so angesprochen werden, wie sie sind, ohne dieses Wissen später eins zu eins zu verwenden. Das ist ein wichtiger Punkt, darf aber nicht dazu führen, dass ich nur noch solche Gespräche führe. Man darf nie das Vertrauen der Anderen missbrauchen. Wenn ich mich zum Beispiel mit jemandem zum Essen treffe, mein Gesprächspartner mir dort bestimmte Sachen einfach für mein besseres Verständnis erzählt, und ich dieses Hintergrundwissen anschließend in einer Sendung in Umlauf bringen würde, dann hätte diese Person das letzte Mal mit mir gesprochen. Es hätte sich auch in der Branche ganz schnell rumgesprochen. Das kann ich nicht machen.

DW: *Passiert das häufiger bei Kollegen?*

PW: Ja, das passiert schon. In der heutigen aufgeregten Zeit geraten Meldungen ungeschützt und ungecheckt in die Weiterverbreitung. Mir ist es selber passiert. Es hat jemand unter meinem Namen Dinge getwittert, etwa Transfergerüchte zu Henrikh Mkhitaryan, der später zu Borussia Dortmund gegangen ist. Darauf sind diverse Online Medien sofort eingestiegen, ohne dass ich davon wusste. Ich war zu der Zeit im Urlaub und wurde darüber dann von meiner eigenen Presseabteilung mehrere Tage später informiert. Dies führte dazu, dass wir erst mal Borussia Dortmund Bescheid geben mussten, dass es sich hier um gefakte Twitter Tweets handelte. Insofern ist es ein schmaler Grad. Man muss auch versuchen zu widerstehen, eine vermeintlich brisante Info sofort rauszugeben, wenn man nicht wirklich sicher ist, dass sie stimmt.

DW: *Wie hat sich das Vertrauensverhältnis zwischen Spielern bzw. Trainern und Journalisten in den letzten 20 Jahren verändert?*

PW: Bei mir persönlich oder generell?

DW: *Beides.*

PW: Bei mir persönlich ist es sicherlich so, dass ich durch die Zeit, in der ich in dieser Branche tätig bin, das Vertrauen vieler handelnder Personen habe. Es gibt niemanden in dieser Branche, mit dem ich nachhaltig verkracht bin, obwohl ich viele Leute durchaus kritisch befragt habe. Eigentlich bin ich der Meinung, dass jeder gute Journalist ein paar Spieler oder ein paar Beteiligte haben muss, die nicht so gut auf ihn zu sprechen sind. Prinzipiell ist das Vertrauen da. Es war aber nie mein Ziel, mit allen gut befreundet zu sein. Es gibt Menschen wie Franz Beckenbauer, mit dem ich seit zwanzig

Jahren Sendungen gemeinsam bestreite, zu denen ich ein freundschaftliches Verhältnis unterhalte, mit denen ich aber nicht persönlich befreundet bin. Das habe ich auch nie angestrebt. Ich habe immer die Grenze gesetzt auch als Reporter. Auch wenn man sich nett unterhält, wissen meine Gesprächspartner, dass es zu kritischen Fragen kommen kann, wenn wir in einer Sendung sind. Das ist aber dann eine Sache des Vertrauens. Matthias Sammer, einer unserer Sky-Experten, war beim HSV im Gespräch als Manager und sagte dort ab. Das wurde viel kritisiert und er war am Sonntag damals zu Gast bei mir in der Sendung. Viele haben mich damals danach kontaktiert und gesagt, sie seien überrascht gewesen, wie kritisch ich mit ihm umgegangen sei, weil sie damit nicht gerechnet hätten. Dies überraschte mich wiederum, weil ich eigentlich dachte, die Leute wissen, wie ich bin. Ganz offensichtlich ging man davon aus, dass man mit dem Sky-Mann, mit dem man auch schon viele Sendungen gemeinsam moderiert hat, nicht hart ins Gericht gehen würde. Dies ist nicht mein Ansatz. Matthias Sammer und ich haben davor und danach genau dasselbe Verhältnis zueinander gehabt wie sonst. Die andere Seite ist, dass das Vertrauen gesunken ist durch die Art und Weise, wie sich die Bundesliga und wie sich auch die Medienwelt entwickelt hat. Den Eindruck habe ich schon, weil sich die Verantwortlichen etwa bei Bayern München an manchen Punkten schützen müssen. Die können auch nicht mehr jeden Reporter kennen, also sind sie vorsichtig. Früher, noch vor meiner Zeit, sind Reporter teilweise mit im Trainingslager gewesen. Ich kenne Kollegen, die fuhren mit im Mannschaftsbus ins Stadion. Dies ist herrlich romantisch. Anfang der 90er Jahre hat mir auch mal ein Trainer angeboten, mit dem Mannschaftsbus ins Stadion zu fahren. Ich habe dies damals abgelehnt. Aber das wäre natürlich heute völlig unvorstellbar. Dafür geht es heute um zu viel Geld, dafür sind die Dimensionen zu groß geworden. Auf Vereinsseite passt man sehr auf, was gesagt wird. Das ist aus Vereinssicht durchaus nachvollziehbar, gelegentlich für die Journalisten aber unbefriedigend. Es gibt nach wie vor Reporter, die sehr viel mehr wissen als sie schreiben oder sagen. Aber das Ganze ist schon distanzierter geworden. Dies ist einfach der Natur der Sache und der Entwicklung des Ganzen geschuldet.

DW: *Viele Fans sehen Ihre Tätigkeit als Traumberuf direkt nach dem Berufswunsch Profifußballer – Worin liegt für Sie der Reiz in Ihrer Tätigkeit und wo liegen die Schattenseiten, die den Fans verborgen bleiben?*

PW: Das ist vermutlich so wie mit dem Beruf des Kneipiers, über den viele denken: „Mensch, der kann jeden Abend Party machen." Für mich ist es natürlich in erster Linie ein Beruf, in dem sehr viel von mir verlangt wird und in dem große Konkurrenz herrscht. Die Zeiten eines Ernst Huberty, Harry Valérien oder Dieter Kürten, die ihr Leben lang für einen Sender gearbeitet haben und dort mehr oder minder unangefochten waren, sind wohl weitgehend vorbei. Es ist auch ein Beruf, in dem eine falsche Bemerkung im schlechtesten Fall dazu führen kann, dass ich vom Schirm verschwinde oder mich zumindest in große Schwierigkeiten bringen kann, wenn einem etwas rausrutscht, was „politisch nicht korrekt" ist. Ein Kollege hat beispielsweise mal in einer live Reportage gesagt, man wisse, dass ein bestimmter Spieler eine Nähe zum Milieu habe. Das mag vielleicht sogar so gewesen sein, das darf man eben nicht *on air* sagen. Jetzt kann man immer verlangen, dass man sich im Griff haben muss – Gott sei Dank ist mir das auch bisher noch nie passiert – aber das ist schon ein permanenter Drahtseilakt. Gerade heutzutage muss man sich in den sozialen Netzwerken auch gefallen lassen, dass man beleidigt und beschimpft wird. Das ist jetzt auch nicht jedermanns Sache. Alles, was man macht, wird öffentlich beurteilt. Das ist auch absolut legitim. Denn wir alle wissen, was wir tun, aber sicherlich ist das ein Punkt, der nicht jedem sensiblen Gemüt so zuzumuten wäre. Und natürlich ist die Konkurrenz unter den Sendern sehr groß. Die Vorstellung, dass Fußballer oder Vereine sagen: „Wir bekommen viel Geld und müssen dann auch mit Kritik umgehen." – ist nur in Teilen richtig. Es ist schon so, dass von Vereinsseite sehr genau darauf geachtet wird, wie von Journalisten etwas bewertet wird und welche Fragen gestellt werden. Es ist etwas anderes, ob man als Fan etwas sagt oder ob man dies als Journalist/ Moderator oder Reporter beim Fernsehen tut. Nicht immer darf man einfach das fragen oder sagen, was einem gerade in den Sinn kommt. Hier muss man schon mal diplomatisch sein. Auf der anderen Seite muss man als Journalist schauen, inwieweit sich dies noch mit dem eigenen Berufsverständnis deckt. Letztlich hat der Beruf für mich nichts an Faszination verloren. Es macht immer noch Spaß, ein Interview zu führen, darauf zu achten, wie ein Mensch

reagiert. Bei Interviews handelt es sich ja eigentlich um eine Urform des Journalismus. Bei *Sky 90* habe ich beispielsweise drei Menschen, die interaktiv sind. Genau dies ist das Ziel des Ganzen: Wie reagiert der eine auf den anderen? Das ist immer wieder spannend. Und der Fußball, den ich hauptsächlich beackere, liefert stetig neue Themen, weil er das Leben an sich abbildet, da er irgendwo ein Spiegelbild der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung ist. Und das reizt mich nach wie vor. Ich habe nach wie vor Freude daran, durch ein gutes Interview einen anderen Blickwinkel aufzuzeigen. Auch öffentlich ausgetragene Streitigkeiten finde ich aus journalistischer Perspektive spannend.
Das betrifft auch den Printjournalismus. Ich hoffe einfach, dass wir auch weiter in diesem Land eine Kultur erhalten, die auch von starken, investigativen und meinungsfreudigen Medien geprägt wird. Das halte ich auch für dieses Land insgesamt, weit über den Sportjournalismus hinaus, für sehr wichtig.

DW: *Welchen Wert kann der Printjournalismus im Bereich Fußball noch beanspruchen beim Live Angebot von Sky Sports und der digitalen Verfügbarkeit von Spielen oder Spielszenen auf Internetplattformen?*

PW: Meine Sparte halte ich derzeit noch für die sicherste, weil Live Übertragungen gerade im Bereich des Fußballs noch die größte Anziehungskraft besitzen, Leute vor dem Fernseher zu versammeln. Printjournalismus ist im Augenblick in der Krise. Ich persönlich bin mir nicht ganz sicher, ob es nicht auch damit zusammenhängt, dass online Informationen umsonst verfügbar sind. Aber Tatsache ist, dass eine Generation, die jetzt um die 20 ist, praktisch ohne Zeitung aufgewachsen ist. Und das wird sich auch nicht mehr ändern. Auch das Verhalten hat sich geändert. Es geht oft darum, schnelle Infos zu generieren und selber auch mitdiskutieren zu wollen. Als Beispiele seien hier Schlagwörter wie „Blogs“ oder „Schwamm-Intelligenz“ im Netz genannt. Ich hoffe, dass ein Qualitätsjournalismus überlebt. Das wünsche ich mir, und daran will ich auch ganz fest glauben. Ob das so sein wird? Das entzieht sich meiner prophetischen Gabe. Aber ich glaube, dass es nach wie vor einen Markt dafür gibt. Allerdings könnten diese Medien sehr viel teurer werden. Einer kleineren Klientel würde somit zugemutet, deutlich mehr zu bezahlen, um dann aber entsprechend bedient zu werden. Ob dies dann als Zeitung am Ende abgerufen wird, oder ob es Qualitätsjournalismus ist, der sich doch zumindest überwiegend in geschriebener Form im Netz wiederfindet, ist die nächste Frage. Nach heutigem Stand würde ich voraussagen, dass es in 10 bis 20 Jahren immer noch Zeitungen geben wird.

DW: *Kommen wir mal zu einem anderen Thema. Sehen Sie Unterschiede im Bereich der journalistischen Arbeit zu England oder Italien? Arbeiten Ihre ausländischen Kollegen anders?*

PW: Die *BBC* hat ja immer den Ruf, DER SENDER überhaupt zu sein. Im Bereich Nachrichten oder Dokumentationen wird sie immer als Beispiel herangezogen. Im Boulevard Journalismus auf der anderen Seite gilt die *Sun* als noch sehr viel aggressiver als beispielsweise die „Bild“ Zeitung. Da gibt es dann sicherlich Unterschiede. Wenn ich in England bin, merke ich, dass im britischen Boulevard im persönlichen Bereich teilweise noch sehr viel drastischer mit Stars umgegangen wird als hier. Bei uns gibt es noch Grenzen, die auch im Zweifelsfall eingehalten werden. Ich kann mich zum Beispiel erinnern, dass Ottmar Hitzfeld einmal eine Affäre mit einer Dame aus Brasilien hatte. Diese Geschichte war unter der Hand schon relativ lange bekannt. Man gestaltete das damals schonend für ihn. Das war einen Tag in der Zeitung und danach nie mehr. Hier kann sich ja schon jeder denken, dass es so eine Art *Gentlemen‘s Agreement* gegeben hat. Dies finde ich bei solchen Sachen auch gut, weil ich glaube, dass es keine Nachrichten sind, die den Lauf der Welt verändern. Hiermit wäre in anderen Ländern teilweise sehr viel gnadenloser umgegangen worden.
Was die Qualität der Übertragungen im Fernsehen anbetrifft, ist es so, dass die Engländer als sehr hochwertig gelten. Das betrifft zum Beispiel die technische Ausstattung, konkret die Anzahl der eingesetzten Kameras, die Kamera Positionen und auch die sehr dynamische und fachlich versierte Art der Bildführung.
Allerdings bedienen wir in Deutschland nach meiner Meinung mittlerweile ein mindestens genauso so hohes Niveau. Ich gehe sogar noch weiter, vielleicht sind wir in Deutschland sogar weltweit führend. In der Rundum-Berichterstattung sind wir nach meiner Einschätzung sowohl quantitativ als auch qualitativ besser. Die Italiener legen noch viel mehr Wert als wir auf das Gespräch rund um den

Fußball. Es gibt Kollegen aus Italien, die behaupten, dass das Gespräch eigentlich viel wichtiger sei als das Spiel selber.

DW: *Also gibt es für Sie Grenzen journalistischer Neugier?*

PW: Ja. Es gibt definitiv Grenzen. Ich bin durchaus ein Freund des Boulevardjournalismus, weil er bunt und unterhaltsam ist und auch über die menschlichen Schwächen berichtet. Bei Sky und früher bei Premiere ist für uns immer die Grenze der Bereich gewesen, der sich im Nachtleben abspielt oder sich um außereheliche Affären dreht. Ein Grenzfall ist natürlich die Situation rund um Uli Hoeneß. In der Berichterstattung haben wir uns dafür entschieden, uns darauf zu konzentrieren, was die derzeitige Steueraffäre für seine Tätigkeit bei Bayern, aber auch für seine Tätigkeit als Sprachrohr des deutschen Fußballs bedeutet. Dort ziehen wir klar die Grenze zu dem, was juristisch noch geklärt werden muss und unterlassen strikt irgendeine Vorverurteilung. Stellen Sie sich mal vor, mir wäre eine unpassende Bemerkung über Uli Hoeneß herausgerutscht. Dies hätte dann berechtigterweise für Aufruhr gesorgt. Bei solch sensiblen Themen muss man sehr korrekt vorgehen.

DW: *Traditionelle englische Fans argumentieren, dass der Fußball in England mit Einführung der Premier League seine Seele verloren habe. Wie sehen Sie das?*

PW: Einerseits kann ich das durchaus verstehen. Andererseits glaube ich nicht, dass es so ist. Nehmen wir Manchester United. Der Club, der im Grunde genommen wie kein anderer für Kommerz steht. Trotzdem ist die Stimmung im Stadion nach wie vor sehr ursprünglich und sehr stark vom Fußball-Fachwissen der Leute geprägt. So zumindest habe ich das wahrgenommen. Bei Liverpool würde ich ähnliches sagen. Bei Arsenal kann man schon unterschiedlicher Meinung sein, gerade jetzt in dem neuen Stadion. Aber neue Stadien gibt es hier auch. Philosophisch gefragt – kann der Fußball seine Seele verkaufen? Ich weiß es nicht. Ich glaube, dass es eine Entwicklung ist, die kaum aufzuhalten ist, weil sich Gesellschaften weiterentwickeln. Fußball hat eine immer stärkere Stellung eingenommen, weil man gemerkt hat, dass man damit auch die Fernseher einschalten kann. Natürlich kann man damit viel Geld verdienen, nur was ist die Alternative? Wollen wir beim Fußball der 60er bleiben mit schummrigem Flutlicht und Nebelschwaden? Ich finde das persönlich auch romantisch, aber ich glaube, dass dies nicht der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung entspricht. Was die Eintrittspreise anbelangt, bin ich ganz klar dafür, dass auch die Premier League darauf achten muss, dass sie die schmaleren Geldbeutel noch mitnimmt. Der Zugang für jeden zum Fußball muss gewahrt bleiben. Das müssen sich die Verantwortlichen dort klar machen. Es gibt da noch einen anderen Punkt: In England werden beispielsweise die Trainingsplätze komplett dicht gemacht. Die Fußballer haben während des Trainings praktisch überhaupt keinen Kontakt mehr zu den Fans. Ich weiß von einigen Fußballern, die dort spielen, dass sie dies ganz gut finden. Ich finde dies allerdings nicht so gut und bin der Meinung, dass wir in Deutschland öffentliche Trainingseinheiten beibehalten sollten. Als Beispiel sei hier Schalke angeführt. Unter dem Motto „ein Club zum Anfassen“ sollen die Spieler dort merken, was der Verein den Fans bedeutet. So wird es auch von Herrn Tönnies gefordert. Ich verstehe, dass ein Trainer irgendwann am Freitag sagt: „Wir wollen das Abschlusstraining nicht öffentlich machen. Wir wollen mal etwas einstudieren, wo die Spieler sich einfach freier bewegen, wenn mal keine Fans da sind.“ Da die Fans am Ende des Tages auch den sportlichen Erfolg wollen, müssen Abläufe auf dem Platz optimal trainiert werden können – bei Bedarf dann auch unter Ausschluss der Öffentlichkeit. Aber grundsätzlich muss der Kontakt zu den Fans beibehalten werden und zwar auch der tägliche Kontakt. Ich bin auch der Meinung, dass die Spieler, sei es in England, sei es in Deutschland, deshalb so viel Geld verdienen, weil die Fans über den Sport reden. Also müssen die Spieler es auch aushalten, dass sie mit den Fans in Kontakt bleiben und auch wissen, was der Verein für die Fans bedeutet. In England ist es immer noch so – du darfst dort Spiele verlieren, aber du musst 100% Gas geben. Und wenn du das nicht tust, bekommst du Probleme mit den Fans. Und das ist auch richtig so.
Um nochmal auf die Fanthematik zurückzukommen: Man muss die Fans mit im Boot haben. Das müssen die Verantwortlichen berücksichtigen, sei es in England, sei es in Deutschland. Es muss weiterhin ein Miteinander sein. Der Fußball braucht die Fans, man braucht auch ihre Leidensfähigkeit, um die Seele des Spiels zu erhalten. Ich kann schon verstehen, dass viele Fans sich auch mit den Entwicklungen schwer tun. Das ist keine Frage. Auf der anderen Seite kann es auch nicht sein, dass

Fans oder Teile der Fans, zum Beispiel Teile der Ultras versuchen, einen Verein zu zwingen, bestimmte Sachen zu machen. Ich fand, dass die *Schickeria*, diese Ultra Bewegung von den Bayern, in Punkto Neuer zu weit gegangen ist. Der Junge hat als Schalker einmal gejubelt, hat geschrien und das wird ihm jahrelang später noch vorgeworfen. Wir wollen doch ein emotionales Spiel und das wird ihm jahrelang später noch vorgehalten. Und umgekehrt ist ihm aus Schalke vorgehalten worden, dass er sozusagen Ultra von Schalke war und trotzdem den Verein verlässt. Soll der Junge mit 15 nicht mehr in das Stadion gehen, weil er weiß, dass er irgendwann mal so gut sein wird, dass er zu Bayern München geht? Da hat es dann für mich Grenzen. Das darf nicht ins Religiöse, Übersteigerte abdriften. Ich bin mein Leben lang ein Fußballfan gewesen, aber ich hatte immer einen entspannten Umgang damit. Man muss auch aufpassen, dass die Fans immer noch begreifen, dass es ein Spiel ist. Ich weiß, es gibt ein berühmtes *Bonmot* von Bill Shankly: es ist kein Spiel auf Leben oder Tod, sondern es geht um mehr! Aber das war auch lakonisch oder zynisch gemeint. Aber im Kern geht es darum, dass man die Fans braucht. Das müssen alle wissen und hier in Deutschland hat man das, glaube ich, begriffen. In England habe ich in der Tat schon den Eindruck, dass teilweise der Bogen überspannt wird, gerade im Hinblick auf die Höhe der Eintrittspreise. Karten müssen für den normalen Durchschnittsverdiener erschwinglich bleiben. Das halte ich für außerordentlich wichtig.

DW: *Welchen Anteil hat BSkyB an der Kommerzialisierung der englischen Premier League?*

PW: Inwiefern?

DW: *In der Gestalt, dass durch die Verträge mit Sky so viel Geld bereit gestellt wurde, dass Spieler aus dem Ausland mit hohen Gehältern gelockt werden konnten, damit gewissermaßen ein Teufelskreis in Gang gesetzt wurde und die Vereine seit 1992 radikal die Ticketpreise erhöht haben.*

PW: Ich bin selbstverständlich nicht autorisiert für Sky in England zu sprechen und kann dementsprechend nur eine persönliche Einschätzung von außen abgeben. Die eben angesprochene Entwicklung ist nach meiner Einschätzung selbstverständlich nicht die Schuld von BSkyB. Denn soweit ich informiert bin, nimmt BSkyB in England genauso wenig wie Sky in Deutschland darauf Einfluss, was die Vereine mit dem Geld machen, das sie vom Fernsehen bekommen. Das müssen sich die Vereine schon selber überlegen. Klar ist allerdings auch, dass die hohen Fernsehgelder es ermöglichen, attraktive Stars in die Liga zu holen. Dies gefällt wiederum auch den Fernsehsendern, weil dadurch natürlich die von ihnen angebotene Ware attraktiver wird. Allerdings habe ich den Eindruck, dass man in England aufpassen muss, nicht für Durchschnitt zu viel zu bezahlen. Außerdem wären die Engländer gut beraten, so wie in Deutschland auf die Förderung junger Talente „aus dem eigenen Stall“ zu setzen.

DW: *Sie sprechen auch die zunehmende Profitorientierung der Vereine an. In den letzten 20 Jahren ist vor allem bei Fans in England der Eindruck entstanden, dass die Gehälter der Spieler so gestiegen sind, dass sich die Spieler zunehmend von den Realitäten der Fans entfernen. Können Sie das aus Ihrer persönlichen Wahrnehmung oder Erfahrung bestätigen? Oder haben Sie ganz andere Erfahrungen gemacht?*

PW: Das ist ehrlich gesagt sehr unterschiedlich. Ich habe genügend Beispiele selber erlebt, wo ich diesen Eindruck durchaus bestätigen kann. Ich persönlich halte Gehälter in einer bestimmten Dimension zumindest für grenzwertig. Darüber hinaus halte ich beispielsweise Ablösesummen wie sie jetzt für Gareth Bale bezahlt wurden für geradezu unanständig.

DW: *Sie meinen die 100 Millionen Euro von Real Madrid?*

PW: Dem Vernehmen nach waren es ja nicht ganz 100, sondern gute 90 Millionen Euro . Das ist für mich eine Größenordnung, die ich nicht mehr nachvollziehen kann und die meiner Meinung nach in der heutigen Zeit nicht vermittelbar ist. Davon abgesehen gilt Real Madrid als hoch verschuldet. Dies lässt sich mit *Financial Fair Play*, wie das Herr Platini propagiert, meiner Meinung nach nicht im Entferntesten in Einklang bringen. Wenn diese hoch bezahlten Leute dann auch die absolut herausragenden Leistungen bringen, bin ich bereit zu sagen, dass ihr Marktwert diese Preise

rechtfertigt. Nehmen wir das Beispiel Messi, der jedem Fußballfan einfach Entzücken bereitet, wenn man ihn sieht. Dieser Mann soll hoch und von mir aus auch außergewöhnlich hoch bezahlt werden. Da gibt es hier mittlerweile in Deutschland auch einige Beispiele. Nehmen wir Ribéry, Robben, Schweinsteiger, Müller oder Reus aus Dortmund. Das sind Leute, für die die Menschen in Stadien gehen. Wenn ein Spieler als Gegenleistung wirklich 100% gibt, und zwar nicht nur auf dem Platz, sondern auch seine Lebensführung so gestaltet, wie man dies von einem Profi verlangen darf, dann bin ich der Meinung, dass das Gehalt noch zu rechtfertigen ist. Es gibt aber genügend Beispiele, wo Spieler für ihr hohes Gehalt nicht den entsprechenden Gegenwert liefern. Das muß man dann natürlich kritisch betrachten. Bedauerlich finde ich, dass es viele Spieler gibt, die von Jahr zu Jahr den Verein wechseln und dementsprechend wenig Identität mit dem Club aufbauen. Ich weiß nicht, ob die Zeiten vorbei sind, aber hier in Deutschland sind beispielsweise Uwe Seeler, Wolfgang Overath oder Marco Bode ja auch in ihrem Leben dafür belohnt worden, dass sie ihren Clubs treu geblieben sind. Sie sind Helden und Vereinslegenden in ihrer jeweiligen Stadt. Diese Anerkennung kann man natürlich nicht in Euro und Cent beziffern, aber das ist ja auch ein Wert. Insofern finde ich es umso erfreulicher, dass Spieler wie Philipp Lahm oder Bastian Schweinsteiger schon solange beim FC Bayern spielen ähnlich wie Roman Weidenfeller in Dortmund. Es geht also doch.

DW: *Würden Sie sagen, dass sich das Kräfteverhältnis zwischen Clubs als Arbeitgebern und Spielern als Arbeitnehmern zugunsten der Spieler verschoben hat?*

PW: Das muss man unterscheiden. ‘Ja‘ im Spitzenbereich. Nehmen wir Robert Lewandowski in Dortmund oder ähnliche Topleute dort. Das Kräfteverhältnis hat sich zu ihren Gunsten verschoben, weil der Markt für sie so groß ist, dass sie im Grunde genommen immer sehr viele Möglichkeiten haben werden. ‚Nein‘ bei den Spielern, die dahinter kommen. Sie tun sich schon schwerer. Da haben die Clubs aus der zweiten oder der dritten Liga andere Möglichkeiten. Man muss dies in der Betrachtung auch mitberücksichtigen. Wir reden im Prinzip fast immer nur über die 50 bis 100 Spieler in der Bundesliga, die weit über der Millionengrenze verdienen. Dort haben auch die Vereine das Druckmittel Geld in einem deutlich geringeren Maße. Zudem sind auch Beraterstäbe unterwegs, die ihre Klienten beeinflußen und versuchen, die Vereine ihrerseits unter Druck zu setzen, indem sie etwa gezielte Falschinfos in den Medien lancieren. Bei den vielen Profis unterhalb dieser Grenze sieht es schon etwas anders aus. Sie müssen oft froh sein, wenn sie wieder einen Verein finden. Dort ist es für die entsprecheden Vereine leichter. Aber wenn wir den absoluten Spitzenfußballer ansehen, hat sich das sicherlich verändert. Das hat auch für die Trainer die Sache schwerer gemacht.

DW: *Welchen Einfluss hatte das Bosman Urteil 1995?*

PW: Das Bosman Urteil hat natürlich dazu geführt, dass Gelder umgeleitet worden sind. Gelder, die vorher als Ablösesummen bei den Vereinen im Kreislauf geblieben sind, sind im Grunde genommen in die Taschen der Berater bzw. der Spieler geflossen. Beim Bosman Urteil bin ich aber entgegen der Lehrmeinung in der Bundesliga der Auffassung, dass hier nur geltendes Recht umgesetzt und angewandt worden ist. Und das war auch höchste Zeit. Man muss sich das im Grunde genommen mal auf der Zunge zergehen lassen: ein Arbeitnehmer, zwar kein klassischer Arbeitnehmer im herkömmlichen Sinne, aber doch ein Arbeitnehmer, hat seine Vertragszeit beendet. Der bisherige Arbeitgeber bekommt jetzt noch Geld dafür, dass der Arbeitnehmer woanders hingeht. Wenn man sich diese Regelung mal logisch überlegt, ist es fast erstaunlich, dass sie nicht schon vorher gekippt worden ist. Und ich habe ganz ehrlich auch das Geschrei des Profifußballs damals nie verstanden. Denn auf dieses Szenario hätte man sich längst vorbereiten können. Es war klar, dass die Regelung kommen könnte. Genauso fraglich ist, ob die 50 + 1 Regelung, die sich in Deutschland zwar bewährt hat, in Brüssel Bestand hätte, wenn ein Verein hiergegen klagen würde. Hierzu gibt es unterschiedliche Auffassungen. Unabhängig davon, ob man das Bosman Urteil jetzt für richtig hält oder nicht – ich halte es für richtig – hat es natürlich dazu geführt, dass die Gehälter explodiert sind und sich das Machtgefüge eindeutig in Richtung der Spieler, bzw. Berater verschoben hat.

DW: *Stichwort Kommerzialisierung – 2022 ist die WM nach Katar vergeben worden. Es wird überlegt, die WM dort vielleicht im Winter auszurichten. Wie sehen Sie das?*

PW: Zunächst einmal muss ich ehrlich sagen, dass ich sehr erstaunt war, dass das Exekutivkomitee oder Teile davon erst im Nachhinein erfahren haben, dass es in Katar im Sommer völlig überraschend ziemlich heiß ist. Ich möchte jetzt nicht darüber spekulieren, welche Gründe im Einzelnen zu welchem Abstimmungsverhalten geführt haben. Das kann man sich ja manchmal auch schon denken. Grundsätzlich bin ich dafür, dass Weltmeisterschaften auch in Ländern stattfinden, die wir nicht als Kernländer des Fußballs sehen, weil der Fußball da auch weiterdenken muss. Die Weltmeisterschaftsvergabe an Japan und Südkorea wurde sehr kritisch gesehen, aber ich habe damals selber erlebt, welche wahnsinnige Begeisterung es dort für den Fußball gibt. Ich fände es arrogant, wenn man hier sagen würde: „Der Fußball hat hier doch nichts zu suchen, wer sind die denn im Weltfußball?“ Dies gilt auch für Russland. Das ist auch ein Land mit Fußball-Tradition und Kultur. Russland ist gerade dabei, sich als Fußball-Land zu etablieren, unabhängig von seiner politischen Entwicklung. Bei Katar erkenne ich im Moment nicht, wie man die Regionen außerhalb Katars noch erreicht. Da haben erkennbar finanzielle Interessen eine Rolle gespielt. Es spricht Bände, dass man die WM jetzt in den Winter legen muss. Eine andere Chance hat man ja gar nicht. Ich persönlich finde das unglücklich. Eine Verlegung in den Winter führt neben einer kompletten Veränderung der Spielpläne in den nationalen Ligen auch dazu, dass Fans letztlich ausgeschlossen werden beispielsweise im Bereich *Public Viewing*.

DW: *Also geht der Volksfest-Charakter der WM verloren?*

PW: Der Volksfest-Charakter geht so verloren. Ich fand die WM in Südafrika wunderbar. Ich fand es richtig, die WM dort zu veranstalten, weil ich es grundsätzlich richtig finde, auch in Länder zu gehen, die früher nicht bedacht worden sind. Aber Katar sehe ich im speziellen Fall kritisch.

DW: *Da Sie gerade das egalitäre Element angesprochen haben – Es gibt auch Stimmen, die sagen, dass kleinere Nationen wie San Marino oder Liechtenstein nicht in der EM oder WM Qualifikation spielen sollten ohne vorab ein Vorqualifikationsrunde zu überstehen. Wie sehen Sie das? Sollten diese „Fußballzwerge“ zu diesen Qualifikationsturnieren gar nicht zugelassen werden?*

PW: Ich kenne derartige Überlegungen auch, die beispielsweise fordern, eine Vorqualifikation zu spielen. Dem kann man aus Sicht der großen Teams durchaus etwas abgewinnen, weil deren Spieler im Regelfall stark belastet sind. Aber hier bin ich ganz konkret der Meinung: Nein. Auch der deutsche Superstar sollte mal in San Marino Fußball gespielt haben. Der deutsche Fußball verdankt einem Spiel auf Island, nebenbei bemerkt, eines der legendärsten Interviews, die es je gegeben hat. Das war das Interview mit Rudi Völler und Waldemar Hartmann. In diesem Zusammenhang auch eine Bemerkung zum DFB Pokal. Ich liebe es, wenn du bei Spielen im DFB Pokal in der ersten Runde einen Mittelstürmer zu sehen bekommst, der eben noch Gabelstaplerfahrer war. Da sieht man ja auch, was diese Leute oft unterhalb der dritten Liga leisten. Früher war das auch in der dritten Liga noch so. Unterhalb der dritten Liga gibt es heute viele Spieler, die zumindest halbtags, teilweise sogar ganztags arbeiten gehen, die dann abends noch 4 oder 5 Mal die Woche trainieren, dazu noch am Wochenende ein Spiel haben. Da muss man anerkennend sagen: „Was nehmen diese Leute auf sich, während der Vollprofi sich ausschließlich um den Fußball kümmern kann.“ Und das gilt dann eben auch für die Liechtensteins und San Marinos. Fußball ist immer davon getragen worden, dass es eine gemeinsame Wurzel, eine gemeinsame Basis und Identität gab und die sollte auch in diesem Punkt erhalten bleiben.

DW: *England gilt als Mutterland des Fußballs. Weltmeister 1966, danach kein Titelgewinn mehr. Halten Sie die Erwartungshaltung, die von den englischen Medien, aber auch von der Bevölkerung an die englische Nationalmannschaft herangetragen wird, für zu groß? Oder warum klappt es bei der englischen Nationalmannschaft nicht?*

PW: Ich habe nie verstanden, warum eine imaginäre Erwartungshaltung irgendeinen Spieler bremsen sollte. Das begreife ich auch im Fußball nicht. Hier in Hamburg geht es beispielsweise nur darum, dass die Erwartungshaltung der HSV Fans so hoch sei. Sollen die Spieler doch froh sein, dass man viel von ihnen erwartet. Ich bin froh, wenn man von mir viel erwartet, weil das bedeutet, dass man mir

auch viel zutraut. Andy Murray, der jetzt Wimbledon gewonnen hat, hatte wirklich eine enorme Erwartungslast, als erster Engländer seit Fred Perry endlich mal im heimischen Wohnzimmer zu gewinnen. Ansonsten glaube ich eher, dass ein bestimmter öffentlicher Druck tragen kann. Wenn wir uns an die WM 2006 erinnern, als die deutsche Mannschaft längst nicht so gut besetzt war wie die aktuelle Nationalmannschaft, dann konnten wir damals sehen, dass Jürgen Klinsmann sehr geschickt diesen Heimvorteil genutzt hat, wohlwissend, dass dies Druck auslöst, aber viele Leistungssportler jedenfalls auch beflügeln kann.
Warum bei den Engländern der Erfolg seit so langer Zeit ausbleibt, müsste man jetzt im Einzelnen durchgehen. Man könnte jetzt pauschal sagen, weil sie keine Elfmeter schießen können, oder weil sie von Gordon Banks oder Peter Schilton und Ray Clemence abgesehen, nie einen ordentlichen Torhüter hatten. Das scheint mir auch ein Grund zu sein, aber bezogen auf die letzten Jahre kann man den Eindruck gewinnen, dass die vielen ausländischen Spieler in der englischen Premier League tendenziell dem eigenen Nachwuchs geschadet haben. Wir in Deutschland haben seit dem Scheitern bei der Europameisterschaft 2000 den eigenen Nachwuchs sehr viel stärker gefördert. Wir sind zum Teil davon weggegangen, Stars oder auch mittelmäßige Spieler aus dem Ausland zu kaufen, weil gar nicht so viel Geld im internationalen Vergleich vorhanden war. Stattdessen haben wir den eigenen Nachwuchs gefördert. Und siehe da, es funktioniert. Es hat mir nie eingeleuchtet, dass wir in Deutschland keine 25 Spieler finden sollen, die dem Anspruch genügen, in der *Champions League* erfolgreich zu sein. Und es geht, das beweisen ja Götze, Reus, Schürrle, Draxler, Müller und Özil . Sie sind ja auch Produkt dieser tollen Nachwuchsarbeit. In Italien war es Ende der 80er und Anfang der 90er auch so, dass in der *Serie A* sehr viele ausländische Stars gespielt haben. Franz Beckenbauer hat mir mal erzählt, dass er 1966 ein Wahnsinnsangebot von Inter Mailand hatte. Das war unglaublich dotiert für die damaligen Verhältnisse und die gebotene Summe wäre auch heute noch viel Geld. Und dann schieden die Italiener in England aus, unter anderem durch eine Niederlage gegen Nordkorea. Daraufhin entschied man sich in Italien, keine Ausländer mehr zuzulassen und die eigenen Spieler spielen zu lassen. Deswegen ist Franz Beckenbauer damals nicht zu Inter Mailand gegangen. Übersetzt für unser eigentliches Thema bedeutet das, dass die Engländer schon zusehen müssen, die Nachfolger der Lampards und Ferdinands auszubilden und diese auch spielen zu lassen. Aber solange die Top-Positionen bei Chelsea, bei Manchester, bei Arsenal überwiegend von Ausländern besetzt sind, ist es für den eigenen Nachwuchs natürlich schwer. Auf der anderen Seite muss ich sagen: vor 8 bis 10 Jahren hatten die Engländer eine Mannschaft zusammen mit Lampard, mit Rio Ferdinand und auch damals schon mit Rooney, der man es durchaus auch zugetraut hat, die Weltmeisterschaft zu gewinnen.

DW: *Glauben Sie, es liegt auch an einer fehlenden Identifikation mit der Nationalmannschaft? In den von mir gelesen Quellen entsteht zuweilen der Eindruck, dass die Belange des Clubs den Spielern wichtiger erscheinen als die Identifikation mit der Nationalmannschaft.*

PW: Das ist schon möglich. Die Premier League hat eine solche Strahlkraft entwickelt, dass sich ein Lampard oder ein Gerard mehr mit ihren Vereinen identifizieren als mit der Nationalmanschaft. In Deutschland hingegen ist es immer so gewesen, dass die Nationalmannschaft für die Spieler etwas ganz Besonderes ist. Michael Ballack etwa, der vielfach gescholten wurde, war ein Spieler, der sich immer für die Nationalmannschaft zerrissen und aufgeopfert hat.

DW: *Jogi Löw lässt sehr attraktiven Fußball spielen und ist international anerkannt. Er hat aber bisher keinen internationalen Titel gewonnen. Was passiert, wenn Deutschland die WM 2014 nicht gewinnt?*

PW: Erstens finde ich, dass Jogi Löw ein Ästhet ist. Mir imponiert, dass er an seiner Idee festhält, nicht nur gewinnen, sondern auch guten und modernen Fußball spielen zu wollen. Egal, ob Jogi Löw einen Titel gewinnen wird oder nicht, er wird als bedeutender Bundestrainer in Erinnerung bleiben, weil er eine Spielkultur, einen Spielstil kreiert und verfeinert hat, den es so nicht gab. Er hat natürlich davon profitiert, dass es auch hervorragende Spieler gibt. Indem er Eleganz immer wieder eingefordert hat, hat er der deutschen Mannschaft auch eine elegante Note gegeben, die die Wahrnehmung des deutschen Fußballs in der Welt sehr positiv beeinflusst hat. Ich erinnere mich an die WM 2010, die tollen Spiele gegen England oder Argentinien. Das ist auch ein bleibendes

Verdienst von Jogi Löw. Man darf das nicht nur an Titeln messen. Ich kenne Matthias Sammer ganz gut, der sagt andererseits immer, Titel seien das Einzige, nicht das Wichtigste, sondern das Einzige. Ganz so ist es nicht, aber für ihn sind die Titel extrem wichtig. Wenn die deutsche Mannschaft in Brasilien im Halbfinale oder im Finale scheitern sollte durch die Umstände, die wir jetzt noch nicht kennen, etwa Verletzungen, Elfmeterschießen, rote Karten oder ähnliches, dann würde das nicht zwingend Löws Aus als Bundestrainer bedeuten. Es geht auch darum, was er selber möchte. Im Augenblick hat man den Eindruck, dass er sich durchaus vorstellen kann, weiter zu machen. Sollte die deutsche Mannschaft in der Vorrunde ausscheiden oder im Achtelfinale, dann wäre es sicherlich so, dass kritische Fragen gestellt würden.

DW: *Auch von Ihnen?*

PW: Möglicherweise. Aber da wäre ich dann nicht der Einzige. An ein Ausscheiden glaube ich aber nicht. Ich glaube, dass die deutsche Mannschaft zu den Mitfavoriten zählt, vielleicht sogar Topfavorit ist, obwohl Gastgeber Brasilien eigentlich als Topfavorit gilt. Aber die deutsche Mannschaft ist definitiv Titelkandidat und ich kann mir nicht vorstellen, dass man dort ein frühes Aus erleidet. Dafür ist die Mannschaft viel zu stabil und dafür ist die Qualität von Löw auch zu hoch.

DW: *Sie sprachen gerade Matthias Sammer an. Es heißt, das Team der deutschen Nationalmannschaft habe im Moment eine flache Hierarchie. Glauben Sie, dass man Führungsspieler wie Sammer, Matthäus, Beckenbauer oder Effenberg braucht für die ganz großen Titel?*

PW: Das ist eine sehr interessante Diskussion. Spieler wie Effenberg oder Breitner waren natürlich in ihren Mannschaften unerlässlich, weil man in ihren Mannschaften bestimmte Qualitäten kompensieren musste. Deutsche Mannschaften hatten teilweise technisch nicht die Fertigkeiten wie andere Mannschaften. Das musste man über vermeintlich typisch deutsche Tugenden auffangen, obwohl es damals auch schon sehr gute Fußballer gab. Franz Beckenbauer ist einer der besten Spieler aller Zeiten. Prinzipiell bin ich auf Sammers Seite. Ich glaube auch, dass eine Mannschaft eine klare Struktur braucht. Also braucht man Führungsspieler nach wie vor, aber diese Führungsspieler sind sicherlich anders als früher. Es war das Verdienst von Sammer in der vergangenen Saison, bestimmte Spieler, beispielsweise Lahm, Schweinsteiger, Neuer und auch Dante zu stärken, von Ihnen gleichzeitig auch mehr zu fordern und somit eine Struktur reinzubringen. Oliver Kahn, der Andreas Herzog einmal während eines Meisterschaftsspiels auf dem Platz heftig wachrüttelte, sagt dir heute auch, dass er dies so nicht mehr machen würde. Er würde heute als Führungsspieler anders handeln. Es gibt in jeder Gruppe diejenigen, die vorangehen. Es gibt die Mitläufer und es gibt die Individualisten. Die wird es auch weiter geben. Ein Ribéry, ein Robben, das sind keine Führungsspieler, das sind Individualisten. Aber es gibt immer welche, die für die Gruppe wichtig sind. Stefan Effenberg hat bis heute eine ganz hohe Akzeptanz bei seinen früheren Mitspielern. Ich habe noch nie einen früheren Mitspieler von ihm getroffen, und es wird im Fußball auch gerne mal gelästert, der etwas Negatives über ihn gesagt hat. Die haben immer gesagt, Stefan hätte immer an alle gedacht. Er hat beispielsweise bei Prämien-Verhandlungen dafür gesorgt, dass selbst die, die auf der Tribüne saßen, genauso mit im Boot waren wie die, die auf der Bank waren, oder so wie er am Ende den Pokal in die Höhe gestreckt haben. Das sind Führungsspieler. Also Spieler, die die Verantwortung übernehmen, die sich in den Wind stellen, die aber in der Gruppe jedem den Eindruck oder das Gefühl geben, sie seien wichtig. Effenberg hat viele Dinge getan, von denen die Öffentlichkeit nichts weiß. Er hat sich beispielsweise im Trainingslager die Nöte der Spieler angehört, Spieler auf sein Zimmer bestellt und gefragt: „Mensch was ist bei dir los? Du machst keinen guten Eindruck.“ Ottmar Hitzfeld war immer so klug, ihn walten zu lassen. Er war froh, so jemanden zu haben. Das ist ein Führungsspieler. Wenn du Führungsspieler heute so definierst, dass da jemand ist, der alle in den Senkel stellt und dafür sorgt, dass ihm die Koffer getragen werden, dann wirst du damit nicht mehr durchkommen. Das ist auch richtig so. Aber so definiert heute auch kein kluger Kopf mehr den Führungsspieler.

DW: *Herr Wasserziehr, vielen Dank für dieses Interview.*

11.4. Interview with Lars Leese – former goalkeeper of Barnsley FC

Born in 1969, former goalkeeper Lars Leese had a two-year spell (1997-1999) with Barnsley FC, playing for the English club during its only Premier League season in 1997/1998.

He is the real-life protagonist of Ronald Reng's biography *Keeper of Dreams: One Man's Controversial Story of Life in the English Premiership*, which won the prestigious *British Sports Book Award* in 2004. The jacket of Reng's book states:

"At the age of 28, German goalkeeper Lars Leese was catapulted from a minor league football field somewhere near Cologne to a small industrial town in the north of England. Something of a culture shock, certainly, but nothing compared to finding himself in goal for Barnsley playing the mighty Liverpool at Anfield in front of over 45,000 spectators. Plucked from obscurity and playing in one of the most important leagues in the world, Leese experienced in real life what thousands of boys – and men – can only dream of: stepping out of the crowd and onto a Premiership pitch. Lars Leese's foray into the wild world of professional football lasted only three years, but his journey from computer software salesman to Premiership goalie is a remarkable story. Here, Ronald Reng traces his stratospheric rise and equally alarming descent: the resulting narrative is an indispensable antidote to the traditional footballing biography and a unique – and at times shocking – outsider's view of English life."

At the time of writing he is manager of the German fourth division team SSVg Velbert. The interview was conducted in Cologne in the restaurant "Maca-Ronni" on 25 October 2013.

Dominik Wolf (DW): *Mit der Veröffentlichung Ihrer außergewöhnlichen Lebensgeschichte haben Sie internationale Bekanntheit erlangt. Wie ist es zur Zusammenarbeit mit Ronald Reng gekommen?*

Lars Lese (LL): Der Ronny [Ronald Reng] war damals in London, hat für deutsche Zeitungen über den englischen Fußball geschrieben. Da ich der einzige Deutsche zumindest zu Beginn der Saison in der Premier League war, war er dazu „verdammt", mich irgendwie kennenzulernen und daraus ist eine freundschaftliche Beziehung entstanden. Als ich dann nach meiner englischen Karriere, nennen wir es mal "Karriere", wieder nach Deutschland zurückkam, hatte ich ein Interview gegeben. Aus dem Interview resultierte die Idee, ein Buch zu schreiben, um einfach mal eine normale Fußballer-Geschichte aufzuzeigen, wenn man nicht Beckenbauer oder Kahn heißt. Da kam nur der Ronald in Frage, weil er alle Gegebenheiten vor Ort kannte und, wie ich finde, auch einen super Schreibstil hatte und insofern haben wir da unsere Jungfern-Fahrt mit dem Buch gemacht.

DW: *Welchen Wahrheitsanspruch kann die Erzählung Ronald Rengs erheben?*

LL: 100%. Da verbürge ich mich auch für. Da ist nichts dazu gedichtet oder schön geschrieben. Da sind ja einige Passagen, in denen ich auch nicht so gut wegkomme. Es war auch wichtig, alles aufzuzeigen, was so passieren kann. Das kann man ja nur machen, wenn man authentisch ist.

DW: *Der Traumhüter gilt als eine der besten Fußballerbiographien überhaupt und wurde als erstes fremdsprachiges Werk mit dem British Sports Book of the Year Award ausgezeichnet. Welche Reaktionen haben Sie in Ihrem Familien – und Freundeskreis erfahren?*

LL: Die Freunde fanden es irgendwie cool aus verschiedenen Gründen. Zum einen kommen sie in dem Buch vor, was auch sehr charmant ist. Die Familie hat ein bisschen gelitten. Es ist ja auch nicht alles immer so reibungslos gelaufen in meinem Leben, speziell was meine Kindheit und meine Eltern anging. Wenn man das dann aufschreibt und zu 100% ehrlich ist, kriegt der ein oder andere schon sein Fett weg in diesem Buch, das dann auch viele Leute lesen. Dass mein Vater dann damit nicht zu 100% happy war, damit muss man einfach in so einem Moment auch leben. Aber ich denke, dass ich keinen beleidigt habe. Uschi Daum z.B. – wir sind jetzt sehr eng befreundet, weil ich mit ihrem jetzigen Freund eng befreundet bin, den ich eben noch gesehen habe – die hat mich mit dem Arsch nicht angeguckt, und ich habe nicht gewusst warum, weil ich ihr nichts getan hatte. Als ich damals im Maca Ronni [auf der Weihnachtsfeier von Bayer 04 Leverkusen in der Saison 1996/1997) den Satz gesagt

habe: „Hey Uschi, Du alte Schleuder!“ war das für sie wie eine Ohrfeige. Ich habe das eigentlich im Buch als nettes Anekdötchen verkaufen wollen und sie war da total pikiert darüber. Mittlerweile ist das ausgeräumt. Aber sie hat die ersten 2 Jahre wirklich an dem Ding zu knabbern gehabt. Ich weiß, dass sie das Buch gelesen hat und es nach „Uschi, Du alte Schleuder!“ direkt weggelegt hat. So verletzt man manchmal Leute, ohne das man es weiß. John Hendrie [Trainer des FC Barnsley in der Championship Saison 1998/1999] wollte das Buch z.B. mit einer einstweiligen Verfügung in England verbieten lassen. Das war juristisch nicht machbar. Es ist interessant, wie unterschiedlich das Buch bei den Leuten ankommt.

DW: *Wie haben ehemalige Mitspieler aus Deutschland reagiert?*

LL: Als das Buch raus kam, habe ich meine Karriere für beendet gehalten. Dann habe ich ja beim 1. FC Köln noch mal einen Vertrag unterschrieben, aber nur für die 2. Mannschaft. Als sich der Wessels damals verletzte [Stefan Wessels – bis zu seiner Handverletzung Stammtorhüter des 1.FC Köln in der Saison 2004/2005] und ich dann in den Kader der ersten Mannschaft aufgerückt bin, wusste natürlich jeder Spieler um das Buch. Das Buch soll im Prinzip eine einmalige Geschichte gewesen sein. Die Reaktionen der Spieler waren eine Mischung aus Begeisterung und Skepsis, weil ja im Buch auch über Weihnachtsfeiern in England geschrieben wurde. Dies hat ja in England auch nicht allen Spielern gut gefallen. Daher waren einige Spieler in Köln vielleicht ein bisschen ängstlich und haben sich vielleicht nicht ganz so gehen lassen, wie sie es sonst gemacht hätten.

DW: *Sie werfen durchaus ein kritisches Licht auf unterschiedliche Facetten des englischen Profifußballs – Gab es jemals kritische Reaktionen von Seiten des FC Barnsley oder ehemaliger englischer Teamkollegen im Anschluss an die Veröffentlichung der englischen Übersetzung?*

LL: Eingangs waren die Reaktionen skeptisch. Das hat sich nachher aber alles wieder relativiert.

DW: *Ihr damaliger Spielervermittler Tony Woodcock pries Sie beim FC Barnsley als erfahrenen Ersatztorwart von Bayer Leverkusen an. Sie waren im Profiteam von Bayer Leverkusen jedoch nur dritter Torwart ohne einen einzigen Bundesligaeinsatz. Hatten Sie vor Ihrem Wechsel die Befürchtung, dass diese Halbwahrheit Ihren Wechsel nach Barnsley gefährden könnte?*

LL: Nein, eigentlich nicht, zumal ich in Barnsley beim Probetraining war. Ich bin dann unmittelbar, 1–2 Wochen danach wieder nach Barnsley geflogen und habe meinen Vertrag unterschrieben. In dem Moment, wo er unterschrieben ist, ist es ja Vereinssache, diese Dinge zu recherchieren. Insofern war ich aus dem Schneider. Woodcock hat immer gesagt, „Halt bloß den Mund. Sag, du warst zweiter.“ Leverkusen war ja damals in der Champions League. Das hat das Ganze noch ein bisschen *gepimpt*. Es ist aber auch nie rausgekommen. Die Engländer waren sehr überrascht, dass ich im Profifußball noch nie ein Spiel gemacht hatte. Das haben sie auch erst mit dem Buch erfahren. Da riefen mich die Journalisten auch an. Das wusste ja keiner. Wenn ein Verein 750 000 DM für mich ausgibt, ist es ja seine Aufgabe zu recherchieren. Ich habe ja eine Arbeitsprobe abgegeben mit dem Probetraining, das ich gemacht habe. Da hätte man auch sagen können: „Nein, wollen wir nicht.“ Insofern war es zwar nur die Halbwahrheit, aber der Zweck hat hier die Mittel geheiligt. Für mich war es die einzige Möglichkeit, nach England zu kommen und Woodcock hat es so eingefädelt. Ich habe ihm nie gesagt: „Sag denen, dass ich da zweiter Torwart bin.“ Er sagte, wir müssten das einfach so machen. Das war auch kein großes Ding weder für Barnsley, auch im Nachhinein nicht, noch für mich.

DW: *Wir haben Sie das damalige Niveau der Premier League im Vergleich zur Bundesliga erlebt?*

LL: Ganz schwierig zu beantwortende Frage: Die Bundesliga war damals auch schon richtig gut. Die Premier League war ein bisschen glamouröser. Das war damals die Zeit von Beckham, Zola, Vialli, Gullit. Das waren wirklich Top Spieler, die dort gespielt haben. Aber auch das Gefälle war brutal hoch. Damals war es so, dass Manchester United, Arsenal, Tottenham mit David Ginola, wirklich Fußball gespielt haben, so wie man es in Kontinentaleuropa kannte und damit Erfolg gehabt haben. Alles unter Platz 6 in der Liga hat noch richtig mit *kick and rush* gearbeitet. Das war schon relativ klar zu erkennen. Das Niveau konnte ich nach einem halben Jahr gar nicht mehr objektiv beurteilen. Wenn

ich Besuch hatte aus Deutschland, sagten allerdings alle, dass das Spiel tausendmal schneller ist als in Deutschland, viel intensiver. Das Spiel in England war insgesamt sehr zielgerichtet auf das gegnerische Tor, in einer Zeit, in der es in Deutschland schon anfing mit viel Ballbesitzspiel, Rückpässen zum Torwart, Spielverlagerung. Spielst du in England zweimal zum Torwart, pfeift das ganze Stadion so laut, dass du den Ball nach vorne kloppst und schon gibt es Zweikämpfe. Das Spiel war definitiv physischer. Ich denke, dass das die *peak time* der Premier League war. Manchester United war ja zu der Zeit auch Champions League Sieger. Insgesamt war die Premier League schon eine Klasse besser.

DW: *Welcher Spieler hat Sie denn damals am meisten beeindruckt?*

LL: Ginola. Absolut, ich habe noch nie so einen Fußballer gesehen. Er muss sich ja schwarz ärgern. Er war nicht in der Nationalmannschaft in der Zeit als Frankreich seine goldene Epoche hatte, weil er sich mit dem Trainer überworfen hatte. Aus Sicht des Torwarts ein absolut unberechenbarer Spieler. Er schoss links wie rechts. Er schoss von der einen Seite die Ecken mit links, von der anderen Seite die Ecken mit rechts. Genauso schoss er auch aufs Tor. Er hatte einen unfassbar guten Touch. Er war der Spieler, der mich in der Summe, auch in der Spielvorbereitung am meisten beeindruckt hat.

DW: *Inwiefern hat sich das Profidasein in England vom Profidasein in Deutschland unterschieden gerade in Bezug auf die Mentalität der Spieler, aber auch in Bezug auf die Trainingsinhalte oder die Trainingsintensität?*

LL: Es war ein komplett anderes Leben. Jetzt ist Barnsley wahrscheinlich gar nicht so repräsentativ als alter Kohlenpott-Club. Für Barnsley sind die Bäume in den Himmel gewachsen. Du bist durch die Stadt getragen worden. Das ist sicher anders, wenn man als Profi in London spielt bei 15 ansässigen Vereinen. Die Spieler haben das auch genauso ausgenutzt, wie es im Buch steht: Samstags abends weg, freitags abends weg, durch die Stadt gezogen. Das wurde toleriert. Da gab es *Treadles Winebar*, steht auch im Buch drin, im Prinzip ein Schuppen mit Popgetränken. Die Spieler standen total besoffen auf den Bänken, aber als ich mir eine Zigarette angezündet hatte, haben die Fans mir die fast aus der Hand geschlagen und meinten: „Wie kannst Du denn bloß rauchen?“ Ich hab dann gesagt: „Ich bin aber nüchtern.“ Die Fans sagten zu mir: „Ist doch scheiß egal. Saufen ist gut, Rauchen geht gar nicht“. So haben die Leute in England das auch aufgenommen nach dem Motto: Viel hilft viel. Das bezog sich auch auf die Trainingssteuerung. Wir sind nur gelaufen in der Vorbereitung. Also ich bin wirklich fit und war auch zu dem Zeitpunkt richtig fit. Aber wir sind marschiert in der Vorbereitung: das war krank – ohne Laktakt – einfach laufen bis man „stop“ sagt und das war meistens nach drei oder vier Stunden. Das war schon hart. In Deutschland wird man ganz anders behandelt als Spieler. Wenn man in England ist, wirst du angesprochen als Spieler, wenn du weggehst, ob du es willst oder nicht. Wenn du im Restaurant sitzt mit deiner Familie, kommen die Leute und fragen: „Kann ich ein Foto machen? Kann ich mal etwas fragen?“ Nach 2 Minuten gehen die Leute wieder. In Deutschland ist es anders. Du gehst irgendwohin, dann wird man erkannt. Dann wird eine Stunde getuschelt, bis sich irgendwann mal jemand traut, zu dir zu kommen. Den kriegst du dann aber auch den ganzen Abend nicht mehr los. Das ist eine ganz andere Mentalität. Die Engländer sind da viel direkter. Die englischen Zuschauer und Fans haben eine Antenne dafür, wann es passt, und wann es stört.

DW: *Kann man von einem typisch englischen Fußballstil sprechen und war es möglich, sich als Ausländer dieser typisch englischen Art des Fußballspiels zu entziehen?*

LL: Mittlerweile würde ich es fast verneinen. Zum einen, weil die kontinentalen Trainer, zumindest bei den Topclubs ein- und ausgehen. Das typische englische Fußballspiel findet sich noch in der *First Division* und *Second Division* – zweiter Ball, also *target player*, ‘rauf und runter‘. Aber wenn man sich Wengers Arsenal anguckt, wird dort schon seit Jahrzehnten ein netter Kombinationsfußball gespielt, der total kontinental ist. Trotzdem ist der Fußball physischer. Die Härte ist immer noch bemerkenswert und auch die Art, wie die Härte weggesteckt wird. Wo sich in Deutschland dreimal jemand in der Luft

dreht, dann fünf Minuten liegen bleibt, wird sich in England einmal am Schienbein gekratzt und dann geht es weiter – einfach weil man keinen Bock hat, sich von den Fans auspfeifen zu lassen.

DW: *Wie haben Sie das im Training erlebt?*

LL: Genauso hart wie im Spiel. Es ging richtig zur Sache. Da wurde sich nicht geschont, extrem harte Tacklings. Aber auch in Leverkusen war es extrem hart im Training. Wenn Du mit einem Wörns zusammen trainierst, der tritt auch alles über den Haufen im Training. Der kann es und will es wahrscheinlich auch nicht anders, weil er davon lebt. Ich glaube aber, dass ein richtiger englischer Spielstil gerade etwas abhanden kommt. Das macht englische Mannschaften derzeit auch so wenig erfolgreich international, weil sie komplett von ihren ureigenen Tugenden weggehen, und das macht sie dann nur noch mittelmäßig.

DW: *Wie hoch schätzen sie denn die Wahrscheinlichkeit ein, dass England in nächster Zeit noch mal Weltmeister wird?*

LL: 0% !

DW: *Warum?*

LL: Ich glaube einfach, dass die Engländer im Moment ein Riesenproblem damit haben, dass sehr viele Ausländer in England spielen. Sie haben ein permanentes Torwart-Problem, obwohl das unter Joe Hart ein bisschen besser geworden ist. Aber international in den Länderspielen schmeißt er sich doch noch den ein oder anderen Ball wieder rein. Ich glaube, dass sie auf dem absolut höchsten Niveau – sprich Spanien, sprich Brasilien, sprich Deutschland im Moment absolut chancenlos sind.

DW: *Woran liegt denn das Torwart Problem in England? Sie haben es ja selber damals mitbekommen mit zwei englischen Konkurrenten im Tor – wie waren ihre Eindrücke?*

LL: Mangelnde Vorbilder. Als ich in England war, ist mir das sofort aufgefallen. Ich habe das auch über Jahre verfolgt. Peter Shilton war im Prinzip der letzte gute Torwart oder die letzte Torwart-Legende und dann kam lange, lange nichts. In England läuft jedes Kind mit einem Trikot herum. In meiner Zeit waren die Trikots immer Beckham, Shearer usw. Es war kein Torwart-Vorbild da, weil Leute wie David James oder andere, die sich damals in der Nationalmannschaft versucht haben, keine Vorbilder für die Kinder waren. Das heißt, in jungen Jahren hat keiner Bock ins Tor zu gehen. Über Jahre und Jahrzehnte potenziert fehlt einfach die Masse, um gut zu rekrutieren.

DW: *Wie würden Sie das Torwart-Training dort beurteilen?*

LL: (lacht) Der Witz ist, dass mein damaliger Torwart-Trainer Eric Steele jetzt Torwart-Trainer von Manchester United ist und das schon seit 4-5 Jahren. Als mir das bei einer Sky Übertragung eines Premier League Spiels aufgefallen ist, musste ich echt schmunzeln. Der wollte damals im Torwart-Training Dinge mit mir machen, wo ich gesagt habe: „Eric, mach ich nicht." Ich war damals ja keine Zwanzig mehr. Das ist übrigens auch üblich so als Torwart, dass du mit deinem Torwart-Trainer besprichst, wie du das Torwart-Training haben willst. Er wollte damals das komplette Training umbauen. Ich sagte dann, dass ich das nicht mehr mitmache.

DW: *Können Sie ein Beispiel nennen?*

LL: Wenn der Ball oben rechts ins Eck fliegt, macht man in Deutschland einen Step nach rechts und drückt sich dann ab und hält dann mit rechts oder greift mit der linken Hand über. Englischen Torhütern wurde beigebracht, viele kleine Schritte nach rechts zu machen, um gerade zu stehen, um dann den Ball über die Latte lenken zu können. Das war die englische Reaktion. Ähnlich war es bei der Ball-Erwartungshaltung: In England sollte man immer mit eng anliegenden Händen vor dem Körper stehen und nicht mit ausgestreckten Armen wie in Deutschland: Das Argument in England war damals, dass bei dieser Ball-Erwartungshaltung die Handstellung der Größe des Balls entspricht. Mit ausgestreckten Armen wie in Deutschland habe ich natürlich ein viel größeres Momentum, kann also

viel mehr Energie mitnehmen, wenn ich in die Ecke muss. Solche Dinge habe ich beispielsweise nicht mitgemacht. Das war für mich absoluter Mumpitz. Das habe ich aber auch direkt beim ersten Training gesagt. Es war eine ganz andere Trainingslehre, was das Torwart-Spiel anging: 70% Anteil hatte das Spiel mit dem Fuß, also Rückpässe rechts, links, lange Abschläge in diesen berühmten *Channel*, wo man dann immer reinschlagen musste. Das waren tatsächlich 70% der Trainingsinhalte für Torhüter. Es wurde gar nicht soviel Torwart-technisch im ureigentlichen Sinne gearbeitet.

DW: *Wie oft wurde trainiert?*

LL: Wir hatten einmal am Tag Training. Um 10 Uhr war Trainingsbeginn, um 1 Uhr war ich wieder zu Hause.

DW: *Wie gestaltet sich der Rest des Tages?*

LL: Bei mir hat das ganz gut gepasst. Wir waren gerade erst ein paar Monate unten, als mein Sohn geboren wurde. Hier und da hast du noch einen Pressetermin, ein Interview oder musst irgendetwas eröffnen, das Übliche. Ansonsten hast du frei. Dann haben wir die Zeit mit den Kindern einfach gut genutzt und uns natürlich auch ein bisschen was angeguckt in der Umgebung.

DW: *Welche Affinität haben Sie denn noch zu England?*

LL: Es hört sich brutal an – eine sehr hohe, obwohl ich seitdem nicht mehr da gewesen bin. Das ist das Kuriose eigentlich. Das war tatsächlich ein zeitliches Problem. Ich bin ja immer im Fußball geblieben. Ich habe es zeitlich einfach nicht geschafft, als Trainer sowieso nicht, weil man hier eine noch kürzere Sommerpause hat, weil man die Saisonplanung machen muss. Mein Sohn ist jetzt 15 und will wissen wo er geboren ist. Ich kann das ja verstehen.

DW: *Ist er Engländer?*

LL: Er hat die doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft. Als Geburtsort hat er Barnsley General Hospital im Ausweis stehen. Mit 18 kann er sich eine Staatsangehörigkeit aussuchen.

DW: *Sie haben eben die englische Fankultur angesprochen. Können Sie als ehemaliger Profi, der dort auf der höchsten Ebene gespielt hat, erklären, worin sich die englische Fankultur von den deutschen unterscheidet – Sie haben in Barnsley gespielt, in einer Stadt, die nur halb so groß ist wie ihre vorherige Station Leverkusen – wo sind die Unterschiede?*

LL: Gut, jetzt ist Leverkusen auch wieder ein autonomes Zentrum. Der Verein spielt ja quasi unter Ausschluss der Öffentlichkeit. Für einen jungen Spieler gibt es keinen besseren Verein. Du kannst verlieren – der Pressefokus ist immer zuerst auf dem 1. FC Köln. Deswegen ist Leverkusen wahrscheinlich gar nicht so ein gutes Beispiel. Man kann die Vereine aber, zumindest von der Größe der Stadt, relativ gut miteinander vereinbaren. Was ich in England z.B. nie mitbekommen habe, obwohl ich dort abgestiegen bin, war das Niederbrennen von Fahnen oder Hass-Tiraden dem eigenen Club gegenüber. Das mag zum einen daran gelegen haben, dass wir wirklich in jedem Spiel alles gegeben haben. Die Jungs, die Spieler sind einfach marschiert ohne Ende. Es hat einfach qualitativ nicht gereicht. Es war dann im Endeffekt nicht gut genug. Der Engländer will, aber das unterscheidet ihn nicht sehr vom deutschen Fan, seine Mannschaft nur arbeiten sehen. Wenn eine Mannschaft in England hart arbeitet, dann ufert das natürlich auch in ein Spiel aus, das von harten Zweikämpfen geprägt ist, die wiederum der Fan gerne sieht. Ein Beispiel steht auch im Buch – wir verlieren zu Hause 6–0 gegen Chelsea und wir sind nicht schlechter – so blöd sich das anhört – wir sind nicht schlechter gewesen. Wir haben einfach nur die Tore nicht gemacht. Die kommen 6-mal vors Tor. Vialli macht 4 Tore, und sie machen 6 Tore mit einer unfassbaren Qualität, auch durch Di Matteo. Die Fans haben uns bis zum Abpfiff und darüber hinaus wirklich *supportet*. Das würde es in Deutschland beim Stand von 0–6 im Heimspiel, egal ob das Braunschweig oder Greuther Fürth ist, so nicht geben. Irgendwann kommen in Deutschland dann mal Pfiffe auf. Das habe ich in England nie kennengelernt. Ansonsten glaube ich, dass die Engländer noch einen ganzen Tick inbrünstiger sind. In Deutschland

wird man mal schnell Fan, weil es nett ist, der Fußball gerade “in“ ist. In England kriegst du das tatsächlich in die Wiege gelegt, und dann bist du das dein Leben lang. Fast jeder hat irgendwie ein Tattoo mit dem Maskottchen des Vereins – typisch englisch halt – die sterben für ihren Verein. In Deutschland ist es bei dem einen oder anderen Verein sicherlich mal nett vorbeizugehen. Bei schlechten Spielen heißt es dann schnell: „Och, hier geh ich nicht mehr hin!“ Und das würde in Barnsley wahrscheinlich nicht so schnell passieren.

DW: *Die Atmosphäre ist also besonders?*

LL: Ich habe das Glück gehabt mal in Liverpool spielen zu dürfen. Das ist ja im Fernsehen schon ergreifend. Der Ronny hat mir gesagt, er war schon 20-mal als Journalist in dem Stadion und als Journalist ist es auch schon ergreifend. Wenn Du aber da spielst, hat es nochmal eine andere Dimension, weil es Dolby surround ist. Du stehst ja auf dem Platz und kriegst es von vier Seiten, der Song “You'll never walk alone“, der Tunnel – du gehst dadurch das schallt bis in die Kabine rein, wirklich in die Kabine rein, die Kabinentür ist zu, da wird gesprochen und du hörst wie es immer lauter wird. Das ist schon was ganz ganz Besonderes, fast *unique*. Die Fans singen zwar mittlerweile in 20 Stadien “You'll never walk alone“, aber so wie es in Liverpool gesungen wird, wird es nirgendwo gesungen.

DW: *Wie geben Sie als Trainer ihre besonderen Erfahrungen von der Anfield Road an ihre Spieler weiter?*

LL: Die Frage ist, muss man das als Trainer an Spieler weitergeben? Da muss ich ja schauen, wo ich Trainer bin. Wenn ich in der Oberliga Trainer bin, dann spielen wir vor 400 Leuten. Wenn ich da von der Anfield Road erzähle, sagen die Spieler: „Was will er uns denn jetzt erzählen?“ Deswegen ist das manchmal gar nicht so gut, wenn man als Trainer immer soviel von seiner Vergangenheit erzählt. Meine Spieler wissen zwar, dass ich mal in der Premier League gespielt habe, aber ich nutze das nicht als Tool, um irgendwen zu motivieren. Einzelheiten fragen sie dann mal unter vier Augen.

DW*: Sie gehören zu einer ersten Welle von ausländischen Fußballprofis, die im Anschluss an das Bosman Urteil in Englands höchster Spielklasse gespielt haben. Wie haben Sie das öffentliche Interesse an ausländischen Spielern im Allgemeinen und Ihrer Person im Besonderen wahrgenommen?*

LL: Im speziellen Fall von Barnsley waren zwei Ausländer vorher da, einmal Arjan de Zeeuw, ein Holländer und Clint Marcelle, der aus der Karibik kam [Trinidad & Tobago]. Das war von beiden Seiten spannend. Als ich nach England kam, musste ich als Deutscher erstmal den ganzen Hitler-Scheiß über mich ergehen lassen, bis auch der Letzte gemerkt hat, dass ich das schon hundertmal gehört habe. Da kommst du als Deutscher nicht drum rum. Ich habe den englischen Humor dann so aufgefasst, dass ich integriert bin. Die Zuschauer aus Barnsley haben Ausländertransfers auch unheimlich spannend gefunden. Ǵorǵi Hristov kam auf einmal nach Barnsley als mazedonischer Nationalspieler, Eric Tinkler als südafrikanischer Nationalspieler. Da kam der ein oder andere Spieler, auf den die Zuschauer gespannt waren. Das hat die Stadt extrem aufgewertet: Man war auf einmal wer. So hatte ich zumindest den Eindruck. Ich war auch in Schulen und die Kinder kamen nach Hause zu mir. Als ich vom Training kam, standen manchmal 150 Kinder vor der Türe und wollten Autogramme haben. Das ist eher eine Sympathie-Bekundung, als dass die Leute dir Eier vors Fenster schmeißen. Insofern fand ich das überhaupt nicht tragisch, eher positiv und habe auch jedem Rede und Antwort gestanden. Ich hatte da keinerlei Probleme, mich zu *committen*. Insgesamt sowohl von Spielerseite als auch von Seiten der Fans irgendwo ein Abenteuer.

DW: *Die Einführung der Premier League wird von vielen englischen Fans als Sündenfall erlebt, als Zeit der radikalen Kommerzialisierung – Haben Sie diese rasante Kommerzialisierung selber wahrgenommen?*

LL: Man bekommt es mit. Nur eine kleine Anekdote als Beispiel: David Beckham hatte damals einen Werbevertrag mit einer Firma, die eine Art Haargel mit Shampoo als Pflegeserie angeboten hat. Diese

Firma hatte auch die Premier League gesponsert. Am ersten oder zweiten des Monats kam dann jemand von der Firma oder ein Kurier und hat für die ganze Mannschaft eine Tonne Haargel usw. vorbeigebracht. Das zum Thema Kommerzialisierung. Es wurde wirklich alles kommerzialisiert. Ansonsten glaube ich, dass die englischen Fans ihren Fußball einfach nur vorne sehen wollen, ähnlich wie das in Hoffenheim der Fall ist. Solange man Erfolg hat und Geld da ist, ist das super. Wenn die Liga wie jetzt eine Krise durchmacht, weil englische Mannschaften trotz Abermillionen Fernsehgeldern und ausländischer Investoren international nichts auf die Kette kriegen, fürchte ich, dass es in England irgendwann auch mal zu Tumulten kommen könnte.

DW: *In welcher Gestalt?*

LL: Aufbegehren der Fans, Fan-Boykott, weil man sagt: „Wir wollen jetzt hier keine Scheichs mehr haben sondern englische Präsidenten, die das ganze von Hause aus leben." Der Engländer identifiziert sich ja gerne mit dem, was er macht. Das wird natürlich immer schwerer, je abgedrehter die Spieler sind, je weiter weg sie sind – in England sind ja sämtliche Trainingseinheiten unter Ausschluss der Öffentlichkeit, was auch ein Riesenunterschied zu Deutschland ist. In England sind die Trainingsgelände recht groß und den Fans in der Regel schwer zugänglich. Wenn du in Deutschland dreimal die Woche den Vorhang beim Training zumachst, dann gehen dir die Fans schon auf die Barrikaden. Ich fürchte, dass das in England irgendwann auch mal der Fall sein könnte. Wenn die Entwicklung so weiter geht, auch mit der Nationalmannschaft, die ja auch seit Jahren oder Jahrzehnten keine Bäume mehr ausgerissen hat, wenn die Franzosen jetzt noch vorbeiziehen, dann könnte das eine ganz böse Entwicklung nehmen in England.

DW: *Woran liegt es? Die Engländer haben doch gute Einzelspieler. Warum klappt es in der Nationalmannschaft nicht?*

LL: Sind die Einzelspieler tatsächlich so gut? Das müsste man dann mal im Einzelfall wirklich durchleuchten. Ich behaupte mal, wenn ich jetzt die englische Offensive nehme, nehmen wir mal ein paar gestandene Spieler wie Rooney oder Defoe, dann sage ich, dass die deutsche Offensive doppelt so gut besetzt ist, mit der doppelten Anzahl an Spielern. Die Nationalmannschaften waren immer dann stark, wenn man Blöcke gestellt hat, einen Angriffsblock, einen Abwehrblock. Wenn du beispielsweise ein oder zwei Vereine hast, wie jetzt Dortmund und München, aus denen das Gros der Spieler rekrutiert wird. In England ist es so, dass die Spieler über zahlreiche Vereine verteilt sind – in Arsenal, Tottenham, ManCity, ManUtd. Allein von diesen Mannschaften kommen drei oder vier Spieler und von kleineren Vereinen kommen dann einzelne Spieler noch dazu, so dass man nicht auf Blockbildung gehen kann. Ich glaube, dass das auch eine Ursache ist, weil bei diesen Mannschaften die verbleibenden Positionen mit Ausländern aufgefüllt werden. In Deutschland, in der Bundesliga ist der Anteil der deutschen Spieler doch wieder relativ hoch, weil sie qualitativ einfach zugelegt haben. In England muss man das komplette Ausbildungssystem mal überdenken.

DW: *Ronald Reng berichtet von Akzeptanzproblemen auf Seiten Ihrer englischen Teamkameraden... Woran lag es?*

LL: Am Gehalt. In England sind die Gehälter recht gläsern, irgendwie dringen sie immer an die Öffentlichkeit. Es gab nicht wenige englische Spieler, gerade aus der Gegend von Barnsley, die für 300-500 Pfund in der Woche gespielt haben. Die Ausländer haben 2000-3000 Pfund in der Woche verdient, was sehr viel war für damalige Verhältnisse. Wir hatten bis zu 6000 Pfund pro Woche in der Spitze als Gehälter. Die Engländer, die im Prinzip die Sensation geschafft hatten, haben daran finanziell nicht wirklich partizipiert. Das war auch nicht wirklich clever vom Vorstand. Die einheimischen Spieler hatten ja gar keine Vertragsklauseln für die erste Liga, weil sie nie davon ausgegangen sind, aufzusteigen. Beim Aufstieg hätte man ja auch von Vorstandsseite sagen können: „Auch wenn ihr hier drei oder vier Jahre Vertrag habt, verdoppeln wir das Gehalt von 500 auf 1000 Pfund die Woche." Dann wären alle ruhig gewesen. Nur so wurde die Kluft recht groß. Verständlich war, dass die einheimischen Spieler gedacht haben: „Wir schaffen hier die Sensation und jetzt kommen hier die ausländischen Spieler und grasen die fetten Verträge ab."

DW: *War das nur ein spezielles Phänomen von Barnsley oder eher eine allgemeine Entwicklung?*

LL: Ich glaube, dass es eine allgemeine Entwicklung war, wobei in Manchester United kaum noch jemand aus Manchester kommt, der für die Profis spielt. Die meisten Spieler werden mit 12 oder 15 Jahren dort hingeholt und werden dann herangezogen. Ein weiteres Problem war damals die englische Sprache für Ausländer. Ich habe zwar damals schon recht gut Englisch gesprochen, aber du hast natürlich in Barnsley in der Kabine gesessen und den *Yorkshire accent*, der dort gesprochen wurde, einfach kaum verstanden. Wenn die einheimischen Spieler sich in der Kabine einen Witz erzählten, dabei noch ein bisschen gestikulierten, kriegtest Du als ausländischer Spieler natürlich unterschwellig das Gefühl, dass über dich gelacht wird. Dieses Gefühl: „Guck mal, die verarschen uns nur“ hatte jeder Ausländer irgendwo.

DW: *Wie lange hat es denn gedauert, bis Sie sich integriert gefühlt haben?*

LL: Integriert gefühlt habe ich mich eigentlich recht schnell. Man muss auch dann von dieser Fußball-Romantik wegkommen. Irgendwann ist es ein knallharter Leistungssport. Da geht es nicht mehr darum, nach dem Training eine Kiste Bier leerzumachen oder Mega Spaß zu haben. Es ist ein Job. Du machst deine Arbeit und fährst dann wieder nach Hause. Du musst auch deine Ellbogen auspacken, um dich jeden Tag zu behaupten. Da will dir jemand vielleicht auch mal vors Schienbein treten, so dass du vielleicht am Wochenende mal nicht spielen kannst. Du musst dann halt mit austeilen. Insofern ist diese Fußball-Romantik in diesen Klassen nicht mehr so gegeben. Das gibt es schon bei Mannschaften, die sehr viel Erfolg haben, wo man auch auf einem Niveau ist. Im Prinzip ist es im Profi-Fußball so, dass du spielen willst und da ist man dann auch bereit, sehr sehr viel zu tun, um zu spielen. Deswegen ist das völlig normal, dass nicht jeder dein *big buddy* ist. Da muss man sich so ein bisschen von lösen.

DW: *Nach Auslaufen ihres Vertrags bei Barnsley lag Ihnen ein Angebot des Hibernian FC aus Edinburgh vor. In Rengs Erzählung klingt an, dass Sie sich von ihrem damaligen Spielervermittler Tony Woodcock im Stich gelassen fühlten.*

LL: Das ist auch genauso gewesen. Ich kann noch genau sagen, wie es abgelaufen ist: Ich war bei Hibernian Edinburgh und habe da wirklich eine richtig gute Trainingswoche vollbracht. Der Manager, Alex McLeish, kam dann zu mir und sagte: „Wir nehmen dich auf jeden Fall.“ Ich sagte dann: „Das ist ja perfekt.“ Das war zumindest eine mündliche Zusage gewesen. Auch der Zeugwart sagte zu mir: „Der Trainer hat erzählt, was für ein guter Torwart du bist.“ Man hat ja auch in einer Trainingswoche ein paar Leute, zu denen man ein bisschen Kontakt hat. Nachdem ich nach Hause geflogen bin, habe ich eine Woche nichts gehört. Zunächst dachte ich, dass das normal ist. Dann habe ich Woodcock angerufen, der meinte zu mir: „Wir machen jetzt einen richtig dicken Vertrag. Du bist ablösefrei und du kriegst da richtig Kohle.“ Ich sagte: „Tony, was ich hier habe [Das Gehalt in Barnsley – 125 000 Pfund pro Jahr], das reicht mir dicke und dreifach, das kann ich eh nicht alles ausgeben.“ Er sagte: „Nein. Es muss jetzt richtig rappeln.“ Dann habe ich irgendwann eine Absage bekommen. Das hat mir keine Ruhe gelassen. Nach drei Monaten habe ich in Edinburgh angerufen und gefragt, woran es gescheitert wäre. Dort wurde mir dann gesagt, dass es an völlig überzogenen Gehaltsforderungen gelegen habe. Damit war das Kind im Brunnen. Da hast du als Spieler keine Chance. Dein Agent bekommt ca. 10-15% des Jahresgehalts. Je höher das Gehalt ist, desto mehr Apanage bekommt dein Agent.

DW: *Bezahlt der Spieler oder der Club die Apanage des Agenten?*

LL: Diese Summe zahlt der Club.

DW: Als ich vom Scheitern ihres Wechsels nach Edinburgh gelesen habe, war ich geschockt.

LL: Es war unfassbar. Es war wirklich ein Skandal. Ich war auch total sauer. Zumal Tony Woodcock mich auch nie angerufen und gesagt hat: „Pass mal auf, ich habe jetzt hier 600 000 DM im Jahr verlangt, die wollen aber nur 400 000 zahlen.“ Da hat es nie irgendein Gespräch gegeben. Edinburgh

ist ja wirklich eine geile Stadt. Es hat also nicht sollen sein. Ohne ihn hätte ich es nicht nach England geschafft. Aber er hat das Angebot aus Edinburgh auch ganz alleine verbockt. Das hat mir auch Edinburgh bestätigt.

DW: *Haben Sie sich irgendwann ausgesprochen?*

LL: Nein. Es gab für mich auch keinen Grund mehr. Wie ich es auch im Buch geschrieben habe: Während der Wechselfrist hieß es von ihm immer nur: „Kein Problem, Kein Problem." Als ich zur damaligen Zeit in Deutschland war, bin ich irgendwann sogar mal unangemeldet in ein Meeting von Woodcock reingeplatzt und hab ihn gefragt, was das soll, ihn auch aufgefordert, mir zu sagen, wenn er mich nicht beraten wolle, so dass ich mich anderweitig umhören könne.
Es gibt für mich nichts mehr zum Nachhaken. Es hat sich einfach so ergeben. Ich ändere die Situation von damals auch nicht mehr. Also inzwischen ist mir das auch ziemlich egal.

DW: *In ihrer vereinslosen Zeit als Trainer haben Sie Praktika bei zwei spanischen Topclubs absolviert, dem FC Valencia und dem FC Barcelona – wieso nicht bei englischen Premier League Clubs?*

LL: Zum einen wollte ich bei wirklichen Topclubs ein Praktikum machen. Das war in England nicht gegeben. Ronny hat einen richtig guten Draht zu Barcelona, deswegen hat er mir das Praktikum in Barcelona verschaffen können. Das war wie ein Lottogewinn. Da ist ja eigentlich nie jemand zum Hospitieren. Bei Barcelona haben mich, wie eine Milliarde anderer Menschen, die Trainingsinhalte unglaublich interessiert. In England wäre ich diesbezüglich nicht so überrascht gewesen. Valencia war zu dem Zeitpunkt, wo ich da war, dritter in Spanien, trotz geringer finanzieller Mittel und der Einstellung des Stadionbaus. Sie sind trotzdem Dritter geworden, auch weil der Trainer sehr gut war zu dem Zeitpunkt. Ich kannte zufällig jemanden in Valencia, einen Ex Spieler [Juan Monar] von mir, der zu der Zeit in Valencia gespielt hat, der mir diese Praktikumsstelle besorgt hat. Es waren irgendwo bewusst ausgewählte Zufälle, wenn man das so sagen kann. Ich kannte in beiden Städten jemanden, der mir die Tür aufgemacht hat. Bei Chelsea habe ich damals auch nachgefragt. Bei Chelsea hatte man mir dann aber gesagt, dass ich in der zweiten Mannschaft hospitieren könne. Man wollte mich also nicht an "die Großen" ranlassen. Ich habe dann entschieden, dass ich lieber zu den ersten Mannschaften in Spanien fliege und mir die angucke.

DW: *Und Ihre Erkenntnisse über den spanischen Fußball?*

LL: Sehr innovativ. In Barcelona waren die Übungen so komplex, dass ich sie trotz Mitschriften und Videokamera nicht verstanden habe. Claudio Ranieri [derzeit Trainer von AS Monaco] war der Einzige, der mit mir da war. Er hat sie aber auch nicht kapiert. Sein Assistent, der dabei war, hat zwar auch mitgeschrieben, aber es war so komplex, dass sie die Übungen gar nicht genau aufschreiben konnten.

DW: *Aber die Spieler konnten die Übungsformen umsetzen?*

LL: Ja, die Spieler konnten sie umsetzen. Sie waren sehr komplex. Allerdings sind die Spieler auch darauf vorbereitet worden. Es wurde ein Kreis mit 16 Spielern gebildet. In diesem Kreis waren 8 Bälle. Es gab ganz klare Passvorgaben. Wenn man als Außenstehender die Ansagen nicht mitbekommt und auf einmal 16 Spieler durcheinander laufen, die Spieler aber immer genau wissen, wann sie was zu machen haben, dann kann man als Außenstehender aufgrund der Anzahl der Bälle nicht folgen. Der spanische Fußball ist einfach technisch-taktisch orientiert, und das hat mir sehr gut gefallen. Daher war der spanische Fußball für mich so reizvoll.

DW: *Reizt Sie eine Trainerstelle im englischen Profi-Fußball?*

LL: Ich versuche eher hier in Deutschland eine Stelle zu bekommen. Wenn es in England passieren sollte, dann wehre ich mich auch nicht dagegen. Der Rösler [Uwe Rösler ehemaliger deutscher Spieler bei Manchester City, derzeit Trainer beim englischen Drittligisten FC Brentford] trainiert eine

englische Mannschaft. Ansonsten gibt es keine deutschen Trainer in England. Das ist ja die totale Ausnahme.

DW: *Warum gibt es eigentlich keinen deutschen Trainer in England?*

LL: Zum einen sind die guten deutschen Trainer auch in Deutschland gut aufgehoben. Zum anderen verliert ein Trainer im Ausland immer etwas mit der Sprache. Das ist einfach so. Englisch wäre jetzt für mich nicht das Problem. Von daher glaube ich, dass in diesem Bereich nicht allzu viel verloren ginge. In England gibt es allerdings schon eine andere Mentalität. Ich glaube, dass es als deutscher Trainer in England gar nicht so leicht ist – aufgrund der deutschen Vergangenheit, die man in England immer noch hat. Und der Engländer ist natürlich auch besonders hartnäckig darin, den Deutschen jeden Tag daran zu erinnern (lacht).

DW: *Inwiefern beeinflusst Ihre damalige Spielposition als Torwart Ihre heutige Spielphilosophie als Trainer?*

LL: Gar nicht. Wenn ich heute mal auf dem Platz stehe, dann kommt mir das auch gar nicht so vor, als ob ich mal Profi-Torwart gewesen wäre. Das ist für mich so weit weg und es turnt mich überhaupt nicht mehr an. Ab und zu werde ich mal gefragt bei einem Benefiz-Spiel ins Tor zu gehen, aber es turnt überhaupt nicht mehr an. Wo andere in meinem Alter noch drauf erpicht sind, nochmal einen Ball aus dem Winkel zu holen, ist mir das total egal. Das Trainersein fasziniert mich insoweit, als das man gesamtverantwortlich ist und wirklich versuchen kann, eine Spielidee zu entwickeln und diese Idee von der Mannschaft durchführen zu lassen. Es gibt mir den Kick, das Ganze unter einen Hut zu bekommen, also samstags am Spielfeldrand zu stehen, um zu gucken wie die Automatismen funktionieren oder die Ansprache an die Spieler zu halten. Das Ganze erfüllt mich mit so großer Zufriedenheit, dass mich das eigentliche Spielen als Torwart gar nicht mehr interessiert. Ich habe auch noch nie einen Torwart speziell trainiert in den Mannschaften, in denen ich gearbeitet habe.

DW: *Schauen Sie bei Ihren Torhütern nicht besonders kritisch hin?*

LL: Ich gucke schon genau hin. Ich schaue schon, was der Einzelne macht und ich sehe auch nach einer Minute, wo er stark und wo er schwach ist. Wenn ich alles selber machen möchte, brauche ich keinen Torwart-Trainer und ich würde den Torwart-Trainer damit nur untergraben. Es gibt ab und zu mal Momente, wo ich zum Torwart-Trainer hingehe und sage: „Pass mal auf, guck mal unten rechts, der drückt sich meines Erachtens ein bisschen zu hoch ab, versuch das mal raus zu bekommen.“ Das ist aber wirklich nur die Ausnahme im Bereich des *fine tunings*. Ich möchte nämlich auch bewusst Verantwortung abgeben. Wenn du heute als Trainer alles machen möchtest, also Aufwärmen, Hauptteil, Schlussteil und willst bloß nichts dem Co-Trainer oder dem Torwart-Trainer abgeben, dann bist du in einem halben Jahr verbraucht und abgenutzt. Dann können dich deine Jungs irgendwann nicht mehr hören und nicht mehr sehen. Ich glaube, dass man heutzutage eben auch abgeben muss aufgrund der zunehmenden Spezialisierung.

DW: *Herr Leese, ich danke Ihnen für dieses Gespräch.*

11.5 Interview with Martin Sonneborn – Originator of German World Cup hoax

Martin Sonneborn, former editor of the German satirical magazine *Titanic*, is the chairman of the German satirical party *Die Partei*. As incredible as it may seem, it was Sonneborn's World Cup hoax that effectively secured hosting the World Cup back in 2006.

In July 2000, on the eve of FIFA's decisive vote on the venue of the 2006 World Cup, Sonneborn and the Titanic staff sent faxes to selected FIFA committee members, containing a hoax bribe offering sausages and a cuckoo clock if the FIFA commitee members voted for Germany. Having signed the letters as "Secretary TDES (WM Initiative)", Sonneborn phoned the receptionist of the luxury Hotel Dolder in Zurich asking her to forward these urgent messages to the delegates. The faxes were folded, put in envelopes and pushed under the room doors of the FIFA committe members in the middle of the night. Failing to recognise "TDES" as the German acronmyn for "Titanic, The Ultimate Satirical Magazine", the delegate of the Oceania Football Confederation, who had received one of the faxes, abstained from voting, thereby enabling Germany to beat the remaining competitor South Africa 12–11 in the final vote. Had Charles Dempsey, the delegate of the Oceania Football Confederation, voted as instructed by his confederation, votes would have been tied, forcing FIFA President Sepp Blatter, who favoured South Africa, to take the decisive vote in the event of a tie. Asked why Charles Dempsey abstained from voting, he was quoted as saying: "This final fax broke my neck. [...] I chose to abstain because of the intolerable pressure that was put on me by all. Not the actual bidding people, but the people on the fringe and incessant phone calls that I was receiving in my room, and also the attempts to bribe me." Sonneborn's hoax sparked a public outcry with international media reports of corruption souring Germany's celebration until his prank was uncovered.[800]

The interview was conducted in the Pantheon in Bonn on 21 March 2013.

Dominik Wolf (DW): *Vielen Dank Herr Sonneborn für die Möglichkeit Sie hier vor Ihrem Auftritt befragen zu können. Ich würde gerne wissen, welche Gründe Sie damals bewogen haben, ein solches Bestechungsfax zu senden?*

Martin Sonneborn (MS): Es gibt einige Bereiche, in denen Deutsche sensibel reagieren, wenn Sie mit Satire konfrontiert werden. Das ist meiner Beobachtung nach unter anderem der Fall, wenn es um Hunde geht, wenn es um Autos geht und wenn es um Fußball geht. Im Bereich Fußball was es offenbar so, dass viele Menschen in Deutschland, insbesondere viele Bild-Leser, sich nicht vorstellen konnten, dass es auch in diesem Bereich Korruption gibt und die Vergabe von Fußball-Weltmeisterschaften natürlich ein hoch korruptes Unterfangen ist. Ich hatte also vor dieser Abstimmung in der Schweiz im Juli 2000 im Grand Hotel Dolder wochenlang überlegt, was ich machen könnte, um die Veranstaltung zumindest mit dem Ruch der Korruption zu überziehen. Ich hatte eine Freundin, die in Singapur zwischengelandet war, gebeten, mir ein paar billige Rolex Imitate mitzubringen, für 5 Dollar das Stück und wollte die eigentlich im Namen des DFB an die FIFA Mitglieder schicken. Das erschien mir doch zu armselig und ich habe das dann gelassen. Ich saß also an diesem Sommerabend in der Redaktion und versuchte verzweifelt, irgendeine Möglichkeit zu finden, in der Nacht vor der Abstimmung noch irgendjemanden irgendwie zu bestechen. In der Bild-Zeitung habe ich mir dann noch mal die Bilder der FIFA-Exekutiv-Komitee-Mitglieder angeschaut und mir die am meisten korrupt wirkenden Kollegen rausgesucht, unter anderen Chuck Blazer, einen unglaublich fetten Amerikaner. Bei seinem Anblick kam ich auf die Idee, einfach ein paar Würste

[800] Background information on the World Cup hoax provided in English is based on David Crossland's online article 'The Hoax that Brought the World Cup to Germany', available at http: // www.spiegel.de/ international/world-cup-bribe-the-hoax-that-brought-the-world-cup-to-germany-a-394276.html (accessed 14 December 2013). Charles Dempsey quoted in ibid.

anzubieten, etwas Handfestes und kein Geld. Ich dachte, Bestechungsgelder wären ja auch schon genug im Spiel. Dann habe ich dieses Fax aufgesetzt – ich erkläre das zum ersten Mal öffentlich – und habe dieses Fax eigentlich so geschrieben, dass der Text relativ lustig wirkt und wir in der nächsten Titanic dokumentieren konnten, dass wir wirklich alles getan haben für unser Land. Ich habe also nicht wirklich damit gerechnet, dass diese Aktion irgendwelche Folgen haben würde. Das kam am nächsten Tag eher überraschend.

DW: *Sie haben sich dazu entschieden, Ihr Fax nicht allen Komiteemitgliedern zukommen zu lassen, sondern nur ausgewählten Mitgliedern* [*Chung Jong Moon- Südkorea; Jack A. Warner – Trinidad and Tobago; Ricardo Teixeira – Brasilien; Abdullah Al-Dabal – Saudi Arabien; Ismail Bhamjee – Botswana; Charles Dempsey – Neuseeland; Chuck Blazer – USA*] *Warum?*

MS: Ich habe mir die Fettesten und die Korruptesten rausgesucht.

DW: *Welche Reaktionen ausländischer Fußballverbände einschließlich des Fußballweltverbands FIFA gab es, und welche Reaktionen sind nicht über die Medien kommuniziert worden, sondern direkt an Sie herangetragen worden?*

MS: Jens Weinrich, einer der investigativisten deutschen Journalisten in den Bereichen Sport- FIFA-Korruption, ist jemand, der immer auf der Spur ist, wenn irgendetwas falsch läuft. Er war eigentlich der erste, der den Verdacht hatte, dass die Titanic dahinter stecken könnte. Er hatte mich damals angerufen und gefragt, ob wir das seien. Da habe ich eine meiner der ganz wenigen Lügen in meiner Zeit als Chefredakteur ausgesprochen, weil ich nicht wollte, dass die Sache auffliegt und habe gesagt, wir seien das nicht gewesen. Als nächstes kam die BBC und dachte, sie sei einer ganz großen Verschwörung auf der Spur. Die haben Franz Beckenbauer und dem Deutschen Fußball-Bund auf der Siegesfeier im deutschen Hauptquartier dann auch das Fax präsentiert. Daraufhin ging die Stimmung wohl rapide runter. Der Deutsche Fußball-Bund und Franz Beckenbauer haben sofort mit Klage gedroht. Die FIFA hat sich, glaube ich, gar nicht geäußert. Mit FIFA Leuten habe ich überhaupt keinen Kontakt gehabt. Relativ schnell kam jedoch die Bitte, sich mit dem Anwalt von Franz Beckenbauer und dem Deutschen Fußball-Bund zu treffen.

DW: *Haben Sie sich zu irgendeinem Zeitpunkt überlegt, zu weit gegangen zu sein, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Drohung einer Schadensersatzklage von Seiten des DFB? Und wie gestaltete sich das Treffen mit dem Anwalt des Deutschen Fußball-Bundes?*

MS: Ich habe meine Anwältin, Gabi Rittig, gefragt, was uns blühen kann. Sie sagte, wenn der Deutsche Fußball-Bund und die FIFA uns verklagen, dann müssten wir äußerstenfalls sämtliche Kosten übernehmen, die z.B. Franz Beckenbauer entstehen würden, wenn er herumfliegen würde, um bei verschiedenen Verbänden zu erklären, dass das Fax nicht vom Deutschen Fußball-Bund kam. Aber selbst das wäre für uns zu teuer gewesen. Wenn Beckenbauer einmal um die Welt jettet, sitzt er ja gerne weit vorne im Flugzeug. Insofern war ich natürlich bemüht, ohne größere Klagen da wieder herauszukommen. Also traf ich mich mit einem Anwalt von Beckenbauer und DFB im Hotel Marriott in Stuttgart. Der Mann erklärte mir dann, dass der Schaden für den Weltfußball gewaltig sei, und für einen kurzen Moment stand die Schadensersatz-Klagesumme von 600 Millionen DM im Raum, auf die man uns verklagen würde, wenn ich nicht eine von ihm vorbereitete Erklärung unterzeichne. Da hätte ich im Normalfall natürlich laut loslachen müssen. Sie kennen ja den Wortlaut der Erklärung – „Zeit meines Lebens werde ich nicht mehr Einfluss nehmen auf die Vergabe von FIFA Turnieren durch das Versenden von Bestechungsfaxen.“ Zum Glück gibt es heutzutage Emails! Die Situation damals war so absurd, dass ich Mühe hatte, ernst zu bleiben. Da es aber um sehr viel Geld ging, klappte das und ich habe mit unbewegter Miene unterzeichnet. Danach hat uns der Anwalt gebeten, seinen Kaffee zu bezahlen und war auch schnell wieder weg. Zuvor hat er aber noch Franz Beckenbauer oder den DFB-Präsidenten angerufen – wen genau wusste ich damals nicht – und hat ihm vorgelesen, was ich unterschrieben hatte. Dann hörte ich es aus dem Telefon brüllen und er kam wieder und meinte, ich müsse natürlich auch noch unterschreiben, dass ich auch auf die Vergabe von Turnieren der UEFA

keinen Einfluss nehmen werde. Er fügte noch handschriftlich „und bei UEFA Turnieren“ in die Erklärung ein, die ich dann nochmal unterschrieben habe.

DW: *Haben Sie dieses Dokument als Andenken aufbewahrt?*

SM: Ja, es liegt neben dem Bestechungs-Fax in meiner Schreibtischschublade.

DW: *Mit Franz Beckenbauer sind Sie dann aber nicht mehr in Kontakt getreten – Sie hatten damals ja argumentiert, dass er die Vorarbeit geleistet hätte und Sie „das Ding“ zum Abschluss gebracht haben.*

SM*:* Ja, genau es war eine solide Zusammenarbeit...

DW*: Aber Franz Beckenbauer ist nie persönlich an Sie herangetreten?*

MS: Nein, überhaupt nicht. Er hat sich später noch mal abfällig über die Titanic geäußert. Auch DFB-Präsident Wolfgang Niersbach, seinerzeit Pressesprecher, wechselte noch Jahre später die Gesichtsfarbe, wenn mein Name fiel. Er ist mal von zwei Freunden von mir interviewt worden. Auf die Frage, ob die Titanic letztlich nicht tatsächlich die Fußball-Weltmeisterschaft nach Deutschland geholt hätte, bekam er einen roten Kopf und knurrte: „Da arbeitet man 10 Jahre an einer Sache, dann kommt dieses Scheiß Magazin und macht einem fast alles kaputt.“ Weiter erklärte er, dass der DFB von Charles Dempsey bereits vor der Abstimmung eine schriftliche Stimmen-Zusage gehabt hätte. Charles Dempsey hat dem widersprochen, wenn ich das richtig verstanden habe.

DW: *Haben Sie sich zu irgendeinem Zeitpunkt Gedanken darüber gemacht, welche Auswirkungen das für Charles Dempsey gehabt hat, schließlich hat er ja dann seine Ämter aufgegeben müssen?*

MS: Er ist als nationale Schande seines Landes bezeichnet worden...

DW: *Genau – „national embarrassment“ hat der Sportminister seines Landes gesagt... -*

MS: Das tat mir auch leid. Aber er ist natürlich ein Bauernopfer bzw. ein Kollateralschaden wie man heute sagt. Eine Zeitlang dachte ich, er sei der einzig Ehrliche im ganzen Komitee, weil er sich der Stimme enthalten wollte, um nicht in den Verdacht der Korruption zu geraten, ohne zu bedenken, dass die Stimmenthaltung die Entscheidung zugunsten Deutschlands bedeutete. Wir wissen allerdings heute, es gibt ja genug Aussagen zu dieser Affäre, dass in der Nacht vor der Abstimmung sowohl Nelson Mandela als auch Gerhard Schröder noch persönlich bei ihm angerufen haben sollen. Der Mann stand also unter enormen Druck. Es gibt einen schottischen Journalisten, der mit ihm befreundet ist, der sagt, er [Dempsey] habe keine einzige Minute geschlafen in dieser Nacht. Ich meine, er war fast 80, wurde von allen Seiten unter Druck gesetzt und wusste einfach nicht, was er tun soll. Mein Mitleid schwand allerdings, als ich sah, dass seine Tochter einen hohen Posten im neuseeländischen FIFA Verband [Oceania Football Confederation] innehat und es auch Indizien gab, die dafür sprechen, dass Charles Dempsey sich finanziell recht gut saniert hat in seinem Leben. Also es saß wahrscheinlich kein komplett Unschuldiger in diesem FIFA Komitee.

DW: *Das Bestechungsfax hat weltweites mediales Echo ausgelöst. Vorhin sind Sie auf die englischen Medien eingegangen. Welchen Eindruck hatten Sie von Channel 4?*

MS: Wir haben am Boden gelegen. Es war unfassbar. (lacht) Es hängt eben immer auch an einem dünnen Haar. Wir haben ja nicht gesteuert, dass durch Channel 4 diese Sache so eskalierte und in die Öffentlichkeit getragen wurde. Man kann dann in dem Fall nur staunend daneben stehen und sich freuen, dass der Weltgeist mitspielt. Dadurch, dass Channel 4 eins der Faxe in die Hände bekam, und glaubte, einer ganz großen Bestechungsaktion auf der Spur zu sein, wurde die Sache zum Skandal, zum Aufmacher der britischen Nachrichtensendungen. Wir konnten das zuerst gar nicht verfolgen und haben dann die Tante irgendeines Bekannten in Schottland angerufen, die sofort den Fernseher einschalten musste. Die war aber schon leicht senil und konnte nur berichten, dass es es irgendwie um Fußball ging in den Hauptnachrichten. Mehr war aus ihr nicht herauszuholen, aber ab da hatten wir dann schon den Verdacht, dass die Geschichte größere Kreise ziehen könnte. Channel 4 hat

nochmal entscheidend mitgedreht. Es war so lustig, weil die Channel 4-Reporter, die mit uns Kontakt aufnahmen, nicht wussten, wer wir sind und zum Schluss so hämisch waren. Es hat Spaß gemacht, sie glauben zu lassen, wir seien wirklich ein Bestechungskomitee.

DW: *Erhalten Sie jetzt noch Reaktionen zu Ihrem Bestechungsfax? Schwingt das Thema heute noch nach?*

MS: Wenn ich auf Lesereise bin, gibt es oft jemanden im Publikum, der aufsteht und sagt: „Danke für die Fußball WM." Die Geschichte ist relativ bekannt. Unter männlichen Lesern gibt es bis heute Leute, die sich an der Geschichte erfreuen. Ich glaube, ich werde auf Lesungen demnächst mal wieder erklären, wie man mit Bestechungs-Faxen eine WM ins Land holt. Das zumindest ist mir ja nicht verboten.

DW: *Denken Sie, dass Ihr Beitrag für die WM Vergabe an Deutschland gesellschaftlich hinreichend gewürdigt wurde?*

MS: Ich glaube schon. Tagesthemen, FAZ und Titanic haben unisono erklärt, dass wir die WM nach Deutschland geholt haben, und es passiert nicht oft, dass diese drei sich einig sind. Außerdem hat sich Rudi Völler öffentlich bei uns bedankt für die Aktion. Ich warte allerdings immer noch auf den Deutschen Fußball-Bund. Es gibt ja die in leicht ironisch-sarkastischem Tonfall getätigte Aussage des Anwalts des Deutschen Fußball-Bundes: „Ja, Ja und wir machen Sie auch noch zum Ehrenspielführer." Ich habe das natürlich wörtlich genommen, weil wir bei Titanic immer zu unserem Wort stehen, und warte jetzt schon seit 2 Turnieren mittlerweile, dass ich die Mannschaft aufs Feld führen darf. Ich betone von Zeit zu Zeit in Interviews, dass ich mich für diesen Moment fit halte. Der Ehrenspielführer steht also noch aus, ansonsten finde ich die kleine Aktion dann auch genügend gewürdigt.

DW: *Herr Sonneborn, herzlichen Dank für dieses Interview.*

11. 6 Authorised facsimile of bribery fax

To Mr. Chuck Blazer
Hotel Dolder
Fax: 0041 1 269 30 01
- confidential -

URGENT PLEASE CONVEY IMMEDIATLY

Frankfurt, 5.7.2000
23:58

Dear Mr. Blazer,

in this difficult situation, Germany would like to emphasize the urgency of its appeal to hold the World Cup 2006 in Germany.

Let me come straight to the point:
In appreciation of your support we would like to offer you a small gift for your vote in favour of Germany:
A fine basket with specialities from the black forest, inluding some **really good sausages,** ham and – hold on to your seat – a wonderful KuKuclock!
And a beer mug, too! Do we leave you any choice???

We trust in the wisdom of your decision tomorrow,
sincerely yours,

Martin Sonneborn
Secretary TDES
(WM 2006 initiative)

Lieber Dominik Wolf,
dies ist eine relativ gute Fälschung eines Faxes, das mich real fast 600 Millionen gekostet hätte...
Herzlich, Martin Sonneborn

11.7 Euopean ticket price comparison

How the Premier League compares to other top divisions

Average ticket prices by league				
Team	**Most expensive season ticket, £**	**Cheapest season ticket, £**	**Most expensive match-day ticket, £**	**Cheapest match-day ticket, £**
La Liga	800,73	232,80	121,87	24,68
Bundesliga	549,44	207,22	47,39	10,33
Serie A	1.654,78	164,89	93,20	14,15
Premier League	865,42	467,95	57,95	28,30
Bundesliga, La Liga and Serie A research by the Guardian. Premier League prices are sourced from the BBC				
Note: Some clubs in these leagues include the price of corporate and VIP tickets in their general pricing structures, which affects the averages				

Source: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/jan/17/football-ticket-prices-premier-league-europe#data (Accessed 17 December 2013)

Note that the ticket prices refer to the 2012/2013 season.

Matchday and season ticket prices by club				
Team	**Most expensive season ticket, £**	**Cheapest season ticket, £**	**Most expensive match-day ticket, £**	**Cheapest match-day ticket, £**
Barcelona	634,81	172,23	247,64	15,79
Athletico Madrid	963,96	257,61	99,72	24,93
Real Madrid	1.460,07	177,00	494,45	29,09
Real Betis	721,31	239,33	74,79	29,09
Malaga	1.173,68	239,33	74,79	29,09
Rayo Vallecano	623,25	232,68	45,71	17,45
Valencia	1.176,70	191,96	66,48	8,31
Levante	498,60	182,82	33,24	12,47
Real Sociedad	695,55	193,62	41,55	20,78
Valladolid	368,13	186,98	41,55	20,78
Getafe	481,98	299,16	207,75	41,55
Sevilla	1.047,06	340,71	66,48	24,93
Real Zaragoza	783,64	247,64	49,86	24,93
Athletico Bilbao	961,47	349,85	66,48	31,58
Celta Vigo	1.196,77	172,63	78,95	41,55
Espanyol	631,56	207,75	498,60	29,09
Granada	810,23	282,54	54,02	29,09
Mallorca	573,39	199,44	54,02	20,78
Dep La Coruna	373,12	172,85	66,48	13,30
Osasuna	839,31	309,96	74,79	29,09
Bayern Munich	540,00	67,00	58,00	12,00
Bayer Leverkusen	450,00	133,00	63,00	10,00
Borussia Dortrmund	823,00	303,00	50,00	13,00
Frankfurt	635,00	267,00	40,00	9,00
Freiburg	590,00	307,00	50,00	8,00
Mainz	516,00	155,00	34,00	10,00
Schalke	735,00	303,00	43,00	12,00
Monchenglad-bach	511,00	274,00	37,00	13,00
Stuttgart	607,00	145,00	60,00	12,00
Hamburg	603,00	230,00	78,00	11,00
Hannover	278,00	75,00	43,00	11,00
Werder Bremen	498,00	141,00	50,00	6,00
Fortuna Dusseldorf	574,00	212,00	38,00	10,00
Nuremberg	729,00	200,00	40,00	11,00
Wolfsburg	450,00	174,00	58,00	7,00
Hoffenheim	475,00	212,00	45,00	10,00
Augsburg	469,00	274,00	32,00	11,00
Greuther Furth	407,00	258,00	34,00	10,00
Juventus	998,00	291,00	75,00	30,00

Lazio	2.993,00	183,00	45,00	11,00
Napoli	947,00	228,00	125,00	15,00
Inter Milan	1.800,00	332,00	170,00	16,00
Fiorentina	2.652,00	154,00	112,00	11,00
Roma	1.210,00	150,00	73,00	14,00
AC Milan	3.326,00	133,00	170,00	14,00
Udinese	773,00	96,00	50,00	8,00
Parma	973,00	158,00	20,00	8,00
Catania	1.330,00	158,00	150,00	12,00
Chievo	400,00	180,00	50,00	15,00
Torino	1.800,00	200,00	99,00	16,00
Atalanta	1.443,00	112,00	90,00	15,00
Bologna	2.910,00	135,00	91,00	14,00
Sampdoria	832,00	100,00	50,00	12,00
Pescara			150,00	16,00
Genoa	825,00	125,00	125,00	21,00
Cagliari			41,00	8,00
Palermo	2.994,00	141,00	141,00	7,00
Siena	1.580,00	92,00	37,00	20,00
Arsenal	1.955,00	985,00	126,00	26,00
Aston Villa	595,00	325,00	45,00	20,00
Chelsea	1.250,00	595,00	87,00	41,00
Everton	672,30	399,00	43,00	31,00
Fulham	959,00	399,00	75,00	20,00
Liverpool	802,00	725,00	48,00	39,00
Man City	695,00	275,00	58,00	26,00
Man Utd	950,00	532,00	52,00	30,00
Newcastle	909,00	322,00	70,00	15,00
Norwich	790,00	471,00	50,00	30,00
QPR	949,00	499,00	55,00	25,00
Reading	595,00	350,00	50,00	37,00
Southampton	780,00	495,00	48,00	28,00
Stoke	609,00	344,00	50,00	25,00
Sunderland	845,00	400,00	40,00	25,00
Swansea	499,00	429,00	45,00	35,00
Tottenham	1.845,00	730,00	81,00	32,00
West Brom	449,00	349,00	39,00	25,00
West Ham	850,00	480,00	67,00	36,00
Wigan	310,00	255,00	30,00	20,00

Bundesliga, La Liga and Serie A research by the Guardian. Premier League prices are sourced from the BBC

Source: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/jan/17/football-ticket-prices-premier-league-europe#data (Accessed 17 December 2013)