



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

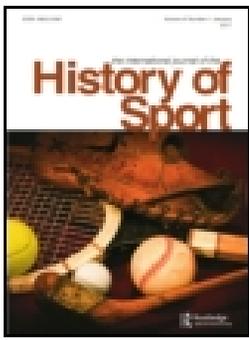
*Female Spectators, Agency, and the Politics of
Pleasure: An Historical Case Study from Australian
Rules Football*

This is the Published version of the following publication

Klugman, Matthew (2017) Female Spectators, Agency, and the Politics of
Pleasure: An Historical Case Study from Australian Rules Football. The
International Journal of the History of Sport. ISSN 0952-3367

The publisher's official version can be found at
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09523367.2017.1332047>
Note that access to this version may require subscription.

Downloaded from VU Research Repository <https://vuir.vu.edu.au/33881/>



Female Spectators, Agency, and the Politics of Pleasure: An Historical Case Study from Australian Rules Football

Matthew Klugman

To cite this article: Matthew Klugman (2017): Female Spectators, Agency, and the Politics of Pleasure: An Historical Case Study from Australian Rules Football, The International Journal of the History of Sport, DOI: [10.1080/09523367.2017.1332047](https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2017.1332047)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2017.1332047>



© 2017 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 07 Jun 2017.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 157



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Female Spectators, Agency, and the Politics of Pleasure: An Historical Case Study from Australian Rules Football

Matthew Klugman 

Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

ABSTRACT

This paper explores descriptions, commentary and critiques regarding the Melbourne women who came to follow Australian Rules football with notable passion in the late 1800s and early 1900s. While it is known that the press represented female spectators in various ways, the depictions of the women who shouted and 'barracked' in a manner similar to the men have not been studied in detail. This paper aims to redress this by drawing on the women's and 'social' pages of Melbourne newspapers, especially those of the 'Ladies Letters' published in *Melbourne Punch*. Purportedly written by upper class women, these letters provide an intriguing perspective on the zealous spectator culture that was emerging around Australian Rules football, the women who were a key part of this culture, and the broader debates and politics around women's rights and gender identity. At issue are intersecting questions of pleasure, rationality, class, gender and race that shed light on the new cultural category of the 'barracker'.

KEYWORDS

Gender; pleasure; agency; spectators; Australian Rules football

Introduction

On Saturday, 3 July 1886, a journalist with the pen-name 'Viva' provided 'A Social Sketch' of the sport that later came to be called Australian Rules football. Writing in her 'Ladies Column' in the Ladies Newspaper supplement of Melbourne's *Weekly Times*, Viva began her sketch by noting that 'From a sociological point of view a great football match is a curious and not uninteresting spectacle'.¹ Viva's curiosity was sparked in part by the behaviour of the crowd. Each team was supported by their own 'partisans', every moment of the game was 'watched with the intensest [*sic*] interest', applause was regularly 'rapturous' or occurred like 'thunder', hats were waved, and at times shouts were 'unanimous'.² Viva was particularly interested in the way Melbourne's 'favourite game ... attracted crowds of interested spectators of all ranks and ages, and both sexes'.³ Indeed, the crowd was so 'heterogeneous' that to describe it in detail seemed 'impossible'.⁴ Nevertheless, Viva was able to confidently assert that 'Of the popularity of football and footballers among women, there can be no doubt':

CONTACT Matthew Klugman  matthew.klugman@vu.edu.au

Young, soft hearted girls, who would not 'tread upon a worm,' avow that football matches are 'awfully jolly,' and seem to regard accidents as a necessary part of the amusement. At the contest of the reds and the blues, a great proportion of the spectators were ladies.⁵

Viva spent much of the rest of her column attempting the 'impossible' task of chronicling the different women and men attending the game until 'Wearied with the shouts of the spectators, the multitude of strange faces' she 'turned away'.⁶ As Viva left the ground she 'could not help wondering whether, in the histories of a century hence, a sentence to this effect will not find its place':

Among the sports indulged in by our forefathers at the end of the last century was a favourite game to which the name of football was given. This game was played by forty bare-armed athletes, who consumed a quantity of time and energy in kicking a leathern ball from one end of a piece of ground to the other. Their manner of playing was so rough that broken limbs were an every-day occurrence, and deaths were not uncommon, notwithstanding which football long continued a sport witnessed and enjoyed not only by men, but by refined and cultivated women.⁷

My interest in Viva's piece lies not in her claim that a significant number of women attended games of Australian Rules football (played by men) in Melbourne in the late 1800s – for this has been well established – but in the way that she represents these women.⁸ For Viva foregrounds the pleasure that these female spectators were finding in watching men play a brutal game. A pleasure that could, in her eyes, be enjoyed without the loss of dignity or respectability by both the women and men in attendance. Such a depiction was in stark contrast with the famed column written by the English 'Vagabond' (John Stanley James) in Melbourne's *Argus* newspaper a decade earlier that decried the way the violent game degraded the 'mad' spectators 'who howled, and shrieked, and applauded' in delight at the rough play.⁹ Viva's sketch of women and men at the football also differed from the derogatory accounts of working class women spectators a decade later in the mid-1890s, which, as June Senyard has shown, caricatured them as irrational viragos predisposed to acts of verbal and physical aggression.¹⁰ Yet, Viva's piece also complicates Senyard's argument that while their status 'saved' middle class women from 'too downward a spiral' into shameful vulgarity, they were differentiated as being less rational than 'their menfolk' and thus 'they could not master the demands of watching and understanding the game'.¹¹ Although Viva notes that the men seem to have a more singular interest in the game and some women focussed more on fashion than the activities on the field, she also writes of another woman,

evidently an authority on football, who seems to know the Christian names of all the players, and deals out information regarding them and the game in a high- pitched voice to her two little girls in crimson plush and her boy of nine.¹²

Indeed, there is no sense in Viva's column that the women attending the game were less rational than the men, nor that they understood less of it, even if their interest in events seemed broader than that of the men.

The politics of Viva's 'Ladies Column' were evident again a week later when she began by discussing the 'Australian Girl of the Period'.¹³ Responding to the pioneering English journalist Eliza Lynn Linton's famous damning article on 'The Girl of the Period', and the vigorous discussion that had ensued in the 20 years since its publication, Viva noted that while the phrase was 'often used in disparagement', she was going to defend the 'Mauds, Victorias and Gertrudes of today'.¹⁴ And defend them Viva did, praising the self-sufficiency, striking intensity, studiousness and even frivolity of the young (white middle and upper

class) women of Australia. Noting that although this frivolity ‘does not seem commendable,’ Viva explained that the

very energy that exhausts itself in the intense pursuit of pleasure would lead her [the Australian Girl of the Period], if it were necessary, to tend the wounded on the battlefield, heedless of danger, or head an expedition to the South Pole.¹⁵

Viva’s implicit argument was that the current ‘age of progression’ meant that not only could these young women excel in traditional female duties (not resting until her jellies were ‘perfect, her cakes renowned’), they could also take their place alongside men in many of the spheres that women had traditionally been excluded from, such as leading explorations to dangerous places or enjoying the spectacle of a rough game.¹⁶

In some ways Viva can be seen as prefiguring the British women (and women’s periodicals more generally) in the 1890s who contested popular dystopian representations of the ‘New Woman’ by creating an alternate discourse of the New Woman as a reasonable and thoughtful figure whose emergence was going to improve, rather than threaten, the nation state.¹⁷ As Michelle Elizabeth Tusan notes:

In essence, the New Woman represented feminists’ Utopian vision of the model social reformer. Her interest in politics and social justice, however, were not represented as a challenge to her dedication to the home, but rather were depicted as an extension of her domestic duties.¹⁸

Yet, while these British writers seem to have focussed on questions of politics and social welfare, Viva’s defence of frivolity and pleasure also prefigure the debates over the virtues – or lack thereof – of the so-called ‘Modern Girl’ which characterized much of the contestations over appropriate female gender identity in the early 1900s.¹⁹

Viva’s column was not necessarily unique or influential, but it does highlight some points of continuity and associated entanglement between the various debates and contestations over the categories of the Girl of the Period, New Woman, and Modern Girls.²⁰ That a columnist for one of Victoria’s newspapers was engaging with these topics is not necessarily surprising, for Victoria had the most radical movement for women’s suffrage in the colonies that later became Australia. Not only was the first suffrage organization in the Australian colonies founded in Melbourne in 1884, but the broader Victorian suffrage movement was ‘associated with a more critical analysis of the woman’s place in society’ than those in other states.²¹ This movement had significant support, and in 1891 a 260 metre long petition of signatures from almost 30,000 women calling for the right to vote was presented to the Victorian Parliament.²² Yet, the backlash to this movement was often profound, and anxieties over the radical politics of these women is seen by scholars as one of the key reasons why (non-Indigenous) Victorian women were the last in Australia to gain the right to vote in state elections, having to wait until 1908, 14 more years than the first in South Australia.²³

Sport – in Victoria, Australia and much of the rest of the western world – was often at the centre of the modern anxieties and hopes around the Girls of the Period, the New Women, and the Modern Girls, as women took up, or were prevented from taking up, new leisure activities such as cycling and the recently codified forms of football.²⁴ At stake were debates over pleasure, health, and agency, along with the rights and responsibilities of women. However, while there is now a rich literature of scholarship exploring the history of women’s engagement with physical culture, the history of women as spectators has been more neglected.²⁵ A substantial body of scholarship is emerging around the women who have played Australian Rules football, for instance, but the early female fans of the sport

have not been studied in any great detail.²⁶ Yet, as Rob Hess has noted, women made up a notable proportion of the crowds that soon flocked to watch games from the mid-1860s when the game started to become popular after its codification in 1859.²⁷ In his groundbreaking exploration of the many roles that women played in this emerging culture, Hess observed the way the many women involved with the early fan culture around the game were represented by the press in different ways – sometimes as ‘passive onlookers’, sometimes as ‘voyeurs’, sometimes as passionate ‘barrackers’, and sometimes as ‘civilizers’ – but the effects and politics of these representations are yet to be studied.²⁸ Senyard’s similarly groundbreaking work on the more general representation of Australian Rules spectators hints at these effects; however, her interest lay predominantly in the class politics of these rather than the gender identities that were at stake regarding those women who were fervent fans of the game.²⁹

Melbourne has frequently been celebrated and decried as a sports-mad city, with many visitors and migrants particularly struck by the zeal with which numerous citizens follow the local game of Australian Rules football.³⁰ The fervour of the many female citizens who attend games is a key part of this. Indeed, Australian Rules football is often lauded as a unique modern contact sport for the way women seem to have made up a very substantial proportion of its crowds since its emergence as a popular sport.³¹ Yet, we are missing historical studies that focus on this phenomenon and explore the pleasures that the early female spectators found in watching the games played by men, that trace the agency of these women in choosing to attend, that examine the way men reacted to these women, and that chart the possible anxieties about gender and specifically femininity that this occasioned. These are important absences because Australian Rules football became one of those sites of dominant popular culture that soon began shaping, maintaining and regulating expressions and ideologies of masculinity.³² So just how did the early female spectators relate to the men playing the game for the entertainment, adoration, and also criticism, of those who watched them? And how did these women fit into the broader spectator culture? For even now the place, passions and knowledge of the women involved in the broader culture around men’s games of Australian Rules football are often contested. Female fans are still frequently accused of being ‘merely’ voyeurs, while female journalists and other women working in the football industry continue to have their expertise questioned and undermined in misogynistic ways.³³ There are underlying questions to address then, regarding what it has meant for women to become zealous – that is, noticeably passionate – followers of a manly game, if this has changed (and if so, how), and what was at stake.

This paper does not seek to provide definitive answers to these questions, but rather to begin the process of addressing them. Drawing on both physical and electronic archives (via the National Library of Australia’s *Trove* database), I aim to explore the thoughts, reflections and opinions that women had of the early female supporters of Australian Rules football, as well as to set these in their broader context. In so doing, I am following the by now well-trodden path of exploring women’s columns and periodicals to extend our understanding of women’s involvement in sport and sporting cultures more broadly.³⁴ More specifically, I will focus on the ‘Ladies Letter’ in *Melbourne Punch* (later *Punch*) for the rather pragmatic reason that this column lasted for a considerable period of time, mentioned Australian Rules football quite often, and a number of the people who authored it, did so for long periods of time, making it possible to get a sense of their relationship to the game and its spectator culture.

Women's pages, columns, and letters in newspapers and periodicals were a mixed blessing for the journalists like Viva who wrote them. Popularized in the mid-to-late 1800s, they were generally (but not always) authored by women, and thus created regular space for female journalists, but also had the effect of often limiting these journalists to writing about topics thought to be of express interest to other women, which often revolved around fashion, gossip, entertainment, food and the domestic sphere.³⁵ Yet, as Jenny Coleman has shown with regard to New Zealand, while these columns often re-inscribed normative gender relations, they could also be a space where gender relations were challenged.³⁶

One of many colonial imitations of the London *Punch*, the Melbourne version of *Punch* began in 1855. It succeeded in part by incorporating the *Melbourne Bulletin* in 1886 and then featuring regular reporting of society news and other forms of entertainment alongside its trademark satire.³⁷ The *Melbourne Punch* began to feature a society 'Ladies Letter' around this time, with initially Gladys writing to Belle, then Ereka to Isla, before settling on Rhoda writing to Esme from 1887 to March 1895. This was followed by Minetta writing to Mab until 1907, with Clio then writing to Peg from late September 1907 to 1918. The result was three quite different women's voices over relatively extended periods of time who commented on the spectator culture emerging around Australian Rules football.

Football Spectators as Portrayed in *Punch's* 'Ladies Letter'

It took some time before the *Punch* 'Ladies Letter' mentioned the spectator culture around Australian Rules football in any detail, although before then there were passing references. In 1887, the second year of the letter, Gladys wrote to Belle that although her father was 'by no means an excitable man', the elections to the board of the Bank of Victoria made him 'wild with joy – just like a barracker of the University football team after a success against St. Kilda or Richmond'.³⁸ Coined in the 1870s, the term 'barracker' was becoming popular by this time, and referred to the act of barracking – shouting out abuse or encouragement to players and officials.³⁹ It was often used as a perjorative term, and Senyard argues that it was deployed to separate the working class from middle class spectators; however, Gladys' 1887 letter shows that barracker was already being used to describe the passions of the more middle class (and above) University supporters.⁴⁰

In contrast to Gladys, Rhoda, the first of the longer-term letter writers, looked down upon the passions for football. In 1888 she hoped that some kind of refined leisure culture such as music would replace football as the key Saturday entertainment.⁴¹ Five years later in 1893 Rhoda told a warning tale of a 'poor girl' who was careless in her choice of hat colour during the football season when walking in Geelong, and unwittingly wore the colours of Geelong on a day when they played St Kilda:

Imagine the terror of the girl, who is of a very quiet, retiring disposition, to find herself surrounded by a crowd of St. Kilda supporters, who noisily condemned her alleged sympathy with the Geelongese! Hot on their heels came a contingent of Geelong gamins, who cheered her lustily for her support of the victorious team, and actually escorted her to her destination, the poor girl, who was as much a stranger to them as she is to football ethics, feeling all the time that she had fallen among the Philistines.⁴²

Yet, while football was not of much interest to Rhoda, there were already signs that some 'ladies' were becoming passionate barrackers. In 1890, for example, the *Weekly Times*' regular male tidbits columnist 'John Peerybingle' related an anecdote of taking his

son to a game.⁴³ Unlike Peerybingle, his son was, ‘of course’, a ‘partisan’.⁴⁴ He “barracked” for Essendon’ and ‘roared and shouted with delight whenever Essendon prevailed’.⁴⁵ The noise ‘attracted the attention of a lady standing near’ who seemed ‘quite delighted with the youngster’.⁴⁶ As a proud ‘male parent’, Peerybingle was pleased by this development, noting that ‘evidently [she] was a lady of good taste so far as smart little boys were concerned’.⁴⁷ However, when Essendon missed an easy shot at goal, Peerybingle heard ‘to my amazement’, the lady exclaim ‘in a tone of disgust: “Bah! That’s So-and-so – he can’t kick for sour apples to-day!”’. Peerybingle:

looked at the speaker curiously and more closely, and saw that she wore the Essendon colours pinned conspicuously upon her breast. Then the truth dawned upon me, and her interest in my little urchin was made plain – they were both ‘barracking’ for the same club.⁴⁸

The 1890s – and 1896 in particular – saw the deployment of the caricatures of violent and cruel working class female barrackers that Senyard has analyzed.⁴⁹ Yet, there were also alternative representations of middle class women supporting their football teams passionately like men did.⁵⁰ And in 1900 Melbourne’s labour newspaper *Tocsin* proclaimed that not only did barracking transcend ‘social [class] distinction’, it also transcended ‘sex’, and ‘the female enthusiast, both highborn lady and daughter of the people, forms not an unfamiliar variation in Australian crowds’.⁵¹ In a nod to the suffragist politics of the time, the piece noted that women barrackers:

have even manifested themselves at election meetings, and, in course of time, with that eccentric process of development to which all young countries are prone, the Australian female Barracker may yet achieve the distinction of being remarkable enough in character to be given a place in a menagerie of curiosities for foreign exhibition.⁵²

Four years later ‘Rover’, a football correspondent for the *Weekly Times*, observed that it ‘has not transpired whether, in the view of “the new girl”, public barracking involves any loss of dignity, but this again made no difference’, the ladies present at a game were ‘all guilty, if there be any guilt’ in shouting out loudly.⁵³ ‘Football is still a man’s game’ concluded Rover, ‘but the fashion of barracking is under invasion by the gentler sex, who bid fair to add it to their many modern captures’.⁵⁴

In these examples passionate female spectators are depicted by the men who have observed them as curious, amazing, and remarkable, though not as less rational than male spectators. While the writers did not directly criticize the women, there is still, however, a sense that they are somehow out of place. These women were going to watch men play a brutal game in significant numbers, ‘invading’ a male space with seeming impunity, and guilty of taking pleasure in shouting out at the players and umpires just like the men did. And yet if their behaviour at football matches was improper – and all these snippets hint that their behaviour was at least questionable – the female barrackers seem unapologetic for it. If, as Senyard argues, status prevented the middle class women from being represented as vulgar, these examples nevertheless convey both male discomfort and female agency in these alternative characterizations of female barrackers.⁵⁵ In contrast ‘Minetta’ – the author of the ‘Ladies Letters’ that followed Rhoda – came to celebrate the passions of female spectators of Australian Rules football, after initially expressing some ambivalence about the game and the fan culture around it.

In 1896 Minetta appeared more interested in the implications that football had for fashion, noting the beauty of the red and white Spring tints of those who followed South Melbourne, and bemoaning that

is hard on the patriotism of Collingwood ladies to have their footballers adopt such unromantic colours as black and white, and on Saturday it seemed as though a number of magpies had strayed amongst a large flock of galah parrots.⁵⁶

Then almost a year later in August 1897, Minetta began her column with a letter that she herself had received from 'Nellie' describing the humorous, if distressing, experience that Nellie had of going to a game between Carlton and St Kilda with her sister Clara and her brother Jack who 'showing a very imposing English tourist' around Melbourne.⁵⁷ Based on Jack's earlier tales, Nellie and Clara expected 'to see a wonderful game played by overpoweringly courteous men' only to find themselves viewing 'more fighting and villainously rough play than we expect to witness for the next ten years'.⁵⁸ Although Nellie looked like she was calmly observing the play, she 'was really too frightened to move', and on returning home Clara made football a 'forbidden topic'.⁵⁹

Another year later and Minetta made a disparaging passing comment on football culture when noting that the language of sewerage workers was unfortunately being adopted by the children in her suburb who 'since the sewerage men's appearance begun to use a tomato-hued vocabulary, of which the most profane larrikin football barracker would feel intensely proud'.⁶⁰ Yet, after not mentioning football for over a year, Minetta provided a more positive account of football language in her letter at the beginning of March, 1901.⁶¹ Reflecting on her attendance at 'a seaside picnic one very hot day', Minetta was amused that while the elderly people at the gathering 'spoke the language of their Fatherland all the afternoon', the 'young people had a curious mixture of talk composed of a small part of their parents' natural tongue and a very large part of genuine Melbourne slang of the kind heard at football and cycling matches'.⁶²

By July of the following year, Minetta appeared to have become a regular attendee at games of Australian Rules football.⁶³ Indeed, Minetta began her letter by observing that:

If we women are debarred from taking part in the Australian national game of football, we are none the less enthusiastic as supporters of the followers of the leathern sphere. Football was the chief, and, in fact, the only, attraction last Saturday.⁶⁴

After describing the dignitaries present at the game between Collingwood and Essendon, Minetta spent some time detailing how two 'lady supporters' of Collingwood were not only very excitable and intensely interested in the game, but also exchanged very caustic comments regarding 'the encouraging remarks' of a man who supported Essendon 'who was calling out and advising the players, in the insane way these self-elected captains indulge in'.⁶⁵ It is an intriguing moment in these letters, for Minetta positions the passionate, excitable female spectators as more rational than the male spectator that they are critiquing, in contrast to the prevailing ideology that men were naturally more reasonable than women.

Minetta's last two ruminations on football lauded the passions of female spectators at the football, while also gently poking fun at the absurdity of these passions. In 1905 she described the 'Football Girl' as a prominent 'feminine genus' in Melbourne that played on notions of the modern girl.⁶⁶ Such girls did not play football 'at least not beyond a kick in the backyard or paddock – oh, dear, no!', but instead were interested in the game 'purely from a spectacular point of view':

'Football Girls' usually hunt in couples, with two male barrackers attached. They know all about So-and-So's form, and whether he is a trier or has been bought. They go to each match of their particular club, and watch the play intently, their faces wearing a decidedly strained expression when their club is getting the worst of it. They are not ashamed to barrack either, when matters are progressing successfully.⁶⁷

Minetta's description of this genus pitied not the football girls, but rather those women who attended games without knowing, or perhaps worse, without caring who was winning and losing.

In 1907 Minetta detailed her amusement at the behaviour of 'lady enthusiasts at a football match':

When they barrack they are too funny for words. They know the players['] Christian names; they call aloud to them; they shout advice; they clap and they stamp and they cheer and 'hoo' like any street boys. Staid old matrons, who, are as bad as the mere girls; and I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw two fat old women bounding about like gazelles when the Saints [St Kilda] had a win on Saturday last.⁶⁸

While Minetta recounted the deeds of 'lady enthusiasts' and 'football girls' for comic effect, she does not imply that these women are somehow out of place or invading men's space. She might, like Viva, find the spectator culture that had developed around Australian Rules football to be curious, and even perhaps bizarre, but after early ambivalence about the violence of the game and the profanity of the language associated with barracking, Minetta told stories of woman sharing (and having every right to share) in the pleasures and suffering of intensely following their teams, and suggested that doing so did not detract in any way from their femininity. The politics of these letters is similar then to that of those British writers who extolled the New Woman as being comfortable in both the domestic sphere and working alongside men in the public sphere. Minetta, however, followed Viva in extending these politics to include spaces for leisure and the public pleasures of participating alongside men in the act of supporting a football team. But maybe the limits of these politics can be found in the way Minetta did not explicitly critique the barring of women from playing Australian Rules football in formal competitions, and in her later comment that 'football girls' did not play the game in a serious way 'oh, dear, no!', as if that might be too manly, and thus too radical a step for this reformist approach to gender identity.⁶⁹

Beguiling notions of progress are ingrained in the project of modernity, but on this occasion the next writer of then Melbourne *Punch's* 'Ladies Letter', Clio, was much more concerned than Minetta with the appropriate behaviour of the women, and men, who attended football matches. Yet, Clio too, would come to celebrate, and then critique, and then again celebrate the pleasures of barracking at the football.

Initially though, Clio seemed quite alienated by both the game of football, and the fan culture around it. In her first mention of football in June 1908, Clio noted that the prevailing smell at games was eucalyptus from the oil used by players. She then laid out her theory that:

the reason why people seem to go half-mad after half-time is because these eucalyptus fumes mount to their brains. I never smell eucalyptus now but I think of yelling crowds and men punching and kicking and pushing like a lot of maddened animals.⁷⁰

Clio identified two kinds of 'girls' attending football – those whose brains were affected by eucalyptus who became overly excited by the game, and those who were 'above, or below, or beyond, such a mundane affair as football' who spent their time inspecting the fashion of the other women at the game.⁷¹ Later in her letter she returned to the behavior of the women driven at least half-mad by football, commenting that:

Football matches evoke the primitive instincts all right. If you get amongst an eager knot of female barrackers you may rub your eyes and wonder if you are not back in the Coliseum watching the dying gladiators, and turning your thumbs down.⁷²

Clio's references to maddened animals, primitive instincts and the excesses of Rome indicate a concern with white degeneration, that is the notion that the British race was in danger of degenerating from its supposed height as the peak of humanity to something at once weaker and less civilized.⁷³ As Jane Carey has shown, for 'many elite [Australian] women the spectre of racial degeneracy loomed large' and this presumed threat galvanized much of the reform agenda of the Australian women's movement in the early 1900s.⁷⁴ On 18 June Clio expanded on the threat football might pose. A team representing the University of Melbourne had joined the Victorian Football League – the leading Australian Rules football competition in 1908. While the other Victorian Football League clubs were semi-professional, the University team was strictly amateur with the middle and upper class connotations that this entailed, and Clio noted that this was bringing 'lots of damsels' to games, but was critical of their conduct:

The University girls must be the elite of culture, else how could they pass such examinations? Yet in the matter of football barracking they display just the same *primitive* prejudices and hatreds as the 'bloke' who follows South or 'Scray year in and year out.'⁷⁵

One month later, however, and Clio seemed not only keen to witness the football, but impressed by the loyalty of the other women who attended the game. Although it was raining, Clio hurried 'back from Flemington' to catch the 'last half of the big football match':

If anybody ever doubted Young Australia's devotion to the winter game the sight of thousands upon thousands standing in the rain watching men frolicking in mud and water must have dispelled it. The girl-barrackers did not even put up their umbrellas, but stoically let the drizzle sodden their hats and wet their dresses ... And how keenly they followed the game!⁷⁶

Rather than being a warning of degeneration, this was an observation of stirring hardiness, and Clio followed it with the tale of an Essendon supporting 'lady' haranguing the umpire by calling out that 'You are getting money under false pretences. You don't know the game any more than a baby in arms.'⁷⁷ Perhaps even a month earlier Clio would have condemned such behaviour as a disrespectful indulgence of prejudice but instead she now told it for comic effect, leaving it stand as a fine example of feminine wit, and noting how 'the umpire palpably winced.'⁷⁸

By August of 1908 Clio even seemed proud of the way the American actress Ada Dwyer Russell seemed impressed by the roughness of Australian Rules football and the great roaring of the crowd. And when a spectator 'veiled murder at a player on the other side', Clio approvingly quoted Dwyer Russell's appreciative response that 'this world would be pretty stale if it weren't for enthusiasm. It sort of keeps one up to the mark, and is worth a whole page of doctor's prescriptions.'⁷⁹

A few months into the 1909 Victorian Football League season found Clio still wrestling with the effects of football. 'Melbourne', she exclaimed to Peg, 'has fairly gone football mad this season', but Clio was now unsure if this madness was a problem or not.⁸⁰ The 'raving crowds' packing into trams, trains and then football grounds seemed an issue.⁸¹ 'Surely', observed Clio, 'it is not a good thing this crushing and rushing of thousands of people to watch thirty or forty men run about and crash into one another.'⁸² And the noise the crowd made could seem horrifying. Arriving late to a football game, Clio was shocked by the experience of standing outside the ground and being assailed by roars that sounded 'like a savage, angry sea, with howls of triumph and snarls of hate mixed through them.'⁸³ She

felt 'sick,' like she was 'going into a gladiatorial show'.⁸⁴ Yet, once Clio was inside and able to analyze the yells, 'they seemed quite different':

There was applause, which consisted of cheers and clapping, and there were full-throated roars of exclamation. These were expressive of delightful surprise, and were awarded equally to a brutal rush, a clever kick, a goal, or a man knocked down and carried off. I came to the conclusion that you can't tell the character of a performance by the veils of the crowd because the crowd is as simple and fickle and foolish as a child.⁸⁵

Clio noted that it had become 'highly fashionable for girls – old girls too – to "barrack" most loyally and continuously for some football team'.⁸⁶ This, Clio believed, was due to the increasing 'sportiness' of women, for the 'girl who plays hockey and cricket and a host of other violent games is naturally deeply interested in the violent physical exercises of men'.⁸⁷ Yet, rather than condemning the animal-like nature of this violence, Clio went on to praise the way the many 'budding doctors' who played for the University team, seemed to:

take a delight in tapping their opponents on those spots in the human frame from which unconsciousness can be most easily induced. When University plays another team, generally two of the other team are carried off on stretchers, which says a great deal for the medical knowledge of the team.⁸⁸

Moreover, Clio claimed that there was 'no doubt' that the University team had 'helped to raise the tone' of spectators attending football games, with the 'very nicest people' now travelling to distant suburbs to see the team play.⁸⁹ Clio then 'confessed' that she was 'one of those who have taken to football as a spectacle since the advent of the University team'.⁹⁰ While her knowledge of the game was developing, she noted with a quip that she still did not 'understand the art of giving and receiving free kicks, but they say that the umpires, who are professionals, don't understand it themselves, so I am not ashamed of my ignorance'.⁹¹

Several weeks later, however, there was a large riot at a South Melbourne game which involved some women as well as men. It was enough to convince Clio that 'there can not be much doubt about the advisableness of girls going to football matches', and that those women involved in the riot had shamed their 'sex'.⁹² A furious Clio now stated that the:

girl who 'barracks' at football matches should be boiled in oil. She is too awful for words. But I cannot think of any punishment for the girl barracker who so far forgets herself and her sex to hoot and howl after the match is over. Some of the women at South Melbourne were perfect furies, who would have torn the Fitzroy players in pieces if they could have got at them.⁹³

Clio went on to describe the 'most degrading spectacle I have seen for a long time' – that of 'a young and pretty girl "barracking" for South Melbourne' who Clio had witnessed the week before.⁹⁴ This girl knew every player by name, shrieked 'with pleasure when "South" succeeded', and hooted at the other side.⁹⁵ As the game progressed her emotions 'twisted and altered her face in a remarkable manner', while the transformation 'from smiling pleasure to savage fierceness was instantaneous':

All sorts of degrees of hate and pleasure flitted across her face, and the worst of it all is that she is typical. They don't all show it in their faces as she did; but they have those same feelings awakened in their hearts, and it is dreadfully bad.⁹⁶

Clio concluded that while it was 'horrible that men should allow their games to degenerate into such brutalising spectacles', it was the 'clear duty of women, if they do not stay away, at least not to take part in the degradation and brutality of it'.⁹⁷ While Clio was likely talking here of a working class woman who barracked for South Melbourne, she was expressing

concern for all the women who attended football matches, and her account of the degrading effects of football aligns with the fears that she expressed in her first two letters on football – that it provoked the worst aspects of those who watched it.

The broader context for Clio's letter was a discussion that had been occurring since 12 June when a man calling himself 'Meteor' wrote a letter to the (Melbourne) *Herald* stating that shop-girls in particular were partaking as 'interested spectators at what I consider as essentially a spectacle for men and boys.'⁹⁸ Meteor was concerned that the coarse language of (male) football barrackers would have a deleterious effect on the young women who 'would be better employed at home in domestic work' and that the birth rate would 'still further decline in Victoria if women continue to take up men's duties in offices and shops instead of learning how to manage a home for their future husbands.'⁹⁹ Meteor's letter touched a nerve, as a report in *Punch* noted a month later:

'Should girls go to football?' is a question that has been much discussed of late. A lot of those who have entered into the argument take a point of view long favoured by the opponents of womanhood suffrage, and declare that the home is woman's proper sphere.¹⁰⁰

This link to the anti-suffrage movement is revealing, because the Adult Suffrage Bill giving (non-Indigenous) women the right to vote in Victorian elections had only passed in November 1908.¹⁰¹ It is therefore interesting that the first public calls (that I have found) for women *not* to attend Australian Rules football matches came shortly after in 1909. Mariah Burton Nelson has argued in an American context that as women have gained more rights, men have come to love (American) football even more.¹⁰² In Melbourne in the early 1900s, it was the fact that many women also loved the popular form of football that disturbed some of the men who wanted to move women back into the private sphere.

Most of the letter writers to the *Herald* however, disagreed – often wittily – with Meteor. 'Comet', for example, asked sarcastically 'What more enjoyable way is there of spending a sunny Saturday afternoon than in the kitchen, preparing savoury delights for "Meteor" and similar brilliant bodies?'¹⁰³ It was 'high time', continued Comet, for a law 'prohibiting innocent girls of under 60 from being present at football matches and other places of amusement, and so spoiling the men's view of what is going on.'¹⁰⁴ 'Some of the Girls' responded in a similar vein, thanking Meteor for his advice and noting that 'After working in a closed workroom all the week it will be such a relief to stay in on Saturday afternoon instead of wasting time at the football matches.'¹⁰⁵ 'Anti-Half Holiday' also expressed his gratitude in having a wife who was sacrificed her pleasures so that he did not need a servant, while 'A Bloke' suggested 'tethering' girls to 'the table with plenty of boots to clean etc' so that they did not enjoy going out into the sunshine instead.¹⁰⁶ The underlying themes of servitude were made more explicit by 'Just a Shop Girl' who 'as an Australian' found it 'hard to believe that one in our midst still clings to the uncivilised theory that woman was created merely as a slave for man.'¹⁰⁷ The following day the *Herald* agreed in a brief editorial comment that 'Woman is not a slave' and that 'She is entitled to her fair share of the world's pleasures and of the world's work.'¹⁰⁸ The link to pleasure was also important because all of the letters critiquing Meteor's argument centred themselves around the notion that women had just as much right to the pleasure of attending football as did men.

The debate in the *Herald* was relatively one-sided, with only one correspondent supporting Meteor in anything other than a sarcastic manner.¹⁰⁹ The report in *Punch* from July suggests, however, that in non-printed conversations there were a lot of voices raised in objection to women attending the football.¹¹⁰ Yet, as the report in *Punch* also noted, there was:

not much to be gained from the discussion, since woman has answered it in a most emphatic manner, a manner that leaves no loophole for disputation, by going to football matches persistently and in large numbers.¹¹¹

If the agency of the female spectators was not in question, their attendance at football games continued to be an issue through 1909. In September, in the midst of the Victorian Football League finals, Samuel Mauger sparked further debate by announcing that ‘a leading doctor in Melbourne had informed him that the young women of Melbourne were undermining their constitutions by yelling and getting excited at football matches.’¹¹² A social reformer, Mauger was a member of the Victorian Parliament, and the most prominent of those to question whether women should go to football games. Nevertheless his warning was generally mocked. The (Melbourne) *Leader* observed caustically that ‘Hitherto nobody has imagined for one moment that’ women might endanger their ‘health by indulging in vocal exercise’, and that it was ‘a terrible warning for suffragettes and female politicians generally.’¹¹³ In turn *Punch* printed a satirical poem urging women to follow this medical advice:

Oh, Mary, Sarah, Annie, Flo,
 Give heed to Maugers warning –
 If to the matches you must go,
 Be mute, or whisper very low

 When players you are scorning.
 Remember, if you shout and yell
 At players’ hurly-burly,
 You’re surely sounding your own knell.
 If loud and high your feeling swell,
 You’re booked for dying early.

 Give heed to what we whisper, Mag –
 Quit roaring like the breakers,
 And if to football you must tag,
 Why, wear a nice, becoming gag,
 And nark the undertakers!¹¹⁴

Yet, the *Leader* also noted that Mauger’s warning that the pleasures of yelling at the football were dangerous to women came at a time of renewed criticism for young Victorian, and Australian, women. Sir John Madden, Chief Justice of Victoria, had recently lectured on the ‘pitfalls’ of the supposedly promiscuous and generally licentious behaviour of modern Victorian girls, while Professor Alfred Manes, a visiting economist from Germany had declared that though young Australian women were beautiful, they were uncultured and could only speak about sport.¹¹⁵

Although she was by now very concerned of the effects that watching football could have on women, in September 1909 Clio sought to defend those women who turned up to watch football dressed gaily in the daring clothes that critics like Madden abhorred.¹¹⁶ ‘There were “pitfalls” in thousands on the MCC Ground on Saturday’ Clio told Peg in her letter:

and they did not seem much the worse for being lectured by the Chief Justice or preached at from the pulpit. In their fresh spring dresses those ‘pitfalls’ make as brave a show of handsome and healthy young womanhood as any country could desire.¹¹⁷

But if these were as good a collection of healthy young women as any country could desire, would watching games of Australian Rules football make them unhealthier? Clio continued to wrestle with this question over the next few years. In 1911 she complained that ‘One of the worst features of our present day football is that it has developed this fierce love of the brutal in so many women.’¹¹⁸ These women would frequently cry out for their team to ‘smash’ the opposition, they seemed to hate the other team, and cared only about winning.¹¹⁹ Clio felt that ‘This spirit is growing’:

It is far more prevalent this year than last, and it will gradually drive away from the football grounds all women who have any respect for themselves. Then the game will become more brutal and bloodthirsty than ever.¹²⁰

Yet, in 1912, in her final mention of football before the First World War, Clio was back to celebrating passionate barracking, and the passionate barracking of women in particular. ‘It is really a marvellous thing’, she mused, to see ‘the strong hold football has over those who never have and never will play the game themselves.’¹²¹ If the zealous shouts of female barrackers had previously shocked her, now Clio praised the ‘marvellous’ sound of the many ‘eager barrackers’ expressing ‘their feelings during the progress of the play’, noting it was ‘unlike any other sound on land or sea.’¹²²

Conclusion

This paper has traced some of the pleasures that women found in attending games of Australian Rules football in the late 1800s and early 1900s, along with the representations and responses to these pleasures. The sounds that Clio found unique were central to these pleasures as significant numbers of women cheered, hooted, shouted, howled, yelled, castigated, and stamped their feet at the men who played and umpired the sport. These were acts of agency, of the right to partake as so many men did in the strange joys of being uplifted or distressed by what happened to the football teams they followed. They were also acts of power – the power to shout out in a particular public space at, as well as for, the men who would become seen as paragons of strong, forceful masculinity.

The male journalists who wrote about these female ‘barrackers’ did not depict them as more irrational than men, but they seemed at once amazed and disconcerted by the way these women invaded male spaces and expressed no shame in vigorously adding to the cacophony of sounds at football games. In contrast both Viva and Minetta wrote as if women should have an equal right to the embodied and very vocal pleasures of following football. Clio shared this sense, but with the proviso that women did not degrade themselves by treating the players of the opposing team as less than human barriers that should be ‘smashed’ on the way to the victory. Indeed, when Clio critiqued the spectator culture around football her point was not that women were illegitimately sharing in thrills that were meant just for men, but that both women and men would be degraded by the base passions that watching football could facilitate. In 1909 however, soon after (non-Indigenous) women had gained the right to vote in Victorian elections there was something of a backlash against women leaving the domestic sphere to partake in the delights of a sport played by men. The responses to this backlash once again foregrounded the issue of pleasure, and the right that women had to the joys that watching football afforded.

These acts of female pleasure, agency and power deserve a place in the histories of Australian Rules football, while historians of other spectator sports should also consider

the pleasures of spectators, female as well as male, and the cultures that facilitated, or perhaps limited, these. In terms of Australian Rules football, there is a need to further explore the racialized politics of gender and sport around the late 1800s and early 1900s, along with issues of class, to look in detail at other representations of female supporters, and to compare depictions of zealous female spectators with those women who played, or sought to play, football. It is also important to explore the impact of the spatial geography of football stadiums, some of which had seating areas that were only for women. What this paper has given is a sense of the agency of the women who continued to go and enjoy watching football and shouting out with gusto despite the various discomforts and criticisms that this led to. Even a woman like Clio who was wary of the ‘mad’ spectator culture that had developed around Australian Rules football, seems to have learned something of the intoxicating pleasures of yelling out at the men playing and officiating the game. And in the end Clio too came down on the side of these pleasures of barracking and the unique soundscape that this created.

Notes

1. Viva, ‘Football: A Social Sketch’, *Weekly Times*, Ladies Newspaper supplement, 3 July 1886, 6.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. See for example, Rob Hess, “‘Ladies are Specially Invited’: Women in the Culture of Australian Rules Football”, *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 17, nos 2–3 (2000), 111–41.
9. Vagabond, ‘Manly Sports’, *Argus*, 30 September 1876, 9.
10. June Senyard, ‘The Barracker and the Spectator: Constructing Class and Gender Identities Through the Football Crowd at the Turn of the Century’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 23, no. 62 (1999), 46–55.
11. Senyard, ‘The Barracker and the Spectator’, 51, 52.
12. Viva, ‘Football: A Social Sketch’.
13. Viva, ‘The Australian Girl of the Period’, *Weekly Times*, Ladies Newspaper Supplement, 10 July 1886, 6.
14. Eliza Lynn Linton, ‘The Girl of the Period’, *Saturday Review*, 14 March 1868, 339–40; Viva, ‘The Australian Girl of the Period’.
15. Viva, ‘The Australian Girl of the Period’.
16. Ibid.
17. Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, ‘Inventing the New Woman: Print Culture and Identity Politics During the Fin-de-Siecle’, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 31, no. 2 (1998), 169–82.
18. Ibid., 170.
19. Alys Eve Weinbaum et al. (eds), *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).
20. For more on the entanglements of the New Woman and Modern Girls see Weinbaum et al., *The Modern Girl Around the World*, 9–10. For a collection of pieces exploring ‘The Girl in Australian History’, see the *Journal of Australian Studies* 34, no. 4 (2010), 499–512.
21. Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia: A Gift or a Struggle?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 164. The political landscape of Victoria was informed in part by the many migrants who came during the gold rush dreaming of a better life. See for example Geoffrey Serle, *The Rush to be Rich: A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1883–1889* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1971); and Graeme Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous*

- Melbourne*, 2nd ed. (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2004). For a sense of how these politics informed the early development of Australian Rules football see Richard Cashman, 'Australian Sport and Culture Before Federation', in Richard Cashman and Rob Hess (eds), *Sport History and Australian Culture: Passionate Pursuits* (Petersham: Walla Walla Press, 2011), 8–39; and Matthew Klugman, "'Football is a Fever Disease Like Recurrent Malaria and Evidently Incurable': Passion, Place and the Emergence of an Australian Anti-Football League', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no. 10 (2011), 1426–46.
22. For more on the histories of suffrage and gender relations more generally in Australia, see Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police: The Colonisation of Women in Australia* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1975); Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans (eds), *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jonanovich, 1992); and Patricia Grimshaw, 'Colonialism, Power and Women's Political Citizenship in Australia, 1894–1908', in Irma Sulkunen, Seija-Leena Nevala-Nurmi, and Pirjo Markkola (eds), *Suffrage, Gender and Citizenship: International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reforms* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), 34–55.
 23. Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia*. For the racial anxieties that also shaped the suffragist movements see also Patricia Grimshaw, 'Settler Anxieties, Indigenous Peoples, and Women's Suffrage in the Colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i, 1888 to 1902', *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (2000), 553–72.
 24. Australian examples include: Marion K. Stell, *Half the Race: A History of Australian Women in Sport* (North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1991); Angela Burroughs, 'Women, Femininity and Sport: The Contribution of the "New Woman" to Nationhood', in Richard Cashman, John O'Hara and Andrew Honey (eds), *Sport, Federation, Nation* (Petersham: Walla Walla Press, 2001), 165–80; and Fiona Kinsey, 'Stamina, Speed and Adventure: Australian Women and Competitive Cycling in the 1890s', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no. 10 (2011), 1375–87. International examples include: Patricia Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London: Routledge, 1994); and Clare Simpson, 'Respectable Identities: New Zealand Nineteenth-Century "New Women" – On Bicycles!', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 18, no. 2 (2001), 54–77.
 25. For more on this, see Matthew Klugman, 'Gendered Pleasures, Power, Limits, and Suspicions: Exploring the Subjectivities of Female Supporters of Australian Rules Football', *Journal of Sport History* 39, no. 3 (2012), 401–15.
 26. Studies of women playing Australian Rules football include: Brunette Lenkić and Rob Hess, *Play On! The Hidden History of Women's Australian Rules Football* (Richmond, Vic.: Echo Publishing, 2016); Rob Hess, 'Playing with "Patriotic Fire": Women and Football in the Antipodes During the Great War', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no. 10 (2011), 1388–408; Rob Hess, "'For the Love of Sensation": Case Studies in the Early Development of Women's Football in Victoria, 1921–1981', *Football Studies* 8, no. 2 (2005), 20–30; Nikki Wedgwood, 'Doin' It for Themselves! A Case Study of the Development of a Women's Australian Rules Football Competition', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, no. 3 (2005), 396–414; and Peter Burke, 'Women's Football During the First World War in Australia', *Football Studies* 8, no. 2 (2005), 2–19.
 27. Hess, "'Ladies are Specially Invited'" See also Rob Hess, Matthew Nicholson, Bob Stewart and Gregory de Moore, *A National Game: The History of Australian Rules Football* (Camberwell, Vic.: Penguin, 2008).
 28. Hess, "'Ladies are Specially Invited'". For a perspective from New Zealand with regard to their dominant football code of rugby see Jennifer Curtin, 'More than Male-Gazing: Reflections on Female Fans of Rugby Union in New Zealand, 1870–1920', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 18 (2015), 2123–34. For a study of women who followed Australian Rules football in a later period see Rob Kingston, 'Football and Women in Melbourne in the 1930s', in Matthew Nicholson (ed.), *Fanfare: Spectator Culture and Australian Rules Football* (Melbourne: Australian Society for Sports History, 2005), 53–61.

29. Senyard, 'The Barracker and the Spectator'.
30. Klugman, 'Football is a Fever Disease Like Recurrent Malaria and Evidently Incurable'.
31. Stephen Alomes, 'On the Margins of the Good Oval: Women and Australian Football', in Peter Burke and June Senyard (eds), *Behind the Play: Football in Australia* (Melbourne: Maribyrnong Press, 2008), 125–46.
32. See for example Raewyn Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).
33. See Deb Waterhouse-Watson, 'All Women are Sluts: Australian Rules Football and Representations of the Feminine', *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 27, no. 1 (2007), 155–62; Stephanie Holt, 'Football's Women Problem', *Overland*, no. 203 (Winter 2011), 7–14; Peter Mewett and Kim Toffoletti, 'Voices from the Margins? Women at the Footy', *Intergraph: Journal of Dialogic Anthropology* 3 (2010), <http://intergraph-journal.com/enhanced/vol3issue1/4.html>.
34. See for example Nancy L. Struna, 'Beyond Mapping Experience: The Need for Understanding in the History of American Women's Sport', *Journal of Sport History* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1984), 120–33; and Cartriona M Parratt, 'Athletic "Womanhood": Exploring Sources for Female Sport in Victorian and Edwardian England', *Journal of Sport History* 16, no. 2 (1989), 140–57.
35. The Australian journalist Henry William Osborne (1865–1936), for example wrote a 'ladies letter' by 'Constance' at one point in his career. See L. Lomas, 'Osborne, Henry William (Harry) (1865–1936)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography*, Vol. 11 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988). Nevertheless, in this paper I am assuming that the writers of the *Punch* 'Ladies Letter' were women, as it seems most ladies letters were written by women. For more on the notion of 'Ladies Letters' being an 'acceptable' space for female journalists in the late 1800s see Mark Hampton, 'Defining Journalists in Late-Nineteenth Century Britain', *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 22, no. 2 (2005), 138–55.
36. Jenny Coleman, 'Writing for the Ladies: Women Journalists in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century New Zealand', *Communication Journal of New Zealand* 8 no. 2 (2007), 51–62. See also F. Elizabeth Gray (ed.), *Women in Journalism at the Fin de Siècle: Making a Name for Herself* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
37. Lurline Stuart, 'Punch', Online Encyclopedia of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00951b.htm>.
38. Gladys, 'Ladies Letter', *Melbourne Punch*, 12 August 1887, 11.
39. Senyard, 'The Barracker and the Spectator'.
40. *Ibid.* There is yet to be a detailed history written of the etymology and development of the term barracker. At some point in the early twentieth century the dominant meaning switched from being a pejorative reference to spectators behaving in a too-loud and uncouth manner, to being a more neutral, even at times celebratory, reference to those who followed Australian Rules football (and sometimes other sports). To barrack for a team, in other words, came to be the equivalent of supporting that team. However, while the meaning of 'barracking' changed in Australia, the earlier, pejorative, meaning of the term still holds in places that the word was exported to, such as Britain.
41. Rhoda, 'Ladies Letter', *Melbourne Punch*, 31 May 1888, 13.
42. The term 'gamins' referred to rough homeless boys.
43. Named after a Dickens character who was honest if rather slow, Peerybingle's regular reflections in the *Weekly Times* had revealing similarities and differences to the women's pages, supplements and letters in Melbourne newspapers. Like them, 'Peerybingle's Papers' was a regular column that filled space with the odds and ends of what was happening in Melbourne life, and it was likely written by a number of different journalists over the many years of the column. Yet, Peerybingle could comment on anything 'he' deemed meaningful, whereas the women's pages, supplements and letters were more confined to 'female matters' such as domestic life, fashion and some entertainment.
44. John Peerybingle, 'Peerybingle's Papers', *Weekly Times*, 12 July 1890, 17.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*

48. Ibid.
49. Senyard, 'The Barracker and the Spectator'. These caricatures were sparked by an infamous brawl during a game between Collingwood and North Melbourne in July 1896. See Hess, "'Ladies are Specially Invited'", 121–2.
50. See for example, 'Twas a Famous Victory: Essendon's Win and its Effects', *Punch*, 25 July 1895, 4.
51. Jarno, 'Australian Types – The Barracker. An Apology for His Life', *Tocsin*, 4 January 1900, 6.
52. Ibid.
53. Rover, 'Notes and Comments', *Weekly Times*, 25 June 1904, 17. My emphasis.
54. Ibid.
55. Senyard, 'The Barracker and the Spectator'.
56. Minetta, 'Ladies Letter', *Melbourne Punch*, 27 August 1896, 13.
57. Minetta, 'Ladies Letter', *Melbourne Punch*, 5 August 1897, 11.
58. Ibid.
59. Minetta, 'Ladies Letter', *Melbourne Punch*, 5 August 1897, 11.
60. Minetta, 'Ladies Letter', *Melbourne Punch*, 30 November 1899, 15.
61. Minetta, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 7 March 1901, 16.
62. Ibid.
63. Minetta, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 31 July 1902, 20.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Minetta, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 22 June 1905, 28.
67. Ibid.
68. Minetta, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 6 June 1907, 22.
69. Minetta, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 22 June 1905, 28. Tusan makes it clear that the alternative feminist representations of the New Woman were not an attempt to say that it was acceptable for women to appear 'manly', but rather an attempt to show that the New Woman was a much-needed extension of femininity beyond the domestic sphere.
70. Clio, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 11 June 1908, 22.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health, and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
74. Jane Carey, "'Wanted! A Real White Australia": The Women's Movement, Whiteness and the Settler Colonial Project, 1900–1940', in Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington (eds), *Studies in Settler Colonialism* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 135.
75. Clio, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 18 June 1908, 22. My emphasis.
76. Clio, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 16 July 1908, 22.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Clio, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, August 1908, 22. Ada Dwyer Russell is now remembered primarily for being the lover and muse of Amy Lowell. See Lillian Faderman, "'Which, Being Interpreted, is as May Be, or Otherwise": Ada Dwyer Russell in Amy Lowell's Life and Work', in Adrienne Munich and Melissa Bradshaw (eds), *Amy Lowell, American Modern* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 59–76.
80. Clio, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 10 June 1909, 24.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Clio, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 29 July 1909, 22.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. Meteor, 'Our Girls', *Herald*, 12 June 1909, 8.
99. Ibid.
100. Untitled, *Punch*, 15 July 1909, 19.
101. 'Adult Suffrage Bill', *Bendigo Advertiser*, 19 November 1908, 7.
102. Mariah Burton Nelson, *The Stronger Women Get, The More Men Love Football: Sexism in the American Culture of Sports* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co, 1994).
103. Comet, 'May They Go to Football Matches?' *Herald*, 14 June 1909, 3.
104. Ibid.
105. Some of the Girls, 'Should be Thankful', *Herald*, 14 June 1909, 3.
106. Anti-Half Holiday, 'A Husband Testifies', *Herald*, 17 June 1909, 5; A Bloke, 'What a "Bloke" Thinks', *Herald*, 17 June 1909, 5.
107. Just a Shop Girl, 'Is Woman a Slave?' *Herald*, 17 June 1909, 6.
108. Editorial, 'Girls at Football', *Herald*, 18 June 1909, 4.
109. Philo, 'A Great Shame', *Herald*, 14 June 1909, 3–4.
110. Untitled, *Punch*, 15 July 1909, 19. Other references to the debate include 'Miscellaneous', *Bendigo Independent*, 19 June 1909, 8; Untitled, (Footscray) *Independent*, 31 July 1909, 2.
111. Untitled, *Punch*, 15 July 1909, 19.
112. 'Girls at Football Matches', *Age*, 22 September 1909, 7.
113. Atticus, 'The Verandah', *Leader*, 25 September 1909, 32.
114. 'Prattle About People', *Punch* 30 September 1909, 6.
115. Atticus, 'The Verandah', *Leader*, 25 September 1909, 32. For an approving report of Madden's speech see 'Pitfalls of Youth', *Kerang New Times*, 3 September 1909, 4. For further reports on Mane's comments see: 'The Australian Girl. A Professor's View', *Leader*, 25 September 1909, 32; and 'Some Candid Criticism', *Daily News* (Perth), 17 September 1909, 5.
116. For more on Madden and a broader history of these concerns about promiscuous modern girls see Rebecca Preston, 'From "Precocious Brat" to "Fluffy Flapper": The Evolution of the Australian Flapper', *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal* no. 21 (August 2015), 33–48.
117. Clio, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 23 September 1909, 22.
118. Clio, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 27 July 1911, 24.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. Clio, 'Ladies Letter', *Punch*, 3 October 1912, 24.
122. Ibid.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of this article together with Warwick Anderson, Leigh Boucher, Jennifer Curtin, Joy Damousi, Esther Faye, Rob Hess, Fiona Kerr, Fiona McLachlan, Louis Magee, Alex McDermott, Gary Osmond, Murray Phillips, Erin Riley, Greg Ryan, Caroline Symons, Melissa Walsh, and Athas Zafiris for their conversations, advice, and support. I am also thankful for the superb research assistance of Athas Zafiris.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This work was supported by the Australian Research Council [ARC DECRA Fellowship DE 130100121].

Notes on Contributor

Matthew Klugman is an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Research Fellow at the Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living, Victoria University, Australia.

ORCID

Matthew Klugman  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0554-6761>