Vulnerability and Exposure
Footballer scandals, masculine identity and ethics

Vulnerability and Exposure presents a critical investigation of contemporary masculine team sports and football scandals and their relationship with gendered cultures, institutions and identity norms.

Viewing topics similar to those explored in Anna Krien’s Night Games through a scholarly lens, Rob Cover draws on reports of AFL off-field scandals over the past decade, critically examining cases of sexual assault, illicit drug use and binge drinking, homophobia, violence and other controversial behaviours that have become norms in the reporting of sportsplayers’ off-field lives.

Exploring the question of what would constitute a more ethical Australian Rules football culture and footballer, Cover develops an approach to ethics by showing that footballers are well-placed to see the vulnerability of others through their own vulnerability to injury, career breaks and loss of reputation.

Cover’s argument begins with the idea that footballer scandals emerge from continuity between on-field play and off-field behaviours and that this needs to be better understood if we are to avoid future scandals.

Providing an overview of the broader social context, Cover also identifies the cultural factors significant in the production of the contemporary footballer identity, and the ways in which these identities are constructed, performed and reported on.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rob Cover is Associate Professor in Communication Studies at The University of Western Australia. He completed his PhD in media theory and queer theory at Monash University (Melbourne), and subsequently taught at Monash and the University of Melbourne. He has also previously taught in media studies at Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand) and in media at The University of Adelaide.

Between 2006 and 2007, Cover provided consultation, strategic communication advice and training to a number of Queensland State Government Departments. He has written for a range of news publications, magazines and online sites, in addition to publishing eighteen short stories in journals and anthologies; in 1998 he was a Writer-in-Residence at the Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers’ Centre (Western Australia). His previous book was Queer Youth Suicide, Culture & Identity: Unliveable Lives? (London: Ashgate) and he has published numerous journal articles and chapters in edited volumes. Cover sits on the board of and/or referees for a number of academic publications, including New Media & Society, Media International Australia, Reconstruction, Social Semiotics and Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies.

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