

In chapter twelve the author begins to detail some of the significant and tumultuous personal issues confronting Roberts as a gay rugby league footballer. As a narrative emphasising the hardships he faced, the author has provided an enlightening account, however, it is arguable that this requires more than mere narrative. The chapter passes without evoking the emotion of the reader by addressing the many challenges or thought provoking issues and concepts. Similarly the final chapter fails to create an impact and simply takes the reader through a sequential transition through Roberts' life. It does, however, provide some analytical discussion regarding the notion of homosexuality and homophobia from both a general and sporting perspective.

Finding Out will appeal to a broad audience of rugby league supporters and other sporting enthusiasts. It will also appeal to individuals who are struggling to come to terms with their own sexual identity including those who have struggled through it. From an academic perspective it is contentious whether the book was ever intended for literary debate. However, it does provide insight into the life of a well known Australian sporting hero and emphasises some of the issues he was forced to confront before identifying himself publicly as a gay man in the masculinised domain of rugby league football.

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Simon Kelner, *To Jerusalem and Back*. London: Macmillan, 1996. 171pp. £14.99.

The consequences of the struggle between Rupert Murdoch and Kerry Packer over Australian Pay-TV dominance were considerable. Indeed, they were transferred into a clash over rugby league, and ultimately spawned the Australian Super League leading to a split in Australian rugby league and in 1998 to a compromise set-up that favoured many of the Super League objectives. Borne of the Australian struggle was the 'European Super League', a calculated gamble by Murdoch to secure global dominance over the professional game. Simon Kelner's book is the first account dealing with the impacts of the implementation of the European branch of the Super league operation. While not marked by the same bitter internal divisions as its Australian counterpart, the European competition represented equally as large an upheaval for British Rugby League. Since 1895, the game in Britain was a symbol of northern English resilience and working class identity. It was transformed from a cultural bastion shrouded in insularity, to a pawn in a broader global struggle. The momentous nature of these changes

are captured by Kelner's evocative title *To Jerusalem and Back*.

Kelner investigates the clash between the parochial community attachments of British Rugby League and the 'global vision' of Rupert Murdoch's Super League. The inextricable link between the European Super League and the Antipodean version suggests that this book will hold an interest for the Australian readership concerned with the wider manifestations of the struggle that has so divided the game in Australia. The appeal of *To Jerusalem and Back*, however, extends beyond a mere interest in Rugby League. It will also be of interest to those concerned with the global versus local tensions of the burgeoning globalisation debate.

Kelner's central question is: 'A heritage betrayed, or a brave new world?'. He sets the context with an historical view of the development of the game and its cultural attachments, including his own background as a Swinton fanatic. He then meticulously documents the development of the Super League, quite literally, taking an hour by hour approach, from the time the British Rugby League was first contacted by the Murdoch organisation. Additionally, a profile of Maurice Lindsay, the game's chief administrator outlines the magnitude of the passions aroused by the Super League and the momentous changes for the game that it represented. Central to Kelner's account is a reliance on the accounts of key personnel associated with the Super League: the game's administrators, Murdoch's television executives and various club officials. Kelner's fluent style, humour and skilful integration of comments and quotes provide a concise picture of the development of the Super League. With great clarity the author expresses the hopes and fears of the key figures, including the passions aroused by the proposed team mergers and new commercial priorities.

The glaring omission from Kelner's account is the perspective of the fans and clubs affected. By equating his own distaste for the innovations precipitated by the Super League, such as team nicknames, pre-match entertainment and mascots, with those of all fans, Kelner presents an over simplified picture. The description of team nicknames as 'crass re-inventions that will fool nobody' (p. 22) is too simplistic. My own research and interview data suggests that local reactions to such 'global' ephemera are considerably more complex. For example, while reactions to mascots have been marked by resistance from some fans, they have been embraced by others, or have been imbued with specific local meanings and interpretations in other instances. The latter reactions may signal the emergence of 'hybrid' cultural elements associated with the game. Both the powerful forces of the Super League and the resilience of the local culture of Rugby League are pervasive. Consequently, many fan reactions are in fact at a mid-point somewhere between Kelner's *Jerusalem* and the commercial priorities of the Super League. A closer analysis of generation, parochial and class factors is necessary in gauging cultural reactions in the case of Rugby League. Kelner's

position is only one interpretation.

A further criticism is Kelner's tendency for 'nostalgic wallowing' in the working class origins and community attachments of Rugby League. Kelner is certainly not alone in this trait which seems endemic to the recent literature dealing with the intensity of the experience of Rugby League loyalties. The fact is, the game in Britain in recent years has been subject to a substantive reformulation along commercial lines, considerably blurring the traditional cultural parameters of the game. Much of this reformulation occurred prior to the Super League, so readers should look critically at Kelner's argument.

The principal strength of the book lies in the opening and closing chapters that explore the tensions between historical legacy and commercial logic and highlight the uneasy alliance between the game and the eclectic demands of television. For those seeking a detailed and reflective account of the conflicts precipitated by the emergence of the European Super League *To Jerusalem and Back* is an excellent choice. Those wanting a more substantive and in depth investigation of the conflicts at the local level and the broader context of the changing dynamics of globalised sport will find the book leaves many questions unanswered.

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Garry Linnell, *Football LTD: The Inside Story of the AFL*. Sydney: Ironbark, 1995, 393 pp. A\$17.95.

Garry Linnell, who is a senior journalist with the *Age* newspaper in Melbourne, Australia has written a serious, but highly readable book on the politics of Australian football. Linnell used a massive amount of primary research data to tell the story of how the Victorian Football League (VFL), the most powerful Australian football competition in Australia, was transformed into a national competition. A combination of newspaper articles, club and central administration documents, and 140 in-depth interviews with football officials ensures that this story is both credible and revealing.

According to Linnell, the initial impetus for the restructuring of the VFL came from Allan Aylett, a former North Melbourne player and club president, who was elected as VFL President in 1979. Aylett brought to the VFL not just a rampant enthusiasm but also a grand vision for the game. Linnell divides this vision into four parts. The first part involved a ground rationalisation program