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## **'Here We Go, Here We Go' Football Fan's World Cup Travelogues**

### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on ten travelogues written by football fans during four FIFA World Cup tournaments (1994-2006), and explores how attendance at the World Cup Finals is represented in popular literary form. Outlining the history of travel writing and the lack of attention given to it by historians, this paper situates the book-format football travelogue in its literary and historic context. Relevant to the historian, ethnographer, literary scholar and sociologist, these football travelogues provide an opportunity to scrutinise, from the fans perspective, the world's largest single sporting event. The paper reviews the written styles, content and common themes, with a historic and literary analysis revealing both commonalities and divergence, and ways of seeing that typically resulted in the presentation of cultural stereotypes. It is concluded that travelogues, written by fans, offer opportunities to both construct and extend a literary discourse on football fandom.

During the 1970s and 1980s, English football was portrayed as an activity for violent, loutish, alcohol-fuelled *lads*. Against this backdrop, it was therefore unsurprising that few writers saw football as a serious or acceptable literary topic. The significant changes that took place within English football during the early 1990s created opportunities for the emergence of new football writing which, for Blacker, was comparable to the advent of *New Journalism* of the 1960s, with parallels between Nick Hornby and Pete Davies and that of Tom Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson. [1] Hornby achieved literary and commercial success with *Fever Pitch*, but Davies's travelogue on Italia '90 preceded Hornby's fictitious account by two years and was the first to bring a new respectability to football writing. [2] The emergence of writers such as Davies, Hornby and Kuper led to the suggestion of a burgeoning *soccer literati*, catering for an increasingly literate football audience. [3]

Notwithstanding its popularity, the genre of travel writing has attracted limited academic interest as a historical resource, with until recently, little scholarship considering its historical influence or meaning as expressions of their time. Similarly, popular sports literature has received very modest academic attention in the UK (unlike the USA). [4] Hughson has called for greater use of ethnographic research in the study of football sub-cultures and the need to distinguish academic ethnographies from 'native' accounts.' Academic researchers have responded to this call, paying particular attention to the FIFA World Cup Finals [5] whilst the travelogues identified in this paper are located in the 'natives' camp. The growing recognition of popular sports literature in the study of sport history is therefore to be welcomed, as it offers fresh perspectives and opportunities to explore a range of historical and sociological issues, including sports 'fandom', nationalism, masculinity, racism, and gender relations. [6]

Despite the problems of defining what constitutes a *travel book* or a *sports book*, both genres have proved remarkably immune to criticism and have become highly popular forms of literature. This paper focuses on one sub-genre of popular sports literature: the football travelogue. The paper identifies ten football travelogues - that is, coherent travel narratives - written by football fans during the FIFA World Cup Finals in USA, 1994 [7], France 1998 [8], Korea / Japan 2002 [9], and Germany 2006 [10] and considers their literary representation of the world's largest football tournament. The aim of the article is to identify some general features and dominant themes within football fan travel narratives and to establish their contribution in

the study of football culture. How do football fans produce and represent, in literary form, their World Cup experiences? The paper begins with a brief history of travel writing and academic uses of ethnographical material. It then explores the construction, common styles and content of these fan-written World Cup travelogues.

### **Travel writing**

The work of the historian often involves travel, not necessarily to a foreign country, but rather to the past where s/he engages with a different worldview. Travelogues have the potential to act as valuable primary sources for the historian in that they offer insight into ‘another place’ and time and an opportunity to assess the author’s behaviour and abilities as a recorder of events. As with all historical material, travelogues require careful and critical analysis, starting from the premise that they perhaps are *unreliable memoirs*.

The travelogue has a long history, with early travel writers recounting their journeys on pilgrimage or missionary work, exploration, conquest or trade. [11] Travel writing is seen as starting with Homer and continuing with Dante, Chaucer, Voltaire, Swift and the ‘Grand Tours’ of Europe in the 1700s. Three recent periods have been identified in which travel writing has been popular: the Victorian era, the 1930s (e.g. Waugh, Byron, Brennan, Fleming), and the 1970s and 1980s with the emergence of cheap flights and mass tourism (e.g. Chatwin, Newby, Theroux, Thubron and Raban). [12] Whereas the vast majority of travel accounts were written by a relatively small, affluent elite, for example on their ‘Grand Tour’, an increasing sense of democratisation is now allowing accounts to emerge from the margins, with any traveller now able to ‘blog’ their experiences on the Internet. [13]

The lack of unknown, unexplored territories has robbed travel books of their old empirical usefulness with the advent of mass tourism and the tourist gaze diminishing ‘the sense of wonder and discovery which pervade the travel accounts written in the previous centuries’. [14] For Stubseid, it is increasingly difficult for travel writers to identify original ideas, leading them to seek out the more exotic or to become much more subject-orientated, exemplified by the football travelogue or the humorous travelogue. [15] The emergence of the football travelogue in the 1990s took place against a background of increasing interest amongst newly arrived middle class supporters of Premiership football. The travel interests of this stratum were also being

represented in non-sporting contexts, typified by advertising executives moving to France to grow lemons, globetrotting ex-pat Americans and celebrity-presented television travel shows with their requisite tie-in books. [16]

Despite the difficulties in establishing a precise definition, a travelogue can be seen as a record of travel incorporating the events, sights and people encountered, either as part of a journey or whilst being based in another place. [17] All travel writing can be seen as being about the search for identity: of the individual (as author or local) or the country. At the same time, greater strides in population mobility has led to a lessening sense of being rooted in one place for an extended period, that is a sense of *home* where one has a biographical history. Although contemporary travel writers often employ a traditional concept of *home* as the main point of reference, in this paper the *home* is supplemented by the game of football.

Academics have only relatively recently discovered travel writing and accorded it serious consideration, having previously preferred either to intellectualise it or to focus on canonised writings from earlier periods. [18] However, lines of continuity can be drawn between the ethnographies of the travel writing from the early modern period and those conducted under the auspices of academic anthropology in the 20th century. [19] The growing academic debate surrounding ethnographic travel writing and its juxtaposition of the scientific and fictional (literary), between logical and emotional, and between fact and fiction, can be linked back to the debates that took place at the emergence of New Journalism in the 1960s. [20] The lack of enthusiasm amongst academics to make use of travelogues is due, in part, to the rarity of dispassionate, scientific accounts writing and the use of questionable research techniques. [21] This reluctance is perhaps unsurprising given the tensions that arise from the factual / fictional nature of travel writing and the persistent question as to whether a text should be treated as reportage or as literary form. It has been suggested that the issue of reflexivity, or rather its absence, together with an often incomplete siting of the narrative within wider socio-economic historic or cultural frameworks, causes the most concern amongst academics. [22] In an attempt to resolve this tension and to distinguish between travel writing and ethnography, ‘travel writers’ are seen as *bricoleurs* or *dilettantes* writing for a lay audience, while ‘ethnographers’ are research scholars writing for a more specialised audience. [23]

The current popularity of travel writing is seeing writers freely mixing narrative and discourse, memoir, letter and diary. [24] Drawing upon history, the social sciences and journalism, they blend fact with fiction, the auto/biographical with the ethnographic, anecdote and analysis, with the often irredeemably opinionated travel writers being described as ‘practised liars infested with the itch to tell wonderful stories.’ [25] The narrative is usually based upon places, people and experiences, with the concept of *the other* (preferably exotic) used to interpret, and often to judge. In representation of *the other*, the author enters a complex process that involves a power relationship which at its heart can be identified as political. [26] One therefore needs to be cognisant of the writers’ attempts to authenticate their experiences and any attempts they make to verify their experiences. For some, when the narration becomes fiction, it loses credibility; for others this matters little, as long as it is credible.

The erosion of the distinction between ethnographic (anthropological) texts, travel writing and journalism brings to the fore the tension between science and storytelling. Calls for greater exchange between an author’s story and ethnographic evidence are premised on how, ‘artistic truths are often more true to life than scientific ones because they are able to provide us with visions of human nature more resonant with our own experiences than any psychological, sociological, or other conventionally scientific rendering.’ [27] Recent innovative scholarship on football sub-cultures has used ethnographic research to generate significant insight and has blurred the distinction between academic ethnographies and *native accounts*. [28] As one would expect from scholars, their work adheres to academic convention, structure and language. It is a relatively short step to consider how recent football travelogues, written *by* and *for* football fans, might complement the academic’s ethnographies and be used as primary sources for those researching football culture. Discussion on the contribution of popular literature can be seen to involve criteria such as coherence, verisimilitude, evocation, empathy, authenticity and believability, with credibility often suggested to be at the heart of a literary, (though not necessarily a historic), judgement on writing. [29]

This paper assesses how travelling English fans have constructed narratives in popular literary form and what these travelogues reveal about the *literaturisation* of the World Cup finals. [30] The different narrative styles, structure and presentation are analysed in conjunction with descriptions of the host nation, its population and the visiting football fans. Content is discussed

in the light of emergent and recurrent themes. In considering these football travelogues, assessment is made of their *semi-fictional* nature, the authors' levels of reflexivity and of ethnographic convention. The parameters of the research are limited to travelogues set during the FIFA World Cup final tournaments, focused on the fans experiences, currently in print and written in the English language.

### **Accounts from the Natives: World Cup Travelogues 1994-2006**

Although each tournament offers opportunities for each author to create a coherent narrative, many of the accounts are little more than a series of snapshots. The content of each account has been examined to identify the author's main preoccupations, which emerged as the portrayal of the host nation, ticket allocation, watching the matches and the fans.

Insert Table 1 here

**Table 1** World Cup Travelogues, 1994-2006

Year	Venue	Title and Author
1994	USA	Don Watson, <i>Dancing in the streets. Tales from World Cup City.</i>
1998	France	Colin Ward, <i>Well frogged out. The fans' true story of France '98.</i> Eddy Brimson, <i>Tear gas and ticket touts. With the England fans at the World Cup.</i> Mark Palmer, <i>Lost in France. The story of England's 1998 World Cup.</i> Christian Smyth, <i>Lost in France. Frontline dispatches from the World Cup '98.</i>
2002	Korea / Japan	Simon Moran, <i>We are Nippon. The World Cup in Japan.</i> David Willem, <i>Kicking. Following the fans to the Orient.</i> Chris England, <i>No more Buddha. Only football.</i>

2006     Germany     Jamie Trecker, *Love and Blood. At the World Cup with the footballers, fans and freaks.*  
David Winner, *Around the world in 90 minutes (+ extra time and penalties)*

The books considered here employ very similar approaches in terms of their structure, presentation and narrative style. All adopt a diary-style format, typically beginning with pre-tournament qualification and friendlies, moving on to sourcing match tickets for the tournament and making travel and accommodation arrangements. While some travelogues begin with the author's arrival on the day the English team play their first match, in one account the writer leaves the host nation on the opening day to travel the world, claiming that it is no longer necessary to 'be there,' and proceeds to 'watch the world watching the FIFA World Cup Finals.' [31]

The authors all have experience with some form of mainstream media with each giving details of their contractual and financial arrangements for the book. Preferring the appellation of *new, independent writer* and *real, live fan* as opposed to the so-called *stay-at-home television fans*, these texts are essentially masculine in form, written by men, about male experiences, presumably (but not verified) for a male audience, with women relegated to peripheral (often sexual figures). Some texts include extensive match reports, whilst others contain little or no commentary of the games themselves; however, all attempt to describe their emotional reactions to the on-field action. Match reports are sandwiched by complaints about travelling to, and within, the host country, the state of world football and FIFA's ticketing arrangements. Hostility within the world of sports journalism is richly described, in particular between these authors and those working for a mainstream media organisation. In one account, after obtaining a press pass, the author describes the photographers' pre-game briefing,

A large group of English photographers has commandeered the seats in the centre of the room. All of them are wearing shorts and most have shaven heads. With their dirty shoes up on the chairs and the camaraderie of a group of Club 18-30 holiday makers 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 school-children in a school-trip to the park on the first day of summer. [32]

The mainstream press are seen by most authors as being on an *all-expense-paid-jolly*, who find little difficulty in obtaining match tickets or hotel accommodation. [33] Further tensions were identified between mainstream journalists and the national teams, and between the journalists and the football fans, with one journalist claiming that ‘sports journalists are not just fans with typewriters’. [34] Those not aligned to a major media organisation found access to the players very difficult, and had to rely upon the often vacuous press conferences, with some authors building much of their travelogues around such events. [35] Despite the antagonism shown by the authors towards mainstream media journalists, many sought to authenticate their experiences with reference to *what the papers say*, presumably to lend a greater veracity to their account, suggesting that the mainstream print media remains *the gold standard*.

Many of the authors had a prior connection with the respective host nations, previously or currently living there and speaking the local language (if not English). [36] The familiarity of the host nation allowed them to claim to offer the reader a real, as opposed to a tourist’s interpretation of the country, using local friends to provide commentary. Those with strong local connections, and showing a familiarity with the language and local customs were better able to explore the relationship between hosting the tournament, the host nation and its team. They were also better placed to provide a historical context to the relationship between, for example, Japan and Korea, Japan and Russia, and Japan and Brazil. [37].

In terms of written style, some travelogues contain a strong historical narrative, others offer personal pronouncements on the current state of world football, while some take a more humorous, irreverent approach to the tournament. The humour varies from comical descriptions of three-step process needed to secure FIFA press accreditation to simplistic stereotypes of ‘foreigners’ and ‘players with funny sounding names.’ [38] Clichés and poorly constructed metaphors abound, with the France ‘96 travelogues replete with references to trenches and battlefields; ‘As I drew nearer to Lens, more and more GB number plates sped past me. The flag of St George was often to be seen draped over the rear window in the customary football-fan fashion. It was like a marauding army descending on the former battlefields of northern France.’

[39] A number of comparisons sought to link the experiences of soldiers who fought in the First World War and modern football fans defending their country's honour, [40] and comparing the treatment of the modern football fan with that of holocaust victims during World War Two, '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 [i.e. English Fans] who only a few weeks previously were battered innocents in Rome now being painted as thuggish lowlife?' [41]

Concern was evident amongst all the authors that the host nations, in particular those without a strong football heritage, did not adequately recognise the importance of hosting the World Cup, and therefore had not created sufficient atmosphere (i.e. *the right atmosphere*). In Germany, one author comments on a lack of football fervour, which he contrasts to England where Cross of St George flags were prominently displayed. USA 1994 and Korea / Japan 2002 were both criticised for their lack of local television coverage which was felt to be indicative of an underlying lack of interest in football. All the authors sought to explore and explain the host nations' preferred sports (e.g. basketball and baseball), contrasted with their attitude towards football. Description of the host included reference to popular culture, such as comics, literature, music and film, with food forming a staple descriptor of the hosts, with the more exotic the food, the more lurid its description. With three of the four finals held in north European or American countries, Korea / Japan 2002 was celebrated as exotic, with the four authors making repeated reference to rice-fields.

Those authors who secured press accreditation, or had contacts or access to official sponsors typically found little difficulty in obtaining match tickets, including those in the final stages of the tournament. However, for writers without these advantages, a common criticism was made of FIFA's ticket allocation process and the role of ticket touts. [42] Although tickets were described as always being available, the prices sought by the touts often lay beyond the reach of those on a limited budget. This led to displays of *schadenfreude* when touts were left with tickets they could not sell. When tickets had been obtained from touts they were often in sections of the stadium reserved for official sponsors, with the writers accusing the VIPs in these areas of showing little interest or understanding of the importance of the event, [43]

Escorted to their seats by young women wearing blue uniforms with the appearance and demeanour of air-stewardesses, the VIPs lord it over them [...] letting it be known who is boss. Most of them won't have paid for their tickets themselves and are being entertained at the expense of the sponsors and the people who buy their products. Some of the VIPs are asleep before the half ends. They snore in seats paid for people in the stands and the thousands more who couldn't get tickets and are locked out. [44]

One might have expected that having travelled to the host nation, the authors would have sought to attend as many games as possible. In addition to the problems in obtaining match tickets, the authors experienced significant difficulties with travel arrangements and costs during their stay. These factors resulted in very few games actually being watched in the stadiums, with many more being watched on television in local bars and restaurants. In USA 1992, the author describes the low level of interest being shown in the tournament,

I decide to seek out some company for the Spain v Korea game and head over to Desmond's. Tony is behind the bar again. 'We've got basketball in the back and football up the front for us,' he grins, indicating the packed back room with his thumb. 'Us' constitutes Tony, in the moments he can squeeze between serving pitchers to the Knicks fans, me and a guy from Honduras. [45]

Other numerous examples are given in which visits to sports-themed bars necessitated requests for the television channel to be changed to show the World Cup.

One writer based his travelogue on *watching the watchers* and sought to explore how those fans not attending the finals experienced the tournament via television. [46] During Germany 2006, he visited various countries and watched matches with friends in their front room, alone in hotel rooms, at large, open-air public screens, or over breakfast at an airport. However, the vast majority of games were missed because he could not find a television showing the match, or because he was on a flight to another country or because he was ill. He watched the World Cup final on television, in his parent's front room, back in the UK.

One interesting development that can be tracked across the four tournaments is the emergence of the open-air, large television screen. Screens were used during France 1998 and Korea / Japan 2002, although in Japan they showed only Japanese games. This was explained in reference to a cultural difference whereby Japanese people preferred to watch the games at home. During Germany 2006, football fans without match tickets were encouraged to visit one of the 12 free Fan Fest Cities where giant television screens were sited next to beer halls. However, one writer was pessimistic on the development of such Fan Fest zones, seeing them as,

One of the biggest – and potentially damaging – legacies of the 2006 World Cup. This may be a generalisation, but it seems to me that Germany's staging of the Cup, with the relentless emphasis on consumerism and the 'good time,' may have forever altered what the World Cup is and what it will be in the future. The World Cup is now first and foremost a spectacle – and as such may ultimately weaken what it was meant to celebrate.  
[47]

### **The Fans**

The theme occupying most discussion was the English fans (when the national team qualified), and those supporting the host nation and fans supporting the visiting teams. Descriptions typically centered on national codes of dress, fan behaviour and hooliganism, with the writers noting the football fans (and their own) conscious dissemination of national stereotypes. [48] During USA 1994, fans were content to wear the national team shirts. By 2002, the tournament had become a pantomime with fans adopting national stereotypes of themselves and the host country. This was reflected in their fancy dress and face painting, with English fans in Japan dressing in *coolie hats* and oriental bandanas featuring Japanese characters and the St George Cross. Other described stereotypes included English fans dressed as City Gents, medieval knights, jesters and a women wearing a crown; Mexican football fans were easily identified by their sombreros and Aztec feather headdresses; Swedish and Danish fans by their Vikings costume, Belgians by their Red Devil paraphernalia, and Brazilians (primarily female) by their bikinis.

Tourist sight-seeing was very occasionally described with the over-riding tendency being to reduce national monuments to the briefest of footnotes to the main attraction. However, in

France 1998 the four English writers did find time to visited World War 1 cemeteries. One author deliberately sought out unusual situations, presumably to generate material for his book (visiting sites such as a hot mud springs, a Dutch theme park (in Japan), an undersea train station and the atomic explosion site at Nagasaki). [49] Frequent references were made to sexual behaviour, including visits to the red-light areas, pixilated pornography on Japanese television and the highly visible presence of prostitution during the tournaments. [50] The authors all complained of a lack of sleep which rapidly became a precious commodity, especially during the early stages of the tournament when games were played in quick succession, often in different cities, with their attendance at post-match celebrations necessary 'for the purposes of research.'

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the accounts dwell almost exclusively on football, with the authors rarely noticing the wider material world. Reading such accounts suggests that being a football fan in a foreign land one has little interest or desire to explore local history or culture. Agreed, the primary purpose of the trip, and indeed of the travelogues, is the football; however, it might be suggested that such displays of anti-intellectualism in choosing to negate the conventional sights informs the boorish stereotype of the English football fan abroad. Such travelogues thus act to perpetuate the accepted model for the behaviour and demeanour of the *authentic* football fan.

During USA 1994, fans were described as freely integrating with each other. Four years later, with the presence of the English national team, and a venue closer to home, all the France 1998 travelogues focused on the English hooligans. The four accounts detailed the terrace banter replete with its casual (ironic?) sexism, racism, xenophobic, and ever-present (if underlying), threat of violence. Terms like *Sooties* were used to describe people from Black and Ethnic minority groups, and whilst one author expressed his disappointment at the Spanish fans who *monkey-chanted* Nigerian players, he described the Germans as 'Krauts' and the French as 'garlic munchers' and commented how the South Korean players had names that sound like take-away dishes, 'Min-Sung, Do-Hoon, Jong-Soo – everyone a winner, and I couldn't help but begin to feel a bit peckish, Then I catch the name of the manager: Cha Bum-Kun. Suddenly I'm not quite so hungry.' [51]

Two of the France 1998 travelogues were by authors whose previous work focused on football hooliganism. Both condemn the violence, but then recount, with some relish, many of the details of the troubles. [52] In their discussion of the violence associated with English football fans, the problems were perceived as lying elsewhere (e.g. with the police or media), with no reflection on the author's own behaviour or that of their fellow fans. During France 1998, the English fans were portrayed as misunderstood and blameless, although there was continual reference to alcohol as forming the basis of fans diet. Despite the availability of alcohol during Korea / Japan 2002, the incidence of football hooliganism was low with only 13 English fans arrested; those attending the tournament interpreting this low number as the consequence of passport confiscation and better policing. [53] Football chants were often included, with the somewhat bizarre scenario recounted in which, during Korea / Japan 2002, English fans were heard chanting 'No surrender to the IRA.' During Germany 2006, the main incidents of trouble being seen as taking place in the UK at sites where large public television screens were operating.

These travelogues purported to offer the fan's story of the World Cup. However, one writer did not appear to have left the media-bubble that often surrounds such tournaments and instead offered a simple, stereotypical description of the English football fans, 'The first sight that greeted me was a group of England fans slobbered over a collection of tables and chairs to the right of the counter. You could tell they were English by the flags, sunburn and tattoos. All that was missing was the beer, but there'd be plenty of that later.' [54] When he later encountered some football fans drinking cans of beer (which for him was sufficient to make them hooligans), he quickly left their company, criticising this 'lager-lout, Loaded generation with nothing to offer but beer and brutality' [55]; However the author makes no mention that he was previously employed as a writer for this particular *lad-mag*.

The descriptions presented in these football travelogues suggest that this sub-genre of popular football literature continues to inform and promote national differences and negative stereotyping. This paper will now examine what else these travelogues reveal about the literary representation of contemporary fandom during the World Cup tournament.

### **Narrating the World Cup Finals**

Historically, travel writing has perpetuated stereotypes with writers attempt to show how universal activities are performed differently in each nation. [56] The portrayal of the actions and behaviour of others can be shown in a positive light, with some of the writers identified here offering positive accounts of different fan behaviour, whilst others writers reveal class, racial and gender prejudices. These football travelogues are interesting because their narratives display a discursive record of observations, often presented as a natural record of, what for the author, was a stable and single reality of events. There was little reflection or questioning of the *natural* stereotypes which functioned as uncomplicated markers of difference, separating fans from each other and from the hosts. These travelogues are therefore more than simple accounts, with each involving a process of interpretation by the reader of the narrative presented by the writer. As Lisle notes, in order to reveal the prevailing discourses at work in travel writing (here, football travelogues), it is necessary to identify the continuity of statements and meanings that come to be understood as *true* and *real*. [57]

Making an overall assessment of these (or indeed any) travel-based literary account, one needs to first consider the authors stated reason-for-going. For one author his attendance at the tournament was a personal journey which he hoped would rekindle his passion for football, his youthful enthusiasm having been extinguished by an excess of live television games and of 'growing up.' [58] Another author's journey appears to be little more than an opportunity to visit friends in different countries, although his stated aim was to 'watch the world watching the World Cup.' Although he repeatedly asks himself 'What am I trying to achieve?' he is not able to offer a satisfactory response, with the travelogue becoming little more than a record of illness, jet lag and modern air travel. [59]

A central issue in reviewing these autobiographical travelogues is the extent to which they can be considered accurate accounts from those directly involved (as they all purport to be). Whilst it might be agreed that these people were centrally involved and have produced primary sources, problems remain on the extent to which the written accounts be verified. Can it ever be known if what they describe actually took place? Ribbins usefully highlights this tension and questions whether one should treat the auto/biography as an essentially objective or subjective account. [60] Are such accounts best seen as falsifiable facts or personally created fictions? As Ribbins notes 'We may (at times at least) want to view auto/biographical material as providing us

with a factual account of real events in times past. In such a case, we may be concerned that the auto/biography is flawed by errors of concealment or fabrication, or inaccuracies of memory.’ [61] One popular tactic used by the writers to suggest validation was to sprinkle the text with quotations from those encountered during the tournament, for example ‘Matty who was outside the ground.’ [62] There was no biographical or background given on who ‘Matty’ was or on any of others fans used to substantiate the claims being made.

The conventional aim of ethnography is to offer a rich, detailed account of people in their *natural environment*. In the production of these accounts, the authors assumed the role of participant observers, each possessing their own level of understanding of fan behaviour, and after conducting ethnographic fieldwork, presenting different narratives of their attendance at the World Cup. It is therefore interesting to note the relatively standard content and consistent vernacular of *the lads-on-tour* employed by the authors. No doubt, the publishers offered a clear direction to the authors, advising them to construct a narrative that conforms to potential readers expectations. It is clear that these texts repeatedly lapse into the presentation and reinforcement of prejudice with regard to the *other* – be this the host nation, women or other football fans. What is thus constructed, and possibly the primary purpose of the sports travel writings discussed here, is accounts of *football with (and for) the boys*.

As a visit to the local bookstore will show, the shelf space occupied by sport narratives has grown significantly over the past 15 years, with many of these sports books products of, and contributing to, a transformation in football culture. This period has seen a particular growth in literary representation of fan culture, with these book-format travelogues located somewhere between the football fanzine and the emerging on-line football fan blog. The Internet is creating new, more participatory platforms for fans to record and share their experiences and one that bypasses the traditional hierarchy and constraints associated with the mainstream media. The creation of a consumerist culture associated with all-things-sport and the new sense of respectability associated with football is due, in part, to the work of a growing squad of literary stars. However, for some, the growth of football fan literature is little more than middle-class authors poaching some of the last remnants of traditional working class culture which they then serve up to an omnivorous middle class audience.



## Conclusions

As one might have anticipated, the writers made little attempt at objectivity and adopted an approach more akin to New Journalism. Under such circumstances, the usual assessment criteria do not apply and, therefore, these texts should be subject to different criteria (such as coherence, verisimilitude and credibility – as discussed previously). What is suggested is that these travelogues represent a significant resource for the sports historian and are particularly interesting when they use football to make visible issues of identity, showing how past events inform the present, and in linking the personal, political and pleasurable.

As with all popular literature, on one level the reader must take these micro narratives as found, even if the authors seem less concerned with offering a fully accurate account of events, preferring instead to infuse their accounts with humour and minimal levels of self-reflection. These are primarily football fan accounts and one therefore cannot criticise them for what they are not (that is, accurate historic records; containing award-winning literary expression; or adhering to academic convention with regard to ethnographic methods of research). These football fan travelogues offer an insight into fan experiences during the World Cup finals and contribute to the wider body of popular sports-themed travel literature – all of which act as valuable and interesting primary sources in the study of sports culture. [63]

This paper has sought to show how sport travel literature might be exploited, focussing on a source untapped by sports historians. [64] These football travel narratives have been used to identify some general features and preoccupations of fans attending the FIFA finals at the turn of the millennium. Having offered an overview, it might now be worth considering a micro-analysis of individual texts to focus specific themes contained within. However, given the increasing range of texts, one would need to select the text carefully: does one choose an example which best exemplifies this genre at this moment in time? Or should one focus on a text that best serves the purposes of the commentator?

The popularity of the travel book when coupled with football shows little sign of abating. The value of these books lies in the fact they do not follow academic convention but instead draw upon a range of literary strategies and techniques to produce travelogues that convey the fan's perspective of the World Cup Finals. As to whether the texts are satisfying as travelogues, on one

level, the writers can be judged on their success in offering the reader a particular insight and a over-riding sense of the passion found at the world's biggest single sports event. In traditional travel writing, to write well about a place there has to be elements of the host nation that excite one; similarly, there is 'not really something called sports writing, only great writers describing sport in the same breath as they tackle life itself.' [65] The challenge is significant, for as Watson has noted,

World Cup City doesn't come with a street map, more like a psychological profile. It's a bit like Brigadoon – a mythological place full of revelry and excess that visits earth only occasionally. [66]

1. Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch*. (London, 1992) Pete Davies, *All Played Out. The Full Story of Italia '90* (London, 1990). Terrance Blacker, 'Fan Fare.' *Sunday Times*. (November 15<sup>th</sup> 1993) pp. 6-8.
2. See Jeffrey Hill, *Sport and the literary imagination* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 113-132; Merritt Moseley, 'Nick Hornby, English football and Fever Pitch.' *Aethlon*, 11 (2) (1994), pp. 87-95.
3. Steve Redhead, *Post-Fandom and the millennial blues: The transformation of soccer culture* (London, 1997), pp. 88-92. See also Anthony King, *The end of the terraces. The transformation of English football in the 1990s* (Leicester, 1998); Raymond Boyle and Richard Haynes, *Power Play. Sport Media and Popular Culture* (London, 2000), pp. 177-186.
4. Illustrating USA academics' work on sports literature, see Tom Dodge, *A literature of sports* (Lexington, 1980); Robert Higgs, *Laurel and thorn. The athlete in American literature* (Kentucky, 1981); Michael Oriad, *Dreaming of heroes. American sports fiction 1868-1980* (Chicago, 1982); Michael Oriad, A linguistic turn in sport history, in Murray G. Phillips, ed., *Deconstructing sport history. A postmodern analysis* (Albany, 2006).
5. John Hughson, 'Among the thugs. The 'New Ethnographies' of Football Supporting Subcultures.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 33 (1) (1998), pp. 43-57. Richard Giulianotti, 'Back to the Future: An Ethnography of Ireland's Football Fans at the 1994 World Cup Finals in the USA.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*; 31 (1) (1996) pp. 323-344; Mike Weed, 'The Story of an Ethnography: The Experience of Watching the 2002 World Cup in the Pub', *Soccer & Society*, 7 (1) (2006), pp.76-95; Mike Weed, 'The Pub as a Virtual Football Fandom Venue: An Alternative to 'Being there'', *Soccer & Society*, 8 (2) (2007), pp. 399-414; Roy Hay & Tony Joel, 'Football's World Cup and its Fans - Reflections on National Styles: A Photo Essay on Germany 2006.' *Soccer and Society*, 8 (1) (2007), pp.1-32; Martin Curi, 'Samba, girls and party: who were the Brazilian soccer fans at a World Cup? An ethnography of the 2006 World Cup in Germany', *Soccer & Society*, 9 (1) (2008), pp. 111-134; Tim Crabbe, 'Fishing for community: England fans at the 2006 FIFA World Cup', *Soccer & Society*, 9 (3) (2008), pp. 428-438; John Efron, 'Critique of pure football.' *Sport in History*, 28 (1) (2008), pp. 123-150.
6. Jeffrey Hill, *Sport and the literary imagination*.

7. Don Watson, *Dancing in the streets. Tales from World Cup City*. (London, 1994).
8. Colin Ward, *Well frogged out. The fans' true story of France '98* (London, 1998); Eddy Brimson, *Tear gas and ticket touts. With the England fans at the World Cup* (London, 1999); Mark Palmer, *Lost in France. The story of England's 1998 World Cup* (London, 1998); Christian Smyth, *Lost in France. Frontline dispatches from the World Cup '98* (London, 1998);
9. Simon Moran, *We are Nippon. The World Cup in Japan* (Hyogo, Japan, 2002); David Willem, *Kicking. Following the fans to the Orient* (London, 2002); Chris England, *No more Buddha only football* (London, 2003).
10. Jamie Trecker, *Love and Blood. At the World Cup with the footballers, fans and freaks* (Florida, USA, 2007); David Winner, *Around the world in 90 minutes (+ extra time and penalties)* (London, 2007)
11. Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourist with typewriters. Critical reflections on contemporary travel writing*. (Ann Arbor, 2000), p. vii.
12. Edward Marriott, 'Where the trail goes cold – the end of travel writing'. *Prospect* (January 2003). Available on-line at [http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article\\_details.php?id=5467](http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=5467)
13. Ken Plummer, *Documents of Life 2. An invitation to a critical realism* (London, 2001).  
Examples of popular Internet travel blog sites can be found at [Travelbog.org](http://Travelbog.org);  
[Travelpod.com](http://Travelpod.com); [getjealous.com](http://getjealous.com).
14. Maria Lourdes Lopez Roperro 'Travel writing and postcoloniality: Caryl Phillip's *The Atlantic Sound*.' *Atlantis*. 25 (1) (2003), p. 53.
15. Anna Stella Karlsdottir Stubseid, 'Travelogues as Indices of the Past.' *The Journal of Popular Culture*. 26. (4) (1993), pp. 89–100; Roperro, 'Travel Writing and Postcoloniality,' pp 51-62. In football travelogue literature, this trend is evident in the work of Charlie Connelly, *Stamping grounds: Exploring Liechtenstein and its World Cup dream* (London, 2005); Giles Goodhead, *Us V Them: Journeys to the world's greatest football derbies* (London, 2003); Andy Sloan, *23 Sweet FAs. Around the world with a football table* (London, 2006).
16. Bill Bryson, P.J. O'Rourke and Michael Palin have all achieved sustained commercial success with their humorous, irreverent travel writing.
17. Holland and Huggan, *Tourist with typewriters*.

18. Rachel Alsop, The uses of ethnographic methods in English, in Gabriele Griffin, ed., *Research methods for English studies* (Edinburgh, 2005). See also Holland and Huggan, *Tourist with typewriters*, p. viii. See also academic journals, *Journeys. The International Journal of Travel & Travel Writing*; *Studies in Travel writing*.
19. Alsop, 'The uses of ethnographic methods in English'
20. Richard Keeble and Sharon Wheeler, eds., *The journalistic imagination: literary journalism from Defoe to Capote and Carter* (London, 2007).
21. Alsop, 'The uses of ethnographic methods in English'
22. John van Maanen, 'An end to innocence: the ethnography of the ethnography,' in John van Maanen, ed., *Representation in ethnography* (London, 1995)
23. Holland and Huggan, *Tourist with typewriters*, p. 12.
24. Helen Carr, 'Modernism and travel (1880-1940),' in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds., *The Cambridge companion to travel writing* (Cambridge, 2002), pp70-86. See also Holland and Huggan, *Tourist with typewriters*, p.10.
25. Holland and Huggan, *Tourist with typewriters*, p. 9.
26. Debbie Lisle, *The global politics of contemporary travel writing* (Cambridge, 2006)
27. Andrew Sparkes, *Telling tales in sport and physical education. A qualitative journey* (Leeds, 2002). See also Margarete Sandelowski, 'The proof of the pudding, in J. Morse, ed., *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (London, 1994), pp. 46-63
28. See footnote number 5.
29. Andrew Sparkes, *Telling tales in sport and physical education*.
30. 'Literaturisation' as used by Steve Redhead, *Post-Fandom and the millennial blues*.
31. Winner, *Around the world in 90 minutes*. His over-ambitious plans were constrained by a limited budget, flight delays and illness.
32. Moran, *We are Nippon*, p.39
33. Smyth, *Lost in France*. Smyth is clearly the guiltiest of this. Sent by an English football magazine and given a complimentary car by one of the sponsors he proceeded to spend most of the following fortnight drunk and missing games.
34. Don Watson, *Dancing in the streets*. 'Sports writers not journalists' see Palmer, *Lost in France*, p. 27.
35. Smyth, *Lost in France* and Palmer, *Lost in France* are narratives heavily based on player and manager comments made during press conferences.

36. All the writers were British apart from Trecker, *Love and Blood*, who was American from the USA. Moran, *We are Nippon* and Willem, *Kicking*, both stated they could speak Japanese.
37. This was demonstrated when comparing the accounts offered by Moran, *We are Nippon* (who was living in Japan and spoke the language), and England, *No more Buddha*, who knew little of the host language or history.
38. Press accreditation see Trecker, *Love and Blood*, p. 160. England, *No more Buddha*, Ward, *Well frogged out*, and Brimson, *Tear Gas* often employed humour based on negative stereotypes.
39. Smyth, *Lost in France*, p.119
40. Ward, *Well frogged out*; Brimson, *Tear Gas and ticket touts*.
41. Ward, *Well frogged out*, p. 91
42. See also Andrew Jennings, *Foul!: The Secret World of FIFA: Bribes, Vote Rigging and Ticket Scandals* (London, 2006).
43. Many of the tickets being offered by the touts were claimed to be have originally been allocated to corporate sponsors, with Korea / Japan 2002 and Germany 2006 seeing the ticket allocation reported as being 20-30 % available to the public, 40% to the International Football Associations and 30% to Official Sponsors.
44. Moran, *We are Nippon*, p. 87
45. Watson, *World cup city*, p. 71
46. Winner, *Around the world*.
47. Trecker, *Love and Blood*, p.233
48. See Richard Giulianotti, Norman Bonney & Mike Hepworth, eds., *Football Violence and social identity* (London, 1994); Richard Giulianotti, 'Football and the politics of carnival. An ethnographic study of Scottish football fans in Sweden.' *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 30 (2) (1995), pp. 191-220.
49. England, *No more Buddha*,
50. England, *No more Buddha*,
51. Brimson, *Tear gas and ticket touts* p. 22
52. Ward, *Well frogged out*; Brimson, *Tear gas and ticket touts*.
53. Moran, *We are Nippon*. Willem, *Kicking*.
54. Smyth, *Lost in France*, p.63

55. Smyth, *Lost in France*, p.68
56. Holland and Huggan, Tourists with typewriters
57. Debbie Lisle, The global politics of contemporary travel writing.
58. England, *No more Buddha* p. 45
59. Winner, *Around the World*.
60. Jane Ribbins, 'Facts or Fictions? Aspects of the use of auto/biographical writing in undergraduate sociology. *Sociology*, 27, (1993), pp. 81-92.
61. Ribbins, 'Facts or Fictions?'
62. Brimson, *Tear gas and ticket touts*, p.7
63. Footballing examples include Harry Pearson, *The Far Corner. A mazy dribble through North-East football* (London, 1995); Tim Parks, *A Season with Verona* (London, 2003). Non-football examples include John Feinstein, *A good walk spoiled: Days and nights on the PGA tour* (London, 1996); Robert Twigger, *Angry white pyjamas* (London, 1997); Norman Mailer, *The fight* (London, 2000); H.G. Bissinger, *Friday Night Lights* (London, 2005); Mike Marquesee, *War minus the shooting: A Journey through South Asia during cricket's World Cup* (London, 1996).
64. See Mike Cronin, 'The Gaelic Athletics Association's Invasion of America, 1888: Travel narratives, microhistory and the Irish American 'other'.' *Sport in History*. 27 (2) (2007) pp. 190-216.
65. Peter Preston, cited in Raymond Boyle and Richard Haynes, *Power play. Sport media and popular culture* (2000), p. 185.
66. Watson, *Dancing in the streets*, p. 9.