

Portrayal of soccer hooligans in 1990-2010 British soccer literature"

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## **Summary**

## Introduction

The topic of soccer<sup>1</sup> is an interesting point of focus in literature. This may be seen from the perspective of two large literature sets, of which: first is a broad non-scientific literature, and the other is academic literature, where soccer is presented in the light of various applicable theories and models. Soccer, however, is a very expansive theme for all writers regardless of scope of their interests. Yet, within this sport discipline, some various and narrower phenomenon that combines physical activity, culture, sociology, psychology and other applicable studies is hooliganism. This interdisciplinary term hides a very broad community that is built on specific identity, artifacts and customs<sup>2</sup>.

What exactly is hooliganism? How to understand hooliganism? What are its origins? This thesis will provide explanations to these questions. Further, the thesis will analyze how hooliganism is presented in the British literature<sup>3</sup> from the 1990 to 2010 period. This time interval should not only provide insights into the fruitful output of various writers, but also specific features of hooliganism and hooligans, which may be in way, era-specific (especially literature from earliest years of this period), or perspective-specific (some authors may express their own personal stances).

The main objective of this thesis is to provide the up-to-date presentation of hooliganism in scientific literature (definitions, interdisciplinary explanations) and how it used to be perceived in the British literature from 1990-2010 (empirical study).

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents perspective on soccer as a sport discipline and also as a social phenomenon. Soccer will be firstly introduced in brief, so that its origin, key principles are enclosed, but its analysis as a social and cultural phenomenon will be much broader and based on various theoretical models and concepts. In this chapter, functions of literature will be explained according to literature theories especially, critical literature concepts. Afterwards, the author will present the topic from the point of view of literature, but mainly non-scientific. In this

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<sup>1</sup> The most popular term for the discipline is “football”, nevertheless the author will use “soccer” which derived from British English register (the whole thesis is written using BE).

<sup>2</sup> Jack David Eller, *Violence and Culture: A Cross-cultural and Interdisciplinary Approach*, Thomson/Wadsworth, London 2010, pp. 106-108.

<sup>3</sup> „British” covers English, Scottish, and Welsh literature, if available.

part, the whole structure of football literature will be presented, breaking it down into three key groups: professional literature, fiction and non-fiction literature.

The second chapter is dedicated to the topic of hooligans and hooliganism. This chapter will generally make this distinction clear, and hooliganism is a social phenomenon, while hooligans present a partly heterogeneous and non-heterogeneous community that has adopted various cultural elements (identity, artifacts, rituals and customs). However, this chapter will also present some negative features of hooliganism, as it also holds some pathological traits such as: use of violence (mainly in the form of prearranged hooligan clashes), nationalist and ultranationalist rhetoric (mainly based on xenophobic slogans: anti-immigrant, anti-LGBT, antisemitic, etc.). Also, hooliganism is often linked to crime (drug crime, extorsions, robberies and assaults. In spite of this, there are also positive aspects of hooliganism, which are often blurred when the negative side is brought to the front. In this view, hooligans may also be presented as very dedicated fans – to their soccer club, nation and country. However, picture is blurred, since it is not clear where the line is as to when a “regular” followership ends, and hooliganism begins. Does the use of flares, harsh language and sitting in specific stadium sector, wearing specific cloths (blouse, club colour scarf) make one a hooligan? In this chapter the literature findings will be an attempt to explain this phenomenon, with how hooligans’ image is represented in various media.

In the third chapter, the author will examine how hooligans and hooliganism are depicted in British literature of 1990 and 2010. This literature will be concentrated on soccer, but will be rather a representation of fiction and non-fiction titles (novels, reportage literature, etc.). The following authors will be taken into account as the creators of literature pieces, where topic of hooliganism may be demonstrated from different angles (John King, Mal Peet, Alan Gibbons and others).

# Chapter 1. Soccer-related literary artwork

## 1.1. Chapter introduction

In this chapter, author will explain emergence of soccer, thus, leading to the description of its evolution as a sociocultural phenomenon. It is noteworthy that soccer as a regulated discipline was only a consequence of players across the world having played a ball in less or more similar manner for centuries or even millennia. The author will bring the discussion closer to its sociocultural framework, as soccer would always involve spectators, which makes it not only a pure play and entertainment, but a vast field for various phenomena existent in human minds and in the social sphere. The author will present, therefore, the soccer within frames of social and cultural theories.

Further, in the study of literature functions, the focus will be given as to why literature has ever been invented. Therefore the functions presented would be presented from its basic functions (ludic – entertainment-specific, or educational). This will be expanded into more refined functions, such as shaping identities, beliefs and stances towards various significant questions.

The chapter will end with an attempt to categorize literature dedicated to soccer, grouping various literature positions into three distinct categories: professional positions, non-fiction literature, and the fiction works. It should be underlined that literature provides some typologies of soccer-related works which will also be provided.

## 1.2. Soccer as a sociocultural phenomenon

The earliest archaeological evidences for using a leather sack with a filling to kick it towards a target date back to Ancient Times (Roman and Greek civilizations), but no one knows what the rules of such a game used to be. Hence, these evidences cannot confirm that it would have been a predecessor of the contemporary discipline. However,

for centuries before the rule-based soccer appeared, variations of “early” soccer (or football) had been played across the world. In personal accounts left in literature and early newspapers, first traces of men having played soccer are connected to 1860s both in the United States and England. In 1860s Oneida Football Club used to exist and it played “football” (that, according to the English spectators, was soccer). However, there must have been some confusion, as the American football, even at that time, involved players struggling for the ball that can be held and carried in hands, thrown or kicked. Soccer, as game, was codified for the first time in 1863, however the final version of principles would be developed until 1871. This was when soccer emerged<sup>4</sup>.

The reason why this was the case, was “19<sup>th</sup> century middle-class mania for rules”<sup>5</sup>. Another author explains this further, reconfirming and going further that the archaeological evidences (two and even two and half-millenia back). In Australia, Aboriginal peoples have played *marn gook*, in ancient China *tsu chu* was known 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, and *kemari* in ancient Japan, all having various resemblance of the contemporary soccer (or some of its leading principles or techniques). But what is most crucial is that for 2000 years various nations have played games where a ball or just a sack with intentionally put “entail” (wool, scobs, sand, hay, etc.) was kicked towards target. Word “football” (properly soccer in the British Isles) was derived from various countries where local varieties appeared (*voetball*, *fuetball*, *fusbal*, *foosball*, *futbol*) in European countries – long before 19<sup>th</sup>-century formalisation processes<sup>6</sup>.

The process of europeisation of the game would be observed since 1920s till 1970s, due to the establishment of national and international structures (leagues, federations). This process would also be reinforced by establishment of three key international (Europe-focused) tournaments: Mitropa Cup (created in 1927), European Champion Clubs’ Cup (created in 1955) and UEFA Cup (created in 1971)<sup>7</sup>.

In the post-War history of football (since 1945), soccer has been an intriguing social phenomenon. The significance of decades of 1950s and 1960s was crucial for establishing such a statement, since it was the era of decolonization. Therefore, African

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<sup>4</sup> Bill Murray, *The World’s Game: A history of soccer*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago 1998, pp. 3-7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Jaime Orejan, *Football/Soccer: History and Tactics*, McFarland Publishers, Jefferson 2011, pp. 9-12.

<sup>7</sup> Kausik Bandyopadhyay, Souvik Naha, *Defining moments in the history of soccer*, „Soccer & Society”, vol. 20, no. 5, 2019, pp. 897-899.

and Asian clubs, national representations and federations appeared on the world map of soccer. Engagement of teams from the post-colonial parts of Earth into international soccer games would be considered as an additional way to augment national identities of new states. Further, the 1966 World Cup was considered as another phenomenon, since it would be the first time when English national representation won (4-2 against Germany in the finale). The 1966 World Cup however, would be a defining moment for soccer worldwide, since it would make reservation for the European element for next decades, however, leaving much space, especially for the South American national teams. Also, the 1966 global soccer game would pave the way for the globalisation, internationalisation and commercialisation of this sport discipline – taking it to its heights nowadays<sup>8</sup>.

Since the inter-war period, soccer would be used as political means, firstly in the fascist or fascism-inspired countries (Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal). The political decision makers in these countries used soccer matches and championships for the goals of their propaganda, proliferating the message of their power (physical, national, economic, military, etc.). This is also when a sports discipline becomes a convenient media to pursue non-sportsmanship agendas<sup>9</sup>.

Not limited to soccer, all sport disciplines represent sociocultural phenomena that hold intricate and complex structures. At the base, sport is a way of life, which makes it a clearly cultural element, since the very culture is also the way of life. There are various planes that make sports a cultural space. Firstly, it is the physical activity that gathers players to a common ground to make effort together, often under supervision of an instructor or coach. This is the initial layer of sports as sociocultural phenomenon, but also there are many persons who train individually, but how and why they do it, seen from collective point of view, also make it a part of social and cultural sphere. Secondly, sports are trained in order to develop skills which are needed in various means of competition (one-to-one, team competition, etc.) that attract spectators (discipline/team followers). Here, another sociocultural phenomenon may be identified, as sport disciplines may be considered as social spectacles, as well as spaces for expression of sociocultural identities.

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<sup>8</sup> Fabio Chisari, *When football went global: televising the 1966 World Cup*, “Historical Social Research”, vol. 31, no. 1 2006, pp. 43-46.

<sup>9</sup> Macon Benoit, *The politicization of football: the European game and the approach to the Second World War*, “Soccer & Society”, vol. 9(4), 2008, pp. 533-535.

Furthermore, the negative side of sports is that some social pathologies may print their presence in the form of violence, vandalism, hatred, and many other categories (crime)<sup>10</sup>.

In the concept of Heinemann (1995), the value of sports as sociocultural phenomenon should be considered as having insights into<sup>11</sup>:

- the consequences and effects of sport on individuals, specific groups and social structures, particularly athletes, spectators, specialised institutions and society as a whole,
- personal and institutional value criteria concerning different types and models of sport activities, historical shifts, specificities of a country etc.

P. Nosal takes soccer from the perspective of “us” and “other” making it a powerful means for shaping and expressing identities among soccer followers. In this approach, that is based on the concept of the Polish philosopher Zygmunt Bauman, “ourness” and “otherness” in soccer is expressed with various means. The highest level of such comparison takes places among nations, states, cities, markets. But on the lowest, “ourness” and “otherness” exhibit in club names, names of soccer players, legends, shirts, scarfs, sport fields, field lines and opposite goals<sup>12</sup>.

This distinction of “our” and “other” associates with the discussion on how soccer may be employed in order to shape and evolve group identities. In social sciences, every individual need identity, but not only in a single dimension. If one would limit to individual identity (person with name, surname, gender and some familial origin) it would never be enough, since there are various component of group identities, which imminently put groups of humans together and juxtapose them to other groups. In this case fandom-based identity is also crucial since it is based on key attributes: following a local club or national representation. Why soccer-related identities are important to persons is the scale of attendance to football matches in person (in stadiums) or in media<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Yuri Naumenko, *Sports as a social phenomenon*, “SHS Web of Conferences”, vol. 55, 2018, pp. 1-4.

<sup>11</sup> Dragan Milanović, Zrinko Custonja, Dario Skegro, *Sports a social phenomenon*, “Research Papers in Economics”, vol. 4, 2015, 603-605.

<sup>12</sup> Przemysław Nosal, *The Social Phenomenon of Football: Sport catalogue of the Others. ‘The Otherness’ as a perspective in social sport studies*, „Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica”, vol. 16(4), 2015, pp. 16-18.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Bullough, Lee Edmondson, Andrew Mills, *Does anyone care where they are from? The importance of locally trained players in English football*, [in:] Kausik Banyopadhyay, (ed.), *Why fans matter? Fans and identities in soccer world*, Routledge, Abingdon 2024, pp. 139-141.

In another approach, soccer represents various discipline related-cultures. In various sociological theories, soccer is only a continuation of what the humankind expected and longer for, for millenia, thus, seeing in soccer: “a lay religion” (in Hobsbawm’s theory of “history from below”), social drama (Turner) and a form of “carnivalisation” (Bakhtin’s social theory). In all these theoretical concepts, soccer is composition of symbolic and sociocultural elements which resemble arena, carnival, theatre scene or altar, and all involved play roles which metaphorically are associated with these deeply embedded cultural spaces. From another angle football cultures can be actor-oriented: coaching cultures, player cultures, spectator/follower cultures, managerial cultures, media cultures and many more<sup>14</sup>.

Delving into the field of soccer as sociocultural phenomenon, asks to see what processes are actuated in human minds, what clearly shows that there is also some psychology on individual and group level. Taken from a distinction of positive and negative psychology, soccer as a discipline that individuals participate, or spectacle that they watch, involved various moods and emotions. The most basic categories of them are<sup>15</sup>:

- positive inner emotions,
- positive interactive emotions,
- negative inner emotions,
- negative interactive emotions (non-offensive and offensive).

Positive inner emotions that accompany soccer players and watchers may be explained as such states that are experienced within human mind and body: feeling of belonging, pleasure and being entertained, joy and fun. Positive interactive emotions may be often mistake with those taking place in inner space of human mind, but they are also accompanied with behavioural intention and action (chanting, laughing, making jump-ups, etc.). Negative emotions are: sorrow, anger, sadness, anxiety, resentment. Negative interactive emotions that are non-offensive often take form of collective booing, whistling. The last one, which also takes discussion closer to the key interest of this thesis are negative interactive emotions that are also offensive for the counterparts. These may

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<sup>14</sup> Gary Armstrong, Richard Giulianotii, *Entering the field: the new perspectives on world football*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1997, pp. 11-16.

<sup>15</sup> Bettina Friedrich, Oliver J. Manson, *Applying Positive Psychology Principles to Soccer Interventions for People with Mental Health Difficulties*, “Psychology”, vol. 9, 2019, pp. 373-376.

be expressed in the form of: swearing, but from this point various forms of violence is involved in these emotions: provoking fight, throwing objects at the spectators or game players, making threats, mutilating, beating and many others. If these emotions are not targeted on individuals, they take form of vandalism<sup>16</sup>.

### 1.3. Functions of literature

The main function of literature is to be a part of culture. Considered as means of registering the contemporary and preserving the past for future, literature is a symbolic form of cultural memory<sup>17</sup>. The reason why this is so is that literature is an open concept that is able to harness all the possible ideas. It, therefore, plays another role that is called a concept of extended human mind<sup>18</sup>.

D. Ulicka recognizes two basic functions of literature<sup>19</sup>:

- literature serves a cognitive-epistemic function which makes it a tool to understand all the concepts of the world, factual and imaginary, direct or abstract,
- literature that helps understand literature (literature that studies literature, critical literature).

Cognitive function means that literature helps develop mind, while epistemic function is to understand the world and gain knowledge about it. On the other hand, a part of literature is comprises of ideas about how various parts of literature can be interpreted in terms of their more or less abstract meanings in literature genres, epochs, schools or particular authors (consecutively given examples: studies on horror literature, studies of

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<sup>16</sup> A. Timur Sevincer, Greta Wagner, Gabriele Oettingen, *Positive fantasies and negative emotions in soccer fans*, "Cognition and Emotion", 2010, pp. 1-5; Joel Rookwood, Ramon Spaaij, *Violence in Football (Soccer): Overview, Prevalence and Risk Factors*, [in:] Peter Sturmeij, (ed.), *The Wiley Handbook of Violence and Aggression*, Wiley, Hoboken 2017, pp. 1-3.

<sup>17</sup> Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, Springer, Berlin-Cham 2011, pp. 144-146

<sup>18</sup> Nancy Easterlin. *The Functions of Literature and the Evolution of Extended Mind*, "New Literary History", vol. 44, 2013, pp. 661-662.

<sup>19</sup> Danuta Ulicka. *O funkcji poznawczej „literatury” i wiedzy o literaturze” (tezy o przyszłej antropologii literaturoznawstwa)*, „Teksty Drugie”, 5, 2005, pp. 27-29.

19<sup>th</sup>-century positivist literature, studies in German School of Horror, studies in Edgar Allan Poe's literary output)<sup>20</sup>.

Another categorization of literature's function considers<sup>21</sup>:

- social functions,
- educational functions,
- persuasive functions,
- ideological functions,
- therapeutical functions.

Social function of literature relates to various dimensions of social life, that said it can shape social skills of the persons who are involved as readers, writers and other parties. Educational function of literature spans from the basic function regarding reading and writing education, to such extent, in which readers use literature to shape their knowledge in specific areas. Persuasive function of literature is explained by the fact that it can shape beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of various concepts. Ideological function means that it may shape the structure of mind of the audiences, convincing them in direct or indirect ways to support an ideology and live by it, or to criticize and fight another. Therapeutical function of literature enters among those groups of persons who experience various mental health problems, regardless if they are mild or serious conditions<sup>22</sup>.

In this part, it may be discussed what functions may soccer-related literature play. Likely, depending on the type of soccer-related literary works, they may perform similar functions. Social function of soccer literature may relate to how audiences shape their own social skills related to this sport discipline. This may be understood as sportsmanship, co-operation, conflict resolution and other skills, when readers are players at the same time. In the other way round, when readers are just followers and spectators, soccer literature may help them understand negative sides of soccer games and shift their belief towards i.e. not assuming or renouncing violence. On the other hand, educational function of soccer literature may be related to rules and playing techniques and strategies, but also, variety of exercises that enhance body capacity. Persuasive and ideological function in soccer literature may not be as visible, as the others, but it may apply when books and

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<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, pp. 29-33.

<sup>21</sup> Nancy Easterlin. Op. cit., pp. 663-665.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem.

novels on this sport discipline may treat a specific soccer club as a centre of specific ideology of zealous followers, which may be dangerous, especially when it promotes violence or sectarian thinking<sup>23</sup>.

#### 1.4. Types of soccer-related literature by subject.

In this subchapter, the author will make an attempt to categorize soccer-related literature. Here, the scope of this literature will be presented, which means that soccer is not only a sport discipline where the main audience are followers and players, but also non-playing professionals.

##### 1.4.1. Soccer professional literature (technical, economic, managerial, sport health, sport psychology, etc.)

Soccer professional literature plays the main function that is shaping skills in variety of fields that may involve players and non-playing professionals. Professional literature for soccer players involves playing rules, playing technique as well as exercise conduct<sup>24</sup>. From the perspective of coaches, there is also widely available literature that regulates various field of soccer: strategy and tactics, organisation of training, guidebooks for organisation and participating in various championships (league regulations, legal regulations, etc.) and many more. There are also various parties involved into the discipline who are not players, but they perform proxy tasks: physiotherapy, sport diets, physical exercise.

For professionals who are involved in managerial matters, wide literature may cover such areas as legal/regulatory, economic and technical themes, which discuss in details how a soccer team can be efficiently run in various conditions. It is also very

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<sup>23</sup> Sean Brown. *Football Fans Around the World: from Supporters to Fanatics*, Taylor&Francis: London 2013, pp. 12-15.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Prickett. *Soccer's Principles of Play*, Dark River, New York 2021, pp. 6-8.

important for the management how to deal with investment, debt management and player transfer and acquisition<sup>25</sup>.

## Literature

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Roderick. *The Work of Professional Football: A Labour of Love?* Taylor&Francis: New York-London 2006, pp. 19-22.

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19. Danuta Ulicka. *O funkcji poznawczej „literatury” i wiedzy o literaturze” (tezy o przyszłej antropologii literaturoznawstwa)*, „Teksty Drugie”, 5, 2005, pp. 26-41.

Title	Author	Category/Theme	Country	Year
<b>Fever Pitch</b>	<b>Nick Hornby</b>	<b>Autofiction/Football fandom</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>1992</b>
<b>The Damned Utd</b>	<b>David Peace</b>	<b>Literary fiction/Historical</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2006</b>
How Steeple Sinderby Wanderers Won the F.A. Cup	J.L. Carr	Satire/Underdog	UK	1975
January Window	Philip Kerr	Crime/Premier League	UK	2014
Hand of God	Philip Kerr	Crime/Premier League	UK	2015
False Nine	Philip Kerr	Crime/Premier League	UK	2016

LS92	Billy Morris	Contemporary football fiction	UK	2017
Birdsong on Holbeck Moor	Billy Morris	Contemporary/Regional	UK	2018
They Used to Play on Grass	Terry Venables & Gordon Williams	Futuristic football fiction	UK	1972
The Football Factory	John King	Hooliganism/Social realism	UK	1996
The Ball of Fortune	Arnold Bennett & Edward Knoblock	Early football fiction	UK	1924
The Flying Fifty-Five	Edgar Wallace	Sports thriller	UK	1922
Grey Timothy	Edgar Wallace	Sports thriller	UK	1913
A Turf Conspiracy	Nat Gould	Early sports fiction	UK	1916
There Ain't No Justice	James Curtis	Social realism	UK	1937
The Chance of a Lifetime	Nat Gould	Early football drama	UK	1910
This Sporting Life	David Storey	Sports realism	UK	1960
<b>Keeper</b>	<b>Mal Peet</b>	<b>YA/Magical realism</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>The Penalty</b>	<b>Mal Peet</b>	<b>YA/Magical realism</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2006</b>
Dead Cert	Dick Francis	Sports-crime	UK	1962
Nerve	Dick Francis	Sports-crime	UK	1964
<b>Under Orders</b>	<b>Dick Francis</b>	<b>Sports-crime</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2006</b>
A New Formation	Calum Jacobs	Cultural fiction/Hybrid	UK	2022
A Woman's Game	Suzanne Wrack	Cultural/Women's football	UK	2022
<b>The Outcast</b>	<b>Sadie Jones</b>	<b>Coming-of-age (football elements)</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Headhunters</b>	<b>John King</b>	<b>Hooliganism/Subculture</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>1997</b>
<b>England Away</b>	<b>John King</b>	<b>Hooliganism/Identity</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>1998</b>
<b>The Red Card</b>	<b>Alan Gibbons</b>	<b>YA/Social issues</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>1996</b>
<b>The Transfer</b>	<b>Terence Blacker</b>	<b>Satire/Football business</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>1999</b>

<b>The Manager</b>	<b>Mike Carson</b>	<b>Fictionalized management drama</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>The Team</b>	<b>Mick Dennis</b>	<b>Football club drama</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>The Dressing Room</b>	<b>Jonathan Wilson</b>	<b>Fictional football culture</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>The Cup</b>	<b>Terry Venables</b>	<b>Football thriller</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>1991</b>
<b>The Beautiful Game</b>	<b>David Conn</b>	<b>Fictionalized football culture</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>The Hard Yards</b>	<b>Paul Coggins</b>	<b>Football + crime</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>The Footballer's Wife</b>	<b>Kerry Katona</b>	<b>Football celebrity fiction</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>The Footballer's Mistress</b>	<b>Jilly Cooper</b>	<b>Romance/Football</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>The Manager's Tale</b>	<b>Neil Warnock</b>	<b>Fictionalized football world</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>2007</b>