Reclaiming Masculinity: A Sociological Study of Running Repairs

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Abstract.

Using published work and popular culture, but primarily through a series of forty eight in-depth interviews with participants, this study seeks to chart the contours of mass, non-elite road running in Britain. It considers those involved both in terms of age, sex, ethnic and social class characteristics as well as the distinctions participants make of one another in terms of ability, commitment and motivation.

These latter differences give rise to discernable groups within the practice that I, and the participants refer to as 'athletes', 'runners' and 'joggers'. It focuses on the 'runners' as the group who comprise the bulk of the field in most events, yet have no readily apparent reason for their involvement since they race and train at levels far above those necessary for basic physical fitness, yet are never going to win any race.

The virtually unique (amongst physically demanding sports) composition of the field, in that middle class men over thirty predominate, is then linked to the motivations of those involved. Using recent work on 'bodies' and highlighting the importance of gender to identity the study maps more recent social changes (as parts of longer term trends) that may have undermined some of the traditional grounds (some more recent 'traditions' than others) upon which masculine identities have been established. It considers the way these changes may have worked to the relative disadvantage of middle class men the 'wrong' side of thirty more than many.

The thesis advanced is that at the heart of the 'urge to do it on a Sunday morning' for many, is an attempt to 'reclaim' masculinity through a particularly public demonstration of physical prowess, through and from which runners feel they derive the 'respect' and 'admiration' of others. Respect, that is, for attributes traditionally associated with the male of the species.
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INTRODUCTION - MAPPING THE COURSE

My own involvement with road running began 'accidentally' in the early 1980s when I was already on the 'wrong' side of thirty. A casual visit to my brother's home resulted in an invitation to accompany him on a five mile 'run'. He was at that time what I would now describe as one of the more regular 'joggers'.

Invitation accepted, I set off, in borrowed kit, to accompany him - I faded badly! A week or so later, when I had recovered sufficiently, I resolved to start training independently to avoid another such embarrassing experience. Several months later, I noticed a poster advertising a local half marathon (in Neath) and persuaded my brother that we should enter. We trained for the race, together on occasions, and it was in the June following the October of my first ever 'run' that I nervously lined up at the start of my first ever race.

The record books show that I finished towards the rear of the field in a time of one hour, forty four minutes and thirty seven seconds, some two hundred yards ahead of my younger (by two years) brother. From that day, I was 'hooked'. While I may have my brother to 'thank' for my involvement in running, what I now know is that most runners will have some sort of 'getting started' story to tell.

As my involvement grew and I raced all over South Wales and beyond,
being a 'student of life' (and, a little later a student of Sociology) I began to notice things about the people who 'ran' and, by implication those who did not. Firstly, I noticed that the vast majority of those 'about to run' at the start of all the races I entered were men. I noticed, too, that most of them were not in the 'first flush of youth' and, like myself appeared to be over thirty years of age. I also presumed, in as far as I could tell (since athletic gear is a fairly effective disguise), that the majority of those 'about to run' were also middle class. As an academic, interest blossomed. I went to the literature, to find that these early observations were supported by published work. The fact that many more men than women seem to take part in road running is unremarkable since many more men than women take part in sports in general (Sports Council for Wales 1992). It also seems that the overall level of women's involvement in road running is not only low but varies universally with race distance. Walsh, for example, writing in 1992 reports the following findings:

Women, overall do seem to account for about fifteen percent of the participants in all races. The important factor to emerge from the data was that the figure varies with the distance run.
<table>
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<th>% of women competitors (NATIONAL)</th>
<th>% of women competitors (THE SOUTH)</th>
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<tr>
<td>10K races</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 mile races</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Marathons</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(13 miles)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>All events</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
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Taking the population of more than 60,000 runners from 133 races around the country the percentage of women taking part varied from around eleven to seventeen percent. A clear trend for women to run shorter distances is evident. The ten mile data gleaned from a smallish sample may not be representative, but the 10K and half marathon figures, both from a field of over 20,000 should give a clearer picture. (Walsh 1992 p. 65).

The fact that most of the entrants also appeared to be ‘middle class’ is also unremarkable. Participation in many sports tends to be class related and those ‘about to run’ are predominantly drawn from those employed in non-manual occupations (Summers et al 1982: Clough, Shepherd & Maughan 1988: Barrell, Holt & Mackean 1986).

What was more remarkable, however, was the fact that those ‘about to run’ were predominantly over thirty. The average age, for instance of those competing in the 1990 London Marathon, was thirty nine (Collee 1990 p. 82). The largest category was the thirty to thirty nine year olds, followed by the forty to forty nines, then the twenty to twenty nines and the fifty to fifty nines. One
hundred of the entrants were over seventy, and the oldest competitor was Wynne Evans at the age of eighty three (figures from the London Marathon Office). Sports participation, in general, declines with age (Sports Council for Wales 1992) and, while there may be some sports like bowls and golf, where participation may increase with age, road running is probably unique in this regard in the realm of vigorous and physically demanding sports. My initial observations, that road running appeared to be an activity undertaken by, predominantly, middle class men over thirty had, then, proved to be correct.

As my involvement with running and runners continued to grow, I began to become aware of some other sorts of distinctions made by those who participate. For there seemed to be different 'kinds' of ways for people to be involved in road running. These distinctions are more fully explored in Chapter Four, but suffice it to say for the moment that they seemed linked to motivation. I had very quickly become aware that my chances of ever winning a race were zero. The gap in ability between my best performances and those of the elite group who did win races was unbridgeable. There seemed, then, to be a distinction made by those involved in running between those few who might win races, or do well in them, and the bulk of the field - the 'also rans'. This small elite group I, in common with other runners, refer to as the 'Athletes' and it may not be unreasonable to suppose that winning races, and thus achieving a high ranking or impressive reputation in this small group of elite performers, would figure large in their motivations.
There was also a distinction commonly drawn between the bulk of competitors and a group this majority somewhat disparagingly referred to as 'joggers' or 'fun runners'. This group, the rest of the runners tended to feel, trained infrequently, raced episodically (if at all) and only did either if the weather was fair. They appeared to treat running (jogging) as a body maintenance activity and appeared to have fairly straightforward extrinsic satisfactions; to 'keep fit', to 'lose weight', 'look good' or whatever. This group, some of whom will trail in at the back of the field in some of the shorter events, I, and many of those involved, refer to as the 'Joggers'.

There is something of a consensus that basic physical fitness can be achieved by taking exercise that keeps an individual breathless for twenty minutes or so, two or three times a week (Vershur & Kemper 1985: Australian Fitness Survey 1985). It does not require an individual to run thirty miles a week and compete over thirteen miles at the weekend. There is, then, a large group of (mostly) men, the bulk of the field in many races, who run and train week in week out at levels far in excess of that required for physical fitness, yet have no realistic chance of winning, or doing well in any race. As far as they are concerned, there is no readily apparent, straightforward motivation for participation, for it involves an awful lot of hard work just to be a perennial 'also ran'. It is this group, among whom I count myself, who are the focus of this study. In common with many of those involved in road running, I too, will refer
to this group as the ‘Runners’ ¹. The distinctions between Athletes and Runners, and Runners and Joggers are nowhere defined but are routinely made within road running circles to the point where they are in common use in the specialist press. Running magazine declares on the ‘contents’ page, for example, that it is a magazine ‘For Joggers, Runners and Athletes’ (Issue 130 February 1992).

As indicated, these differing groups may well tend to have differing motivations for involvement with the practice of running. However, the motivations of the Athletes and Joggers seem to be more readily apparent then those of the Runners. There has been some survey-style research into the ‘motivations’ for non-elite involvement in distance running. These studies have shown that non-elite participants take part for ‘a personal challenge’ or ‘personal satisfaction’ (Barrell, Holt & Mackean 1986) or ‘goal achievement’ or ‘as a test of personal worth’ (Summers, Machine & Sargent 1983). While these responses have enabled others to ‘label’ what Runners do, they are superficial and do not aid understanding at the level of meanings or provide any sort of explanation. For the really interesting questions remain unaddressed. Why should it be that the sorts of people who are attracted to this particular sort of physical and mental challenge are drawn to it? Life is full of potential challenges, so why should they see running thirteen miles as a ‘test of personal

¹ When referring to these groups of participants identified by those involved as ‘Athletes’, ‘Runners’ and ‘Joggers’, a capital letter will denote that meaning.
worth' and why should they wish to undergo such a test? So, while some of the social characteristics of those involved in distance running seem to be fairly well established, much less is known about their meanings and motivations, especially, perhaps, of runners at this non-elite level.

While sports participation, in general, has a long association with masculinity (Blue 1987; Brohm 1978; Chappell 1989; Clarke & Clarke 1982: Coakley & White 1992: Connell 1983: Crosset 1990: Davis & Delano 1992: Dunning 1986: Dunning & Sheard 1979: Dyer 1982: Guthrie & Castelnuovo 1991: Hargreaves Jennifer 1986: Hargreaves John 1986: Hargreaves John 1987: McTeer & White 1991: Messner 1987: Messner 1991: Miller & Penz 1991: Rutherford 1988: Scraton 1987: Whitson 1990: Willis 1982) \(^1\) this has been most clearly drawn in relation to contact sports and those most reminiscent of warfare as a 'mock battle'. This has occasionally been to the point where running, and some other sports have been labelled 'gender neutral' (McTeer & White 1991). It is the argument of this thesis, however, that running has strong, if somewhat more subtle, links with masculinity that have yet to be charted. Once these connections are illuminated, the factors behind the predominantly male, middle class and over thirty composition of 'the field' should be much more apparent. Let me summarize my thesis.

\(^1\) This list is intended to be neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, but simply to indicate the regularity with which the association is made.
Chapter One details the theoretical framework through which this study approaches non-elite road running as a sociological 'problem'. It lists the specific strengths of that framework in relation to the particular subject matter of this thesis as well as providing a brief exposition of its core assumptions. The chapter also describes the main method of data collection and its subsequent analysis.

Chapter Two, Three and Four are the first substantive chapters of the work and are intended to provide the context of knowledge about running necessary for a full appreciation of the arguments in the subsequent chapters. Accordingly, Chapter Two considers running as a 'natural' practice, explores its connections to the romanticism that give us our love affair with the past and briefly considers the development of modern sports. It then goes on to examine the genesis of road running as a mass participation phenomenon in New Zealand in the early 1960s and the spread from there to other 'developed' countries, including Britain. The chapter ends with a contemplation of the state of the 'running boom' in Britain today and the number of Britons involved in non-elite distance running.

Chapter Three concentrates on the intensely physical nature of distance running. For those with smiling faces and waving to the camera in the television coverage of the London Marathon (especially the early stages) give no indication of the blood, sweat and tears involved in running long distances as fast as your legs can carry you. This chapter attempts to do this through
cataloguing the physical consequences of distance running and describing the
practice of racing through the words of the Runners themselves. In a very real
sense, this chapter is bound to fail, since the only way to really know what it is
like to run a half marathon is to do it. The chapter closes with the Runners
themselves making just that point.

Chapter Four more fully develops the distinctions those who run make
of those who run. It considers 'Athletes', 'Runners' and 'Joggers' as distinct
groups and the nature of the relations between these groups. It describes how
Runners feel that, although they consider Joggers to be involved in a very
different (and inferior) activity to true distance Running, the uninitiated remain
unaware of this distinction. This 'confusion' leads to a degree of tension (on
the part of the Runners, at least) as they try and distance themselves from the
very unwelcome 'Jogging' label.

If Chapters Two, Three and Four have concentrated on various aspects
of the practice of non-elite distance Running, then Chapters Five, Six and
Seven attempt to chart the context of everyday life in which non-elite Running
takes place. To this end, Chapter Five begins this contextualisation with a
discussion of some of the major themes that permeate modern consumer
culture. It considers, amongst others, the themes of youth, vigour, activity and
control that dominate the conceptual air we breathe and discusses how these
images may impact on ideas of body shape and reinforce the cultural physical
fitness/sexual performance link. The chapter looks at the practice of road
running in the context of these themes and ends with an adumbration of the part it may play in the age group dynamics of which many of the Runners seem acutely aware.

Chapter Six continues to outline the context in which non-elite Running has mushroomed and flourishes, firstly through exploring the importance of gender to 'identity'. It then goes on to consider what it may mean to be a man in modern Britain. It looks at the 'rules' of masculinity (hence its title) in their idealised forms and the differing class related emphases on some aspects of physicality and the public use of violence. It goes on to provide a synopsis of what it would mean to be a man, a real man in the world of manual and non manual work and in familial and sexual relations.

If Chapter Six outlines, in a highly idealised form, what it ought to mean to be a man, then Chapter Seven begins to outline the threats to those masculine ideals that, in reality, many men face in their everyday lives. It sketches out changes in the world of employment, the decline of manual labour and the entry of large numbers of women into the labour markets. It examines the reality of work for many men where they may have lost their sole breadwinner role and find themselves doing, essentially, the same kind of work as their partners. The growing financial independence of many women may be mirrored by a growing personal independence and these can, and often do, have impacts on the nature of men's familial and sexual relations. Men's, perhaps increasing, insecurities in these areas are also examined.
Furthermore, although many of these changes made with the advancement of modern feminism may work to men's relative disadvantage, many (probably middle class men more than others) may feel under considerable pressure to support such changes. For many men, then, the traditional grounds (or many of them) upon which masculinity has been built may be fast eroding.

The penultimate chapter attempts to link the preceding themes by exploring the connection of leisure pursuits to identify and sports to masculinity. It charts the more subtle links which this sort of Running has with masculine ideals via endurance and strength of character. It recounts what the Runners themselves say about the increased status they believe they enjoy through their participation. It concludes with an examination of the more equivocal benefits women may derive from their involvement and why Running in particular (over other sports) may be so attractive to so many middle class men the 'wrong' side of thirty.

The concluding chapter presents a synopsis, drawing together the major themes and connections explored throughout this study. It then goes on to suggest some avenues, at least, which may benefit from further empirical research. This work ends, as it began, on a personal note with a consideration of the way this investigation has (sometimes uncomfortably) illuminated my own motives for involvement in Running.
CHAPTER ONE

Theory and Methods: An Approach to Understanding

We live in an increasingly complex social world. On the face of it, this is a straightforward and fairly uncontroversial statement of fact. It does, however, imply two of the elements that lie at the centre of the figurational approach adopted in this thesis. Complexity in the context of social living implies the webs of independent relationships individuals have with others, known and unknown, at varying social and geographical distances. The fact that complexity is increasing implies social change and a concern with long term social change is at the heart of this approach.

The figurational approach, first developed by Norbert Elias, has particular strengths in relation to the subject matter of this thesis. Firstly, there is the background of work he and his followers have done on sports as a sociological 'problem', their development and the dynamics of the sports groups involved. There is also the focus on long term change in identifiable directions. While the future remains unknown, dependent as it is on the concatenations of present day actions, there are nevertheless identifiable trends in the direction of long term historical changes, and it is these trends which profoundly affect the interdependent relationships in which people, the research subjects of this thesis included, find themselves. The third 'strength' is, then, the primary focus on interdependencies as an irreducible social unit and the conception of
them as involving more or less stable balances of power, or power ratios. The fourth asset of the figurational approach is that it, like the present thesis, emphasises the embodiment of individuals. While the human body may not be the primary focus of Elias' work on the civilizing process, it is of great importance to it and it has been argued that his workings contain within them an implicit theory of what Shilling terms 'civilized bodies' (Shilling 1993 p. 150). Finally, Elias and his followers have provided some useful insights into masculinity, once again a central theme in this thesis and so it may be appropriate to deal in some detail with Elias' theoretical approach.

In the modern world of the West, just as at all other times and in all other places, human beings are unable to satisfy basic biological or psychological needs in isolation. It is clear that human beings are biologically equipped - though, of course, not fully 'programmed': that depends on social learning - to be social (Elias 1991) and without this social dimension would not be fully 'human'. Each of us is, then, a human being amongst others - unique in some respects but sharing common characteristics with other humans, and the social relationships we all form constitute webs of interdependence. For there is no one

who is not and never has been interwoven into a network of people..... one's sense of personal identify is closely connected with the 'we' and 'they' relationships of ones group and one's position within those units of which one speaks as 'we' and 'they'.

(Elias 1978 p. 128)
The theoretical focus on interdependencies, those between people within a particular group and those between the people in groups which are themselves interdependent provides a powerful framework for understanding social dynamics once these interdependencies are recognised as involving more or less stable power ratios. The term ‘interdependency’ in this connection does not imply co-operation. While particular interdependent relationships may be primarily co-operative, others may be dominated by competition, conflict or be combinations of these and other things. All, moreover involve a balance between affect and rationality. A war, for example, is an interdependent relationship between (at least) two mutually hostile groups of people. Its interdependent nature is revealed by the old military maxim - No plan survives contact with the enemy. These interdependent relationships, whatever their character, represent labile balances of power, that is, they are processual in character and prone to change.

There are differing, but interdependent sources of power that individuals and groups can mobilise in their interdependent relationships with others and which form the bases of inequalities between people and groups of people. A power advantage can be had from the successful monopolisation of the means of fulfilling ‘elementary functions for each other, and for the group as a whole if they are to survive as a group’ (Elias 1987 p. 227). What has today, perhaps, become one of the most obvious sources of power in human figurations, the ‘nexus of interdependencies and axes of tensions ....... which can be identified in any social context’ (Horne & Jary 1987 p. 88-9), is
economic power. Derived from an elementary universal of human groups, at its simplest 'the provision of food and the other basic wherewithals of life' (Elias 1987 p. 227) economic power is realisable in many different ways. A wage earning husband may derive economic power over his non-wage earning wife, for example, through his participation in the labour market. Parents usually have a degree of economic power over younger children through the provision or withdrawal of 'pocket money'. People can derive economic power from holding a position in an organisation that exercises a degree of remunerative discretion in respect of others 'earnings', or over buying and supply functions. It is not then simply from the successful monopolisation of the means of production that economic power flows, though that too is a source. If economic power is an important source of power in the modern West, and elsewhere, it is not the only source of power. One often neglected, especially perhaps by those theories which give primacy to the economic function, is concerned with the production of knowledge.

Writing of knowledge Elias suggested that 'to perceive its basic role in human societies one need only think of a "knowledgeless" group - that is, a group to which no knowledge has been transmitted from previous generations' (Ibid p. 230). Such a group would almost certainly not survive, so almost complete is the biologically determined human autonomy from innate patterns of behaviour and consequent reliance on learned knowledge (Elias 1991). Like other sources, the appropriation of the means of satisfying the human need for knowledge 'can serve as the basis for inequalities' (Elias 1987 p. 230). The
rise of Islamic fundamentalism in some states in the world today and the consequent increase of the power and influence of clerics in them, is based upon their position as providers of (primarily mythical) knowledge for interpreting the world. The privileged place of 'science' in the modern West, as a source of 'real' or 'true' knowledge has led to other sources being measured against standards of 'scientific proof' for acceptance. Shifts in the balance of power between women and men (germane to this thesis) have occurred partly as a result of some modern feminist writings gaining the status of legitimate sources of 'knowledge'. Knowledge, then, is power.

If human groups are to survive, then violence, too, has to be controlled. Or, in 'a somewhat wider sense the function of conflict management in its two aspects: control of violence within a group and the control of violence between survival groups' (Loc cit) has to be undertaken. Where the relatively successful monopolisation of the use of violence has taken place, as it has in many modern Western states, those who specialise in its use can hold considerable power. Many states have been in various periods of their history controlled by the military, and in others today where so called 'civil wars' rage, groups of armed specialists struggle with others perhaps with the explicit intention of putting the 'roof' of ethnically or tribally defined statehood over the geographical regions for which they are contending. Part of this need to control violence, if a group is to survive, is the learning of a degree of self restraint by its members. For only then is it possible for people to live together without destroying themselves and each other. The 'learning of a social
pattern of self restraint or a civilizing process of sorts' (Ibid p. 231), can also be monopolised and used as a source of power and status differentials. The learning of such patterns of self restraint, not only in the use of violence but in other patterns of behaviours is certainly not possible without the simultaneous fulfilment of other functions such as the 'economic' function; however, they in turn 'require individual patterns of self control' (Loc cit).

We are all, then, involved in interdependent relationships of differing kinds with others. Each of us occupies a unique point in webs of interdependence, or figurations, through which we try and pursue what we see as our aims and avoid our fears. These figurations we recognise, for example, as families, factories, universities, towns, occupational groups, states and groupings of states. But this is not to paint a static picture, for human figurations are inherently processual. Life itself is a process and the living human beings who form figurations are not only interdependent with one another but have to act and interact - both with each other and 'extra human nature' - in order to produce and reproduce their lives.

(Dunning 1989 p. 40)

Figurations have 'immanent dynamics', that is the 'dynamics of a social figuration are inherent in its structure and the "make-up" and motivations of the people who comprise it' (Ibid p.41). Thus structure and process are two sides of the same coin. For just as people are the indispensable core of figurations so, too, are figurations nothing more than webs of interdependent people. So,
therefore the struggles

between individuals and among groups - for control of the economy, or the state, for material goods and services, for income and wealth, for access to occupations and occupational advancement, for control over the production and dissemination of knowledge, for prestige, for love and erotic gratification, for excitement and so on

(Ibid p. 41)

become crucial. It is in and through these webs of interdependent relationships that those involved in running, like the rest of us, pursue material rewards, access to power and status and attempt to avoid our fears, but may be unaware of the shifting balance of power which they involve.

Figurations are conceived as ‘both a constraining and enabling influence on the actions of individuals’ (Rojek 1985 p. 159). Individuals themselves may experience them as such, for while they may find the figurations they are locked into relatively opaque they may be aware of being disadvantaged, for instance in their interdependent relationships with others. Employees, for example, may be aware of changes over time in their access to economic power in their relationships with their employees, and may consciously seek to enhance or defend their position with regard to material rewards in the light of such changes. In such cases, people’s ‘motivations’ may be apparent, but longer term changes in the individual’s ‘make-up’ will not be so readily recognisable.

Over the longer term a ‘civilizing process’, described as ‘an observable, unplanned, unintended or blind long term social process which ...... [Elias
holds]...... took place in Western European societies between the Middle Ages and modern times' (Dunning & Sheard 1979 p. 8) has had effects. The observable consequences of such a process were the elaboration and refinement of social standards regarding the control of ‘natural’ functions and the conduct of social relationships generally: a concomitant increase in the social pressure on people to exercise self control: and at the level of personality an increase in the importance of ‘conscience’ as a regulator of behaviour.

(Loc cit)

As society becomes increasingly complex, and the chains of interdependence in which individuals find themselves lengthen; in order to fulfil ‘his [or her] own function at his [or her] node in the web, every individual is constrained to take account of the effects of his [or her] own and other people’s actions through a whole series of links in the social chains’ (Mennell 1992 p. 95). In particular, individuals are required to exercise more and more foresight, to plan further ahead and to attune their actions to a more precise timetable making them ‘accustomed to subordinating momentary inclinations to the over-riding necessities of interdependence’ (Ibid p. 96).

Over time, this becomes not only a matter of conscious regulation, for it is Elias’ argument that deeper psychological changes occur.

The web of actions grows so complex and extensive, the effort required to behave ‘correctly’ within it so great, that beside the individual’s conscious self control, an automatic, blindly
functioning apparatus of self control is firmly established. This seeks to prevent offences to socially acceptable behaviour by a wall of deep rooted fears.

(Elias 1982 (1939) p. 233)

In the course of this process, as ‘external restraints grow more subtle and all pervasive, the use of direct force was pushed increasingly behind the scenes’ (Dunning & Sheard 1979 p. 8-9). The use of violence and other outbursts of emotional expression have generally become progressively less acceptable forms of behaviour as chains of interdependence lengthen and the need to exercise control and foresight in everyday life increases. This has meant that, today, the state has come to hold the sole right to the legitimate use of violence in almost all circumstances (and, interdependently, the sole right to raise taxes) and those seen to be in the grip of ungovernable emotions are viewed with alarm at least, or seen as candidates for a penal or medical institution. In this very specific sense, then, according to Elias and Dunning we live in ‘unexciting’ times. Furthermore, in an argument also elaborated by Elias himself (Elias 1987A), it has been pointed out that a consequence of the continuing expulsion of violence from aspects of everyday life has been to the relative disadvantage of men rather than women. For the ‘balance of power between the sexes will tend to veer in favour of men to the extent that violence and fighting are endemic features of social life’ (Dunning 1986 p. 80) and veer in favour of women to the extent that social life is pacified. For it was predominantly men who had hitherto to benefited from the use, or threat, of violence as a source of social power in everyday life. Even though, in the long
term, the nature of social relations can be seen to influence personality through the advancement of the threshold of repugnance regarding violence, for example, human beings are far from being determined by these influences. Indeed, rather than thinking in terms of the false polarities of 'freedom' and 'determination', it may be much more productive to think in terms of the relative scope for choice that an individual has.

The need is not to establish whether the actions of Louis XIV or of a slave are 'free' or 'determined', but to investigate carefully how much scope for decision each has. There will be a big difference between the two, but in neither case are their actions absolutely free or absolutely determined.

(Mennell 1992 p. 196)

People are not only capable of innovation: if we separate the idea of biological evolution on the one hand, and social development on the other, it becomes clear that people are biologically equipped to innovate (Elias 1991).

Given the subject matter of this thesis, non-elite road running, it is in the area of people's 'voluntary' leisure activities that this ability to innovate becomes particularly important. Indeed, although innovation and cultural change are hallmarks of the societies of the modern West, nowhere, perhaps, is humanity's 'natural changefulness as a social constant' (Elias 1978) more apparent than in the field of leisure. For while the 'leisure options that may be open to the individual may be heavily conditioned' (Rojek 1989 p. 8), certainly much more than some 'traditional' sociology with its talk of leisure as 'free time' would seem
to indicate, 'options do exist. Choice is real. Perhaps the most stimulating and exciting work being done in the study of leisure attempts self consciously and consistently to combine agency and structure' (Loc cit).

While the leisure choices of individuals are influenced by the structures of class, race, gender, culture, discourse and so on, choices made by individuals will also help to shape these structures.

However, actions and rules, individuals and structures do not exist in aspic. They exist in time. The precondition for more realistic views of leisure is to recognise that both our object of study and our theories are social processes; human relations which are contingent and subject to change.

(Ibid p. 9 emphasis in the original)

Therefore for the non-elite Runners (the focus of this study) while their involvement in road running is the result of real choice, it will also be intimately connected to other aspects (work, family and so on) of their everyday lives. In other words their leisure relations form part of a web of interdependent relationships they have with others. It is to these relationships, and likely shifts in the power balances or ratios they represent that this study looks for understanding. The main source of data for this study is a series of forty eight semi structured interviews with participants conducted over a period of almost two years in South Wales. At first glance, it may seem something of a paradox that the empirical evidence for a study informed by a theory which stresses the importance of long term historical processes, is of a 'here and now'
variety. But as Elias points out, empirical evidence of a 'here and now' type does not, necessarily (nor in this case), mean that the sociological question is framed as if concerned with 'social phenomena exclusively at a given point in time' (Elias & Scotson 1965 p. 11-12). That would produce something which would have structures 'which to use the language of the films [would] have the form of a "still"' (Ibid p. 12). Crucial, then, is the way in which the sociological question is framed, for it is only once questions are 'conceived as problems of phenomena which have the form of process, which participate in a movement in time' (Ibid) that comprehensive explanation can become possible.

So it is with this study. The work is essentially a study of people experiencing processes of change. People, of course, themselves change, not least of all biologically over time, that is, they age (and as we shall see in later chapters, aspects of that process, too, are important for the present study). But as they age, people acquire a history, a personal biography unique in detail, but also a part of a period of (in the case of this study) British social history. As children of the 1950s and teenagers of the 1960s (the case for most of the research subjects) they will have lived through, arguably (along with the two World Wars), one of the periods of most rapid and far reaching social change ever experienced in Britain. Those changes that seemed to gather pace in the 1960s, many of which are still ongoing, may mean that for many, the broad expectations, acquired in their earlier years, of how adult life would be for them are neither possible nor seen as wholly appropriate.
Some of the changes the research subjects (in common with others who have lived in Britain during this period) will have experienced will involve shifts in the balance or ratio of power between people within and between groups. Though, as we have seen it may be unlikely that people ordinarily conceive of them as such. Some of these shifts in power ratios, though, will be consequences of identifiable but unplanned long term social processes. There is, for instance a tendency towards what Elias calls ‘functional democratization’:\footnote{A process identified in The Civilising Process Vol II 1978 (1939) but there referred to as ‘growing structural pressure from below’. The term ‘functional democratization’ was coined later by Elias.} With lengthening chains of interdependence there is a tendency towards the exercise of reciprocal controls within and between groups. That is to say, for the power ratios among groups of people to move in the direction of equality (though they may, of course, still be very unequal). However, although some of the change that people experience will be as consequences of these long term processes, they are less likely still to conceive of them in those terms.

This means that by approaching the research subjects (who are themselves developing, ageing, changing) in the context of wider processes of change, the sociological question is ‘conceived as problems of phenomena which have the form of processes, which participate in a movement in time’ (Elias & Scotson 1965 p. 12). Thus comprehensive explanation becomes possible, and that is what will be attempted here.
The forty eight interviews were conducted with participants from all over South Wales, from Gwent in the East to Carmarthenshire in the West. Potential interviewees were contacted in one of several ways. Firstly, some were approached through a number of Running Clubs in South Wales. At a club training night, volunteers were asked for their names and telephone numbers and those subsequently selected from among the volunteers were contacted and an interview arranged. Those who ran unattached to any club were contacted initially through club members of their acquaintance and a ‘snowball’ sample developed from these contacts. A small number of interviewees were also approached while they were out running or jogging and contacted later with a fuller explanation and arrangements made for an interview. The overall sample was not constructed with a view to being statistically representative of the participating universe since that is, at present, both unknown and unknowable. It was, however, designed to cover the known differences in involvement (see the Introduction) and apparent differences in the social characteristics of those who run. Consequently the sample included small numbers of male and female elite performers or the ‘Athletes’. These were the men who ran at under six minutes to the mile (an arbitrary but not unreasonable division), and some at well under six minutes to the mile, and the women who ran at under six and three quarter minutes to the mile. (The Road Runners Club system of Standard Certificates adds 15% to the Men’s Standard Time to arrive at the Women’s Standard). The sample also included numbers of men and women who ran at paces slower than eight and nine minutes to the mile (respectively) who would therefore be classed by most participants as
'Joggers'. The bulk of the sample, however, consisted of men and women who ran further and faster than was necessary to achieve basic physical fitness, yet stood no realistic chance of every winning (or doing well in) any race - the 'Runners'. The interviewees varied by ability, but they also varied in age. The youngest was twenty four years old and the oldest (by quite a margin) was seventy one. The average age of the sample was fractionally over thirty eight years, compared to the average age of the 1990 London Marathon entry at thirty nine years.

Members of the sample varied, too, in the levels of their involvement. All of the Athletes and some of the Runners were regularly and heavily engaged in club training sessions, club racing programmes and so on, while other club Runners did little more than wear a club vest in the races they chose to take part in. Some of the club Runners and some of those who ran 'unattached' raced regularly, while others raced infrequently or hardly at all. One of the interviewees had been a regular Runner for over ten years, but had only entered his first race a few months before being interviewed. None of the Joggers were club members, and only two had ever raced and only one more than once. Neither of them had entered a race longer than five miles. There was some correlation between ability level and degree of involvement, that is, the quicker Runners seemed to have a greater degree of commitment to their Running, but this was not clear-cut.

Those interviewed were predominately male, predominately middle class
and exclusively white. The first two characteristics reflect what is already known about those who take part in road running (see the Introduction) and the third reflects, perhaps, the fact that the research took place in South Wales where there are few ethnic minority communities of any real size. Though predominately male, the sample did include fourteen women whose ages, ability and levels of involvement also varied. Only the female ‘Joggers’ were not members of a Running Club; all the other women were. The female ‘unattached’ Runner seems to be a very rare ‘species’ indeed.

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<tr>
<th>SAMPLE STRUCTURE</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Athletes’</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Runners’</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Joggers’</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youngest</td>
<td>25 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>71 years</td>
<td>52 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>41 years</td>
<td>31 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Runners</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattached Runners</td>
<td>14</td>
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**Registrar General’s Social Class**

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Totals 34 14
Those interviewed, then, represented most of the 'ways' in which people may be involved in road running along what appear to be the important dimensions associated with the practice. With four exceptions, all the interviews were conducted in the respondent's home. In the majority of cases the respondent was the only member of the household present, although four of the women Runners were interviewed in the presence of their partners (who were also Runners) and four of the women Joggers were interviewed in the presence of theirs - who were not. In all, there were five 'husband and wife' pairs among the Athletes and Runners and in only one case were they interviewed separately. The remaining female Runners and Athletes were at present single after divorce. With the respondent's permission (forthcoming in all cases) the interview was tape recorded. The broad outlines of the research and an assurance of confidentiality were given to each respondent at the start of each interview. As explained to them, each respondent was identified on the tape by a random number, and details of age, height, weight, sex and ethnic group were recorded. There was only one list which linked names and addresses to identification number and this was kept under lock and key until the research was complete. It was then destroyed. As a further protection of anonymity, minor details in the description of respondents attached to direct quotations have sometimes been changed.

My own involvement as a regular Runner was always made clear at the beginning of each interview. In a number of cases the respondent seemed visibly to relax when told this, some commenting towards the end of our
session that such an interview would have been very difficult, or impossible, with someone who did not themselves Run, for they would 'never have understood'. This extensive bedrock of shared experience enabled much 'preparatory work' in the interviews to be dispensed with. Respondents were 'warmed up' by asking for a 'potted history' of their lives thus far, and were then encouraged to talk about various aspects of their lives they had touched upon in their preamble.

This basis of shared understanding almost always meant the respondent became 'comfortable' very quickly and the interviews then became 'interviewee led'. Respondents were encouraged to talk about aspects of their lives, their running, its relationship with family and work obligations; they were indeed allowed to 'ramble'. Interviewed in this patient way, respondents tended to want to discuss those aspects of their lives that were particularly important to them. In addition to their Running, it was in this way that a number of respondents dwelt at length on the frustrations and disappointments associated, for example, with their careers. The interviews were eventually brought to a close by asking the respondent whether there was anything they wished to talk about that had not already been covered in one way or another.

It was at this point that several respondents explicitly declared (what had already become obvious through the course of the interview) that their Running was very important to them, and formed a large part of their lives even though they could not fully explain its importance. None of the respondents were
asked, directly, 'why' they ran. To do so may have put them under pressure to articulate motives appreciable only with a significant degree of detachment, and may thus have been counterproductive. A few of the, perhaps, more perceptive respondents did, of their own volition, attempt such an analysis. The results of their attempts are reported in the body of the study. The interviews with Runners and Athletes lasted, on average, one and three quarter hours, with the shortest lasting an hour and a quarter and the longest almost three. Interviews with Joggers tended to be somewhat shorter and averaged almost exactly an hour in duration.

The tapes of each interview were analysed. Biographical information was noted, as were the social variables of sex, age and ethnic group together with height and weight. Verbatim comments were grouped under thematic headings and it is these quotes that appear in the text. Once twenty interviews had been analysed, the first ten were re-analysed and some further, peripheral information added to the written record. As indicated earlier, some minor biographical details of those to whom a quote is attributed in the text may have been changed to preserve anonymity. Any such alteration involves no material difference to the meanings of what they said. I regard those interviewed to be typical of the people engaged in the practice of road running. Although the absolute numbers of Athletes interviewed was small, they represent, by definition of their elite status, a very small minority of those involved in the sport. Neither do I have any reason to believe that the Joggers interviewed for the study were atypical in any sense. Furthermore, the
feelings, sentiments and attitudes expressed by those formally interviewed constantly reinforced comments made to me in informal conversations I have had with all types of runners over the years. Some of these informal comments, usually made over a glass or two of ‘anaesthetic’ after a race, also appear in the text. As with Moskos in his study of American combat soldiers.

the data is (sic) not of a survey sample kind, but relies instead on intimate interviewing and participant observations, [and so] the materials gathered allow certain kinds of qualitative inferences.

(Moskos 1970 p 137)

Being a fellow participant, a ratified member of this group, I, too, ‘could go beyond ritualistic answers to pat questions’ and I, too, would ‘assert with some confidence that the findings reflect a set of beliefs widely shared by .....’ (Ibid p. 137-8), in his case, American combat soldiers, in mine, runners in South Wales throughout the period of the fieldwork.
CHAPTER TWO

Doing it Naturally: Time for a Run

As the introductory section to this thesis indicated, this chapter is the first of three that, together, attempt to outline the physical practice of distance running. It might be thought logical, therefore, to start with a brief history of distance running before moving on in later chapters to look at the social context in which it takes place. While this chapter does indeed include a brief history of the development of distance running, at least insofar as it has become a mass participation phenomenon, the context in which it takes place might be said to 'intrude' even here. 'Intrude', that is, in an historical sense, for the chapter opens with a discussion of the uncertainties and risks associated with modern life in Britain which promote our 'romantic' attachment to the past. Many modern people tend to have a love affair with an idealised version of the past which they see as safe, natural and predictable, to be contrasted with the perceived artificiality, danger and uncertainty of the present. The chapter then goes on to locate running as a 'natural' activity with its roots in the distant past. From their roots in prehistorical hunting and warfare sports and forms of running are traced through to the present day where with the introduction of the idea of a 'level playing field' they are seen as 'unmeditated' (in the sense of requiring no interpretation) contests of natural abilities.

It is at this point that the discussion moves to the genesis of road
running as a mass participation phenomenon in New Zealand at the beginning of the 1960s. From there, it spread to the United States where its 'romantic' overtones struck chords with the 'cultural revolution' of 'flower-power' that had begun on the West Coast. From there, running ‘boomed’ and spread worldwide. The chapter closes with some indications of the level of participation in road running in present day Britain and the trends can be identified in road running and road racing.

The undoubted pressures of modern living, associated as they are with chronic change, uncertainty and flux, may bring with them a desire to re-establish a perceived closer connection, with the ‘unchanging’ realm of the ‘natural’. This may be a response, in part at least, to what is seen to be both that most ‘wondrous’ and most ‘monstrous’ facet of modern human living - the modern city. As Elias points out (Elias 1994 [1939] p. 446) the modern city is qualitatively different from settlements of bygone eras; it is not simply a case of increased pace, pollution, overcrowding and expense. As Raymond Williams has expressed it, ‘between the cities of ancient and medieval times and the modern metropolis…………. there is a connection in name, and in part, of function, but nothing like identity’ (Williams 1973 p. 7).

Although a particular form of urban romanticism may be unique to modern times, some have identified similar tendencies in other societies at times of profound change. There is, for instance, a thread of ‘aristocratic romanticism’ to be found in the cultural forms associated with court society from
its beginning in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in France up to
the revolution (Elias 1969).

This finds literary expression in the hands of generations which
lived, through the main phase of the courtization of the elite
nobility, their transformation from knights to courtiers, the severing
of their links with the provinces and the land, and the exclusion
of the provincial nobility from the central elite.

(Mennell 1992 p. 87)

There were, for example, popular novels 'peopled by nymphs and
shepherds' (Ibid), where the shepherds represented the provincial nobility who
embodied a 'superior mentality, a lack of artifice and a closeness to the natural
which the courtiers have lost' (Ibid). Indeed, towards the close of the period
of the ancien régime 'life imitated art, with Marie-Antoinette and her ladies in
waiting playing at being shepherdesses' (Ibid).

It is common enough in any age for people to see the past as being
more 'natural', more predictable and above all safer than the present (Pearson
1983 p. 7-11). This idealised version of the past persists despite documentary
evidence to the contrary. Victorian England, for example, was anything but
safe (Philips 1977), and even the late Victorian and Edwardian years, from the
1890s to the Great War, often seen as a 'golden period' of the 'British way of
life', were full of crime and violence (Pearson 1983 Chapter 4). Yet the past,
and certainly a 'golden age' passage of it, (whenever that is thought to have
been) is commonly enough characterised as 'natural', predictable and safe even
today - usually coupled with a notion that we should strive to return to it (as in John Major's 'back to basics' campaign).

Modern life, characterised as it is both by change and lengthening chains of interdependence where social relations are 'lifted out' from 'local contexts of interaction and......[restructured]....... across infinite spans of time-space' (Giddens 1991B p. 21), inevitably brings with it elements of risk outwith the control of each individual. As Ulrich Beck argues, at the end of the twentieth century the 'social production of wealth is systematically accompanied by the social production of risks' (Beck 1992 p. 19). We are, for instance, required to put trust into what Giddens calls 'symbolic tokens' and 'expert systems', both of which are also 'disembedding mechanisms' (Giddens 1991B). Money, as a 'symbolic token' is the means of connecting credit and liability when goods are not directly exchanged at a specific time and is therefore a means of 'bracketing time and so lifting transactions out of a particular milieu of exchange' (Ibid p. 24). Workers do not (usually) receive their week's material needs in what would be a rather bulky pay packet. They receive money. Workers are required to trust (as are others) that these symbolic tokens will be accepted in exchange for the goods and services they may require at some future time, or in payment for those they have already received. The acceptance of money-payment for work to be exchanged in the future for goods and services inevitably involves some risk. The purchasing power of currency can be rapidly eroded by inflation or even hyper-inflation as in Germany between the wars for instance. However, it should also be noted
that there remains the possibility of it increasing through falling prices.

More importantly, perhaps, there seems to have been a significant shift in the balance of risks which people face in modern societies when compared to those of the Middle Ages. In those times it was the ever present threat of physical attack, the risk of violent aggression against the person which predominated (Elias 1994 [1939] p. 156-66). Today, however, the level of risk of that kind may be much reduced, but we are locked into the risks associated with the role of expert in the division of labour, or what Giddens calls ‘expert systems’. Risks, over which we as individuals have little, if any, control. Reliance on these ‘expert systems’ has become a matter of necessity, for there may have been a time in human history when single individuals may have been able to carry the entire stock of human knowledge in their heads. But that time, if it existed, has long gone since the human ability to communicate knowledge through the use of learned symbols (their ‘symbol emancipation’ - Elias 1991), has meant that knowledge has grown exponentially. Today we have to take large areas of our lives ‘on trust’; we rely on ‘experts’ (people who increasingly know more and more about less and less) to ensure our safety in their ‘expert systems’.

When I go out of the house and into a car, I enter settings which are thoroughly permeated by expert knowledge - involving the design and, construction of automobiles, highways, intersections, traffic lights and many other items. Everyone knows that driving a car is a dangerous activity, entailing the risk of an accident. In choosing to go in the car, I accept that risk, but rely upon the aforesaid expertise to guarantee that it is minimised as far as possible.

(Giddens 1991B p. 28)
Elias also uses the example of modern traffic to contrast the kinds of risks associated with modern living and those that people were exposed to in bygone ears (Elias 1994 [1939] p. 446). However, he goes on to locate them in the lengthening chains of interdependence associated with the figurations that characterise modern life. This is, perhaps, more productive than an abstract emphasis simply or mainly on ‘time and space’ which may seem, relatively, to exclude people. That said, it is clear that we acknowledge and accept for the most part, the risk of an accident and consequential injury involved in the use of our cars. We are, however, becoming increasingly aware of, and uneasy about, enforced reliance on other expert systems (the unease being a feature of what Ulrich Beck has called ‘reflexive modernization’ - Beck 1992). We have been forced to trust, for instance, that those responsible for the manufacture of and material requirements, including our motorcars, are not poisoning the planet. While some may seek to reduce their direct dependence on expert systems through the adoption of a particular lifestyle, we all breathe the same air and live on the same planet. This is most clearly demonstrated through a consideration of nuclear risks. We are all forced to trust that those who administer nuclear power plants (since this sort of risk is neither temporally nor spatially specific) have developed and are guided by effective safety procedures. Indeed, the whole notion of ‘risk’ as separate from ‘danger’ appears to be relatively recent in origin. The word itself conveys the idea that many of the contingencies which affect human life are the result of human actions rather than given by ‘nature’ or ‘God’ (Luhmann 1988). The word ‘risk’ only seems to have come into the English language in the
seventeenth century, and probably derives from a Spanish nautical term meaning 'to run into danger or go against a rock' (Giddens 1991B p. 30).

The risks and uncertainties inherent in modernity may, then, have nurtured the desire to identify more with 'nature' than with 'society' common amongst those living in the societies of the modern West. 'Nature represents all that is despoiled by civilisation, the obvious victim with whom the individual identifies himself' (Douglas 1978 p. 25). For although 'society' delivers the means of life,

Society is an unremitting source of worry as well as rich prizes. Corruption, self-seeking and aggression will tend to be seen as characteristic features of human social life; in contrast nature is idealised as good and simple.

(Ibid p. 24).

Useful though it may be, there is an undesirable consequence of the way the notion of 'risk' is posed in the work of Giddens and Luhmann above. The idea of 'risk' is posed in the dichotomy of 'nature' on the one hand and 'culture' or 'society' on the other. As Elias cogently argues, however, this contrast (like many other such contrasts) is an unhelpful one since, through a neglect of processes, it tends to hide the interdependence of biological evolution and social development (Elias 1991 Sections I and II). Yet it remains the dominant way of thinking in modern times and in those circumstances 'nature' is often more highly evaluated than 'society'. As Elias puts it:
The concept for nature, for instance, can symbolically represent a whole conglomerate of often diffuse and even incompatible syntheses. It can represent the great benevolent mother which produces only what is helpful and good for human beings. The term 'natural' can be used as a praise word implying that it has a high positive value in contrast to things made by humans which are artificial, not natural, and thus do not participate in the eternal goodness of nature.

(Ibid p. 45)

This desire to identify more closely with nature may, then, not only foster a wish to leave the 'man-made' city for the more 'natural' countryside, but also to turn the clock back. That is to turn the clock from the modern agribusiness that is much of today's countryside, back through 'man the farmer', back through 'man the pastoralist' to 'man the hunter', man at his supposedly primordial 'best'. Given the increased desire to identify with the 'natural', then one of the attractions of some sports becomes clearer. For it is possible, given 'the right conceptual approach and historical direction, to trace the origins of modern sport back to primitive matters of survival' (Cashmore 1990 p. 36). Primitive matters of survival, that is, connected both with primitive warfare and with the hunt, for much of the technology and the skills required would have been the same in both activities. Using the analogy of the hunt, track and field events appear as direct, regulated descendants of the primitive chase for game and techniques of killing or disabling prey with some sort of missile. The javelin replacing the spear being, perhaps, the most straightforward example.

There is another sense in which these sorts of sporting activities may be distantly 'mimetic' of the hunt. If we use 'mimetic' to denote a leisure activity
in which 'the feelings aroused in the imaginary situation of a human leisure
activity are the siblings of those aroused in real life situations' (Elias 1993
[1986] p. 42). Then the apprehension, tension and above all the excitement
generated by a sporting contest may be closely related to those generated in
the hunt, or indeed, the battle. These feelings are equally capable of being
aroused during individual track, field or combat contests for example, and in the
'mock battle' of many team sports. For human hunting and primitive warfare
both started out as group affairs.

Furthermore, these practices may have played a part in our biological
evolution as a species, for in order to chase prey the hunter must be an
efficient locomotion machine. The hunter has to be capable of an explosive
effort in a sprint if required, and, if the hunt were to last all day, be able to
distribute output over a prolonged period - as in a marathon. While there are
many species in the animal kingdom who will outperform human beings 'at their
distance' (and so if they are to be hunted as prey human hunters would have
to rely on group co-operation for success), human beings do have a prodigious
spread of running abilities.

Although much of modern sport has become a vehicle for commercial
interest, at 'the same time we should recognise that the impulses that make
sport attractive enough to be commercially exploited are part of our evolutionary
make-up' (Cashmore 1990 p. 44). If running has been around for a long time,
then so, too, has competition for 'man the hunter competed for the best game
and sexual prizes' (Brittan 1898 p. 78), and at 'some stage in ancient history rivalry seems to have struck chords' (Cashmore 1990 p. 45). In the sporting context rivalry manifested itself as sporting competition, the basic forms of which some have seen as 'constant through the ages' (Huizinga 1971 p. 12) (Although this view is open to criticism - Dunning 1993 and see below). In some contests, the 'whole essence of it is a trial of strength and speed' (Ibid) where the rivalry hinges on a single quality (speed, endurance, strength, memory, skill, ingenuity, etc.) exercised within defined limits and without outside assistance, in such a way that the winner appears better than the loser in a certain category of exploits.

(Caillois 1971 p. 19)

These contests like running, boxing and wrestling may be considered as 'sports' where there is physical competition, but they are not 'played' in the sense that soccer, rugby and basket ball are. These latter contests may usefully be considered as 'sport-games' (Elias & Dunning 1993 [1986] A) which can further differentiate them from 'games' such as chess and chequers which involve no physical competition and are not 'sports'.

This, is not, however, to imply that ancient contests closely resembled modern sport. Indeed the difference may be large enough to question whether the basic forms of sport are 'constant through the ages'. The degree of aggression and violence that was tolerated (and enjoyed) and the absence of any notion of 'fair play' set these ancient contests apart from modern sport.
In the various forms of ancient Greek combat sports, for example, limbs were regularly broken and eyes put out. There is one example (Elias 1971 p. 102) where the contest finished when one contestant was able to force his leather-armoured outstretched fingers into his opponent’s abdomen, below the ribs, and then to disembowel him. The folk football that flourished despite attempts by the ‘state’ to proscribe it, in medieval and early modern Britain (Elias & Dunning 1971 p. 116-8) was similarly a very different game from the modern descendants. ‘There was shrovetide football in which rival armies of participants battled it out through field, street, even in rivers and under bridges’ (Hargreaves 1986 p. 17), with inevitable casualties. Whereas, as a consequence of modern thresholds of repugnance, one of the peculiarities of many sports and sports games is that there are rules constraining contestants with the aim of reducing the risk of physical injury to a minimum (Elias & Dunning 1986). As far as ‘fair play’ was concerned early folk football involved having as many participants on each side as each side could master - even some on horseback! (Ashworth 1971 p. 44). The ancient Greek form of ‘boxing’ did not differentiate between classes of contestants and ‘did not try therefore to match people according to their weight……. the only distinction made was between boys and men’ (Elias 1971 p. 100).

What was clearly missing, then, in comparison with modern ideas about ‘sports’ was the notion of a ‘level playing field’ which, when introduced, gave rise to a ‘whole group of games [that] would seem to be competitive, that is to say, like combat, in which equality of chances is artificially created’ (Caillois
The introduction of an 'ethios of fairness' may have been connected in the first instance, at least, with betting on the outcomes of sporting events (Elias 1971 p. 101-2), but more importantly with the links between the processes of 'sportization' and 'parliamentarization'. Elias was concerned with the question of why it should be that the 'civilising of game contests and the restraint on violence to others through social rules which require a good deal of individual self control developed first in England' (Elias 1986 p. 24). While others had linked 'sportization', where sport comes to be played by the agreed rules of the game (which have the limitation and control of violence as one of their main functions) and 'parliamentarization' where political conflicts are played out according to agreed parliamentary rules, this has been only 'at the level of analogy' (Mennell 1992 p. 148). Elias, however, saw the 'parliamentization' of political conflict as an unusual route out of a cycle of violence, where debating skills replace physical weapons, and pointed out it was the same class of people who were involved in the two aspects of a broader process of development.

It was simply that the same class of people who participated in the pacification and greater regularisation of factional contests in parliament were instrumental in the greater pacification and regularisation of their pastimes.


The class of people in question were the landed aristocracy and gentry of eighteenth century England.
The parliamentization of political conflict, and the consequent extension of the franchise has, no doubt, fostered the belief that ‘all men are born equal’. This egalitarian idea (though expressed in somewhat sexist language) holds centre stage in the declared belief system that underpins the democracies of the modern West. While people in these societies recognise social inequalities of many kinds, they tend to conceive of themselves as essentially equal. That is, no human being is intrinsically more valuable than any other. Therefore, a sporting contest, for it to have any meaning, any legitimacy as a contest, must reconstruct a ‘utopian equality’ that allows "natural" differences to be expressed in such a way that they cannot be "confused" with the accidentality of social life that neither starts from, nor approximates to this ideal state’ (Ashworth 1971 p. 45). It is only in this way, given the modern ‘essential equality’ of people that legitimate comparisons can be made. In civil society wealth, poverty, class, gender and ethnicity are all factors that can ‘interfere’ with outcomes. While on the ‘field of sport, outcomes are "sacred", that is, they reconcile essence and existence, they make that which appears to be, real’ (Ibid). In a very real and powerful sense, sport seems to be an activity ‘outside’ society, uncontaminated by the forces at work in other areas of social life. If we do come into this world differentially equipped, then sport appears to reflect these ‘natural’ differences. Sport appears to involve natural physical skills and capacities, sport presents these ideological images as if they are natural. They appear to rest on natural or extra-social truths rather than being products of human and social and political construction.

(Clarke & Clarke 1982 p. 63 emphasis in the original)
We accept the results of sporting contests, by and large, believing that success has gone to the 'fittest' and that 'success or failure lies in the hands of the individual' (Ibid). Sport then can, and has, come to be seen as an area of unmeditated reality where we can plainly see 'what's what' without 'having to listen to the involved, self serving analysis of theorists, analysts, political groups etc. Running faster, jumping higher, throwing further can be seen - not interpreted' (Willis 1982 p. 117).

The fact that sporting contests appear to be uncontaminated by social factors, illusory though this certainly is, means they can be used to make telling comparison between individuals and between groups, men and women for example. At the level of individuals because 'identity' is becoming increasingly linked to 'the body' (see Chapter Five), sporting contests may be used as an aid to establish or maintain that identity through telling comparisons with others. Others that is, who may or may or be taking part in the sporting competition per se. Some of the data I have gathered can be used to illustrate this point. One Runner in this study explained.

'It's funny, but it's almost as though you secretly believe you're a better man than the next bloke, simply because you can run faster'. (Although we do learn at an early age that these things are socially valued). As said, this can hold, too, in comparisons with others who do not themselves take part. Another of the interviewees, a male professional observed:
Sometimes in my work, I've been in a position where I've had an idiot for a boss. You know, you think to yourself - 'there's something wrong here, you're getting paid twice as much as me, and you're an idiot'. Then you think - 'yeah, come on, get a pair of running shoes and we'll go out and we'll really see what you're made of'.

These comparisons, whether they be made with others within the sporting competition, or with others who were disinclined to submit themselves to the rigours of the event, were explicitly recognised, then, by some of the Runners interviewed as a means of laying bare the 'intrinsic self' for comparison. The idea of 'fairness' or a 'level playing field' that was crucial to the development of modern sports has ensured that they are seen, and can be used, as meaningful tests of 'natural' abilities and the outcomes as reflections of 'natural' differences. As we have seen, so it was with some of the Runners interviewed for this study. Let me now turn to some relevant aspects of the history of distance running insofar, at least, as it development into a mass participation phenomenon.

Road Running, as an activity for people other than dedicated athletes had its genesis in New Zealand in the early 1960s. Arthur Lydiard, a well known coach there became famous all over the world when he coached three athletes to medals (two gold and one bronze) in the Rome Olympics in 1960. He had experimented with himself over a period of some thirteen years and had developed a system of endurance training which provided a good aerobic base upon which to do speed and anaerobic work. It was this system he used to train some of the best athletes in the world in the late 1950s and early
In the early 1960s the first of a series of books Lydiard wrote (mostly with Garth Gilmour) on jogging and health was published (see Appendix I). From that time on, jogging and road running became, and still is a popular activity with people of all ages in New Zealand - promoted with some of Lydiard's own slogans such as:- 'You should have a doctor check your health before giving up exercise! From New Zealand, the 'jogging boom' spread worldwide, but its route to America seems to have been via Bill Bowerman, an American coach, who took a four by one mile relay team to New Zealand in 1962/3 for Lydiard's advice on endurance training. Bowerman was impressed with the jogging groups he saw in New Zealand and started a group in Eugene, Oregon, on his return to the United States in 1963, where he, too, wrote on the subject. His books, like those of Arther Lydiard contain a range of training programmes designed to enable virtually anyone to take up jogging safely. They also provide practical advice on equipment and so on, as well as some
of the basic 'do's and don'ts' of the practice. Jogging is promoted in these books very much on the grounds of health related fitness and its associated weight loss (something referred to as 'girth control'). Indeed Bill Bowerman co-authored one of these publications with a heart specialist, W. E. Harris ¹ which exhorted people to jog to 'reduce the waistline', 'improve your appearance' and 'help prolong your life'.

Once in America, the practice seem to have struck chords. For not only had the link between health and fitness been refocused in the wake of Eisenhower's heart attack, but there was a 'cultural revolution' under way amongst the young that had its roots on the West Coast in the very early 1960s. This 'cultural revolution', too, displayed the strong 'romantic' overtones that may characterise periods of rapid social change, as in the period of 'courtization' in France discussed earlier. That this revolt against modernity gathered pace with opposition to the war in Vietnam is a strong possibility, but what is clear is that it did involve a rejection of the material, the scientific, the technological and as such may have been an early symptom of what Ulrich Beck calls 'reflective modernization' (Beck 1992).


² Information for this section was derived from correspondence with Arthur Lydiard, John Davies (athletic coach, contemporary of Arthur Lydiard and Olympic medallist) and Dr. Jan Cameron of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand.
In its extreme form many young people rejected modernity in toto - they ‘dropped out’. But whether that rejection was total or partial, whether they became ‘full time’ or ‘weekend’ hippies, ‘nature’ became reborn in the minds of many. It ceased to be something to be controlled and exploited for profit and became instead a ‘pure’ and ‘innocent thing’ to be protected from the ravages of human greed. Involved with this reorientation to nature was an increased emphasis on humans as ‘natural’ beings and as part of the ‘natural’ world. This emphasis has helped promote the rise of ‘the body’ to its present centre stage position in 1990s Western culture. While maintaining the idea of its ‘spiritual distinctiveness’, the human race was, perhaps, more readily seen as an integral part of ‘nature’.

The industrial modernity the human race had spawned, on the other hand, was seen to threaten humanity on three fronts. It threatened the very planet, it threatened the body, it threatened the mind. Modern industry, it came to be believed, was, and is, poisoning the planet, requires people to lead unhealthy ‘artificial’ lives and dehumanises them in the (industrial) process. The response to these perceived threats was, ‘naturally’ enough also threefold. There was the growth of environmental awareness and protest at what ‘progress’ was doing to the planet. For the mind, people found a Guru, or a drug, and for the body the response was healthy eating, vegetarianism and healthy ‘natural’ exercise. Thus a run in the park (the very existence of which may indicate that some people had similar thoughts previously) may be much more of a symbolic escape than many realise.
The practice grew in popularity. Bill Bowerman received President Kennedy's award for his work; he wrote books on jogging, as did Dr. Cooper and Jim Fixx, but long before Frank Shorter won the marathon for the United States in the 1972 Olympics in Munich, road running had arrived in Britain on a wave of kaftans, cowbells and cannabis. Those who were the ‘children of the fifties' and ‘teenagers of the sixties' will, by now, be part of the ‘new middle age’ cohort (Feathersone & Hepworth 1982), no doubt taking some of these values with them. (The average age of the entrants to the 1990 London Marathon was thirty nine years - London Marathon Office, Richmond, Surrey).

In Britain, mirroring the situation in the United States, the interest in healthy exercise, given its ‘romantic' overtones did not result in an explosion of participation in track and field events. On both sides of the Atlantic such performance orientated events were seen by these new ‘participants in exercise' as contaminated by the technologization of sports. ‘Elite athletes employ a variety of techniques and a plethora of experts to enhance performance, including sports scientists, sports psychologists and sports biomechanists' (Davis & Delano 1992 p. 5-6). While these experts may not have been so much in evidence in the early 1970s, it was still common knowledge that these techniques, and performance enhancing drugs, were in use. The line has always been a difficult one to draw between ‘legal' and ‘illegal' technical help in athletics since the ‘training techniques, equipment, food, medical care .......[used]..... are the product of our technological culture’ (Brown 1988 p. 303), along with performance enhancing drugs. However there
were concerns at the time; a contemporary article in *Le Monde* reported that:

East German doctors are said to have developed undetectable drugs. These are widely used for scientific purposes. So as not to affect an athlete's confidence, this medical doping is carried out without his knowledge, except in the case of 'safe elements' and adults........ Treatment with anabolic steroids has become generalised, together with the introduction of male hormone for girls, even the very young.

(F. Janim in *Le Monde* 9/10 - 9.73
Quoted in Brohm. J. M. 1978 p. 19-20)

These suspicions, confirmed since the re-unification of Germany, have now overshadowed recent Chinese athletic performances, for many former Eastern European coaches are now employed there (Miller 1993).

The point of this is that the growth in interest in running did not result in thousands heading for the nearest 'Tartan' track to take part in competitive track events. For technologised sports have far too much in common with technological production, with the dominant view of the body as a machine. In production it has the job of producing the maximum work and energy (Rigauer 1981; Brohm 1978) and in sport it is that same body-machine whose performance can be broken down and enhanced by 'artificial/technological' means. In other words, technologised sport had much more in common with the 'technical/commercial problem' rather than offering a 'natural solution'. The running 'explosion' took place, then, not in athletic stadia but in parks, along canal towpaths, along cycleways and, if all else failed, along the roads.
The first London Marathon was the 1908 Olympic Marathon (Butcher 1989 p. 3), run from Windsor Great Park to the White City. The race was awarded to Johnny Hayes, an American, who finished in the then world best time of 2:55:19. An annual race the 'Polytechnic Marathon' began in 1909 and was run over approximately the same course (ibid). These, and the races that followed down the years, were not the mass participation events that we know today. In fact, as late as the beginning of the 1970s, the ailing Polytechnic Marathon could hardly master two hundred runners, and while little is known of the social characteristics of those who organised and took part in these races, the competitors would be track athletes almost to a man (the only recorded female entry to the Polytechnic Marathon was Violet Percy in 1926, who recorded a time of 3:40:22 - Blue 1987 p. 60).

But road running as a mass participation phenomenon had arrived in Britain from the United States and, by the late 1970s the 'era of the big city marathons was in full swing with raced sprouting up like mushrooms' (Butcher 1989 p. 4). The first London Marathon as we know it now started [in 1981] with 6255 people crossing the finishing line in Birdcage Walk. The first two, Inge Simonsen and American Dick Beardsley actually held hands to do it.......[for]....... in those bygone days the winner won precisely nothing but his 'pickie' (sic) in the papers.

(Loc cit)

In the 1990 London Marathon, almost 80,000 people applied to run,
34,822 were accepted and 24,953 finished the course. The average age of those who took part was thirty nine years. Most were therefore born in the 1950s and 1960s (figures from the London Marathon Office [LMO], Richmond, Surrey). The number of half and full marathons staged in the Wessex (South West England, to include Dorset) area of England increased from just one in 1981 to twenty six (thirteen of each) in 1984 (Barrell, Holt & Mackean 1990A). The London Road Runners’ Club Fixture List for 1990 catalogues thirty four full marathons, one hundred and seventy five half marathons, and one hundred and fifty ten mile races to be staged in Britain in that year in a list that is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. In the early 1990s, the total number of events of four miles or more up and down the country through the course of a season was thought to be around 2,200 (Walsh 1992 p. 62).

The ‘universe’ of road Runners is both unknown and unknowable. Even if estimates were constructed from the entrants to road races (a very difficult task in itself), an unknown number of Runners would be excluded. For there appear to be some who have Run, perhaps for years and yet seldom, if ever race (one Runner interviewed for this study could be so described). Yet there will be others who will race most weekends and even twice in the same weekend. Therefore any estimate would have to take account of possible multiple participation, that is, where the same runner is part of the entry in more than one race.

A study of runners in Wessex drew a sample of 1637 runners, with
addresses in Wessex, from a total of fourteen marathons or half marathons staged in the area in 1984. When the sample was investigated for 'double entries', that is, where the same runner appeared in more than one event, the final sample number was reduced, but only to 1470 (Barrell, Holt & Mackean 1990). Although precise numbers cannot be known, there can be no doubt that hundreds of thousands of British people regularly run, and more or less frequently take part in organised races and 'fun-runs' up and down the country.

There has been talk about the end of the 'running boom' to the point where it has become something of a cliché. But as Troop put it in 1992, 'while there are events that are not being held this year, due to policing problems, lack of sponsorship or whatever....... there are just as many starting up' (Troop 1992 p. 6). What is clear, though, is that the full marathon of twenty six point two miles, as a race distance, is in decline. There are no longer any city centre marathons in Scotland. Glasgow was last run in 1988, Aberdeen 'died' in 1989 and Dundee in 1991 (Belcher 1992 p 6), although London continued to 'buck the trend' with entries reported up in 1992 (O'Hagan 1992 p. 6). There is little doubt that it is the specialised training and high weekly mileages demanded in a marathon training schedule which mean that Running a full marathon has to be a rarity for most non-elite performers. Most of the Runners interviewed for the present study had done at least one marathon, but only a handful, five in all, had done four or more. Marathon training makes huge demands upon time, upon the Runner, and upon their family. It is therefore something to which many Runners feel they can subject themselves
and their families only intermittently. Of the 642 who had completed one marathon in Wessex in 1984, only 63 had run five that year, and that sample included elite competitors (Barrell, Holt & Mackean 1990). The overall trend, then, is to shorter race distances (Walsh 1992 p. 6).

This chapter has considered the risks and dangers associated with the chronic change and flux of modern living and how this may have fostered a desire in many to somehow return to an idealised ‘safer’ and more ‘natural’ past. It has considered also the clear links many sports have with a supposedly more ‘natural’ past and how, especially since the introduction of ideas of ‘fair play’, sporting contents may be seen to reflect uncontaminated ‘natural’ differences between individuals. As such they can, and are, often used as the basis for telling comparisons between individuals as ‘identity’ becomes ever more tightly linked with the body.

The rise of road running as a mass participation phenomenon has been charted from its genesis in New Zealand and on to America. There, it struck chords with the widespread rejection of technological modernity amongst the young on the West Coast and a population re-awakening to the links between health and exercise. As such it did not result in an explosion of interest in track athletics, for that was seen as ‘contaminated’ by technologisation, but in running along canals, cycleways, in the parks and, if all else failed, along the roads. Some attempt has also been made to assess the extent of the ‘running boom’ in Great Britain, and although some of the longer distance races, notably
marathons, are in decline, nevertheless hundreds of thousands of Britons more or less regularly take to the roads minus their motor cars. Chapter Three attempts to add to the picture of road running through a consideration of it as a ‘natural’ and intensely physical practice and what that will involve for those who participate.
CHAPTER THREE

The Agony and the Ecstasy: ‘Humping the Boonies’

As indicated at the close of the previous chapter, this one aims to add to the picture of road running through a consideration of its intensely physical character and some of the potential physical consequences for participants. It begins, though, with a discussion of the inability of many in the non-participating population to understand what it is that runners ‘get out’ of their running, before moving on to the physicality of the practice. In a sense, therefore, this chapter moves full circle, for if it opens with the inability of non-participants to ‘understand’ the practice, it closes with the participants themselves recounting that they could not fully explain it of those who do not run.

The uninvolved, non-participating public by and large find it difficult to see what it is that Runners get from their Running, when they see Runners out at all times of the day - and night. As one of my sample, a thirty eight year old male put it:

Being on ‘Continental Shifts’ (a shift system that usually involves working two ‘morning’, 6 a.m. - 2 p.m., shifts followed by two ‘afternoon’ 2 p.m. - 10 p.m., shifts; then two ‘night’, 10 p.m. - 6 a.m., shifts followed by two days ‘off’) you’ll find me out Running at all sorts of odd times, from eleven o’clock at night somedays to four o’clock in the morning on others.
It is, perhaps, therefore not strange that many people find it hard to understand what the attraction of running miles in horizontal sleet and other extremes of weather might be.

People generally understand nowadays that there are objective health benefits, as well as cosmetic ones, to be had from regular exercise, especially aerobic exercise, 'those that increase the oxygen using capacity of the body by prolonged working of the heart and lungs' (Geline 1978 p. 12). The benefits include a strengthened heart and lungs, the heart becoming larger and more effective as a pump which produces a slower resting heartrate. 'The number of capillaries in both the heart and the rest of the body increases' (Ibid p. 13-14), meaning blood pressure tends to rise less during physical work and returns to its lowered resting level more quickly. 'All these changes are the hallmarks of the heightened cardiovascular strength running helps produce' (Ibid p. 15).

Running also strengthens the lungs, increases their capacity and results in a greater diffusion of oxygen through the lungs into the bloodstream. It can increase the strength and tone of skeletal muscle and can help bring about weight loss, or 'girth control'. An eleven and a half stone Runner, doing eight minutes to the mile is burning up over one hundred calories each mile (Geline 1978 p.18).

Even so, the non-participating public are often left wondering why Runners cover the distances they do. According to Collee, for example, although the benefits of regular exercise are well established, 'you can take
anything to extremes, and running twenty six miles on tarmac smacks of fundamentalism' (Collee 1990 p.82). Most non-participants would probably view this level of exercise as somewhat extreme, and the intelligentsia amongst them, at least, may cite Pheidippidies as the first extremist in this regard. Straight after the battle with the Persians at Marathon he 'wipes his sword on his tunic, runs straight home and dies of exhaustion when he gets there. What for I ask you? Just to be the first in the showers?' (Loc cit). The intellectual opacity of road Running for non-participants, their inability to 'see' what Runners get out of it, is constantly reaffirmed to those involved. Runners who cover mileages such that they need to train daily, irrespective of the weather and perhaps, because of other commitments, at 'odd' times, are regularly dismissed by friends and acquaintances as 'mad' or 'crazy'.

Virtually all the Runners interviewed for this study recounted occasions when they had been met with incredulity on account of their Running.

'People often tell you you're mad, especially when they've seen you out Running in the rain', explained a thirty two year old female. Other Runners's comments were similar:

'They think you're crazy to do it', said one.

'They don't understand, do they? They think you must be a sandwich short of a pic-nic', said another.

'People just can't understand why you would want to Run miles and miles', echoed a third.
Paradoxically, many Runners themselves seem to exhibit the same reaction when they talk of ultra marathon entrants, those who compete in races of a hundred miles or more (Hilliard 1991). But there is an idea amongst the general public that Runners are engaged in some inexplicable form of compulsive behaviour that drives them out onto the roads at all times of the day and night oblivious to the conditions. Compulsive indeed, it may be, for over half of those interviewed for this study made some sort of reference to their Running being, or in danger of developing into, some kind of 'addiction'.

'I've got to Run, it's like I need a "fix" or something' felt one Runner in his forties. 'They say it can get to you, like a drug don't they? Well I think it can', observed another, in his thirties.

A discussion of the possibility of there being a chemical basis for this 'addiction' follows later in this chapter but these sorts of comments point to Running being, or becoming, 'compulsive' for some Runners, at least. But whether 'compulsive' or not, Runners are generally anything but oblivious to the conditions.

Running is an intensely physical activity which usually takes place in a 'natural' environment, at least in the sense of being out-of-doors. Most of the Runners interviewed for this study reported that, far from being oblivious to the conditions in which they ran, they were in fact acutely aware of them. Some Runners made a point of checking a weather forecast for the following day so
they could plan to Run at the most favourable (or least unfavourable) time. Some of those with less flexible routines talked of the ‘awful moment’ when the alarm clock awoke them and they heard the rain beating on the bedroom window.

‘It’s terrible then’, one of the women interviewed commented. ‘But the worst part if getting yourself out through the door. Once you’ve done that, it’s not too bad. It’s never as bad as you think it’s going to be - once you’ve got going’, she continued.

Weather conditions and the route will both exert a significant influence on the ‘quality’ of a Run in terms of the experience of it for the Runner and have an effect on its ‘quality’ in terms of the time achieved. The surface of the route will, itself, have an influence. Hard surfaces, such as concrete or tarmac produce a faster foot ‘roll-off’, yet increase the shocks to the legs and back. Softer surfaces will reduce these shocks but reduce speed and sap stamina. The camber and incline of the route are also important. A gradient ascended in a motor car unnoticed will require a significant increase of effort on the part of a Runner, if the pace is to be maintained. Steep hills, ascended or descended, generally spell trouble. The former require an increase in energy expended, and the latter tend to shake the Runner up and break the rhythm. Some Runners deliberately train on steep hills as part of their programme so that they hold no fears if encountered during a race.
'Hill work is bloody awful really. But you've got to do some, otherwise when it comes to a hill in a race, you go backwards', as one interviewed for this study succinctly put it.

Adverse camber, too, can cause problems. It will increase the likelihood of injury, especially if the Runner is tired, or close to their performance limit.

Humidity levels, air temperature, wind direction and strength, sunshine, cloud, fog, mist, drizzle and rain will all influence a Run, in terms of its quality, and the Runner's performance. Cool days are generally considered to be advantageous, but a very cold day, or a very cold wind can cause problems. Body heat can be dissipated too quickly and even a well greased nipple, if kept erect by a cold breeze, can become chaffed and bloodied through the constant rubbing of a sweat-soaked vest. Drizzle is usually welcomed more than rain.

'It's nice. People think you're "bonkers" - but the drizzle keeps you reasonably cool, and once you're wet, you're wet. It doesn't matter anymore', explained a fifty eight year old. Heavy rain, however, can gradually fill running shoes with water to the point where, instead of weighing just a few ounces, they can feel like they weigh several pounds. But it is strong sunshine and heat that cause the more serious problems for most.

'I did a ten-miler a couple of weekends ago on a really hot day. I don't think anyone enjoyed it. Everyone seemed to be suffering all the way round',
observed a Runner in his thirty fifth year. Running in hot weather causes the body to lose fluids more rapidly in an attempt to control body temperature, mostly through sweating. If hot weather is coupled with high humidity levels, then this sweat does not easily evaporate and body temperature can soar. In any event, if body fluid levels drop, the body works less efficiently and this will have an effect on pace, and if continued can lead to dehydration. It is vital, therefore, that a Runner takes on enough liquid to enable to body to dissipate surplus heat, for an eleven stone Runner doing a two hour, thirty five minute marathon (around six minutes a mile pace) will produce heat at the rate of 1,000 Kcal per hour. That is, about fifteen to twenty times greater than when ‘at rest’ (Griffin 1990 p. 53-8). Those who finish the London Marathon, for instance, ‘on all fours’, do so almost invariably as a consequence of hyperthermia (an excessively high body temperature) due to dehydration, because they failed to take on enough fluid during the early part of their race.

As a result, obvious precautions are taken. If the route is a long one and the weather warm, then water will be required en route. Clothing must be appropriate for the conditions, bearing in mind that the Runner will ‘warm up’ considerably over the first few miles and so it may be better to be a little cool for the first mile rather than too hot for the subsequent nine. Socks are checked for wrinkles, often the cause of blisters, yet as one of the Runners remarked:
'You still see people finishing (the London Marathon) with bootfuls of blood'.

Shoes are laced with care. Too loose means the foot may move in the shoe causing it to rub, or result in an injury. Too tight, and the shoe may bruise the instep. Nipples and crotch are liberally greased with petroleum jelly or sun-tan oil to avoid chaffing, known colloquially as 'Jogger's Nipple' and 'John Wayne Problems', respectively. 'Vaseline' is advertised in the running press for that purpose. Their advertising copy reads 'Vaseline, the difference between a comfortable winner, and a sore loser' (LRRC Fixture List 1990 p. 77). Sun tan oils, on the other hand, understandably perhaps, are not (advertised for that purpose).

Muscles and joints are carefully stretched and warmed up beforehand in an effort to avoid some of the more consequential injuries associated with Running (a sore nipple may heal in a few days but inflamed tendons and so on may preclude Running for weeks), at least by the more experienced Runners. It was common amongst those in the interview group who had started Running on their own, without the benefit of any knowledgeable advice, to wonder how they had 'survived' their initial 'forays' into Running. A Runner in his fifties explained:

My cousin and I started Running around the same time. After a few months doing it we decided to enter a race. We were amazed when we got there - there were people sprinting up and down, stretching and bending, and doing all sorts of things before
the start of the race. We had never bothered with anything like that.

But with experience, all of the present sample of Runners had come to realise that warming up before a Run can help avoid muscle 'pulls' and 'tears' and other common problems associated with Running. 'Warming down' too, after a Run will help loosen any stiffness and enable the Runner to train more often. However, if the risk of a minor injury is significant, the risk of a significant injury is relatively minor. Save in those few cases where Runners do themselves permanent damage the real dangers come from 'accidents'; such as putting a foot in a pothole and breaking an ankle, or being hit by a truck; and from severe dehydration which can send the core body temperature soaring out of control, resulting in brain damage.

However, even without injury, Running, and especially racing often involves pain.

'When it's really hurting - that's when you say to yourself "Why on earth am I doing this?"', said one experienced Runner.

'You use all sorts of mental tricks to keep your mind off the pain', said another, who continued: 'It's funny, but when you line up at the start (of a race), you know damn well it's going to hurt - so what's it for?'

If ultramarathon competitors' definitions of pleasure and pain are different
from those associated with more conventional forms of running (Hilliard 1991),
then so, too, may more conventional Runners’ definitions be at variance with
those employed in everyday life. By everyday standards, while Running, and
especially when racing, competitors constantly endure some level of discomfort.

‘Even when you’re Running well within yourself, comfortably like, even
then it hurts a bit’, felt one thirty six year old male. ‘Running comfortably’ did
not have the same meaning for nearly all of the Runners interviewed as it has
in everyday usage. ‘Running comfortably’, for them, meant ‘Running at a level
of discomfort that has, with practice, become routinely tolerable’.

Over two thirds of the Runners interviewed now felt that it only ‘really
hurt’ when you were ‘suffering’, ‘struggling’, or going through the inevitable ‘bad
patch’, though some difficult races, or difficult conditions meant that it ‘hurt all
the way around’. This was linked to the fact that most of the sample felt they
‘pushed’ themselves much harder in a race than they did in ‘normal’ training.
That is, of course, with the exception of what one regular club Runner
described as those ‘lung-burstin’ speedwork sessions with the club.

A Runner in his early thirties described his first race:

The first time I raced, I felt sick as I crossed the finish line. I
thought to myself, ‘never, never again!’ But then, after a couple
of beers in the pub afterwards when you’re feeling a bit more
human you start to think - ‘I’ll do better next time!’
Many of those interviewed for the present study felt that when they went through that 'bad patch', or the going was tough, that was the time they had to reach into themselves for personal reserves. A Runner in his forties reflected:

'Even when it's absolute murder - you've just got to keep going and hang on in there and hope you'll get a second wind'.

Another, younger Runner, summed it up as follows: 'After all - no one can really Run ten miles or more without it hurting'.

Most sports involve participants in a pattern of exertion and recovery, whether in the flow of the game as in Rugby Union or Association Football, or between points, as in tennis, or in formal time segments, as in boxing. Distance running, however, involves a prolonged continuousness of effort rarely found in other sports. A non-elite marathon Runner may be Running continuously for *three or four hours*, and that will involve Running in various states of discomfort, pain, and even upon occasion, physical distress. Moreover, much of this discomfort and pain must be endured in isolation. Many Runners will try to do some of their training in the company of others. For example, as one Runner put it:

'...It's always easier if you've got a bit of company - and I think you train better too'.
However, most members of the present sample were in the position of having to do most of their training mileage alone. Distance running is, after all, popularly seen to be characterised by its solitary nature (Hornberger-Thompson 1991). The ‘loneliness of the long distance runner’ has, as a notion, passed into the modern consciousness. Given this, it may not then be surprising that a significant proportion of those interviewed for the present study (over two thirds) reported using some form of ‘mental strategy’ to keep going during long (and uncomfortable) training runs. These strategies were many and varied. They ranged from a simple counting of the lamp-posts along the way to reciting poetry (usually Rudyard Kipling’s ‘If’ in the case of the man who reported using this strategy). The common feature in all these strategies appeared to be that they worked as devices which enabled Runners to ignore more easily the discomfort involved and to stop them thinking about how far they still had to go. Runners may face the strong temptation to turn around and go home were they to allow the thought of, for instance, ‘one down, nineteen more to go’ to enter their heads at the one mile mark of a twenty mile training run. But in much the same was as long term prisoners in Durham Jail’s ‘E’ Wing were unlikely to have calendars on their walls seeing ‘freedom as too distant a matter for constant reflection’ (Cohen & Taylor 1978 p. 14), Runners, too, tend to operate in shorter time frames. Prisoners may think, for example, in terms of ‘from now until the next visit, or letter’ adopting a sort of ‘Salami’ approach to their sentence, taking it slice by slice. Runners operate in a similar vein. On a long training Run they may think on the basis of ‘from here to the next water point’, or if the route is an ‘out and back’ Run, then ‘from here to the turn
around point. The end of a long training Run may not be safely contemplated until the Runner is sure of making the finish in reasonable shape, and that may be only one or two miles from ‘home’.

Time is inextricably linked with road running, not only in the variation in ‘time frames’ in which runners may operate, or as an objective measure of performance, but also in the mental arithmetic that is required of any Runner intent on monitoring the progress of any particular Run. At each mile or kilometre point of a timed Run an ‘equation’ of sorts will need to be ‘solved’. It involves not only distance covered and time elapsed; but the time remaining to the ‘target’ finishing time; the pace required to achieve the ‘target’; the pace required to achieve an ‘acceptable’ time, plus the feasibility of maintaining that pace given the present level of exhaustion. Yet a common question posed by non-participants is:

‘What on earth do you think about when you’re running?’

In truth, both the more exact calculation required on timed training runs and the more approximate equivalents on untimed runs become ‘second nature’. There is, consequently, an opportunity to let the mind wander. Approaching half of those interviewed for the study felt their running gave them:

‘Time to think about things’, as a female in her thirties put it. Another Runner, this time a man felt that his Running is:
'A bit of a mental clearing-out exercise', and another thought he:

'Got some of ..... [his]...... best ideas while ......[he].... was Running', and yet another declared:

'I come back [from a run] mentally refreshed, all the cares of the day are gone. It's great for getting rid of stress'.

However, if the preceding pages documenting as they do, the discomfort, pain, potential for injury and mental gymnastics involved in road running - and as such, may have merely served and compound the general lack of understanding surrounding this behaviour - then it should also be appreciated that, upon occasion, it can be a pleasurable experience:

It is worth observing that the experience of force and skill coming together, however briefly, in the long home run, the perfectly hit golf shot, the crosscourt backhand or the 'flow' in a cross country run, is a great part of what makes sport popular. Such moments [sometimes extended in the case of running] afford enormous satisfaction and pleasure, even to the normally moderate athlete.

(Whitson 1990 p. 23 - my insertion)

Running as a ‘flow experience’ (Csikszentmihalyi 1988) or the mild euphoria of the much discussed, but all too infrequently experienced ‘Runner's High’ can indeed transform Running into a pleasant experience for some.

The phenomenon of the so called ‘Runner's High’ was first described by
American physiologists over fifteen years ago. It was thought to be the result of the body producing a morphine-like substance called Endorphine during exercise. More recent research, undertaken by Dr. Eric Newsholme of the Biochemistry Department at the University of Oxford, however, links it to an amino acid called Tryptophan. This substance passes signals from one nerve ending to the next, and the brain, of course, is a bundle of around ten million nerve endings. A substance called Albumin carries amino acids around the body, rather like a fleet of taxis. Moderate exercise empties these 'taxis' of the other amino acids used by the body for fuel, thus allowing a greater proportion of Tryptophan to be carried to the brain producing a feeling of mild euphoria (Thompson 1990 p. 10-11).

The Runners interviewed for the present study however, were overall undecided as to whether such a phenomenon existed at all. Some thought it did:

'When you're Running well, it can be exhilarating, I don't know how much of that is a biological thing - a chemical thing - but you can get a terrific "high" off it. There is something like that', reported one man. Others felt it might be much ado about very little:

'I do think I get a bit of a "buzz" sometimes, when everything is going right - but if that's it [Runner's High], it's not worth all the effort!'.
Many simply reported that if it did exist, even though they had been Running for years, they had never experienced it.

'You read in the magazines about it being like a drug - and you get "high". Well, it's never worked for me', was one wry observation.

Although there are, then, potentially both positive and negative aspects to the experience of Running to be enjoyed and endured, usually in isolation, for those who Run 'down the field', racing can be a sociable experience:

'You nearly always pair up with somebody - somebody you've never met before. They might say something and then you’ll talk and chat for miles sometimes', declared one of the interviewees.

Most of the Runners interviewed who ran 'down the field' or 'in the pack' in races confessed that they were surprised when first they started to race at the amount of chat and banter that went on, especially in the early stages of a race. As one man explained:

Everybody talks to one another, even telling jokes you know, but it tends to die down a bit towards the end when everyone is 'digging in' for the finish - perhaps it's to do with nerves at the start, but I don't know.

Another told a story of a race he had recently completed where, in its fairly crowded early stages, he was Running alongside a group of Runners he
did not know. One of these Runners was describing a race he had completed the weekend before to the others in the group. He was complaining that the race had been run along country lanes where there was a fair amount of vehicular traffic, and since many of these lanes did not have 'verges', it was quite 'hairy'. At which point a voice piped up from somewhere behind them enquiring as to where these 'hairy virgins' might be found - much to the amusement of all in earshot!

As well as a fair amount of chat taking place 'down the field', there is also a lot of help and mutual encouragement. Runners will pass drinks and sponges to one another at water stations. If somebody is obviously struggling, they will be encouraged and cajoled by others. Upon occasion, when the finish has been very close, those in obvious difficulty have been physically propelled across the line by strangers. Three of the Runners interviewed for this study, all men, had had experience both of Running 'in the pack' and in the more intense and competitive ambience that is the 'front of the field'. They all mentioned the qualitatively different experiences that each engendered. One of the sample, a very quick Runner who normally competed at the front of the field explained:

There were races when I was coming back .....[from a long term serious injury]......, where I raced way down the field, you know, a marathon in four hours. It was completely different from where I was before, you know, towards the front where you've got no time to talk. Down the field it was a different experience. We enjoyed ourselves and chatted all the way around.
One of the other Runners who had had experience of both, nevertheless felt that there was still a good deal of camaraderie even between these quicker Runners. As he explained it:

It’s not as though people aren’t friendly, they are. It’s just that once the race starts everyone is on their own and thinking about their own race. Let’s face it, when you’re Running that fast you’ve got no bloody breath to talk.

Another ‘class act’ in Running terms, though not one of the three who had experience of Running ‘in the pack’, explained about the nature of competition towards the front of the race.

Although we are never going to win a race - it’s the real athletes who do that, the competition is fierce. But at the end of a race the chap in front will turn around and say ‘Well done’ - You’ll do the same to the chap who came in behind you and you’ll mean it.

Some of the Runners who competed ‘down the field’ felt that many of the differences between people that seem to matter in everyday life are no longer important in the context of Running, and especially of a race:

‘You’ll talk to anyone - it doesn’t matter who. Once you’re Running, you have this thing in common’, explained a forty three year old from ‘the pack’. He continued:

‘It doesn’t seem to matter who you are, or where you come from’.
This sort of 'suspension' of social differences and the formulation of a common bond in the face of the physical adversity that Running ten, thirteen or twenty six miles entails, has a parallel. It is reminiscent of the bonds reportedly formed in the military, especially when under fire. There, too, commandernesship 'isn't a particularly selective process. Race, personality, education - anything that would have made a difference in peace [time] - count for nothing. It is simply brotherly love' (Broyles Jnr. W. 1986 p. 199). The incentive for the formulation of these bonds may have been the unpredictability of the situation faced. As another soldier colourfully explains. 'Taking it personal is for people in the World. We got a separate culture out here. And in some respect it's better. Fuck man, and A.K. round don't care what color your paint job is' (Del Vecchio J. M. 1982 p. 44). In these instances the soldiers who fought in Vietnam had 'successfully eliminated hierarchical difference by subordinating it to the broader system of "survival"' (Jeffords 1989 p. 54).

In the case of road running, it is a question of 'surviving' the distance. Time and distance are the Runner's common enemies and tend to unite them all in the face of social difference. For, just as in order to understand how soldiers' attitudes and behaviours are shaped:

one must try and comprehend the extreme physical conditions under which they must manage [for it] ...... is only the context of the immediate combat situation that one can appreciate the nature of the primary group process developed in combat squads.

(Moskos 1970 p. 140)
It is perhaps also only by understanding the extreme physical conditions involved in Running ten or thirteen miles as fast as possible that one can appreciate the intensity of the common bond which may be forged during a race.

These bonds formed during a race also seem to have another characteristic in common with those forged 'under fire'. They both tend to be transient or 'for the duration'. Just as in the Vietnam war where the U.S. combat soldier typically served a twelve month 'tour of duty', meaning they left behind 'comrades in arms' whose tour had started after their own, Runners too, leave their 'long Running friends' behind. For combat 'squad members who had returned to the United States seldom wrote to those remaining behind. In most cases, nothing more is heard from a soldier after he leaves the unit' (Moskos 1970 p 145-6). Similarly, Runners reported that people with whom they may have Run for many miles during a race, encouraging and helping one another through the inevitable 'bad patches', simply went on their own way with a handshake once the race was over. The 'bond' seemed to evaporate as quickly as the sweat.

If 'racing bonds' are transient, then 'training bonds' of longer duration appear to be mainly one-dimensional. Relationships with running club 'friends' and even regular training partners seemed to be focused on Running to the exclusion of all else. One of the interviewees explained
Well, I've trained with .......[a local running club]....... for over four years now, and over that time I've got to know three or four blokes really well. Sometimes we train together away from the club and we plan which races to go to together.

He then asked whether one of these individuals would also be interviewed for this research. In attempting to identify this individual to me he said:

‘You know, he lives up in .......[a suburb].... or .......[another suburb]..... or somewhere up there’. In other words, in spite of a claim of having got to know these individuals 'really well' over the course of three or four years, this man was still not sure which part of town at least one of his Running ‘friends’ called home. Three of the perceptive Runners in my sample realised that these relationships were exclusively about Running. As one man put it:

That was about it really.....[the Running]..... I have very little social contact with them. You talk while you're training, and in the warm up and warm down. There is a bond between Runners and a lot of the discussions are about Running, and the times you've done and the training you've put in.

But there are also characters you gravitate towards and find you have an affinity with, and you seek them out and talk to them while you're training. But at the same time, I don't think - 'Oh, I wish they'd say lets all meet down the pub on Friday night' - I wouldn't be awfully keen on that.

This chapter opened with a discussion of the way in which the non-participating general public seem to find it very difficult to understand what it is that Runners 'get out' of their Running. A lack of comprehension that is
compounded, perhaps, by the voluntary nature of the activity, that is, a failure to understand why Runners should actually choose to do it. That non-comprehension may have been compounded still further by a description of the discomfort and pain (and upon occasions, mild euphoria) which are involved with this intensely physical practice. The chapter then considered the way in which the sharing of the adverse physical conditions inevitably associated with the practice may promote ‘bonds’ between participants similar to those forged in the military under combat conditions. This, in a sense then, is ‘where we came in’, for if the non-participating public find it difficult to understand Running, then in common with soldiers trying to explain the combat experience, Runners find it very difficult to explain what it is really like to Run ten miles to those who have never done it. Time after time, Runners in my sample said they believed that non-participants could not understand what it was like to Run a competitive (to whatever degree) distance race:

‘Oh yes, you could describe it to them. You could describe it to them for hours. But even then, they wouldn’t really know what it was like.

‘You just can’t explain it to them. The only way they [non-participants] are going to know what it’s like to Run ten miles is to do it’, were typical comments.

Similarly, a Vietnam veteran, talking to a young woman who was trying to understand her uncle’s Vietnam experience, explained that it was impossible
to explain adequately the experience of jungle patrols where the enemy, 'Charlie', was indistinguishable from the rest of the population.

'Unless you've been "Humping the Boonies^", you just don't know' (Mason 1985 p. 136).

The following chapter continues this discussion of running through an examination of the distinctions those involved in Running make among themselves and the consequent relationships distinct groups of participants have with the other groups involved.

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1 'Boonies' is a common shortened version of the American and Canadian slang term 'boondocks', meaning wild, desolate or uninhabitable country. The phrase therefore means 'working in the boondocks'.
CHAPTER FOUR

Splitting the Field: A Case of 'Race Relations'

This chapter is the final one, in a series of three, that examines aspects of running as an intensely physical practice that can be said to have links, given the right conceptual framework, with 'mankind' at 'his' supposedly 'primordial best' as 'he' hunted game and waged warfare in the dim and distant past. The chapter concludes this examination by considering the distinctions runners make of one another. It outlines differences in commitment, pace and motivations between identifiable groups that I, in common with those who participate, refer to as 'Athletes', 'Runners' and 'Joggers'.

It recounts the, typically, extrinsic satisfactions that those involved in 'Jogging' claim to derive from their involvement, and logs the increasing levels of competition to be found among those who Run more quickly. Indeed this competition increases to the point where, in a small elite group, the 'Athletes', it becomes readily recognisable as the desire to 'win' which drives them on.

The chapter then goes on to explore the relations between the groups involved, and catalogues the tensions apparent in the comments of some of the Runners, particularly, about the possibility of being misclassified (as they would see it) in terms of a Running/Jogging distinction. For just as the generations in modern Western societies may struggle over resources 'some of which are
symbolic and include the capacity to define meanings and the frontiers of
generations' (Featherstone 1987 p. 121), the Runners, too, (or some at least)
appear to be engaged in such a struggle.

This struggle (not, of course, unconnected with the struggle between
generations) is essentially one over the meanings attached to what they do in
the pursuit of ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu 1984). Successfully defining Joggers
as non-Runners has the effect of increasing the scarcity of the cultural capital
they feel accrues to them in respect of their involvement, with its consequent
effect on their power chances. The contest for the cultural capital associated
with Running (the nature of which is more fully discussed in the next, and
subsequent chapters) has similarities with many other such struggles, and it is
with a consideration of these similarities, whether they are based on
generations or residential groups (as in Winston Parva - Elias & Scotson 1965),
that the chapter concludes.

An uninvolved, but interested observer at the start of a road race would,
no doubt, witness some odd routines. Competitors would be nervously
stretching muscles, warming joints, and those not so contorted, would be
adjusting and re-adjusting items of kit; tying and retying shoelaces; applying
and re-applying lubrication in the tense few minutes before ‘the gun’.

The ‘field’ will be kitted out in a multicoloured assortment of headgear,
tee-shirts, running vests, shorts, dayglo lycra running tights and brightly
coloured (and expensive) running shoes. If our observer were to look more closely at the multicoloured moving mass that constitutes the field they would notice, too, the facts that the vast majority of those ‘about to run’ are male and over thirty. If our observer looked more closely still, they may become aware (although running gear is an effective form of ‘mufti’) that the majority of those ‘about to run’ are middle class. In South Wales, at least they would also no doubt observe that the ‘field’ is almost exclusively white (see Introduction).

In addition to the distinctions of age, sex and social class that we all make of one another in a society such as ours, as the moving mass that constitutes the field finds direction and ‘exits stage left’ at the signal from the gun, our observer may notice something else. Namely, that all the competitors do not seem to move off at the frantic pace set by those at the front. If our observer were to find a position further along the route taken by the race they may notice (as may others who have waited more or less patiently in their motor cars as a policeman holds up the Sunday morning traffic to let competitors through) that it takes some time for all the runners to pass. A more thoughtful observer may even realise that those towards the rear of the field have little, if any, chance of winning the race. One, more thoughtful still, may realise that, given the obvious difference in abilities, that these ‘also rans’ were probably aware of the fact when they lined up at the start. Those who head the multicoloured stream of competitors may well harbour thoughts of breasting the finish tape, but those ‘down the field’ would certainly know before they entered that they had no chance of standing on the winner’s rostrum.
There are then, distinctions to be made among those who run in terms of ability, commitment and, it seems, motivation.

Virtually all those who participate regularly in running (all but one of those interviewed for this study; and the 'exception' did in practice) make the distinction between what they and I refer to as 'Running' and 'Jogging'. Runners see Joggers as participating chiefly for extrinsic satisfaction, a fact confirmed by those Joggers interviewed (I shall return to this subject later).

Runners attribute motivations such as 'to lose a bit of weight'; 'to get a bit of exercise'; 'or to keep reasonably fit' - perhaps for another sport - to those who 'Jog' rather than 'Run'. Runners see Jogging as a slower, more episodic and involving a lower level of commitment to the activity than the one in which they are engaged. As one Runner who trained at up to fifty miles each week put it:

'I certainly would distinguish between Runners and Joggers - on the basis of time and mileage - and the regularity of it'.

While there was no exact agreement amongst the interviewees over where the dividing line in terms of time (pace) should be drawn between Running and Jogging, most of those interviewed (and all of those who considered themselves 'Runners' rather than 'Joggers') felt there was an important difference in terms of pace.
'I've heard it said that if you are doing seven and a half minutes to the mile you're Running; if you're doing one second over that you're Jogging. And that's about right', thought one of the interviewees, a man in his fifties. Others saw it somewhat differently. A younger Runner felt:

'The difference is around eight minutes to the mile - about forty minutes for a five miler. Slower than that and you're Jogging.

Over half of those who made the distinction primarily in terms of pace, sought to qualify it in consideration of distance. The younger Runner quoted above, for example, decided, when the eight minutes to the mile pace 'divide' was translated into longer distances (one hour and forty five minutes for a half marathon and three and a half hours for a full one), that the dividing line ought to be 'eased':

'Those times aren't bad, are they?' he said, and continued, 'Well, perhaps the difference would have to be altered, you know, slowed down a bit as the distance gets longer'.

Brendan Foster, commentating for television on the 1989 London Marathon, remarked (as the picture showed competitors down the field at the five mile stage):

'These are the joggers - the quickest and keenest of them will be doing
eight or eight and a quarter minute miles at this stage, but most will be doing nines or tens' (BBC 1 coverage 1989).

One of those interviewed for the present study, a woman in her fifties, put the dividing line between Running as Jogging as slow as ten minutes to the mile:

'If you’re doing ten minutes to the mile then you’re Jogging’ was her firm opinion. Of those that put a figure to the ‘boundary’ between Running and Jogging, however, her’s was the slowest ‘divide’ by some way.

Although there was no exact agreement as to where the difference was between Running and Jogging in terms of pace (it varied from seven minutes to the mile to the fifty plus year old woman above, who put it at ten minutes to the mile), their decisions did not appear to be random choices. There were those amongst the interviewees who described themselves as Joggers, appeared to derive extrinsic satisfaction from their Jogging and were happy to place the divide at:

‘A good deal faster than I go’, as one man put it, for few of them bothered to ‘time’ their own performances (more of those in a moment). But amongst the Runners there was a tendency for their boundary between Running and Jogging to be related to their own level of achievement.
The slower an individual’s own pace, the slower the divide between Running and Jogging that they maintained, with themselves ‘safely’ on the ‘right’ side of it. Conversely, quicker Runners tended to set a more demanding divide between what they considered to be Running and Jogging. Therefore there would be those at the slower end of the ability range who would consider themselves as Runners, yet be likely to be (mis?) classified as Joggers by those at the front of the race - and be aware of it.

Some of the slower Runners’ sensitivity to being (mis) classified as a Jogger led to the only ‘tense’ period in all the interviews conducted for this study. It was with a man in his late forties, who, although he completed more than twenty miles a week and often more, did so at around ten to ten and a half minutes to the mile; thus he would have been defined, by virtually all those interviewed as a Jogger. Despite describing himself as ‘more of a jogger really’ when arrangements were being made for his interview, when pressed on what the difference between Running and Jogging might be, he became defensive and adamant that there was no difference:

‘It’s just the same’, he insisted, ‘a mile for them is a mile for me; it’s just the same. - Anyway, I’m too big to be a Runner’ (emphasis mine).

Those, however, who embraced the ‘Jogger’ label unproblematically and even enthusiastically were generally quite clear about what they got from it. A woman in her thirties explained:
It's a bit of a fitness thing, you know, and to lose a bit of weight. There were three of us .......[all women]....... who used to go out a couple of times a week - if the weather was O.K.  We didn't go out in the rain or anything silly like that. Sometimes we'd go down the main road and sometimes down ......[a country lane]....... The trouble with the main road was there was quite a lot of traffic, so you didn't really like to stop when you wanted a rest. - But you did get the odd 'beep-beep' from lorry drivers.

She explained that, in retrospect, it had seemed a 'seasonal thing', when holiday time was approaching and they all wanted to 'look good on the beach'. She continued Jogging, intermittently, for several years, but now hardly did any at all:

'We tend to go to step aerobics (instead) now' ¹, she said (and for the same reasons).

Another of the Joggers interviewed, a professional man in his fifties, was similarly quite clear why he 'Jogged' as he put it.

¹ This is in line with current trends, for participation rates in jogging have fallen over recent years and those for aerobics/step aerobics have climbed steeply over the same period.

I love food, you see. If I didn't do something I'm sure I'd run to fat. I like the odd glass of beer or two as well, which is a problem weight-wise. So I Jog a couple or three times a week and do a few 'sit-ups' and things just to keep fit.

Another, younger, Jogger was also in little doubt about his motivations.

'It's about "keeping young and beautiful", I suppose - and staying in shape (in the sense of keeping fit). That's why I do a few miles a week if I've got the time'. Yet another man explained his Jogging in more colourful terms:

Oh, it's all about vanity. I started (Jogging) when I got on the scales one day and it shouted 'Get off! - We don't take coach parties'. I was just too fat, you know. Whereas now, I can wear fashionable clothes and stuff. That's what's in it for me really.

These remarks from individuals directly involved as participants in Jogging, seem to confirm the view that Jogging as a body maintenance activity is to do, primarily, with a concern for 'self presentation: with exercise for "looking good and feeling great"' (Featherstone 1987 p. 126). (This will be treated in more detail in the next chapter). It does seem, then, that there are relatively clear, conscious motivations to be found amongst those who, episodically, 'do' a few miles a week if 'the weather is fine', if they 'have the time' and embrace the label of 'Jogger'.

Virtually all those interviewed for the present study (the exception has been dealt with) recognised a difference between participants they called
'Runners' and those they referred to as 'Joggers'. In addition, all of the Runners recognised a distinction between themselves and those competitors who were likely to win races. The Runners in the sample (those with no realistic chance of winning, or ever being 'in the frame' in any race and who Run 'down the field') used various terms to describe the really 'class acts' in racing terms. Unattached Runners (those who did not belong to a running club) tended to refer to this fast group as the 'elite' or 'elite runners' or 'athletes'. Those who Ran with clubs also used those terms, but also described them as 'Good Club Runners'.

The boundary between Runners and 'Athletes' (for that is what I shall call this elite group) did not seem to be determined entirely by pace. Pace, it was often felt would vary, since course and conditions would be different from race to race. It seems to be that the finishing position is more important in establishing this divide.

'I can't tell you how fast these blokes are going (the Athletes) - except that they fly, you know. But they are the ones who get their name in the (local) paper' (for winning races), observed one of the interviewees who progressed at a somewhat more leisurely pace.

Among those interviewed, there was widespread agreement upon the bases of the distinctions made by those who run, of those who run. A distinction was made between the 'class' performers and the 'also rans', that
is a distinction between groups I have called ‘Athletes’ and ‘Runners’, respectively. They also make a distinction between committed Runners and others who may take to the roads more episodically. The latter tend to complete shorter distances, less frequently and for extrinsic satisfactions. They are those I, and the Runners, refer to as ‘Joggers’. Such distinctions are commonplace in the running press. Running magazine, the specialist running magazine with the largest circulation in Britain, declares at the head of its ‘Contents’ page that it is ‘For Joggers, Runners and Athletes’ (Issue 130 February 1992).

Those interviewed included a small number of elite performers, or Athletes; elite performers are, by definition, relatively ‘thin on the ground’. But in common with the self defined Joggers, these Athletes also seemed to have fairly clear cut conscious motivations. All of the Athletes were, of course, aware that they were part of an elite group:

‘Everybody knows which group they are in’, as one of the Athletes put it, whether that be at the very top of the ‘Senior Men/Women’ classification, or corresponding positions in the ‘Veteran’ (forty plus for men), or ‘Superveteran’ class (fifty plus). All the Athletes interviewed for the purposes of this study were, however, Senior Men (under forty) or Senior Women (under thirty five).

What came across very strongly form the limited number of elite Athletes interviewed was the intensity of interpersonal competition. To them, winning
races was all. Such was the desire to win races expressed by these men and women that tactics extended to the point of selecting which races to run in.

As one man explained:

There are, perhaps, four or five blokes in South Wales capable of beating me at the moment. So you have to choose your races very carefully to try and avoid these people. Sometimes, you know, you think - 'I won't go to that race, or that one because ......[a rival]....... or ......... [another rival].... will probably be there'. So perhaps you choose to go to a smaller, out of the way race, where you have a better chance of winning. Sometimes, though, it backfires and when you get there your heart sinks because these three or four blokes have all done the same thing - and they are there! We are all trying to second guess one another all the time. You have to if you are going to win races.

Such was the telling nature of the comparison among themselves that racing afforded to these people that there was a marked reluctance to put their 'reputation' (and, therefore, their ego) on the line. One of the female Athletes confided:

It's really all about beating people. Sometimes when somebody you feel you should beat, beats you, you say to them, you know, 'well done' and that, and then you go back to the car, put your head in your hands and think - 'Christ! - she beat me'.

Not only were these Athletes acutely aware of who their rivals were; they also made it their business to keep abreast of the sort of form these rivals were in:

'You always look at the result sheets of other races', one of them
explained:

That way you know who's running well, and who's struggling for form. So if you see, say, [a major rival] hasn't gone that well in a couple of races, then you can enter a race he's likely to be in and you know, with a bit of luck you'll be able to get one over him on the day.

While many races provide cash prizes for winners and some second and third places, amounts were small, usually less than a hundred pounds for the winner of the major 'Senior Men' category. Thus the spur amongst the Athletes was less financial reward, than status reward, particularly amongst the fairly select group of people who really knew 'who was who' in the world of road running in South Wales. Furthermore, this interpersonal competition extends in a modified form into the ranks of the very good non-elite club Runners.

One of the latter Runners, a man who was on the verge of being considered an Athlete, also planned his racing carefully:

'Sometimes it is better to Run in some of the low-key races where you have a chance of coming in the top ten, you know, a bigger fish in a smaller pond' he felt. Though other very 'useful performers' who were never quite going to do that were still, in a more general way, aware of who the 'competition' were:

'As you go round the racing circuit you see the same faces every week,
just about. We all know each other, not by name perhaps, but you know who you normally beat and who normally beats you', explained a six plus minutes to the mile performer. Another 'class act', this one in his fifties made a similar point:

'You meet the same people wherever you go - you see the same ones and you think - "I've got to beat him today" - and if you do, you feel great'.

These very good Runners tended to use this interpersonal competition (with those they Ran against week in week out), as a measure of their performances as much, if not more than their finishing times: 'If you beat half a dozen people who normally beat you, then well, O.K., one or two of them may have had a bad race - but not all of them. It means you've Run well'.

This man and other good performers, in common with the Athletes, also seemed to enjoy the tactics of racing. Some talked of that enjoyment 'I really enjoy the tactics of it' one man explained. He continued:

It's fascinating. It's like when you come to the brow of a hill, instead of easing back as you go down the other side, you open up and go down as fast as you can. That way, the bloke who was five yards behind you is suddenly twenty yards adrift and, with a bit of luck, that will be decisive.

Alternatively:

If you come to a corner or something and you go out of sight you can do the same thing there. You sprint hard for a few yards so that when the chap who was ten yards behind you comes around
the corner, the gap has gone to twenty, and he thinks he's lost you.

One of these quicker Runners, a man in his thirties, summed up this tactical aspect of the 'battle' thus:

'It's all about breaking people - and some are tougher than others mentally - a lot of it's in the mind because everyone is hurting'. Considerable importance was, then, attached to the telling comparisons contested with other known 'faces' at races by these quicker non-elite performers. For them, an important comparison was within the race; and the reward, the respect of that large group of 'nodding acquaintances' a varying selection of whom 'bumped into' one another at different races every weekend of the year on the South Wales circuit.

There is, however, another comparison from which these quicker Runners and the Athletes may feel they benefit. That is, the comparison which seemed to be of more importance to those who Ran less quickly, that between those who Run and those who do not subject themselves to the rigours of participation. Amongst these less quick Runners, interpersonal competition was less important and took a more limited form. One such Runner, a man in his late thirties who 'competed' at around seven and a half minutes to the mile, put it like this:

'I'm very competitive against my last time, only fairly against a couple of
blokes I used to go to races with........ you know, we liked to beat each other, but the other Runners don't really matter much'.

Another Runner, this one somewhat older and who progressed at a steady eight minutes to the mile, said:

'I'm really interested in beating my own times'.

A younger equivalent (in terms of ability) concluded that:

'While there are a couple of blokes from the club around your standard, and it's nice to beat them - it's not vital. Some weeks you win, some weeks they do'.

Among these less quick Runners interviewed for this study, direct interpersonal competition with other Runners in a race did not, then, seem to be important. What did seem to be of more consequence (for almost half the non elite Runners interviewed - with a bias towards those at the 'slower end') was some sort of what might be termed 'categorical competition'. That is, many of these slower Runners indicated that they were aware of, and to some degree reacted to, the 'type' of Runners they were overtaking or being overtaken by during the course of a race. For some, it was 'body shape' that was important. A thirty two year old professional man commented:
'I look at people's build as well. If they look fairly athletic and fit, and I'm passing them, I think - "That's O.K., I'm doing alright".

Some of the unattached Runners (those not belonging to a running club) noticed whether they were passing Runners in club vests. They felt, as did most of those who belonged to a club, that by dint of club training nights and coaching, club runners had an advantage over those who ran unattached.

'I use club Runners as a mark - they should have an edge', explained one of the 'unattached'.

For others, sex was an important factor. Many male Runners did not, they said, feel particularly competitive in relation to women Runners, except perhaps where the competition was 'meaningful'. As one man confessed:

I'll tell you this, and I know I shouldn't say this really, but at the pace I run I usually finish around the time that the first woman in the race finishes. If I'm close to her near the end, then I'll put in some extra effort to make sure that I come in ahead of her. I suppose its the difference between being beaten by a woman and not being beaten by any woman.

At which point his wife, herself a Runner and who was present during the interview, rolled her eyes and looked heavenwards. Most, though are more sanguine about being beaten by women Runners:

'You don't see them normally', explained one of the slower non-elite
performers. 'There's a few you pass early on, and there's always a few already finished when you get there, but after a few miles it's quite rare to pass a woman', he concluded. The vast majority of the Runners unproblematically accepted that they were always going to be beaten by women, at least by the elite performers. Two other men, in addition to the one already quoted, also noted that there did not seem to be many women around to be 'competitive with' towards the latter stages of their races.

'They just don't seem to be there', as one of those interviewed put it.

Some of the women Runners interviewed, however, seemed to be far more aware of the 'gender factor'. One, in her fifties, revealed:

I take great pleasure in passing men. Especially the local lads who start off and - whoosh - they're gone. You know very well they decided last night in the pub to enter, and I think to myself 'Oh - I'll catch them - two miles and they'll be walking'.

Another Runner, this one in her early forties liked to:

'..... beat as many men as possible, especially the younger ones'.

Age, too, then, seemed to be a source of this 'categorical competition' between non-elite Runners either considered independently or, as above combined with sex differences. A Runner who competed at around seven and a half minutes to the mile and was approaching his sixtieth birthday, disliked,
he said, being passed by other Runners. When this happened, he was often consoled by the fact that they were much younger:

“When people pass you, you think - "Oh well, he’s not as old as me anyway".

Another Runner, this one some fifteen years younger also liked to:

‘... stand around after I’ve finished the race, and it makes you feel good when all these young, fit looking blokes come in a long way behind you’.

Except for this ‘categorical competition’ (where for some Runners to some degree age, sex and club/non-club dynamics played a part), comparisons with others within the race became progressively less important moving down the ‘ability continuum’. For the slower non-elite Runners, the important comparison was not with other Runners, but with those who did not Run at all. This difference was neatly illustrated by the case of one of the Runners interviewed for this study. He (a man in his forties) had Run regularly for almost ten years but had only recently (a few months before the interview) begun to race. During our discussion, he seemed unable, or unwilling, to explain this unusual pattern of participation. He did not know, he said, why he had (until recently) never raced, even though he had been a regular Runner for such a long time. At that point, the man’s wife (herself a Runner) who was present during the interview interrupted. ‘I know why he didn’t race’, she
reasoned:

He was reluctant to test himself against other Runners, that's what it was. He was quite content with his Running - getting whatever he was getting from that - but he didn't want to test himself against others. Now he has, and he's found out he's really quite good; there's no stopping him - he's racing every weekend now!

At which the man himself smiled and nodded his agreement.

He had, then, been reluctant to put his ego 'on the line' and risk comparison with other participants, comparison which may have threatened his 'status', had be been 'found wanting' as the 'genuine article' - a real Runner. The importance of this comparisons for these non-elite Runners between those who do, and those that do not Run may go some way to explaining their intense dislike of being 'confused' with Joggers. Joggers are seen as non-participants. Joggers are seen as being engaged in a fitness related activity, but in the same way (and their assumption is, for the same sort of motives) that those engaged in aerobics or swimming may be. What they do not do is Run. Clearly, then, although there may be cultural capital to be gained from participation in body maintenance activities to do with the body as a means of expression, the 'body of others' (Featherstone 1987), they feel that more still accrues to them through Running, an activity 'beyond the call of (body maintenance) duty'.

To be labelled a Jogger, or 'fun runner' is, therefore, to be placed on the
wrong side of a highly significant divide - and almost all of my sample of Runners who had been thus (mis)classified, reacted against it. The stronger reactions to the question: ‘How do you feel when people ask how your jogging is going?’, came from the slower Runners. They were most at risk, perhaps, of being misclassified (as they would see it) by the general public and the very good club Runners and Athletes. For as we have seen, generally speaking, the quicker the Runner, the more demanding the ‘pace barrier’ between Jogging and Running to which they tend to subscribe.

'I feel insulted', was the reaction of one female in her thirties to being labelled a Jogger. She continued, 'If people ask me whether I did such and such a "fun-run", I say yes, I did the "fun-run", but I'm not a fun-runner'. One of the male interviewees also reacted in similar vein:

'Oh, I always pick them up when they ask how the jogging is going and I'll say, "Look! I don't Jog, I Run" - and I've said that many a time to people.

Another male Runner exclaimed:

'I can't stand that! When people ask how the Jogging's going. It really frustrates me. I tell them "I'm not a Jogger, I'm a Runner - and there is a difference, you know!"'.

When asked how he would reply if people asked him to explain the
difference between Jogging and Running, in common with many other Runners this respondent felt that it was:

........ a combination of speed, distance and going out on a regular basis. The difference is that a Jogger is a fun-runner, whereas a Runner is a serious runner, it's an important part of him. A Jogger can put their shoes away and not go out Jogging for a week or more - a Runner can't do that. A Jogger does it more to keep fit or something.

Which brings us more or less to where we 'came in', as it were, at the beginning of this chapter. The only thing to add, perhaps, is that some of the quicker Runners and Athletes were aware of the sensitivities of those who Ran more slowly with regard to the divide between Running and Jogging. One of the quicker Runners in the sample counselled:

You've got to be careful and wary about how you use these terms (Runners and Joggers) because of the effort some of these blokes put in - and still Run relatively slowly. I've been affected by David Coleman ¹ talking about 'fun-runners' and I think he's got it wrong.

Another 'class performer recalled an experience he had had recently which, he said, 'illustrated the point'. He continued:

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¹ The B.B.C. Television Commentator.
If you’re talking about half marathons, then, I doubt that many Joggers would do one of these. Thinking about the ‘fun’ you get out of it, I remember driving home from ..........[a recent local].......... half marathon and passing what must have been the last chap out on the course. He was hardly going quicker than walking pace, he looked dreadful and still had about three miles to go, with hills and things still to do. I thought - ‘Where’s the fun in that?’

Yet another of these quicker Runners believed, even the

organisers have got it wrong sometimes. I’ve heard them sometimes over the tannoy system at the end of a 10K race saying things like ‘Here come the “fun-runners”’ - when they are talking about people coming in at forty or forty two minutes. Anyone who thinks a 10K is a ‘fun-run’ has never done a 10K. At least, not in forty minutes.

Many of the Runners interviewed for this study appreciated that those who did not Run were unlikely to recognise the difference between Running and Jogging. An Athlete, in a more measured response to the question of his reaction when people asked him how his jogging was going, replied:

I think it’s just a case of ignorance, in the sense of lack of knowledge. I take exception, as most Runners do, when they are called ‘fun-runners’ and they are doing three and a half hours for a marathon. Even David Coleman ¹ hasn’t got that one right.

‘I wonder what his (David Coleman’s) best marathon time is?’, wondered another Runner who had felt himself ‘slandered’ by a television commentary. Other responses echoed the theme:

¹ The B.B.C. Television commentator, who came in for criticism from several Runners in this regard.
'People just don’t know unless they Run themselves', thought one of the female interviewees, for example.

The relationship, status differences and struggle over symbolic resources and access to cultural capital with its consequent effects on power chances can best be understood perhaps, as a system of established-outsider relations (Elias & Scotson 1965). Just as in ‘Winston Parva’, the thinly disguised area of Leicester used for the initial study, there are recognisable groups involved in the practice of road running. Here also, two of the groups (the Athletes and Runners) are at pains to distinguish themselves from a third, the Joggers. Similar, too, is the way in which one of these distinctions is broadly ratified by the non-participating public who tend to distinguish between those who win races (or do well in them) and the ‘also rans’. The second distinction (between the Runners and Joggers) is, however, widely blurred outwith the practice, the non-participating public tending to use the words running and jogging interchangeably, as indeed have some academic writers (Featherstone 1982 p. 184-186). Thus presenting Runners with the ‘problem’ of asserting their difference.

This seems to have led to intense strategies of ‘repulsion’, to halt the ‘colonization’ of Running by Joggers (as the Runners might see it). Hence many are nearly always prepared to point out to the uninitiated what they regard as a highly significant misclassification.
It is hardly surprising, therefore, that it was the Runners (and the slower Runners at that) who seemed to be more concerned with the (mis)appropriation of Running apparel by the fashion industry, when compared to the Athletes (see Chapter Five) who seemed more sanguine about it. In these ways, the tensions between the groups involved in road running mirror those in ‘Winston Parva’. Here, though, instead of people being anxious to highlight a distinction based upon geographical locations, as was the case in the North of Leicester, people are anxious to have what they consider to be very important differences in ability, commitment, physical intensity and motivation recognised by the wider public.

This chapter has attempted to chart the contours of road running. It has mapped the distinctions made by those who Run, of those who Run (and indeed of those regarded as doing something other than Running). It has examined the bases upon which these distinctions are made, those of ability and motivation between Athletes and Runners and a more complex combination of ability, commitment, motivation, distance and regularity between Runners and Joggers. It has also portrayed the extent of disagreement as to where, precisely, these demarcations lie along the ability continuum.

The chapter then went on to consider the motivational differences both attributed to the members of these distinct groups by the members of others and attested to by the members themselves in two of the three cases. The Joggers in the sample were thought to be, and reported themselves, seeking
extrinsic satisfaction from their involvement. The Athletes are motivated primarily by interpersonal competition and the status that 'success' brings with it. Winning, as we saw, was all important.

Although, as described, a degree of interpersonal rivalry with a group of 'nodding acquaintances' was a potential source of status for some of the quicker Runners in the non-elite sample, its importance decayed rapidly with ability. Less able Runners did not, generally, tend to see competition with other Runners as at all important; and while there is an element of low-key 'categorical rivalry' for some in a race situation along sex, age and club lines, for this group the important comparison is with those who do not Run. Consequently, they displayed a significant degree of irritation at being labelled as Joggers (non-Runners) by those outwith the practice and, more especially, by those within it, or those who should have knowledge of it. Their sensitivity to the issue was recognised by many of the quicker participants, but not, occasionally, by race organisers and television commentators.

The theoretical approach adopted for this work recognises that people are enmeshed in complex webs of interdependent relationships, of many kinds, with others. Given the interconnectedness of all aspects of people's lives, only limited understanding could be gained through the abstraction of one aspect of those lives and consideration of it in isolation.

Up to this point, however, the preceding substantive chapters have
focused on a particular sporting practice, road running. Its links with a more 'natural' past and some aspects of its development into a modern mass participation phenomenon have been outlined. Some of the more major physical consequences for individuals of such participation have been documented in an attempt (that Runners contend is bound to be inadequate) to describe what it is really like to Run a half marathon, for example. The participants themselves have also been considered both in the light of the age, sex and social class distinctions we all make of one another in societies such as modern Britain and in terms of those of ability and motivation made by those who Run, of those who Run (or indeed do not as in the case of the Joggers). The latter distinctions have given rise to three fairly distinct groups within the practice (though inevitably blurred at the edges) that I, and those others involved call 'Athletes', 'Runners' and 'Joggers'.

The following chapter begins the task of setting the practice of road Running into the context of the lives of those who participate. Chapter Five considers some aspects of the cultural climate in which road running as a body maintenance activity 'above and beyond the call of cardiovascular duty' has developed. It considers the prominent and pervasive consumer icon images of youth, health, beauty and vigour and how they relate to road running. It also considers the equation of 'active' with 'attractive' and the ever tighter links forged between the 'body' and 'identity', a process, some claim, that has been influenced by the practice of sport itself:
‘Through sport, the self becomes conscious of the body, the self is embodied, exteriorized. Not only body practices, but the body itself become a sign of the self’ (Rail 1991 p. 747).
CHAPTER FIVE

Doing It in Style: Running Against the Clock

This chapter begins with a consideration of the nature of ‘identities’ in the highly individualised societies of the more developed world. A ‘more developed’ world, that is, with the arguable exceptions of Japan and some other far Eastern states. It then proceeds to discuss some of the images, perceived as positive, desirable and expressions of that identity that pervade modern consumer culture. The chapter then looks at road running as a body maintenance activity, and as such, how it may be used as the basis for individual ‘claims’ to those images (or some of them); and concludes with the Runners’ reactions to the misappropriation (as some of them see it) of some of the symbols associated with the practice by the fashion industry. Everyone wears running ‘gear’ now!

If one were to be roughly awoken from a state of deep sleep in the middle of the night by a stranger who demands to know ‘Who are you?’, half asleep and bewildered, one may offer an answer. That response may be all the more revealing than one offered in more normal circumstances, since with social defences not yet in operation it may be more closely related to who we truly feel ourselves to be - and identity. In such circumstances, in other societies or at other times the ‘awoken’ may have offered a name of a collectivity, a tribe or clan. Some individuals in our own society may answer
in terms of a status group which so dominates others that it overrides them in terms of its relation to their identity. They may answer 'I am a doctor', 'I am Father O'Connor' or even, 'One is the Queen'. For the most of us, however, this would not be the case; most of us would answer with a personal name, the name of a unique individual.

In modern societies people have undergone a process of mass individualisation. Lengthened chains of interdependence, vastly increased numbers of different social functions and the geographical mobility (intra and inter-state) demanded of many in these societies 'separate' people from one another. Members of kinship groups no longer fulfil the functions they do for one another in simpler societies. These functions are fulfilled by others known and unknown at varying geographical and social distances. Consequently the individual person is much less tightly bound by 'his' family, 'her' kinship group, village or town than in smaller, simpler survival groups. This process of individualisation has led to a shift in the balance between 'I' and 'We' identities in favour of the former (Elias 1991A p. 155-223).

Not only does the increased 'individuality' of modern societies result from this increased division of social functions and the growing understanding and control of non-human natural forces, but it has become socially valued:

With the increasing differentiation of society and the resulting individualization of individuals, this differentness of one person to all others becomes something that is ranked especially highly on the social scale of values. In such societies it becomes a
personal ideal of young people and adults to differ from others in one way or another, to distinguish oneself - in short, to be different.

(Ibid p. 140)

This desire to differ is not something that is 'given' by nature, but is something that has developed in people through social learning. 'Like other aspects of self-control or "conscience", it emerges only gradually in history in this pronounced and pervasive form' (Ibid p. 141). Furthermore the learning of self controls themselves tends to 'separate' people from their human and non-human 'outside' world. The affect control and restraint of impulses (which can sometimes be fulfilled indirectly, and sometimes not at all) demanded because of the need to exercise foresight in social relations tend to heighten individual's sense of being 'alone', 'inside' themselves. Coupled with a reification of the functions of a person's self regulation in relation to people and things on the one hand, and functions that constantly serve to reproduce the organism itself on the other, this produces the pervasive modern dichotomy of 'mind' and 'body'. There is no doubt that modern people tend to experience themselves as somehow 'inhabiting' their own bodies, as an 'intelligence' (or in times past a 'spirit' or 'soul') that exists separately from, but within their corporeal 'shell'. They are, they believe, 'on the inside looking out' on a world from which they are separated, the boundary being the outer surface of the body.

The increasing centrality of the body as a focus of concern in modern
Western cultures seems, then, to be related to the social flux and individualization experienced by people in the late twentieth century. In these societies there has been a decline in the old religious frameworks 'which constructed and sustained existential and ontological certainties outside the individual' (Shilling 1993 p. 2: Elias 1991A). This, coupled with the enormous increase in the significance of 'the body in consumer cultures as the bearer of symbolic value' (Shilling 1993 p. 3), may have given rise to the 'tendency for people in high modernity to place ever more importance on the body as constitutive of self' (Ibid). With the breakdown of religious certainties and the 'grand political narrative' (Ibid) no longer providing the certainty it may once have, or as Beck puts it, as people 'are set free from the certainties and modes of living in the industrial epoch' (Beck 1992 p. 14-15) people increasingly have reflexively to construct their own biographies. As they are confronted by the shocks unleashed by the other side of the 'risk society'; as the 'system of co-ordinates in which life and thinking are fastened in industrial modernity - the axes of gender, family and occupation, the belief in science and progress - begins to shake' (Ibid p. 15) people may turn, as it were to their bodies. In such a climate their bodies may seem to provide, temporarily at least (see Chapter Seven), a firm foundation 'on which to construct a reliable sense of self in the modern world' (Shilling 1993 p. 3).

As such bodies have increasingly been seen as representative of self, and therefore its 'exterior territories', its outer surfaces, become ever more important. It is these outer surfaces (for it is here where man as monad (Birkitt
1991) meets the 'outside world') the appearance of the body that 'symbolises the self at a time when unprecedented value is placed on the youthful, trim and sensual body' (Shilling 1993 p. 3). Body 'appearance' has, in the recent past, been more of a feminine preoccupation (Miller & Benz 1991 p. 152), for men used to 'act' and women to 'appear' (Berger 1972) but both sexes now have to be concerned with how they look to a much more equal degree. On the grounds that 'inner health equals outward appearance' (Featherstone 1982 p. 172), the health and beauty industry has hitherto been geared more toward women than men (Zechetmayr 1991). But in more recent times there has been a change in the moral climate to one where both sexes 'increasingly assume self-responsibility for their health, body shape and appearance' (Featherstone 1982 p. 183).

People can, and increasingly do, work on their bodies. Since 'human bodies are malleable.....[they are therefore].... constantly culturally constituted. For example, we manipulate our appearance with clothing, surgery, movement styles, cosmetics, dieting and exercise practices’ (Davis & Delano 1992 p. 5). The 'culturally correct' shapes to which many men and women may aspire are temporally and spatially specific. As far as the feminine form is concerned, we need look no further than the old masters whose models, presumably considered to be beautiful at the time, are to modern eyes 'generously upholstered' (Wetton 1990 p. 13). The male form, too, as depicted by classic artists such as Michelangelo, is 'so well muscled [that] had they lived today they are likely to have been frogmarched to the nearest drug testing laboratory on
There is, then, no such thing as a 'natural' body shape, and it is a paradox that examples of today's idea of the 'natural' and 'attractive' male and female body shapes may have been produced by artificial means. Produced, that is, through many hours of 'pumping iron', many sessions of aerobics, careful dieting, drugs or even the use of the surgeon's knife. The fact that the body is potentially malleable has meant that the possibility exists for the body to become a project for some. This involves:

- individuals being conscious of, and actively concerned about the management, maintenance and appearance of their bodies. This involves a practical recognition of the significance of bodies; both as personal resources and as social symbols which give off messages about a person's self identity.

(Shilling 1993 p. 5)

The construction of healthy bodies, or at least, healthy looking bodies is perhaps the 'most common way in which the body has become a project to be worked on as part of a person's self identity' (Ibid p. 6). But other ways such as plastic surgery or bodybuilding are also indicators of how people in the modern West are placing increasing emphasis on bodies and forging ever tighter links between the body and self identity. Perhaps the closest links of all may be for the elite athletic performer, for whom an 'occupational' status requiring enormous dedication, commitment and self denial is completely dependent upon peak bodily performance.
This is not to say that in the modern West the unfinished 'project of the body' (unfinished, that is, in the sense that the project can never be complete because death is inevitable) is of equal concern to all. Bourdieu argues that different social classes may have different orientations to their bodies. The working class, for example, tend to view their bodies in more instrumental terms (Bourdieu 1984), women more so than men (Wilkes 1990 p. 118). Therefore, insofar as they may be interested in voluntary physical exercise, working class people may be 'concerned to spend their efforts on weightlifting and activities directed towards strength, both fields in which manual dominance can be asserted' (Loc cit). These may more directly reflect working class idea(l)s of machismo and for an interest in strength for fighting (Dunning, Murphy & Williams 1988). They might, consequently, be less attracted by an intense but un-work/strength related practice such as road running. Furthermore, working class bodies become marked by the demands of 'getting by' in life and as a result of the ways in which temporary 'release' may be sought from those demands (Crawford 1984). Therefore as working class people may be more likely to see their bodies as a means to an end, rather than a lifelong 'project', distinctive body forms are likely to result. It is in ways such as these that 'habitus' can become imprinted on the body.

In general, then, it is those from the less fatalistic middle classes who may be more likely to believe they have control over their health, control exerted through the choice of an appropriate lifestyle (Calnan 1987 p. 83). It is they who may tend to treat the body as a project, whether that be with the:
emphasis placed on the intrinsic functioning of the body as an organism, which leads to the macrobiotic cult of health, or on its appearance, the 'physique', that is, 'the body for others'.

(Bourdieu 1984 p. 212-3)

The modern moral climate of individual responsibility for the body, and particularly where the emphasis is placed on appearance, is not one that insists on 'bodywork' or body maintenance work as ascetic practice for moral salvation. On the contrary, 'diet and body maintenance are increasingly regarded as vehicles to release the temptations of the flesh' (Featherstone 1982 p. 171).

For to 'be sportive is almost, by definition, to be desirable, fit, young and health.....[and the]........ dominant icon of consumer culture is the youthful, sexually attractive, physically fit person' (Hargreaves 1986 p. 134). One of the positive images that attaches to exercise (and therefore to road running) as a body maintenance activity is that active equals attractive (Zechetmayr 1991).

Some elite women bodybuilders in the United States, for example, report that their involvement with bodybuilding made them feel 'sexier, more feminine, more sensual and more visually appealing' (Guthrie & Castelnovo 1991). Some of the Runners interviewed for this study also indicated that an 'enhanced' body shape achieved through the practice of Running was an important 'added benefit'. One man who had started jogging initially with the intention of losing some weight and had become a Runner and 'hooked', thought that:

'It's partly about feeling good about yourself - you stand in the shower
after a Run and sometimes you think - "You’re not bad for your age: there’s hardly an ounce of fat anywhere".

Another of the interviewees, this one a man in his thirties, put it more succinctly:

‘No-one wants to be a disappointment when they take their clothes off’.

Given the centrality of the body in consumer culture, body related images are all pervasive, and the images that occur and ‘recur within advertising and consumer culture imagery .......[are of]...... youth, energy, fitness, movement, freedom, romance, exotica, luxury, enjoyment [and] fun’ (Featherstone 1982 p. 174). These are joined by those of control and sexual potency, for if health is the metaphor for control, then ‘body weight is the metaphor within the metaphor’ (Crawford 1984 p. 70). Slimness is seen as coincident with health and ‘fat is a confirmation of the loss of control, a moral failure, a sign of impulsiveness, self indulgence and sloth’ (Ibid). Intensive ‘bodywork’; exercise practices that burn up impressive numbers of calories can allow a much safer release to hedonism without the unfortunate effects of obesity. In much the same way that bodybuilders often indulge in a ritualistic binge of ‘prohibited’ foods after a competition (Bolin 1992 p. 391). Runners talked of ‘heading for the pub’ after a race.

‘We usually go the pub and have a few glasses of anaesthetic
afterwards', one of them explained. 'After all', he continued, 'You have to get the calories from something!'. Other Runners interviewed for this study also talked of going out for a few drinks, and even 'a good few drinks', with a clear conscience after a successful week's training:

If its gone well [the training] that week, and especially, you know, if you're not racing that weekend you can to out and have a good drink on Friday night and not worry about it. You feel ahead in the 'Hail Mary Department'

was the way one man explained it.

If practices such as road running can enable participants to 'indulge' themselves without suffering the apparent loss of control associated with obesity, they may also reflect positively on perceived sexual virility. High degrees of physical fitness 'above and beyond the call of cardiovascular duty' and sexual virility are blurred with neologisms such as 'exersex' and 'sexercise' (Featherstone 1982 p. 182). Women's bodybuilding becomes sexualized with phrases such as 'flex-appeal' (Bolin 1991), and physical fitness is taken to imply sexual potency. Intense body maintenance activities involving strenuous exertion and especially, perhaps, those conducted in public can be seen as a 'performance', as a 'claim to certain capacities' (Goffman 1971 p. 15-24). Humour can fulfil many functions in social life, and one of them is that it provides a means of 'staking a claim' to capacities that can be easily denied. In a series of car window stickers featuring a sex/sport connection such as 'Wind surfers do it standing up!' or 'Rally drivers do it sideways!', there is one
that reads 'Marathon Runners keep it up for hours!'. If there was no underlying imputed 'truth' in the claim, or at least no belief in that effect, it would not raise a smile. One of the 'claims' that may be subject of such a 'performance' could be that of sexual potency along with others such as fitness, control, vigour, attractiveness and youth.

Before moving on to consider the last of these 'capacities', that of youth, in more detail it is, perhaps, germane to note the difference in the way a significant involvement with road running is likely to imprint upon the bodies of men, and of women. The fact that distance running 'burns off' many calories is well documented (Geline 1978 p. 18), and participation may lead to a reduction of body fat for both sexes - if all other things remain equal. For men, this may well lead to the loss of excess body fat from around the waistline, thus helping them maintain a 'broad-at-the-shoulder, narrow-at-the-waist' (at least as opposed to the other way around) body shape that is seen as desirable in modern Western cultures. For women, though, distance running alone, without other specialised exercise may not achieve the desired (and desirable) effect.

A female will have a greater concentration of subcutaneous, adipose tissue, particularly in her buttocks, which are relatively inactive metabolically (making it hard to 'burn-off' the fat).

(Cashmore 1990 p. 101)

Any fat reduction may be, then, from other parts of the body, leaving this 'excess' tissue virtually undisturbed. In any event, today's attractive woman
may be relatively tall and comparatively fat free but prominent female distance runners hardly 'fit the build'. Rather than having comparatively 'large breast, long flowing hair and robust figures as females are generally typified', the tend to 'meagre' figures that 'minimise secondary sexual characteristics' and maintain an 'adolescence-like appearance' (Hornberger-Thompson 1991). Thus it may be that the Rosa Motas, Liz McColgans and Ingrid Kristiansens of this world may not represent a physical shape to which many young women would aspire, regarding it as not particularly visually attractive.

In the present study, over half the interviewees explicitly linked body shape and physical activity at some point in the interview. There were those who were grateful because they could:

'Eat anything I like and never put on a pound', as an 'added benefit' as one man put it. There were also those who felt they were doing well if the Runners they were passing in the course of a race had a 'good physique'. Others made the point that it was, in reality, difficult to tell how well a Runner was likely to perform simply from their body shape, even though there was a feeling that it should be possible. One woman, who had since become a Runner herself talked of the time she travelled to London to watch her husband compete in the London Marathon.

Having seen her husband off at the start, she had moved to another part of the course to watch him go by. She explained:
We got there, and waited - and waited. I began to think, you know, that we'd missed him. There were these really quite big people going through - and then suddenly, down the road he came. But, you know, there were some really quite large people ahead of him and you'd have never thought it to look at them. He [her husband] *looks* much faster.

If one of the 'capacities' which may be 'claimed' through Running is youth, then it is not exclusively through appearance that this may be made. While cosmetic body maintenance activities make a claim to youth through appearance, vigorous physical activities may help make that claim through 'biological age'. For it appears that there are, at least four 'ages of man' - or woman. Those four ages have been called 'chronological age', 'personal age', 'biological age' and 'consensual age' (Featherstone & Hepworth 1988). Most obviously there is an individual's chronological age - the number of years they have lived. Secondly, there is the idea of a 'personal age' or the 'age of self' which may progressively diverge from chronological age. The idea that older people are really younger people trapped in an 'ageing shell' is becoming more commonplace.

From the celebrated author J. B. Priestly to the television comedian Dave Allen, many have made the point that people do not feel old 'inside'. J. B. Priestly talks of feeling as though, as a fairly young man, he was 'kidnapped' and taken to a theatre. There forced to 'don grey hair, the wrinkles and other attributes of age, then wheeled on stage'. Behind the appearance, he was, he said, 'the same person with the same thoughts' as when he was younger (quoted in Puner 1978 p. 7). Dave Allen, in a similar vein talks of catching
sight of a figure reflected in a shop window and wondering ‘who that old fart was’, until, he realised, ‘It was me!’. Most of us, as we grown older may, then, be aware of the divergence of our ‘personal age’ from the chronological measure.

The ‘third age’ refers to the state of our bodies in biological terms. Some of us may be able to feel pleased with ourselves as we leave the doctor’s surgery having been told that, though over fifty, we ‘have the body of a thirty five year old’. Most of us, however, will not be that fortunate. Our ‘biological age’ may equal, or even be in advance of, our ‘chronological age’. Most of us do, then, have conceptions of age that differ from a strict chronological measure, but there is also the age status of an individual as evaluated by others.

The ‘fourth age’, or ‘consensual age’, is the relationship between an individual’s ‘personal age’ and the age status attributed to them by others. This relationship is recognised, for instance, in the use of phrases such as ‘forty going on twenty five’ or, less flatteringly, ‘forty going on seventy’ to describe someone. Individuals, too, will seek to establish a ‘consensual age’ for themselves. The ‘lonely hearts’ columns of local newspapers are full of ‘young forty five year olds’.

Road running, as a form of ‘bodywork’ or body maintenance activity may be used, through its effects on biological age, as one method of exerting an
influence upon consensual age. In other words it may be a practice which may encourage others to treat an individual more in terms of the age they feel themselves to be, rather than in strictly chronological terms. Road Running may be, therefore (perhaps especially for older Runners with a relatively large difference between 'personal age' and the calendar), Running 'against the clock' in more than one sense. The 'claim to youth', or at least, a claim to 'distance' from old age and death is also made through the performance of the practice. Intensely physical, vigorous sports have usually been the province of the young. Indeed, as we have seen, with the average age of participants in non-elite road running appearing to be well over thirty, it is probably unique among sports which demand the expenditure of large amounts of physical energy over a prolonged period.

The desire to appear 'young' or at least to delay being classified as 'old' is not surprising. In some simpler societies the elderly maintain or even enhance their status as they move from being warriors to elders who settle disputes, take important decisions or intercede with the ancestral ghosts (Beattie 1966 p. 146). In modern Western societies that is not the case. The old in such societies are not seen as the repository of all knowledge, experience and wisdom as they may be elsewhere, for knowledge can be gained from other sources. Chronic and rapid change, characteristic of societies in the West will often mean that our elders' experience is obsolete (or the relative empowerment of the young may lead them to perceive it as such). Furthermore, the physical changes associated with ageing and particularly with
'deep old age' will often disadvantage the elderly relative to others through increasing their dependence on them. More people living longer means more people will experience degenerative diseases (the effects of which can lead to a personal de-civilising process) which will reduce their power relative to others. Indeed the 'problem' of an ageing population is nowadays referred to as a shift in the 'Dependency Ratio'.

No longer being able to hurry for a bus, climb stairs or (horror of horrors) control bowel movements, as a de-civilising process will compromise an individual's status as a 'fully paid-up', ratified member of society. Not only do these physical changes (and others) associated with ageing increase an individual's dependency, they also signal their greater proximity to death. Death, in a way, has become the 'new obscenity'. As the ultimate animalic aspect of human beings, it has been pushed behind the scenes of everyday life and talked of in euphemisms, for it also throws into high relief the fact that all body 'projects' are doomed to eventual failure. A 'present-day German brochure advertising the services of cemetery gardeners ......[makes]..... no explicit mention to death at all' (Mennell 1992 p. 52). Thus the modern aversion to the topics of death and dying may be both a consequence of the advancement of the threshold of repugnance at the animalic side of life (or in this case, the end of it) (Elias 1985); and the way it demonstrates the ultimate futility of body maintenance projects in which much time and effort may have been invested.
If the practice of distance Running is not a denial of death, as objectively, no practice can be, it seems in part at least to be related to a 'distingcing exercise'. Therefore, marathon running may be seen as 'shaking a pig's bladder at death' (Collee 1990 p. 82), that is, proving one's distance from death by apparently risking it.

Many of the Runners interviewed for the present study reported that some of their friends believed they were taking serious risk by Running the distances they did.

'You always get this "Jim Fixx thing 1", don't you. You know, that chap who dropped dead - into Jogging. Some of them think you're in danger of "dropping" at any moment'. Complained one of them. Another said he was unable to convince one of his friends that distance Running was safe:

'He reckons that you come into this life with an allotted number of heartbeats - So why waste them on Running!'.

While many people seem to 'know someone' who 'knows someone' who died while out running, Runners know the risk is small. For the incidence of 'sudden death during exertion is extremely rare. Among adults older than

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1 Jim Fixx, one of those who helped popularise running and jogging in the United States (see Chapter Three) dropped dead while out jogging at the age of fifty two.
thirty, coronary artery disease is the predominant cause of sudden deaths’ (Sherman 1993 p. 93).

As we have seen, this ‘shaking a pig’s bladder at death’ may be a result of the way death still poses an existential problem for people in the late twentieth century. It (death) represents a point at which individuals ‘lose control’, which throws into question their concern with lifestyles and body regime (Giddens 1991A), undermining what we hold of value. (This may, of course, appear to solve part of the existential problem ‘at a stroke’ since it presupposes there is a ‘self’ which survives corporeal death to ‘lose control’). So although death may no longer, as Giddens claims be ‘associated with anxieties of an utterly fundamental sort’ (Ibid p. 50) is the same way that it would have been in the middle ages, for example, it is nevertheless a source of anxiety - but not, perhaps to the same degree for all. It may be, for instance, depending upon an individual’s habitus, that the prospect of physical deterioration with age is accepted, and death may be viewed somewhat differently depending upon the time and effort an individual has spend on their body a source of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1984). Thus death, as proof both of the futility of body projects and the fact that humans are of the animal kingdom and have an animalic side, has promoted the tendency to shun the dead and the dying. After all, ‘another’s death is a reminder of one’s own’ (Elias 1985 p. 10).

These age-dynamics were reflected in some of the responses Runners
interviewed for the present study made when talking of the subject.

'It's always nice to come in ahead of these youngsters', observed one man in his fifties. While another, in his mid thirties, saw it from the other 'end':

There's this sixty year old guy on the running circuit (of local road races) and he's very good. He often comes in around the time I do, and I must admit if I see him towards the end I'll put a spurt on to make sure I beat him - Fancy being beat by a sixty year old!

If road Running is, in past at least, a claim to 'extended youth' as well as the perviously discussed images of control, vigour, activeness/attractiveness and sexual potency that attach to it; this has not been lost on our political leaders. 'Superfit', ex. S.B.S., Paddy Ashdown has posed for 'photo opportunities' before he, fairly sedately, Jogs a few hundred yards. George Bush and Bill Clinton similarly promoted and promote their fit and active lifestyle as part of their respective Presidential images - both being photographed in action, and 'dressed appropriatley' (Zechetmayr 1991). For Jimmy Carter, such an attempt to identify with these images went awry (like much else in his Presidency) when he attempted a charity 'fun-run' and collapsed in front of the television cameras and had to be helped from the course by his Secret Service men.

If it is, then, these culturally positive images of youth, physical fitness, sexual active/attractiveness, virility and control that are the subject of a 'claim'
(Goffman 1971 p. 15-24) by those involved in the practice of Running. That may go some way towards explaining the adverse reactions of some of the Runners interviewed for this study to the way the symbols of the practice (running 'gear') had entered mainstream fashion. For it is not only the naked body itself which is a symbolic resource, but he consumer goods that clothe it also convey information about the true self, the person 'inside'.

Over the last two hundred years or more, economists have amassed a body of theory that purports to explain some aspects of consumers' behaviour in relation to the goods that they buy. These theories state that the quantity of a particular 'good' purchased by consumers will vary inversely with its price, though not always, and at varying rates. Either that, or they have tended to concern themselves with the amounts of particular 'goods' which consumers may purchase as reflecting changes not only in the price of the commodity, but changes in income, in the price of 'substitute' commodities and so on as consumers attempt to maximise 'utility'. However, 'utility', if explained at all, tends to be explained in teleological terms. A partial exception may be Lancaster’s Theory of Demand which attempts to deal with consumers' brand preferences through the properties of the particular 'brands' themselves. However, why one particular commodity rather than some other should be desired at all remains unaddressed. For these sorts of questions to be asked

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(in an attempt to maximise heuristic ‘utility’), it is necessary to move from the rather artificial world of a ‘generalised consumer’ divorced from their positions and relationships in dynamic figurations. It is necessary to move to a real world of real men and women united and divided by ethnic, class and age boundaries; a world of embodied, feeling, thinking, individuals who use foresight to pursue what they see is their interests and avoid their fears in the context of the web of more or less unequal interdependent relationships in which they are involved.

We have to turn to a sociology where it is ‘standardised ethnographic practice to assume that all material possessions carry social meanings and concentrate a main part of cultural analysis upon their use as communicators’ (Douglas & Isherwood 1980 p. 59). The fact that the things we own can and do communicate things about us is beyond dispute. Advertisers use this fact, sometimes explicitly, in their efforts to separate consumers from their currency. In a series of advertisements run in 1990 for the Renault 25, for example, the advertising copy read: ‘If the car you drive says a lot about you - choose your words carefully’ (Radio Times 26/5/1990 p. 27-9).

But it is not only the highly paid and (probably) clever people of advertising agencies who are aware of this fact and seek to exploit it. We nearly all do it. Virtually all of us use consumer goods as ‘props’ to some degree to help in our attempts to sustain a ‘performance’ for others, to aid our impression management (Goffman 1971). Even those few amongst us who
self consciously 'opt-out' of consumer culture communicate important information about the sort of people they are to others through the consumer goods they do (or more usually do not) own. We know the clothes we wear, the house in which we live, our public consumption of goods and services will be interpreted by others in their attempt to gain information about us. Attempts, at the root of which is the 'need' to gauge the social distance between individuals in the complex hierarchies that characterise societies of the modern West. In other words, to place us on their 'social map'. And although, interestingly enough, Goffman does not attribute our capacities as performers to social learning (Burkitt 1991 p. 60), he does bring the way we live largely by inference to 'centre stage'. As we, and others are constantly called upon to interact with individuals of whom we have scant, or no, biographical knowledge impressions are all important. So it is possible, through the display of consumer 'props' and other strategies to manipulate the impressions others gain of us. It may well be, for example, that:

executives often project an air of competency and general grasp of the situation, blinding themselves and others to the fact that they hold their jobs partly because they look like executives, not because they can work like executives.

(Goffman 1971 p. 55)

Road running is linked to consumerism both through necessity and 'style'. The ownership and use of an appropriate pair of quality running shoes is almost a precondition for participation if injury and long-term physical deterioration are to be avoided. Its links through 'style' are to do with the
images that attach to the practice, and sports in general, and therefore to the equipment associated with it; images that have been promoted and emphasised by the fitness/fashion industry in its attempts to sell sporting shoes and clothing to the much larger non-participating market. Put simply, because of the images associated with it, running gear, along with other sportswear, has become fashion gear. While non-runners would be unlikely to have any objective requirement for high technology running shoes, it is:

images [that] have become the central objects of consumption....[for example]...... Instead of being cast in functional roles women become sex objects and images which are, helter skelter attached to products like adjectives.

(Lash & Urry 1987 p. 290)

In many sports, ‘state of the art’ equipment is required only by elite performers, the ‘professionals’ for whom the sport is a more or less full-time activity. This aspect of the technologisation of sport, the technical improvement of equipment, can give an elite performer a decisive ‘edge’ (as with the introduction of fibreglass poles into pole vaulting) which can mean the difference between success and failure or decide the colour of medal. Such equipment with its high development costs and limited market can also be extremely expensive. However, due to the percussive nature of road running, and the need of participants to avoid injury, high technology running shoes are the ‘norm’ rather than the exception for all standards of participants. However, some of the non-elite Runners interviewed for this study seemed to feel they were being exploited. One of them complained:
I think the fact that running shoes have become fashion items has pushed the price up. As you know, anyone who Runs needs a good pair of shoes but these manufacturers just seem to change the colour this year or give it another name or whatever and stick another twenty quid (£20) on the price.

Most of the Runners interviewed also felt that there was a need for comfortable and effective clothing. Clothing that would, to a degree at least, protect a Runner from the worst of the weather and keep them comfortable even though they may be sweating profusely. But while knee length Lycra shorts may be more comfortable for a Runner prone to chaffing or on a really cold day, there is no intrinsic reason why they should be fluorescent orange/silky black and have a manufacturer's logo prominently displayed upon them. The 'migration', or 'assisted passage' (assisted that is, by the fitness/fashion industry) of running gear into mainstream fashion has been achieved through the sale of the 'images' that attach to the practice. Road running, as an intense form of body maintenance activity has, as we have seen, strong links with the increasing importance of the body, and body appearance, both reflected in and encouraged by the media.

If, as we saw towards the start of this chapter, the outer surfaces of the body, including of course the way they are dressed, are seen as representing 'self', the person we really feel ourselves to be, this provided a source of tension for some of the Runners in the sample for this study. Many were distinctly resentful that running gear had entered mainstream fashion and was no longer a reliable indication of inclusion in the practice of Running. Clearly
the symbols of the practice were important to them, and those who wore the gear but did not Run were seen as 'Poseurs'. It is rather like someone wearing the scarf of a university at which they have not studied. The Poseurs have not undergone the pain of legitimate acquisition. Although many of the Runners and some at all ability levels expressed resentment at this 'symbol migration', there was a tendency for those who Ran more slowly (and thus be more likely to be confused with Joggers - who are non-participants) to express more concern than those who Ran more quickly. It is likely that as 'marginal' individuals, in this sense, their self images are more likely to be seriously threatened.

When considering those who were 'dressed for the track, but built for the bar' (Parsons 1992 p.7), the quicker men and women in the sample, if they reacted at all, tended to view these 'Poseurs' with slight amusement. 'It just makes me smile a little', commented one six minute miler. While the difference was not clear-cut, the stronger reactions did tend to come from slower Runners:

I hate it! To see so many people wearing these track suits and things. Some of them can hardly walk, let alone Run. They've become fashion accessories now and, if I'm honest, I feel a bit aggrieved, you know.

These were the thoughts of a man who performed at between seven and a half and eight minutes to the mile. Others concentrated on what they saw as a 'waste'. 'Yeah, you see someone in a pub wearing a pair of eighty or
ninety pound running shoes and you just know he's never even going to run a mile in them - what a waste!', was the reaction of a female seven and a half minute miler.

While these sorts of opinions were fairly common amongst the Runners interviewed, and somewhat more common amongst the slower Runners, there was also a reasonably widespread feeling that real Runners could still be identified by those 'in the know'.

'Real Runners never wear running gear, you know, casually - they only wear it for Running', was one theory.

'If all the gear is the latest stuff - then he's not a Runner. Runners don't care what they wear; any old thing as long as it's comfortable', was another. While these 'theories', and others were offered as to how those 'in the know' might separate the 'wheat from the chaff', and genuine Runners did retain the moral 'high ground' of the public practice, the wearing of running gear was no longer a reliable sign of inclusion/exclusion to a wider audience.

The sale of running gear to the mass non-participating market has muddied the waters of identification, at least for those outwith the practice; much to the chagrin of some of the Runners interviewed.

Once again, these undercurrents are not lost on those whose business is advertising. A sports shoe manufacturer (Avia) recently ran an advertising
campaign in the running press in which their sports shoes were described as 'For Athletic Use Only' (Running magazine March 1992 Back Cover).

This chapter began with a discussion of the way in which individualisation and the nature of modern social relations have produced the modern way of conceiving the 'self' as an isolated individual 'within' a corporeal shell. With that conception has come the idea that the body, and especially its appearance, both reflects and is used to express the true character of identity. The chapter then went on to consider the appearance of bodies and the current preoccupation of many with body maintenance activities which impact upon that appearance. These activities (or many of them) reflect the unprecedented social value placed upon the youthful, trim, vigorous active (and therefore attractive) body that has become a major icon of modern consumer culture.

But it is not solely the shape of the naked body which expresses information about our true 'identity'. Consumer goods as part of a created lifestyle, and not least of all the clothes in which we dress our bodies, also communicate information about us to others. Just as the information our body conveys is manipulable to a degree through body maintenance activities, the information our consumer good 'props' convey is manipulable through careful choice. Choice in consumer goods depends upon a degree of affluence, of 'surplus' disposable income and, of course, generally speaking the more 'surplus' disposable income individuals have, the wider that choice becomes.
Products carry overtones and connotations, and those that are seen as desirable may be used by individuals to 'lay claim' to those images in what has come to be known as 'conspicuous consumption' (Veblen 1953 [1899]). Such is the case with running 'gear'. The positive and socially valued images of youth, vigour, attractiveness, virility and control that attach to the practice and, therefore, to its symbols have been used to sell them (very successfully) to a mass, largely non-participating market. This has, in the eyes of some of the Runners interviewed in the course of this study, contaminated these symbols, devalued them as reliable indications of participation, which reduces both their exclusivity and potency as symbols for such individuals. The chapter concluded with a consideration of how this was much to the chagrin, particularly, of many of the slower Runners.
Human identity has always been inseparable from human bodies, for the former simply cannot exist without the latter. But as we saw in the last chapter, the outer surfaces of human bodies, their appearance, has increasingly been seen in the modern West to express, or at least to communicate information on, important aspects of that identity to others. This chapter begins with a further consideration of aspects of identity, particularly in relation to gender, and proceeds to outline in an idealised form some of the major tenets of masculinity in modern Western culture.

The way in which individual identity is seen to be expressed by appearance poses problems for individuals in societies such as ours. One of these problems is the way old age and, ultimately, death calls into question the time and effort expended on 'body projects'. Another concerns the way in which apparently 'floating' individuality is 'socially anchored'. With identity wrapped up in a 'corporeal individuality' (at least, this is the way those of us in the modern West tend to experience ourselves; as monads, Burkitt 1991), there is a perceived risk, at least, that this identity may float, unanchored, in the flux of modern life.

If, for example, after a divorce there may be an acute version of 'finding
oneself (Wallerstein & Blakesbee 1989), or indeed of re-finding oneself in the move away from identification with a former partner, then the social conditions produced by modernity, with its change, uncertainty and chronic reflexivity (the defining characteristics of a ‘new’ modernity Beck 1992) as we constantly examine our motivations, means this is a more or less continuous process of contemporary social existence. While it is true that in no society can individuals define for themselves ‘who they are’ in a social vacuum, the emphasis on individuality in our own means it becomes a more difficult and less straightforward task, involving elements of choice. All individuals live (or have lived) in a social context, changing though that may be. People define ‘who they are’, they ‘find themselves’ in large part in relation to others. Identity is not, then, simply a matter of ‘who one is’, it is also a matter of ‘what sort of person one is’, requiring ratification through the perceived perceptions of others. Therein lie the elements of choice as people reflexively construct their identity, or attempt to.

The ‘grid lines’, the starting points for this process of identity construction are the fundamental divisions of our social world which, like different kinds of ‘frontiers’ cross cut our ‘social map’. The differences socially constructed upon age, sex, ethnicity and social class, some of which will of course through social habitus become imprinted on bodies, are the ways in which we first classify ourselves in relation to others. While we have already considered some of the ways in which people may seek to ‘place themselves’ on a social map in relation to age, it is important to realise that:
People struggle daily with the project of sustaining a social and individual coherence and identify in relationship to class and race, at work and in our lifestyle and particularly in our gender and sexuality. (Rutherford & Chapman 1988 p. 10 emphasis added)

Similar points are made elsewhere (Craib 1987 p. 725). In a society such as ours, gender identity is at the very heart of who we feel ourselves to be. If the 'roughly awoken' from the previous chapter answers the demand of 'Who are you?' with a personal name, rather than declaring 'I am a man' or 'I am a woman', it is because even in that half awake and bewildered state they confidently expect that fact to have already been recognised.

Sex differences, and more importantly the social differences constructed upon them (gender differences) are fundamental to our understanding of who we are in relation to others. For a gender classification is a relational one; it makes no sense in isolation. It not only defines who an individual is, in fundamental terms, it also defines who an individual is not. As gender classifications are relational, then there is the matter of relations between the sexes (in more than one sense) to be considered as well. It has been argued that relations between the sexes are one of the most fundamental issues of our time, since other social dimensions of age, social class and race are all cross-cut by them and so all have a sex/gender dimension to them (Dunning 1986 p. 79).
Gender categories generate social relations, which partly at least, constitute all other social relations and activities. As a basic axis of society gender forms the social as well as the linguistic air we breathe.

(Davidoff 1990 p. 230)

But not only are the relationships between the sexes fundamental, they are also subject to change. They are part of the uncertainty of modernity, for if one can be sure that one is a man, or one is a woman, then what is far less certain is what that means, in terms of changing expectations, the apparent increase in the negotiation of gender roles and a 'plurality of options'. While gender roles are less rigid in modern Western Societies (or tend to be) than those to be found in other places or at other times, the variation to be found in the character of those roles over time and space is immense. For while the 'content' of gender roles may vary, their existence is universal:

In all known societies certain tasks are regarded as appropriate for men, others for women. Among some pastoral African peoples, for example, women may, and should milk the cattle, among others they are strictly prohibited from doing so; which rule prevails depends upon how cattle, and women are regarded.

(Beattie 1966 p. 189)

Although there is, arguably a degree of sexism in the quote above in that it considers only the way 'women (and cattle) are regarded', but not the way in which men and women are; thus failing to link the question to the balance of power between the sexes, it does illustrate the simple point that gender roles are universal. In our own society, as in many others, gender differences
pervade more areas of life than simply the division of labour. 'To be a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, is as much a function of dress, gesture, occupation, social network and personality as it is of possessing a particular set of genitals' (Oakley 1972 p. 158).

But if there are elements of choice, some possibility of 'negotiation' in regard to gender roles in the modern West, then what are the options in terms of the attributes or 'capacities' that may be 'claimed' to enable an individual to carry off a 'gender performance'. The question becomes, then, (in the case of men) what attributes, or combinations of them must be successfully 'borrowed' from the 'library of masculinity' to enable an individual to maintain a ratified masculine 'performance'. For it is already plain that the possession of certain genitalia may be a condition of, though is not in itself adequate for, a 'legitimate' claim to manhood. The first question mark, for some, may involve that very condition, for there is much evidence that human bodies 'do not conform to notions of physical gender dichotomization' (Davis & Delano 1992 p. 1: See also Eichler 1980; Frye 1983; Kessler & McKenna 1978). As Davis & Delano put it:

the physical realities of a vast number of people are concealed by acceptance of physical gender dichotomization. These include not just the inter sexual people........... and [those] whose chromosomes, hormonal make-up and internal and external genitalia do not match in the conventional sense, but others as well. 

(Davis & Delano 1992 p. 10)
For these individuals gender identity, notionally based as it is, upon physical difference in the first instance, becomes highly problematic. For as we know, gender operates not only 'as a fundamental organising category, but also at the level of social relations and the structure of personal identity' (Davidoff 1990 p.251).

But even for the majority who have no such physiological problems, there is still a gender identity to be built and maintained. While for both sexes there may be some 'optional' attributes associated with masculinity or femininity which may or may not be 'claimed'; and perhaps more choice in where emphasis is placed; there are still themes which run through mainstream or hegemonic gender stereotypes which have either to be 'claimed', or the 'failure' to do so handled in some other way. For both sexes, since identity is inevitably gendered because it is inevitably embodied, one of the primary resources for a claim to these attributes to be attempted is through body appearance and behaviour.

Bodies themselves can be more obviously engendered through a variety of means, from clothing to surgery. In Merleau-Ponty's (1962) phenomenological approach, one of the primary sites for the construction of masculinity is around the body and its physicality or physical prowess. Thus what is often accentuated are secondary sexual characteristics. For men this can mean an emphasis on characteristics such as height, hairiness or musculature, for 'well defined, hard and taut muscles imply physical strength
and aggression that, it is assumed women do not possess'; and, in general, it 'is not uncommon for athleticism, muscularity and physical strength and power to be lumped together and associated with masculinity' (Davis & Delano 1992 p. 12: See also, Hargreaves 1986 p. 112). It is, after all, according to a widespread patriarchal assumption which still retains much potency, 'men [who] act and women [who] appear' (Berger 1972 p. 47). The capacity for potent action endowed in the male by virtue of physical prowess is itself a form of empowerment. 'Male power is legitimated more easily because of the body and its muscles and its image of action is seen as "natural" or biologically given' (Hargreaves 1986 p. 113).

One of the principal ways in which this relative power of males is apparent is in the manifest or latent threat of violence against other men, and against women.

whether we are concerned with the battles on the football terraces, or the films of Clint Eastwood, the national conduct of modern warfare or more individual and less controlled manifestations of aggression, the links between the terms 'masculinity' and 'violence' would seem to be straightforward and, for many people, almost natural.

(Morgan 1987 p. 180)

While the propensity to resort to violence in public, on the football terraces for instance, may be mainly class related, the occasion used to express 'an intense macho form of masculine identity, what one might call a violent or "aggressive masculine style"' (Dunning 1989 p. 46), it is important to
realise that men in general benefit, or exert power or social control over women in general because of it:

 Whilst not wanting to underestimate the effects of actual physical violence against women, we feel that the forms of social control which involve the implicit possibility of violence, frequently have the same consequences as its actual use.

(Green, Hebron & Woodward 1987 p.80)

For despite statistical evidence to the contrary, most women regard the ‘possibility of physical attack in public spaces as a very real threat’ and thus ideas about ‘appropriate places for women are reinforced by the fear and actuality of male violence’ (Ibid p. 89). In short, the possibility of male violence against women leads to masculine control of public social space. The recourse to violence publicly, and in the home by relatively few individual men, has the effect of exerting an element of control over the behaviour of almost all women. Although, as previously recounted, the actual emphasis on violence in masculinity (as a consequence of individual and social civilising processes), is likely to be confined in public at least, to particular kinds of men (Dunning 1989), there is nevertheless the idea that a man should be physically able to ‘look after himself’ present in traditional hegemonic masculinity as well.

Many of the themes in our culture stress:

toughness, physical strength and capability, achievement and the demonstration of virility, the importance of aggressive competitiveness. These qualities mark out the ‘natural qualities
of the male.

(Clarke & Clarke 1982 p. 82)

Modern sports have accordingly become a 'principal social locus for the inculcation and expression in public of [these] traditional standards of masculinity' (Dunning 1990). Thus body sense is important in the development of a male identity and the physical practices of sport are a useful way for adolescent boys to claim masculinity (Connell et al 1982 p. 22: Messner 1987 p. 199: Whitson 1990 p. 19). Indeed

among adolescent males, for whom other sources of masculine authority (based upon earning power, adult sexual relations or fatherhood) are still some way off, the development of body appearance and body language that are suggestive of force and skill is experienced as an urgent task.

(Whitson 1990 p. 23)

There are, too, the obvious links between sport, masculinity and violence. Involvement in contact sports, where the body is 'used as a weapon' (McTeer & White 1991), has been seen to confer masculine status. In the contest over the rules, for example, that eventually led to the bifurcation of the game of football into 'Soccer' and 'Rugger' in the 1860s, there were some who insisted upon the retention of 'hacking' (kicking opponents on the shins) believing its abolition would lead to football being 'emasculated' (Dunning & Sheard 1979 p. 110). For 'real' men playing in an 'abrasive way', and violence in sport behaviour may be symbolically more important for men in a culture
where it is no longer required in everyday life, providing as it does symbolic proof of the natural superiority of men over women (Messner 1990). The macho subcultures that surround some contact sports also symbolically vilify women whether 'behind closed doors in Rugby Union football .... [or] more openly and in public in the Association game' (Dunning 1990). (I shall return to this in a moment).

But as well as sport being primarily a physical practice (Cashmore 1990 p. 13), requiring strength, competitiveness, aggression and perhaps a readiness to engage in more or less controlled physical violence, it also requires varying degrees of skill. Skill in sport (in most cases) can be considered as a form of physical control; and control, in one form or another is a theme that runs through many aspects of mainstream masculinity. To be male is to have a degree of control; control of the physical environment, control of resources, control of oneself, control of others; to be in control. It is this combination of force and skill which relatively empowers men, for what 'it means to be masculine is, quite literally, to embody force, to embody competence' (Connell 1983 p. 27).

Though physical competence, physical control, may be a vital part of masculinity, another aspect of control, that of self control, to express it popularly, in a 'mental' sense can often be demonstrated through sports; self control that is linked to a certain strength of 'character'. There are 'athletic fields where the development of physical presence, stoic courage and the
endurance of pain and judgement under pressure was portrayed simply as a part of manhood' (Whitson 1990 p. 21). The almost militaristic virtue of being 'able to experience pain and not give in to it' (Kimmel 1990 p. 100) is an integral part of masculinity. The same point has been made elsewhere when considering gay men acting out

their apparently passive and masochistic fantasies in sexual engagements with other men .... [and the way they] .... often characterise it as a way of proving their 'masculinity' through enduring the challenge of pain.

(Segal 1990 p. 151 emphasis is the original)

Participation in many sports is seen as demanding the physical prowess, skilful execution and qualities of character - 'the norms of physical and mental toughness' (Whitson 1990 p. 22) that have been, and often still are considered the mark of a 'real' man. Sport is a terrain of contests where the strength, aggression and skill required in activities such as boxing and rugby 'render men, by implication, fit also for work and battle' (Hargreaves 1989 p. 140). It has also provided 'unmeditated' results that legitimate male superiority as 'natural'. Until recently, few feminists considered physical power as a crucial aspect of patriarchy, perhaps because this emphasis on action and the body may be 'rather too close for comfort' (Scraton 1989 p. 457). But today, as well as sport being a 'terrain of contests', it is becoming increasingly 'contested terrain' as women's encroachment into the area of sports is fiercely resisted on a wide but by no means universal scale (Miller & Penz 1991 p. 149).
Such resistance is also evident in the non-playing aspects of sports. As previously indicated the macho subcultures that surround some contact sports routinely involve the symbolic vilification of women. Examples range from the chant of 'Get yer tits out for the lads' directed at females by some football supporters (Dunning 1990) to the singing of 'Goodnight Ladies' as a signal for wives and girlfriends to leave the (Rugby Union) Clubhouse before the 'serious drinking' and the singing of bawdy songs associated with rugby took place (Dunning 1986 p. 83). Sport occupies a privileged place in modern culture, which may go some way to explain why this terrain is contested so fiercely. For if

social life is conceived as a game by which identities are established, tested and possibly abandoned, then games can be conceived of as an idealised form of social life that establishes identity with a consensual certainty that in social life is not always possible.

(Ashworth 1971 p.40).

But before considering the implications of this feminine 'encroachment' into a formerly male preserve (see the next chapter), there are attributes other than physical prowess, physical skill and the norms of 'physical and mental toughness' (Whitson 1990 p. 22), which, if successfully 'borrowed' from the 'library' of masculinity, may form the basis for the construction of a masculine identity. For sports participation as a claim to masculinity has been seen as particularly useful (up until now) to pre-adult males. It is the case that 'only a minority of men keep up team sports after leaving school - usually those who

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were rather good at them, and probably found this an important way of defining themselves' (Connell 1983 p. 22). For those who were not rather good at them, and do not find it an important way to define themselves, the world of work and perhaps the superior earning power attached to success in intellectual work, fatherhood and success in adult sexual relationships will be ways in which less physically able men might establish their masculinity. But if sport participation has been one of the fora in which young males 'learn to project a physical presence that speaks of latent power' (Whitson 1990 p. 23), then physicality can be important in other areas of life itself. Although we have considered how the physical capacity for violence may relatively empower men (both individually in relation to other men, and men in general in relation to women), it may be physicality itself which separates males from the feminine (McTeer & White 1991), and this may be important in the world of paid work as well.

Paid employment may provide some men with opportunities to take a 'loan' from the 'library' of attributes that are associated, in modern Britain and elsewhere, with masculinity. Hard, physical toil, with its emphasis on strength and physical endurance helps distance some men from the 'feminine'. In a study of the impacts of a working class counter-school culture, Paul Willis describes how some 'working class kids get working class jobs'. A group in the school he called 'the lads' had little interest in the life of the school, fulfilled themselves outside the school gates and had ambitions to get into the world of hard, physical work as soon as possible. It was this sort of physically
demanding work that ‘the lads’ fetishised as properly masculine (Willis 1977 p.159). For the work involves ‘being tough, able to keep up labour over a long period or to exert sudden force in lifting or shifting’ (Connell 1983 p. 22). Work in adverse conditions, too, is regarded as typically masculine. Although women and children worked in coal mines in the early stages of industrialisation in Britain, they had been formally excluded from working underground long before the British coal industry was nationalised in 1945. Work in adverse conditions - in a coal mine, or an oil rig or hanging in a gantry underneath the Forth Railway Bridge - can be contrasted with the general ‘comfort’ of city life. It is this ‘comfort’ of city life which, according to some ‘feminises men, removing them from the land......... and expose these rough hewn rural men to the effete life of the fop’ (Kimmel 1987 p. 136). And if this work in adverse conditions can be contrasted with the relative comfort of city life, it can also be contrasted with its relative physical security; a consequence of the long term process of pacification of civil society. Dangerous work is men’s work.

Though more the case than in some other cultures, women have been excluded from direct combat roles in the military of modern Western countries. The justification for such exclusion has shifted: as physical strength decreases as a significant feature of the conduct of warfare, so the ideological site shifts to other qualities or properties, to do with, say, hormones or bodily cycles (Morgan 1987 p. 188).

In other words, ‘Western armed forces........ search for a difference which
can justify women's continued exclusion from the military's ideological core - combat' (Enloe 1983 p. 138). Dangerous work is men's work. And if women should not be exposed to danger, then conversely, the exposure to, and competent handling of, physical risk can be seen as an integral part of masculinity. As such, the effective handling of physical risk may represent one more of the attributes available for 'loan' from the 'library' of masculinity. In modern Western societies, where everyday life has become relatively pacified and the dangers of direct physical attack reduced, there are, nevertheless, still risks. Different forms of risk have become a condition of modern social existence as the human race introduces new dangers which we all have no option but to face. The global risks of pollution and nuclear warfare have turned ours into a 'risk society' (Beck 1992). 'Competitive markets - in products, labour power, investments or money' (Giddens 1991A p. 117-8) are industrial systems of risk that affect nearly everybody, whether we like it or not; but in matters of risk where choice is involved, to accept that risk is a demonstration of courage, since courage itself is the quality that is put on trial, the 'individual submits to a test of integrity by showing the capacity to envisage the "down side" of the risks being run, and press ahead regardless, even though there is no constraint to do so' (Ibid p. 133).

The masculine standard is 'a masculinity that is always willing to take risks' (Kimmel 1990 p. 100). At the extreme, those voluntary undertakings, which if the individual fails to meet the challenge, would result in death or serious injury can be completed only by those with the requisite 'mental
toughness'. Dangerous sports, like motorcycle racing, rock climbing (or some forms of it) and downhill racing involve an 'ability to maintain control over a situation that verges on chaos, a situation that most people would regard as entirely uncontrollable' (Lyng 1990 p. 858). While we are aware of the glamorous 'macho' world of motor racing with its overtones of wealth, speed, power and risk, the acceptance of risk in a working environment, whether that be underground hewing coal or on active service in Northern Ireland, will imply masculinity, too. In the world of employment then, hard, physical work, especially if it is dirty and dangerous, can provide a potential site for the construction of a masculine identity for those involved in it.

Many of these physically demanding working class jobs have disappeared through processes of automation and industrial contraction. In the case of the coal industry, and no doubt in others too, both these processes have happened simultaneously. The industry has contracted overall, to the point where even ten years ago there were more school teachers than miners in West Glamorgan. And in truth, contrary to popular myth, increasingly over the last thirty years coal faces in Britain's (formerly) state run coal mines have become highly mechanised, replacing much of the heavy physical work that was formerly demanded of coalface workers. In short, the ditch is no longer dug by a team of men with picks and shovels, but by a JCB. Although these types of working class jobs may be disappearing, working class masculinity may still be established in the world of paid work for 'the mastering of a trade (with one or two exceptions) and especially being good with machinery is also
felt to be masculine’ (Connell 1983 p. 22). If technical competence and skill with machinery are seen as masculine attributes, then so, too, is the control of powerful machines, especially those with independent movement. Driving a bulldozer or a juggernaut ‘reeks’ of working class masculinity and the ‘maleness of such work is maintained by a network of social practices in which teenage boy’s involvement with motorbikes and cars is an important transitional form’ (Ibid p. 23: Willis 1975 Passim). Work can, and often does, assume a deep importance in men’s lives, since it can be that ‘through doing a man’s job that men could feel secure in their identity’ (Seidler 1989 p. 151).

Where these aspects of their work are absent, where men are engaged in light factory work, for example, there may nevertheless be attempts to maintain the masculinity of the manual workplace. There may be pin-ups of naked or scantily clad women, reinforcing the proposition that men are ‘active’ but women simply ‘appear’ (Miller & Penz 1991 p. 150-2: Connell 1983 p. 24). There may also be a good deal of sexual banter with and/or sexual innuendo aimed at and/or sexual harassment of female workers employed in the enterprise in one capacity or another. These strategies may not only be a means of dealing with sexual tension but also a form of social control, as sanctions operating against these women for invading masculine social space - the industrial/manual workplace.

Even if a man’s occupation or place of work does not carry with it these working class overtones of masculinity, associated with risk, physicality or
mechanical power, then conspicuous success in it can still form the basis for a claim to masculinity. Whether we consider the economy to be a modern form of the ancient hunt, or a battle 'waged' by other means, then conspicuous success in the world of work equates with bringing home much prey or spoils of war. Material 'prizes' are proof positive of competence in the competitive, aggressive and occasionally violent world of modern industrial societies; competences that men are supposed to have, and which have their roots in the capacities for aggression, competitiveness and violence required both in warfare and the hunt for game in times past. After all, 'booty forms prima facie evidence of successful aggression' (Veblen 1953 [1899] p. 30). Thus economically successful men may feel comfortable enough with their masculinity to dispense with sexist, racist or classist attitudes (forms of pejorative comparison with women and other men), and feel free enough to 'engage in expressive intimacies in their relationships with women' and even 'make fun of exaggerated machismo' (Farr 1988 p. 265).

Highly rewarded positions in the economy hold the prospect for middle class men not only of material success, but also the exercise of a degree of control over others. That is, the exercise of a degree of power, 'the ultimate aphrodisiac' (Dr. Henry Kissinger 1987). For one of the 'rules' of masculinity is to be 'a big wheel: success and status confer masculinity' (Kimmerl 1990 p. 100). These higher status men who may themselves derive status from any 'earlier sports success' (Messner 1991 p. 73) in their lives may, nevertheless, view the publicly acclaimed, commercialised athlete as a 'narrow, even atavistic
example of masculinity'. That is the case even though the 'athlete' may 'embody all that is valued in present cultural conceptions of hegemonic masculinity - physical strength, commercial success, supposed heterosexual virility' (Ibid), for example. For their own decisions irrespective of their past sporting success, 'not to pursue an athletic career are equally important signs of their status vis a vis other men' (Ibid). Thus it may be felt that the choice of a sporting career may 'express this need to amount to something within a social context that seems to deny.....[other]...... opportunities to do so' (Messner 1987 p.196). But even though a sporting career may be seen by some (and especially perhaps the economically successful) as a 'second choice', it should be remembered that even there, many may be called but few shall be chosen; for sports necessarily produce 'failures' (and nearly always more of them) as well as 'successes'. Hence, perhaps, the popularity of a Tee Shirt that carries the message - 'Dare to be Average!'.

However, given the structure of modern British labour markets, even male 'average earners' may feel themselves to be 'responsible for providing the majority of the income and financial security for their families' (Ibid p. 205). Indeed, some eighty percent of British men felt they were making 'money for basics, such as food and housing' (Kiernan 1991 p. 89). It is perhaps, with the arrival of children when commonly enough 'the wife stops working and the husband becomes unequivocally the "breadwinner"' (Connell 1983 p. 25) that, possibly at this time more than others, many men may use a 'breadwinner' role to connect both with their families 'and, more abstractly with "society"'.
(Messner 1987 p. 206). But more than that, the reason behind the change in family circumstances and its size (the arrival of children) will in itself confer masculine status upon the father, ratifying, as it does, one sort of adequate sexual functioning.

Thus it may be that the nature of men's work, their conspicuous success in it, or the provision of the mainstay of an acceptable standard of living for their families - a breadwinner role - may afford many men the opportunities to found their masculinities in the world of paid work. Their employment may provide them with the opportunity to take a successful 'loan' from the gender 'library' of masculinity. As such, these 'loans' confer beneficial power ratios of one kind or another. In common with participation in many sports, where the combination of force and skill relatively empowers men (carrying with it as it does the latent threat of coercive power), the world of hard, manual work can provide similar male 'benefits'. The demonstrations of physical potential involved in each will enhance the statuses of these men relative to other men, and of men in general, relative to women.

Conspicuous economic success confirms favourable power ratios with others, known and unknown, in the long chains of interdependence that characterise the modern economic system. High material rewards will give these men access to economic or remunerative power over others, both as an aspect of their relationship with other family members and vis a vis other individuals by virtue of their purchasing power. Men may, in any event, hold
the family 'purse strings' where they are the sole breadwinner and it may be that their earning capacity brings with it access to 'normative' power in relation to other family members. There may arise the feeling that it is right and proper that breadwinners should have a major influence in expenditure decisions in recognition of the fact that they provide the resources.

Some of the other attributes which men may, successfully or otherwise, try and 'borrow' from the 'library' of masculinity revolve, obviously enough, around sex and sexuality. Here too physicality has a place. The sex act is, after all a physical act and, in the case of the male, is dependent upon a particular physical response. It would be hard to overestimate the centrality of sex and sexuality for gender identity, since it is the biological base upon which gender differences are constructed. To be a man, therefore, or to be a woman is to stand in a particular biological relationship with the other sex, and to the act itself. Consequently, some writers have seen sexual orientation as crucial: 'it is clear in modern Western society one's sexual orientation is a very important part of identity' (Caplan 1987 p. 2). It is true that the 'rules' of normative masculinity may prescribe 'no sissy stuff: avoid all behaviours that even remotely suggest the feminine', rules derived from a version of masculinity that is 'white middle class and heterosexual' (Kimmel 1990 p. 100). And it is also true that heterosexuality is seen as the 'natural' way of things and homophobia involving 'the active daily subordination of women and gay men' (Rutherford 1988 p. 28) forms a part of hegemonic masculinity. But it should be remembered that gender identity in modern Western societies is an
achieved identity. So that even though sexual behaviour may be a 'vital part of that achievement' (Caplan 1987 p. 2), there is still a distinction to be made between homosexual behaviours and homosexual identity.

The Sambia people of Papua New Guinea have a cultural tradition whereby young boys leave their families and live separately from the village in an all male community. Here they are coerced into a system of homosexual fellatio (something similar here in Britain may be labelled ritual child abuse),

first as fellator and then [when older] as fellated. Elders teach that semen is absolutely vital: it should be consumed daily since the creation of biological maleness and the maintenance of masculinity depend on it. Hence from middle childhood until puberty boys should perform fellatio on older youths.

(Herdt 1987 p. 2)

Even though these homosexual practices started in trauma, the evidence indicated that most of these youths 'also experience them as pleasurable and erotically exciting. Yet in spite of this formidable background the final outcome is exclusively heterosexual' (Ibid p. 3). The Sambia do not think of themselves as 'attracted only to males during the stage of homosexual activity; they are also excited by women's bodies; and in most cases men leave behind homosexual behaviour following marriage' (Ibid p. 4).

What seems clear, then, is that there is a potential for difference between sexual behaviour and identity, and so while orientation may be an
important part of gender identity it is not, perhaps, a defining feature of it. While homosexuality may carry feminine overtones, especially in its 'camp' form, paradoxically in the 'super macho' form it may expose the 'absurdity of masculinity more effectively than effeminacy' (Segal 1990 p. 149). It may be that 'male sexuality, gay and straight, shares certain common features deriving from the pervasive identifications of masculinity with power and genital performance' (Ibid p. 151 emphasis added). In these respects, gay men have far more in common with straight men than they do with gay women and consequently, 'masculine' sexual activity may be far more about power, control and physical performance, than about which sex is the object of sexual desire.

If sexual activity is regarded by many (men particularly) as a physical performance, then there has been a long cultural association between physical fitness and sexual prowess, at least as far back as the 19th century Theory of Spermatic Economy. According to that theory, 'the male possessed a limited quantity of sperm which could be invested in various enterprises, ranging from business, through sport to copulation and procreation' (Mrozek 1983 p. 20). On the other hand, others believed that 'sport was an activity that regenerated the body and made more efficient use of sperm' (Cresset 1990 p. 52). Even today there are widespread beliefs that sex before a sporting event may adversely affect (sporting) performance, thus demonstrating the cultural link. Physical prowess developed through sporting activity carries with it, then, connotations of potent sexual performance, and sport has come to be 'very closely linked with notions of masculinity, virility and physical strength' (Deem
This conception of the sex act as essentially physical (and therefore amenable to 'improvement' through fitness) links with the view of the body as a 'machine' (Seidler 1989 p. 40). Heterosexual relations can and 'often do settle into a pattern in which the man's arousal and control of movement is central' (Connell 1983 p. 24) and would thus account for boyhood recollections of peer group discussions (usually 'behind the bike sheds') centring not on 'how it felt', let alone 'what did it mean' but upon 'how one did it'. Relating to the body as a machine can, during sex, provoke a split in consciousness 'wherein part of one's attention is watching the machine, looking for flaws in its performance even while another is supposedly immersed in the midst of sexual pleasure' (Brod 1990 p. 128).

This view of the sexual experience as a physical performance and therefore influenced by physical fitness has passed into popular culture and gained wide acceptance by both sexes. The mechanical couplings that are depicted in pornographic images concentrate on the physicality of the sex act. The penis is always huge and hard, vigorous copulation is followed by powerful ejaculation - time and time again. In talking of Britt Ekland's exercise video 'The Sensual Fitness Programme' in which 'one of the pearls dropped by our comely Swede is that an all over massage is the perfect prelude to a night of lovemaking..... [and there are] also exercises to firm and trim "the muscles you need for love"', Lipman remarks, 'like your brain, presumably' (Lipman 1986 p. 67). Fitness and sexual performance are further blurred with neologisms such as 'exersex' and 'sexercise' in relatively common use, and when 'sexual experts
proclaim that dietary control and exercise will enhance sexual prowess’ (Featherstone 1982 p. 182), to the point where it is claimed that ‘jogging can cure impotence’ (Hepworth & Featherstone 1982 p. 107).

Moreover, the language of ‘male sexuality that we have inherited is a language of will, performance and conquest’ (Seidler 1989 p. 23). The mark of a ‘real’ man may be to ‘love them and leave them’ - and as many of ‘them’ as possible:

We simply had to prove our potency through the number of sexual encounters we had: sex had become a quantitative experience. It was a way of proving oneself to other men, but also of silencing our own fears and doubts about the quality of our sexual experiences. This could no longer be questioned.

(Seidler 1989 p. 33)

It seems, then, there is an aspect of male sexuality that is ‘not about mutual pleasuring, but the confirmation of masculinity which is based upon physical capacities’ (Kimmel 1990 p. 105). In an overemphasis on physicality (where men project a ‘physical presence that speaks of latent power - Whitson 1990 p. 23) and conquest, rape may be understood as a crime more connected with power than with sexual desire. As an extreme form of phallocentrism, it can be understood as an ‘attempt to imprint one’s presence, not just in space, but in the most protected space by an irresistible penetration’ (Connell 1983 p. 25).
This physical-sexual link may also be found 'in reverse', as it were. Davis (1982) argues that the threat of rape may be more evident for Afro-Caribbean women in Britain than for women of South Asian descent because they are more likely to be viewed as sexually available. And this 'image of Afro-Caribbean women as more sexually assertive may contribute to the belief in the athletic prowess of this group of women' (Lovell 1989 p. 63). In other words, if the physically fit have the potential for sexual 'assertiveness', then the sexually assertive have the potential for physical fitness.

It is not necessary for individual men to take an active part in the subordination of women (and indeed many would have no wish to) for them to benefit in terms of their masculinity. The threat of male violence means that men (some more than others) exercise greater control of public social space and thus relatively constrain choices for women. It is possible, as men, to stand aside and let the images of the 'sportsman, the sexual superstud, the misogynist, the woman beater and all the myths and icons of male superiority do the work for us' (Rutherford 1988 p. 24), although this may involve the acceptance of a 'lesser' masculinity.

Physical fitness and strength acquired and demonstrated in hard manual labour or through sports, may therefore open up possibilities for men to 'borrow' attributes from the 'library' of masculinity: attributes to do with virility, sexual conquest, control of the body and control in social relations more generally. In addition to this, the power of insemination may itself confer masculinity.
Fatherhood, or becoming a father, is a time when ‘retrospectively the privatised sexual practice within marriage is collectively certified and endorsed’ (Connell 1983 p. 25). The ‘nudge-nudge’, ‘wink wink’ jokes that often accompany new fatherhood seem to have several functions. Firstly, they blur the distinction between fertility and virility, the process of insemination itself being seen as a ratification of adequate sexual functioning. They also handle the fact that the establishment of paternity is nearly always problematic (without modern tests you can only really be sure who your mother is). But it should also be understood that the 'ribald jokes that greet the new father (not it be noted the new mother) mark this as an occasion when the body is socially confirmed in its masculinity' (Ibid).

In this idealised version of hegemonic masculinity, in subsequent family life the man may enjoy a degree of authority and control over other family members. He may, perhaps, be responsible for any physical punishment of children - though ‘much less than a generation ago’ (Ibid p. 26). Men may enjoy enhanced status based on physicality compared to other men and to women in the world of work, in sport, in sexual relations, in fatherhood and in the home. These are some of the attributes which may still be available for men to ‘borrow’ from the ‘masculinity’ shelves of the gender ‘library’ as the basis for the construction of a gender identity, reflecting as they do some of masculinity’s major themes.

But rather like physical fitness itself, masculinity is never secure. Just
as the athlete must constantly train to maintain a level of physical fitness, there can be no 'final solution' (unless it be death) to the 'problem' of masculinity. ‘Masculinity is unresolved - never able to be fully demonstrated, subject to eternal doubt. Masculinity needs constant validation: its pursuit is relentless’ (Kimmel 1990 p. 100). No matter, then, whatever the present strength of an individual's claim to the attributes of masculinity may be, all that is available is indeed a 'loan' from the gender 'library'.

If these 'borrowed' attributes are some of the major building blocks available for use in the construction of a masculine identity, then the following chapter examines some of the grounds upon which such a fabrication must be built. This ground, the fabric of everyday life is, in modern Britain at least, not bedrock, but shifting sand. While it is in and through the figurations of everyday life that people have to make such attempts, and while social structures are inseparable from the people who comprise them, such is the ingrained nature of the homo clausus model of people that it is all too often expressed in those terms. Rutherford and Chapman, for example, describe it thus: it is, they say, in the 'familial, sexual and cultural structures' that people must attempt the identity construction project. That is in the 'place where the "me" of consciousness meets the "it" of structure that [is where] people's subjectivities or identities are constructed' (Rutherford & Chapman 1988 p. 17). But whether unhelpfully expressed or not, it is this ground of everyday life (upon which men must attempt to construct their gender identity) which is being eroded and undermined more or less rapidly by processes of social and cultural
change. The power balances between the sexes are changing. The process of functional democratization has meant if we do, as men, let the images of the 'sportsman, sexual superstud' and so on 'stand in for us', then we must also realise that 'these mirrors are less reassuring than they used to be' (Rutherford 1988 p. 24).

Some of the traditional attributes of masculinity claimed in the world of paid employment have been undermined by economic change. And in the realms of family and sexual relations (amongst others) traditional masculinities have been challenged with an increasing measure of success by feminist ideas. It is to this changing terrain that we now turn in order to examine the tenure men may have on some of these 'building plots'. For the days of 'freehold' appear to be gone, and men seem to have a very 'short lease' indeed on some of these sites.
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Times They Are a Changing: Leasehold Masculinity

As indicated at the end of the last chapter, this one takes a closer look at some of the traditional grounds (some, it must be said are more recent 'traditions' than others) upon which masculinity has been constructed. It goes on to chronicle some of the social and economic changes, particularly these that seem to have gathered pace since the 1950s, that have undermined and eroded some of these traditional 'building sites'. If these changes do not indeed mean there is a current crisis of masculinity, then it appears that there are, at least, a few 'small, local difficulties' to be handled.

Before undertaking that, however, as an introduction to that 'closer look' it is necessary to return briefly to some familiar ground. One of the themes that has surfaced on several occasions in this work so far, notably in Chapters Two, Five and Six, is that of uncertainty and risk in the context of modern Western societies. These risks are not those associated with some supposed increased exposure to physical danger in everyday life, for quite the reverse is true. They are the risks and uncertainties linked to what is possibly the defining characteristic of modern Western life the fact of chronic and accelerating social change. What is more, it has been possible to identify some longer term trends in the way these societies have been, and are still, changing. Two of these trends, themselves interdependently linked, are the trend towards longer
chains of interdependence, and correspondingly towards an increased division of social functions, and one towards a progressive pacification of civil society (Elias 1982 [1939]: Giddens 1991B).

People are involved in increasingly complex webs of interdependent relationships with others, known and unknown, at increasing social and geographical differences. As these chains of interdependence lengthen, all sorts of social relationships become 'lifted out' of local contexts of interaction and have become reconstituted across 'infinite spans of time-space' (Giddens 1991B p. 21). But trade, for example, over ranges wider than the local context and then with known and trusted individuals has only become possible with the comparative pacification of civil society. The development of nation states (as part of a longer process) has led states to demand for themselves the sole, legitimate right to raise taxes and (in almost all circumstances) use violence within the territories over which they claim jurisdiction. Violence has become progressively expunged from everyday life, and while it might be argued that people today face increased risks from such things as nuclear war, pollution (Giddens 1991A p. 28), or indeed nuclear accidents, there is little doubt that most individuals are much more physically secure in their everyday lives than in times past (Elias 1982 [1939]). These long term historical processes of individuation, interdependence and pacification have influenced all facets of social relations and the power ratios they involve. People have to deal with the social relations in which they are involved not only 'as they are', but also with the ways they may be changing. Thus it can be argued that 'all men,
potentially at least, were affected by a set of historical and structural changes that had an impact on the gender as a whole’ (Morgan 1992 p. 8).

One of these ‘impacts’ reflects the relative disappearance of violence from everyday life for, consequent upon it the extent to which ‘fighting skills and physical prowess are honoured in society’ (Whitson 1990 p. 24-5: Dunning 1986) has declined. Such a decline will have relatively disadvantaged men. This, and other changes including the loss of the pioneer role through the ‘closure of the frontier’ (or in the case of Britain, the loss of Empire) has led to a ‘perceived feminisation of society’ (Messner 1987 p. 196). The move to the city from rural life has also been seen as relatively benefiting women. ‘Not only does the city liberate women, turning them into wanton, disrespectful and arrogant wenches, but the city feminises men’ (Kimmel 1987 p. 136). But notwithstanding these latter claims, both modern urban males, and their rural counterparts have to deal with economic and cultural changes that have eroded much of the grounds upon which (some since time immemorial, and others in more recent times) traditional masculinities have been constructed. If men’s tenure on these grounds is leasehold, then some of the leases may be running out fast.

The traditional masculinities outlined in the previous chapter - those based upon physicality in sport, in work, in sexual relations; on success in the economic ‘hunt’ or ‘battle’; of the exercise of control and authority within the family and the demonstration of a certain strength of character - may pose
problems for many individual men. These problems are of two broad types. Firstly, there are the problems associated with the way individual men may feel they 'measure up' to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, whether these ideals are matched by the reality of their masculinity. This may create a tension between the men they struggle to become i.e. the ideal forms of masculinity they struggle to achieve, and the humiliations and indignities life serves up for them an all too regular basis:

It is this tension which is so often flattened out within a structuralist tradition, so it is difficult to explore the tension between the experience of men and the dominant forms of masculinity in terms of which men are constantly judging and comparing themselves.

(Seidler 1989 p. xi - xii).

Secondly, there are those problems that stem from the fact that social changes are undermining many of these ideals in any event. Men may feel, therefore, that as they struggle to 'put the ball in the back of the net', life is 'moving the goal posts'. The patterns of gender relations in which men find themselves are constituted cumulatively, that is, the norms of family life, family relations, behaviour at work and those for adolescent social life are all related. 'They mesh with each other and make an overall pattern, one of the most powerful and general structures in society' (Connell et al 1982 p. 72). But this pattern is, of course not static, but the subject of a dynamic process of gender relations (Messner & Sabo 1990 p. 11-12), that is interdependent with what are traditionally called 'structural' and 'cultural' changes.
Taking these two broad types of problems in reverse order it is clear that, while men's power remains, 'that power is becoming less certain'. As men and masculinity have become more 'problematic', they have 'come to be seen more as topics for studies and observation'. There may indeed no longer be 'one particular dominant model of masculinity' (Hearn 1987 p. 6) but a variety of combinations and emphases of those attributes available from the shelves marked 'masculinity' in the gender 'library'. Traditional masculinities, have been subjected for some time now to feminist critiques that have not so much been commentaries on major economic, political and social changes, and the ways these have been reflected in academic analysis and writings, but have actually contributed to them. For it always was and is still impossible to consider the 'position of women's rights...... [as]..... cordon off from a consideration of men's place in society' (Morgan 1992 p. 7). Consequently, in the same way that 'the Invisible Man of H. G. Wells, whose death is signified by his return to visibility, the weakening of particular masculine identities has pushed them into the spotlight of greater public scrutiny' (Rutherford 1988 p. 23).

Not only have these 'changes in the relative social position and power of men and women......... all of which enter into the process of further change they reflexively inform' (Giddens 1991B p. 23) thus accelerated, the grounds upon which they occur have also broadened. Not only have the feminist attacks on male power in the economy been sustained, they have also been extended to encompass other areas of social life, leisure amongst them.
These critiques argue that no longer should women be regarded as recreationally disadvantaged, a neglected group whose problems are capable of resolution through piecemeal changes in social policy. [Feminist analyses] are therefore critical of campaigns organised by the Sports Council to promote women's participation in sport which were based on quantitative data about gender differences in participation rates, car ownership and other 'positivistic data'. In their place a political analysis of gender and leisure is emerging which links wider social processes and individual women's experiences.

(Green, Hebron & Woodward 1987 p. 78)

At one extreme, men's responses to feminist challenges to hegemonic masculinity as 'natural' have ranged from 'outright hostility' (Hearn 1987 p. 6) to 'patrism - an equivalent of subjective racism' (Turner 1984 p. 155-6) or a 'macho backlash' (Hearn 1987 p. 6) and even 'violence as a common response' (Rutherford 1988 p. 29). At the other extreme, men have adopted 'sympathetic stances in the form of men's anti-sexist groups and other activities' (Hearn 1987 p. 6), while in the 'middle ground', they may mount a vigorous defence against women's inclusion (and intrusion) into male preserves, sport being one (Dunning 1986). This may be accompanied by loud talk of the 'importance of all-male institutions' and a strident defence of the 'importance of confrontation in "men's games"' (Whitson 1990 p. 24-5).

For respond, it seems, men must. Whether men called themselves 'feminists' and actually looked critically at their own practices, or simply 'came
to feel a diffuse sense of unease or a variety of more or less immediate pressure that caused them [sociologists particularly perhaps] to look at topics on their reading lists or their involvement in home or parenthood' (Morgan 1992 p. 7-8), a response was required. This said, the much heralded arrival of the ‘New Man’ as an ‘expression of the repressed body of masculinity, ............ a fraught and uneven attempt to express masculine emotional and sexual life’ (Rutherford 1988 p. 31), as a more than isolated response seems to be an illusion. ‘New Man’ has been seen as a frequent response to structural changes and the challenges of more or less assertive feminism. In his (New Man’s) ‘New Father’ incarnation, he is ‘fully entrenched in the Mothercare Catalogue........ He looks soft and gentle, and what’s more he’s not afraid to show it’ (Ibid p. 34). ‘New Man’ is interested in clothes; he is not afraid to put his body on display, contradicting the ‘code of who looks and who is looked at, .....[for]........ for men have traditionally held the power of the look, the symbolic owning of women’s bodies’ (Ibid p. 52).

While this aspect of ‘New Man’ may be somewhat more general, and certainly the images abound, whether ‘New Man’ represents a real change in gender relations is open to doubt. It may be a common misunderstanding ‘that all one needs to do is wish, or want another way of life and somehow marriages, family, work or politics will be altered by our dreams and desires’ (Hertz 1986 p. 198).

Certainly, for many the reality is different. In seventy five percent of
'couple households' in Britain, the woman is mainly responsible for household duties, and in sixty seven percent of these households, where the woman works full time as well, this is the case (Kiernan 1992 p. 101). Men are more likely to claim that household duties are equally shared (twenty percent compared to twelve percent of women) 'perhaps because they (or their partners) are unfamiliar with how much work is actually done, or more likely, because perceptions are coloured by stereotypes, or even guilt' (Ibid). Moreover, there appears to be a gap between those who say tasks should be equally shared and those who claim they actually are. For most of the tasks (household shopping, preparing evening meals, household cleaning and so on) 'the ratio was at least two to one' (Ibid p. 105. See Table 7.1)

Table 7.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of respondents in 'couple households' in Britain saying household tasks</th>
<th>....should be equally shared</th>
<th>....are equally shared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household shopping</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing evening meal</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening dishes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household cleaning</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing and ironing</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household repair</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising household money</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In dual career families, where 'partner's' jobs are 'equal in status and the rewards they confer and commitment they demand' (Segal 1990 p. 39), there seems to be a more equitable distribution of household work, although this is often lessened by the employment of domestic help. The employment of domestic help may bring 'greater equality between women and men for some women, but at the expense of the cheaper labour of other women' (Loc cit). This greater equality may bring with it added tensions, for these families seem to have a high rate of divorce. It may be men's continuing demands for more traditional wives, and their resentment of their wife's career success, added to the frustration of many wives seeking greater equality in the home [which] can lead to increasing family strain and tension.

(Campbell 1988 p. 17)

Overall, though, 'research seems to indicate that the greater the income differential between husbands and wives, the less husbands are involved in parenting and housework' (Segal 1990 p. 38).

Nearly all of the male Runners interviewed in the present study who discussed their domestic arrangements - and that was nearly all of them - described them as 'an egalitarian relationship', or that household tasks were 'fairly shared', or claimed that 'I do my fair share' of them. Only one man, an individual who would be classed as a Jogger by most definitions, confesses to doing nothing around the house despite the fact that, in common with nearly all of the other men interviewed, his wife also worked full time. He explained that
this wife (who was present during the interview) was 'a wonderful woman' who did 'absolutely everything' around the house and he did not know 'why she puts up with me'.

In nearly all other cases, there was a claim to an equitable distribution of household tasks. Where more detailed information was forthcoming (in over fifty percent of the male Runners interviewed), the claim usually did not stand up to scrutiny. As a thirty four year old Runner explained:

'Oh yes, we do the weekly shopping together, we share that. My wife usually goes around and gets the "basics" while I go off and get the interesting stuff and choose the wine'.

While many Runners claimed to do 'an equal share' of the household cleaning, only two ever cleaned the toilet - perhaps the acid test. Two of the Runners, after their contribution to the running of their households had been discussed and despite earlier protestations of equality, went as far as to concede that they could, or should 'do a little bit more' or 'make more of an effort'. While nearly all of the Runners interviewed felt they shoulder an equal burden as far as domestic work was concerned, at least some displayed signs of guilt that, in reality, they did not. Conversely, some of the women who were interviewed for the study felt their Running had meant that housework had moved down their list of priorities:
‘The housewife-mother thing doesn’t seem so important to me now’, commented one. Another believes:

‘Running has given me a new aspect to my life - away from work and the sink’.

Another of the interviewees, a woman in her forties, explained more fully:

‘I used to be forever cleaning and dusting, but it’s funny, it’s not so important now. Now I can sit here and look at the cobwebs and not worry about it - there’s more to life than housework’.

It seems that, while some of the men had, perhaps, felt some pressure to take on board the idea of the ‘New Man’, at least as far as household chores were concerned, some of the female participants had felt the ‘release’ of becoming a ‘New Woman’. For while there may have been a change in some men’s ‘attitude to childcare’, possibly a change in their ‘experience of fatherhood’, and even a change in the psychological perspective on the importance of the father’s role. What proves harder to find is convincing evidence that there has been a change in the amount of practical work men actually do as fathers.

(Segal 1990 p. 33)

Certainly the group of men interviewed for the present study provided no
such convincing evidence. But while there may, then, be the belief that 'the division of work within the family........[is]........ broadly unchanged' (Henwood, Rimmer & Wicks 1987 p. 35-6), the present study did provide some indications that the situation is perhaps no longer a guilt-free-ride for some men at least.

Some men may actually encourage their wives to get jobs 'as long as it does not threaten the organisation of the family', thus placing 'the division of household and childcare duties beyond discussion' (Seidler 1989 p. 55). In any event the 'rules' of traditional masculinity are much less that a woman should not go out to work and more that she should not go out to play. So it has, then, in a sense been 'left open for men to change their attitudes towards women' (Loc cit). Men as husbands and fathers may have something of an open script, ranging from a traditional distant stance, through equal involvement, even role reversal (McKee 1987). This 'freedom' for men may be there, but there are, nevertheless, potential costs to be borne. Given the present gendered nature of labour markets, there are financial as well as cultural risks to be run by men seeking to establish their masculinity in domesticity and childcare. For domesticity and childcare are involvements that have traditionally been kept on shelves other than those labelled 'masculinity' at the 'gender library'. Indeed if a man 'borrows' from these shelves, then others may apply unwelcome definitions to him, those of a 'lesser' masculinity or even no masculinity at all. But if the heralded arrival of the 'New Man' seems, at least, to be premature, then traditional masculinities remain under pressure from major economic and social changes, as well as the sustained
challenge produced by feminists critiques.

Technical change in the work place have meant that machines have, to a large extent, replaced the need for physical strength. The picks and shovels of manual labour have been replaced by the mechanical excavator. While there will be a few jobs in many industries which still require a significant degree of physical strength and will involve hard, physical toil, there are now very few industries where these sorts of jobs predominate. This process has progressively undermined one of the bases of traditional working class masculinity and is

sweeping on with cybernation wherever it is possible to do so with the dynamic of profit itself. And although physical masculinity has been reasonably successfully integrated with machinery, it certainly hasn’t been with computers.

(Connell 1983 p. 31).

Difficulties may also have been exacerbated by the decline of the apprenticeship system where an adolescent (male, traditionally) would ‘absorb the mysteries of the craft’ (McClelland 1991 p. 81) while learning his manual skills. This decline in the system of apprenticeship has taken away an important rite de passage into traditional working class manhood. It was necessary for the adolescent to pass through a period of servitude if ‘he were to emerge as a competent workman and which marked his passage from being one of the "lads" to being a free and independant man’ (Loc cit). There is,
then, no doubt that these changes in the nature of manual work ‘with the
decline in manufacturing industries, the introduction of new technology and the
subsequent de-skilling of traditional male jobs .....[have]..... undermined
traditional working class masculinities’ (Rutherford 1988 p. 23). While these
changes are eroding some of the ground upon which working class
masculinities may have been built, this turf has never been available to middle
class employees. As Connell puts it, while it may now be a fact of life that for

large parts of the male workforce........... the daily round means
neither sweat nor grease. For office workers nothing whatever
about the physical process of work either tests or signifies masculinity.

(Connell 1983 p. 23 emphasis added)

If the changes in the nature of work may pose ‘problems’ for some men,
then other changes in the realm of paid work may pose ‘problems’ for rather
more of them. In the recent past, the world of paid work has been dominated
by men, although some women have always been in employment. Over the
period 1851-81 around eighty five percent of men were economically active,
while thirty five percent of women were. But

it is certain that the vast majority, perhaps eighty percent [of
those women workers] were concentrated into domestic service,
textile production and clothing trades, in each of which they
constituted the majority of the workforce.

(McClelland 1991 p. 78).
And while labour markets are still relatively segregated along gender lines, more and more women are involved in a wider variety of employment than ever before. The 1991 Census figures reveal that women comprise fifty two percent of the resident population of Wales; they make up forty seven percent of the working age population (men 16-64 years and women 16-59 years) in the Principality; forty four percent of those economically active and thirty five percent of all full time employees. (Source: Labour Force Survey March-May 1993: Employment Department Group). What has happened, then, and particularly since the 1950s is that

it has become increasingly common for married women to return to the labour force, and at younger ages, with the result that increasingly large proportions of households enjoy two incomes. Indeed, two incomes may be required for the family to be able to achieve an acceptable living standard.

(Jamieson & Toynbee 1990 p. 94).

It is, perhaps, with the upwardly revised conception of an acceptable standard of living that the wife's earnings can quickly become an indispensable part of the family income. This loss of the sole breadwinner role, given that the 'realm of paid work has been, and remains important for the creation of men and definitions of masculinity' (Hearn 1987, p. 19), reflecting, as it does, the inability of many men to maintain their independence is a serious 'blow'.

1 A distinctly masculine form and meaning of 'independence' meaning the ability to maintain his dependents in the home. (McClelland 1991 p. 82)
As such, it represents one of the ‘tensions that exist between the sense of masculinity we inherit from childhood and the material relations in which we can realise this’ (Seidler 1989 p. 153). Consequently, it may be seen as one of the second broad group of ‘problems’ that men must face, that of whether they ‘measure up’ to current masculine ideals.

Although labour markets remain largely segregated along gender lines, the technical and industrial divisions which have, hitherto, been associated with gender are increasingly coming under threat. The divisions of:

- light/heavy
- skilled/unskilled
- dirty/clean
- interesting/boring
- mobile/immobile

[safe/dangerous] are seen as reproducing male/female divisions to some extent (Game & Pringle 1983 p 28-33 my insertion). While it should be stressed that such oppositions as skilled/unskilled are social constructions, for while women are statistically more likely to find themselves in less skilled jobs that does not mean they are without skills. And as we have seen, the range of occupations to which the labels of ‘heavy’, ‘dirty’, ‘dangerous’ and so on can be applied is diminishing. Although segregated labour markets remain

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1 It is the case that the skills and crafts of women have, historically speaking, been downgraded or marginalised in favour of the skills of men’ (Morgan 1992 p. 81).
and men appear to be more 'segregated' than women (for if occupations are 'cells', then 'women do not defend their cell walls so effectively against men, as men defend theirs against women' [Cockburn 1988 p. 30]), nevertheless, men's 'cells' are under threat from 'invasions' and 'tokens' (Morgan 1992 Chapter G). Furthermore, even though it may be differentially described, and rewarded, men realise they are progressively finding themselves doing the same kinds of work as their wives, whether that be 'machine minding' in one guise or another, or working with a 'Qwerty' keyboard.

If men find themselves doing the same kinds of work as their wives, conspicuous success in the economic 'hunt' or 'battle' will, realistically, not provide the ground upon which to construct masculinity for most. Very few of us can be Chief Executive or Chairman of the Board. Though we may strive, in the real world few of us connect with significant power. 'Dreams of greatness and fame, of "being someone" rarely bear fruition' (Rutherford 1988 p. 54).

Certainly none of the men (or women) interviewed for this present study appeared to be living the 'American Dream' as it were. While it may be true that relatively few of us can derive any real satisfaction and status from, or have any real interest in, what we do to earn our respective livings, those interviewed did seem, generally, to be a dissatisfied bunch in terms of their employment. Several of the 'Joggers' claimed to have a high degree of job satisfaction, but most of them and none of the Runners or Athletes made any
such claim. Around half of the men interviewed dwelt (and some at considerable length) on either their 'chequered' employment history, or on what 'might have been' had the 'cookie crumbled' somewhat differently. At most they elaborated on their qualified success. Those who seemed to enjoy what might be termed moderate material success (the vast majority of those interviewed) still tended to set no great store by their employment.

'I just drifted into teaching, as most people do, because I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do', explained a head of department at a large secondary school. Another teacher, at a similar level in Further Education, felt that his:

'ambitions probably stop here', although he had not yet reached his thirty fifth birthday. Many others felt their future lay outside the occupation in which they now worked. A middle manager described himself as a (self defined) 'frustrated academic'. A civil engineer had attempted a teaching course. Three of those interviewed were doing Open University Degree courses 'on the road', one explained, to 'something better'.

The theme that came through time and time again during discussions of the interviewee's employment was that of underachievement. Many felt that, through force of circumstance, past or present, they were not using their skills and talents to best advantage. Such a feeling is, perhaps, common enough in Britain today. For if it is probably true, as the saying goes, that if an autobiography is not essentially a story of failure - it must be a pack of lies!
However, the Runners in my sample did seem to be acutely aware of their failures and shortcomings in the world of paid work.

But even those men with relatively mundane employment may consider themselves fortunate in the face of the number of people currently without a job at all. There is little doubt that being without a job can be a frustrating and dispiriting experience for many men. It has been argued that high levels of male unemployment and the growing jobs sector employing part-time women have changed the face of the labour market and had a corresponding effect at home. The past decade has seen the increasing exposure of child sex abuse and men's violence against their wives.

(Rutherford 1988 p. 23)

For the 'loss of job may mean a loss of status and increasing frustration, domestic difficulties and even a reassertion of a certain sort of "masculinity" through violence' (Hearn 1987) p. 19). The issue of domestic violence is a complex one and may be linked to many factors 'personal and more general'. That said, one of the factors that may influence the use of violence by men directly against women, usually in the home (Dobash & Dobash 1980) is the relative statuses of individual men and women (O'Brien 1975). At least, that appears to be the case in the United States:

An examination of divorce petitions showed that men's violence was more likely to be cited if the husband was less well educated than this wife; if the husband had a lower occupation than the woman's father; if there were disputes over the adequacy of the
husband's income; if the husband was dissatisfied with his job and if the husband had failed to complete high school or college.

(Walby 1990 p. 136)

This is not, of course, as already indicated, to contend that male domestic violence is confined to the ranks of the unemployed or those in lower status jobs than their wives. But, nevertheless, in the Britain of the early nineties, as a decade before, ‘thousands of men...... suddenly found themselves incapable of fulfilling the requirements of the male sex role because of society’s economic crisis’ (Franklin II 1984 p. 206).

While there may be links with unemployment, the ‘tradition’ of male domestic violence does go back a long way:

It is impossible to say who first declared that wives could and should be beaten by their husbands, or when the practice began; it is equally difficult to find any historical period in which there were no formulae stating the form such beatings should take, and specifying the conditions under which a wife was deserving of a good clout.

(Dobash & Dobash 1980 p. 31).

That is, with the apparent exception of some upper class marriages in the Ancient Roman State (Elias 1987A), masculine authority, reflecting the fact that women were conceived of as ‘property’ (with the same exception), and this underpinned by the more or less legitimate use of violence, was a ‘fact of family life’ up until the recent past. In Britain, men could still sell their wives as late
as the nineteenth century \(^1\), and even the Victorian family ideal, both in its middle and working class variants, 'emphasised the home as an orderly and hierarchical place'. There 'children were expected to be obedient and men expected to exercise benevolent authority' (Crow & Allen 1990 p. 18).

But the times they are a-changing, for while there may be echoes of the Victorian ideals of family life that continue to involve notions of men's traditional authority, in recent years the idea of a 'good husband' has been progressively 'redefined with a greater emphasis placed on companionship, home centredness and shared activities' (Bell & Newby 1976 p. 160-1). As the power ratios of men and women change to the relative disadvantage of the former, domestic violence has come under more intense public gaze and has helped to reinforce the

changing position of women in many spheres ......[undermining]...... the certainties of the past. The divorce laws, far from being a 'Casanova's Charter' predicted by the popular press, have been used predominantly by women leaving their husbands.

(Rutherford 1988 p. 24)

Other changes in the role of the state have, to an extent at least, affected the traditional power of the 'father figure' as some of his traditional functions have become 'transubstantiated into the body of the state, the

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\(^1\) See Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. 

These changes in gender relationships, these shifts in the balance of power between the sexes and between the generations (both in general terms, as we saw in Chapter Five and within the family, as we shall see) have served to increase the diffuse sense of unease which many men may feel. These changes have also impacted upon sexual relationships and it is here, perhaps, where many men may feel that unease most acutely. Men have been brought up to assert 'control' in relationships so that

demands for sexual equality ......[are]...... seen as threatening. It is difficult for us as men not to experience sex as some kind of work we have to maintain control of. It is threatening to realise we do not know how to give pleasure to ourselves, let alone give pleasure to sexual partners.

(Seidler 1989 p. 59)

Even without any change in the organisation of households, 'the construction of sexual practices in marriage that reinforce hegemonic masculinity are vulnerable to demands by women for full sexual gratification' (Connell 1983 p. 32). It is in the nature of the sex act that a women is capable of 'reception' almost indefinitely (leaving aside the question of her pleasure), but a man can be seen obviously 'to fail'. This horror of (male) horrors, the unsatiable women with a voracious sexual appetite is the subject of many of the bawdy songs associated with Rugby Union, such as 'Eskimo Nell' and the 'Engineer's Hymn'. One of the functions of such songs is to symbolically reduce the 'threat' of powerful women (Dunning 1990). It is therefore perhaps
no coincidence that prodigious sexual appetites and rampant sexual promiscuity were attributed to witches in early modern Europe (Levack 1987 p. 36-7) and elsewhere, the vast majority of whom were female (Ibid p. 124). This was clearly, then, not only a result of the early church's negative attitude towards sex, but also another aspect of their (the witches) 'threat' to normal men.

Thus for modern men, with their sexual partners increasingly demanding their 'orgasmic rights', the element of control in sexual relations has moved to ensuring one's partner has an orgasm (at least). With the dominant view of the body-as-machine and the sex act as primarily a physical performance, then adequate sexual functioning (so the notion goes) can be achieved by physical control; control of the body: 'Men are often told to think of sports, work or some other non-sexual event, or to repeat multiplication tables or mathematical formulae in order to keep themselves from premature ejaculation' (Kimmel 1990 p. 101).

Adequacy is measured by the 'time elapsed between penetration and orgasm' and thus the sex act becomes something of an 'endurance test' (Ibid). Some may therefore feel under pressure to be 'Martini-Man', able to perform 'anytime, anyplace, anywhere' (as the advertisement goes), and while the standard of the required 'performance' may be more exacting, there may even be calls for an 'encore'. Men today may feel themselves expected to be more than capable both 'behind the wheel' and 'between the sheets'. And while outward bravado prevails in most instances, we all suffer from insecurities over
our performance, both in the front and the back seat of a motor car. Paradoxically, adequate sexual functioning can itself bring about further insecurity and doubts, for by ‘introducing one’s wife to overtly intense pleasure, one risks giving her lessons she will put to bad use and which one will regret having taught her’ (Foucault 1986 p. 177 - Talking of Plutarch’s Moralia Vol. II). Plutarch concluded from this that the conjugal relationship should be different from the relationship of lovers (Ibid p. 144-59).

Insecurity is intrinsic to modern masculinity, after all one is only ever ‘as good as your last game’ (Messner 1987 p. 199) or performance. Masculinity is in constant need of reproving since ‘everyman, deep down knows he’s a worthless piece of shit’ (Solnas 1971 p. 7) or so the SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) manifesto claims. While masculinity may have its particular insecurities, this pervasive feeling of inadequacy is probably not exclusive to men but part of the modern human condition.

The passage of time adds to rather than resolves any of the insecurities intrinsic to masculinity. The gender, class and ethnic group dynamics of our social world are well recognised. However, age dynamics have, until recently, received far less academic attention. As a man passes through the life course, he may face added problems in ‘renewing’ the ‘loans’ on some of the attributes he has ‘borrowed’ from the ‘masculinity shelves’ of the ‘gender library’. Indeed, some of these ‘borrowed’ attributes may be seen as seriously ‘overdue’. The youthful, fit, active energetic, visually appealing image that
dominates modern consumer culture may be progressively harder to reconcile with what he sees daily in the mirror. 'The wrinkles, sagging flesh, tendency towards middle aged spread, hair loss, etc., which accompany ageing' (Featherstone 1982 p. 178), threaten self conceptions of the sexually active/attractive male at the heart of modern conceptions of masculinity. Along with these cosmetic changes, there is, for most, a loss of physical fitness with which to contend as part of a 'midlife package'. Such a loss fuels doubt over sexual prowess, given the link that is thought to exist between physical fitness and sexual performance. It may also be seen to call into doubt sexual potency and the ability to provide partners with the full sexual gratification increasingly demanded. The routinization of sexual relations within a long term relationship may add further to these doubts and difficulties, leading some spouses to 'withdraw' from their partners. There is little doubt that the increasing expectations of a continuing high level of sexual gratification within a single relationship have played some part in the rising rate of breakdown of marriages and other longer-term relationships.

Often, by the time men reach midlife, the language of sexual 'will, performance and conquest' (Seidler 1989 p. 22) that may have been used to bolster masculinity is seen as inappropriate. Typically they are no longer part of the sexual 'cut and thrust' of the wine bar or disco, for if they are they risk being a figure of fun as 'the oldest swinger in town'. In any event, they are likely to have passed through the stage of 'mate selection', although increasing numbers of men (and women) nowadays go through periodic stages of 'mate
re-selection'. Some men may therefore have a desire to combat these physical signs of ageing 'by energetic body maintenance activities .....[and/or].... with the help of cosmetics, beauty and fitness industries' (Featherstone 1982 p. 178), in an attempt (as we saw in Chapter Five) to reduce 'consensual age'. There is little doubt that the consumer icons of youth and fitness as highly valued assets inevitably empower younger men to the relative disadvantage of older ones.

Many of the Runners interviewed in this study, and perhaps especially older Runners, seemed aware of these age dynamics. As outlined in Chapter Five, a number were pleased to finish ahead of younger competitors or concerned if they were beaten by older ones. Some of the sample, however, put it more explicitly. One man, in his middle forties explained:

'It's really quite satisfying when you've finished and you're standing around watching these young, fit looking blokes coming in after you'. Another, also in his forties, said:

'When I'm passing these younger, you know, athletic looking sorts in a race, then I know I'm doing O.K.'. Yet another man, this one in his late thirties, put it quite bluntly:

'It's quite nice to "stick it" to these youngsters', he said.
If, as we have seen, the passage of time does not help the insecurities felt by men in respect of physical ageing, then it may compound difficulties in other areas like the economy and family relations as well. For as a man progresses in his working career, he may experience a 'shrinkage of possibilities'. If his work has depended on his physical strength ...[then at midlife]... he knows it is already beginning to decline. He is likely to begin measuring his dreams against the reality and shrinkage of possibilities that lie before him.

(Farrell & Rosenberg 1981 p. 26).

For men in non-manual jobs, while they may not have reached their peak earnings or the highest rung of the organisational ladder, or maximum recognition until later middle age, indicators of how far they will go in these dimensions tend to appear much earlier. Those .......[destined]...... for top management have already been separated from middle management.

(Ibid)

The consequent sense of failure, inadequacy or, at best, 'flawed or qualified success' (Messner 1987 p. 206) felt by many men may be the 'result of unrealistic social definitions of masculinity and success' (Ibid p. 208) but nonetheless real for that. None of the Runners interviewed for this study claimed to be on any 'fast track' to conspicuous success in their careers, and as we have already seen, for most their ambitions seemed to be limited:
‘I’ve got as far as I am likely to go, I expect, as far as career goes’, mused one thirty eight year old.

If careers have, by the time they reach midlife, ceased to be for some men the grounds upon which they might ‘measure up’ to the ideal of ‘being a big wheel’, then the life course may hold further unwelcome changes for them as it unfolds.

‘By the fourth decade, most of the wives of these men have begun to emerge from the burdens of childcare’ (Farrell & Rosenberg 1981 p. 27). At this time in their life men must often face a developing person less defined by the stereotypical wife-mother role. These changes in the wife’s behaviour and sense of herself may impinge upon the husband, creating pressure to re-define his own self-conception.

(Loc cit)

These changes may be most acutely felt when women at this time, more free of childcare responsibilities and with independent access to resources through involvement in the labour markets, attempt ‘to have leisure time independent of their partners’ (Green, Hebron & Woodward 1987 p. 84). This can prove to be a ‘major source of conflict, particularly when this involves women moving outside the home’ (Loc cit). For as we have already seen, the ‘dictum that a woman’s place is in the home doesn’t so much mean that she shall not go out to work, but that she should not go out to play’ (Dobash &
Thus at this time, the male partner's control over substantial areas of women's lives, and in particular leisure activities, which has 'historically been understood as legitimate or even desirable' (Ibid p. 81), may become, to varying degrees within particular relationships, a matter for negotiation and/or tension and conflict:

One hundred years ago a man may have expected to come into full patriarchal authority as he moved into middle age. Such expectations remain a vague and often unstated part of our subjects' concept of ideal family patterns, while in reality the father begins to lose power at this time. As a husband and wife negotiate a more egalitarian relationship there tends to be an escalation of overt conflict.

(Farrell & Rosenberg 1981 p. 125)

By the time men reach midlife, their adolescent children, too, start to become more independent and their authority over them is loosened. They may actively rebel or at the very least 'begin to move in wider and wider circles outside the possibility of his control' (Ibid p. 28).

Three of the factors at work here are, firstly the growing financial independence of adolescents, for it has 'generally been assumed that traditional authority is most thoroughly underwritten when parents hold key resources, such as land or capital which will be passed from parents to children' (Jamieson & Toynbee 1990 p. 95).

But while the prospect of inheritance may remain a source of power in
relation to their children for some parents, for most it is the fact of adolescent children’s independent access to resources through part-time or casual employment, and until recently through the state, that has undermined their authority. The Welfare State, the professions and the law are all ‘massive material entities and symbolic of the family father’ (Hearn 1987 p. 20).

The second factor that tends to increase the power of children relative to their parents is an increase in the unwillingness (or indeed later, the inability) of parents to use physical violence against their offspring as a means of control as both children (and parents) get older.

The third, is the idea (almost unique to the modern West) that parents are responsible for the way their offspring ‘turn out’. No more than a hundred years ago, and probably less, the ‘black sheep’ of the family was considered to be just that. The responsibility for deviant behaviour lay with individuals or ‘fate’ and no ‘blame’ attached to the parents. Now, however, with the rise of what has come to be known as ‘American Psycho-babble’, at least by the unimpressed, there are many parents who blame themselves, or are blamed by others for the way their children turn out [and] cannot believe they have God given or ‘natural’ immutable rights as parents. It does not mean they have no control, rather that they have to work harder and resolve the tension in family relationships between differentiation and identification. By accepting the responsibility and seeking closer ties with their children, they become vulnerable to children’s demands and more open to new ways of coping.

(Jamieson & Toynbee 1990 p. 101)
This acceptance of responsibility by parents for the development and not just the basic survival of their children inevitably increases the power of the latter relative to their own. For as anyone who has children will know, socialisation is a two-way process and children are not slow to realise that, by accepting this responsibility, their parents become vulnerable. Parents are faced with difficult decisions. For not 'giving in' to a child's demands may be seen as 'disadvantaging' the child in comparison with peers which may have an adverse effect on the way the child eventually 'turns out'. Armed with knowledge of the more liberal approaches adopted by the parents of some of their peers, and through carefully selected and, always, invidious comparisons, children are able to use the 'responsibility' accepted by their parents as a stick with which to beat them.

In Victorian times and the early decades of this century, children, and perhaps especially daughters, were called upon to help with the running of the house even though they may have been in paid work from the age of fourteen. Yet even then, while living at home 'working class young people were not in command of their earnings until their late teens or early twenties' (Ibid p. 95). Now, though, typically the only demands made by parents on children are of the 'clean up your own mess' variety 'motivated by a desire to teach respect for others'(Ibid p. 94), and in other ways parents are increasingly involved in servicing their children. If parents, and perhaps especially fathers, have been disadvantaged by the shifts in the balance of power between children and parents, then men at midlife are unlikely to be in a position to bolster their
masculinity through the fathering of further children.

The confirmation of masculinity through the fathering of children which 'seems at the moment to be the most secure part of the pattern' (Connell 1983 p. 32), will no longer be a possibility for most men at midlife. The possibility, at least, of universal contraception has meant there has been a shift in the relations of reproduction, giving women as well as men control over fertility which has itself promoted 'both the entry of women into the public sphere and the growth of modern feminism' (Hearn 1987 p. 21). It has also meant that, by midlife, most men's families are deemed to be 'complete'.

As this chapter has outlined, hegemonic masculinity is under threat on many fronts. While it may not be realistic to talk of a crisis of masculinity, there are increasing numbers of 'small local difficulties' in men's lives resulting from a changing economic, cultural and more general social climate. The decline of physical prowess as a source of 'social currency' in general - that is outside of sport and such occupations as the military and the police - and the progressive pushing of violence behind the scenes of everyday life (Elias 1982 [1939]) (as the state has taken to itself the sole legitimate right to raise taxes and use violence - in almost all circumstances) in particular, has relatively disadvantaged men. Changes in the nature of men's work, the number and character of jobs available for men, the loss of the sole breadwinner role as large numbers of women have entered the labour markets, have all helped shift the balance in gender relations. Stemming from the idea of the body as a
machine, the consequent view of sexual relations as essentially physical has been called into question as women demand their orgasmic and emotional 'rights'. Concomitement changes in familial authority structures with the increasing independence of women and adolescent children, both financially and personally, have further eroded some traditional grounds upon which masculinity could be constructed.

The 'shortest lease' on some of these grounds may come with advancing years. The cessation of fathering children, declining physical capacities, bodily signs of ageing, loss of familial authority and a career 'going nowhere' may intensify the 'little local difficulties' that generally threaten masculinity as men approach midlife. These may amount to 'reminders' that some of the attributes 'on loan' from the gender 'library' are now 'overdue'. If these attributes must be 'returned' then there remains the possibility that others may yet be 'borrowed'. For men may 'seek to define themselves as being more than familial or formal work roles' (Hearn 1987 p. 21 emphasis in the original) and may seek to do this in their leisure activities.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Reclaiming Masculinity: Running Repairs

Before going on to consider the possibility of a reclamation of masculinity through leisure pursuits, and through road running more specifically, it will be helpful, very briefly, to make some general points about the ‘nature’ of leisure.

The first of these points is that there is no real agreement as to what leisure actually is. ‘The saying that work for some is leisure for others is not only a popular truism, it is also a vital analytical insight’ (Rojek 1985 p. 13). What is also clear is the definitions which equate leisure with ‘free time’ (Parker 1971 p. 22) are less than adequate. They have the effect, for example, of ‘writing out’ the connection between many women and leisure (Griffin et al 1982 p. 91) since ‘free time’ is usually defined as time not taken up with paid employment.

The second point is that there have been advances beyond the work/non work dichotomy through making a distinction between spare time activities and leisure pursuits (Elias & Dunning 1993 [1986]). The classes in the ‘spare time spectrum’ developed there (Ibid p. 96-98) are differentiated by the balance between routinization and de-routinization they involve. That is, where routinization is understood to be

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recurrent channels of action enforced by interdependence with others, and which impose upon the individual (sic) a fairly high degree of regularity, steadiness and emotional control in conduct and which block other channels of action even if they correspond better to the mood, the feelings, the emotional needs of the moment.

(Ibid p. 98)

The attraction of relatively de-routinised leisure pursuits is that they may provide individuals with the opportunity for a pleasurable and socially sanctioned de-controlling of emotions - in short, for excitement, much more so than in other, more routinized activities. This, and the fact that they are undertaken voluntarily characterise them as leisure pursuits. But these leisure pursuits also have other important aspects. They may provide opportunities for 'sociability' and 'motility', the former where, for example, people participate in pub and party gatherings or gossip communities at a 'level of friendly and open emotionality considerably above other spare time or work activities' (Ibid p. 97); the latter where there is a 'degree of de-routinization and loosening of restraints through movement of body and limbs, that is through motility' (Ibid p. 98).

Given the subject matter of this thesis it would not be unreasonable to examine, briefly, how non-elite road Running might fit (or not) into this classificatory system. From the data so far presented it would seem that non-elite Running affords scant opportunity for most to indulge in 'sociability' through the practice. Some Runners will attend club training sessions, a few may have regular training partners and many of those Running 'down the field' will
socialise in the early stages of a race. These 'relationships', however tend to be one dimensional and/or highly transient (see Chapter Three); the 'loneliness of the long distance Runner' seems to be the reality for most for much of the time.

Oddly enough, neither does non-elite Running seem to afford those involved much in the way of 'motility'. While Runners, while running, are obviously mobile, they are mobile in a highly structured way in much the same way that those involved in some kinds of manual employment may be (and, as I shall elucidate in a moment, possibly for very similar sorts of reasons). If an assembly-line worker, for instance, does not repetitively perform the physical actions prescribed for their allotted task, in other words, do their job, they are unlikely to get paid. Similarly, unless Runners Run they are unlikely to get the 'respect' and 'admiration' from others that many seem to feel they derive through their involvement (I shall return to this theme in greater detail shortly).

In other words in order to gain their particular sort of 'pay packet' Runners, too, have to perform repetitive prescribed physical actions. They must Run, dancing around in the back garden will not do.

It is, perhaps, unsurprising therefore, that (leaving the question of the existence of 'Runner's High' aside) those in my sample made little mention of any 'excitement' they derived from their Running. Apart from a little nervous anticipation before a race for some they seemed to experience their training
and racing as a highly routinized activity as described above. Their constant training regimes required ‘steadiness and emotional control in conduct.......[which blocked]....... other channels of action even if they correspond better to the mood, the feelings, the emotional needs of the moment’ (Ibid p. 98). Many talked of having to ‘force’ themselves out through the door on a training Run as something they ‘must’ do even though it was the last thing they really wanted to do at the time. Their Running seemed underpinned by a kind of ‘work ethic’ more than a quest for pleasure which may go some way to explain its apparently ‘compulsive’ nature. The way many Runners spoke, too, of the frustration and guilt they felt when unable to Run through injury or other circumstances did not smack of someone being denied a treat. Many Runners in my sample seemed, then, to be describing not something that gave them any sort of ‘freedom’ to express themselves physically, but something they felt they had to do if they were to ‘benefit’ from the ‘respect’ and ‘admiration’ of others (recurrent channel of action enforced by interdependence with others (Ibid p. 98) ).

Indeed, Cohen and Taylor’s view of some leisure pursuits (characterised by their voluntary nature) as forms of identity work (Cohen & Taylor 1978 my emphasis) may be much closer to the reality of Running for many than they (Cohen & Taylor) probably realised. As a form of identity work (I shall return to this theme shortly) underpinned, as it appears to be, by a kind of ‘work ethic’ with a ‘pay packet’ of enhanced status it may not be surprising that Running does not seem readily to ‘fit’ into Elias and Dunning’s classification of ‘leisure
pursuits' (Elias & Dunning 1993 [1986]). This does not, necessarily imply criticism of the 'spare time spectrum' that Elias and Dunning have developed; for if, as the data I have gathered suggests, there are very particular (and unusual) motivations behind their involvement for many who Run, then the 'ill-fit' of Running into their 'leisure pursuit' classification may simply reflect that fact.

Road Running is, though, an activity which is voluntarily undertaken and much work on leisure lists this as one of its defining features. Given its voluntary nature, it is a little surprising the limited amount of work that has been done on the nature of the choices people make in the world of their leisure activities.

While the work of Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1984) is something of a notable exception, it may be that, for particular leisure pursuits, empirical studies (such as this one) will be the only way to establish why people may choose to undertake one activity in preference to others. Their leisure 'choices' will be intimately bound up with the web of interdependent social relationships in which individuals find themselves. Thus for a girl perhaps

the need to marry......[or find a partner] is ....... often the chief thing in life she looks forward to in the future ...... her chances of earning good money are low, and marriage and dependence on a husband [or partner] to supplement her income offer a better standard of living and more security than she could expect if she were single.

(Barrett & McIntosh 1982 p. 76 my insertions)
While there is, quite obviously, a sexual side to this behaviour, viewed in terms of her adult life expectations a young girl's interest in make-up and clothes (her leisure 'choices') and financial and temporal resources expended on hairstyles and jewellery can be seen in the context of her 'need' to attract and retain 'the right man' (Griffin et al 1982 p. 107). Leisure pursuits are not, then, arbitrary choices idiosyncratically arrived at through individual caprice. For although there is a window for agency, choice is real; that which we 'choose' to do is also profoundly affected by the social relationships in which we find ourselves, as well as limited by constraints of time and money.

Many men and the Runners in this study were no exception, will be involved for most of their waking hours with the demands of a job and a family. The rising rate of marital breakdown will mean that some men will be less involved in a family unit (for divorce usually results in a single man and a single mother) but this lower level of direct involvement may be episodic. The emerging pattern of what is coming to be known as 'serial monogamy' (a series of formally monogamous relationships with a procession of partners) means that many men will, for much of their lives, have family type responsibilities in one 'family unit' or another and perhaps more than one. Work and family will, therefore constitute the 'paramount reality' of their everyday lives. But if this 'paramount reality' does not provide them with the means of establishing their identity (at the heart of which is their gender identity), then in spite of how 'massive' its presence may be, we should note 'how ingenious, complex and even desperate can be the identity work which seeks to evade its clutches'
For many, perhaps, the worlds of work and domesticity do not provide adequate sites for the construction of identity. For such people, 'what I do' is not 'what I am' (Ibid p. 22). Men may make 'escape attempts' from this 'paramount reality' to areas of life they have 'freed up':

It is difficult to find any intrinsic behavioural characteristics of free areas - so diverse are they in content - other than that of voluntary participation. These are areas where a man does not sell his 'self'. They might be classified, not in terms of their own features - which might be wholly mundane and uninteresting - but in terms of the areas of paramount reality the individual is trying to edge away from and put on the line. There are activity enclaves in which people try and dig out, through hobbies, sex, games and sport a safe place for self expression and identity work; new landscapes in which people use holidays and adventures to get away from the routine world, to find a setting for acting out their fantasies and mindscapes, where the voyage with the aid of drugs or other therapies is an internal one.

(Holen & Taylor 1978 p. 96-7 emphases in the original)

Hobbies, sport and sex (their leisure 'choices') may, then, for some be vital areas of identity work. As 'activity enclaves', they may be expressions of what an individual may feel their life to be 'all about', a place for the separation of the essential 'self' from the 'paramount reality' of work and family.

Virtually all of the Runners interviewed for this study confirmed that their Running was very important to them; indeed, several mentioned that this 'importance' was one of the defining differences between Running and Jogging. This significance came through from the Runners interviewed during discussions on how they felt when they were injured and unable to Run:
‘My wife says I’m like a bear with a sore head if I haven’t been able to run for a few days’, said one, and others continued in similar vein:

‘My family move out, basically, if I’m injured - or at least they threaten to’. Or:

‘It’s terrible - you just don’t feel right - it’s like a big gap if you can’t run’, were the typical sorts of comments made by these Runners. Many of them then went on to discuss its general importance to them, without reference to injuries. The interviews were littered with comments like:

‘I can’t explain it - it’s just very important to me, you know - It’s a big part of my life’. Or:

‘When I think about it, running is my social life. It’s work, home and running and that’s about all there is. My social life is going out with the lads and training for an hour or so in the evenings’. Or:

‘Wherever I’ve been in the world, I’ve managed to run. Even in Egypt where women don’t do that sort of thing’, a female Runner explained. One of the others, a man, summed up the general feeling:

‘I’ll be running forever, unless the knees fail - I’ll never give it up’, he declared.
Most of these Runners found it very difficult to articulate the nature of the activity's importance to them. Beyond being absolutely sure of its significance, they were unable to express more precisely what it was that they 'got-out-of-it'.

One thing participants may 'get-out-of-it' is a 'level playing field' upon which to compare themselves with others. Such comparisons may be essential, for 'to know what a man is, he compares himself with others........ Self knowledge derives from knowledge of the other and *vice versa* (Ashworth 1971 p. 43). For social life in general in present day complex societies does not provide such a facility. Life is not an 'idealised game because the mutuality of rules is not, necessarily, guaranteed, so that outcomes can be mutual and not individual' (Ibid p. 41). Modern sport, it may be felt, provides the means for such comparisons. Things that interfere with comparisons - race, gender, class, wealth - in real life are ideally done away with in sport so that what 'appears' to be is 'real' (Ibid p. 45), or so it might seem.

Indeed it was comparison, in one form or another, that seemed to be of crucial importance to virtually all the Runners and Athletes in this study. For the Athletes, and those Runners at the quicker end of the ability continuum, it was competition and comparison with other known individuals which appeared to be central, with a comparison with non-participants 'in the background'. For slower Runners it seems, this interpersonal comparison was much less important, or figured not at all. For them, it seemed, a comparison with those who do not Run (the non-participants) was the salient one. The centrality of
such comparisons and the 'benefits' Runners felt they accrued through them were revealed in several ways during the course of the interviewing. Athletes and quicker Runners would often dwell at length on race tactics (see Chapter Four). They focused on the psychological as well as the physical battle that goes on in any race between competitors at the front of the field. This was thrown into stark relief in one particular interview with an otherwise very modest man who warmed to the theme of 'psyching-out' his 'competition' (other very fast Runners):

'It’s all about breaking people, you see. At this level there’s often not much in it in terms of ability. So you do whatever you can to break people on the day', he explained.

For many more of those interviewed in connection with the present study, those who Ran more slowly, it was with those outwith the race (and the practice) who were the source of a 'beneficial' comparison. While talking of how they felt others (family, friends, acquaintances) reacted to their Running, both male and female Runners returned time and time again to the themes of 'admiration' and 'respect':

'Even when people tell you, you must be crazy to do it - it's jealousy that's behind it most of the time. They wish they could do it - that's what I think' was the opinion of one woman in her thirties, who continued:
You can tell, you know, when they ask you how far you’ve run today and you tell them five or six miles or whatever. They may well say - ‘You must be daft’ - but you know they’re thinking - ‘That’s a bloody long way’ You know, I think deep down - they admire you for it.

Men, too, felt they earned the respect of others through their Running:

Oh, I think people do respect you for it - I’m sure. My parents are, you know, quite proud. And I know that because they’ve gone out of their way to tell me,

said an average Runner in his thirties, who went on:

When people find out you’ve Run ten or thirteen miles in a race that day, they tend to say things like - ‘That’s a long way in a car - let alone running it!’. And you can tell, by the way they say it, that they are impressed.

Another Runner told a story of meeting some ‘friends of friends’ at a social gathering. After explaining how they found out in the course of conversation that he had Run a ten mile race that morning, he continued:

Well, it was quite funny, they couldn’t get over it........ It was sort of - ‘You ran ten miles this morning, and you’re here, dancing tonight’ - He said he would probably have needed a fortnight in bed to get over it. So yes, I do think people give you a little bit of respect for it.

Other Runners talked of people’s ‘sneaking admiration’ even when they were dismissing them as ‘mad’, and there was much more in similar vein from the majority of Runners and Athletes in my sample. There can be little doubt,
then, on the evidence from these Runners that the vast majority of those who Run (in my sample, at least) view this ‘respect’ and ‘admiration’ as proof positive of the way the practice is socially valued, and of the cultural capital that accrued to them through it.

Another of the women in my sample talked of how she felt her parents (she is in her thirties) were ‘proud’ of her because of her Running:

‘They like to talk about their daughter-the-Runner’, was the way she put it.

When asked what they thought the basis of that ‘respect’ might be, many of the Runners seemed to search for words to explain more clearly what they meant:

‘I just think people are a bit impressed because you can Run ten, fifteen miles or whatever’, was a typical reply. Several individuals in my sample, however, seemed to have given the matter some thought. One explained:

‘It’s odd that’. He said, and continued:

Well you know yourself, it’s mostly mental isn’t it? I mean, once you’ve done all the training, then if you want some extra pace, or do a few extra miles then it’s mental. You just have to push on even when it’s really hurting. But I don’t think people realise that. With all the training, your body is used to it. Your body isn’t going to let you down - usually. But I think what they
admire is that you are *physically* capable of running all those miles. Anyway, that’s what I think.

This was an explanation, of course, that employed the ‘traditional’ and all-pervasive mind-body dichotomy. This man was in his early forties and had settled (with several others) on the fact that the source of ‘admiration’ and ‘respect’ they felt they enjoyed through their Running was on the basis of *physical* prowess. Another man, also the ‘wrong’ side of forty confided that:

‘People know, I think that you have to be a bit determined to do it. But I don’t think that’s it. It’s that you *can* do it, especially at my age’.

Whether or not Runners do enjoy enhanced status in the eyes of non-participants because of these demonstrations of physical capacities may be open to doubt, even though it is an extremely common experience for Runners to feel that they do. But whether illusory or not, that certainly is *not the point*. The point is, that real or imagined, most Runners *feel* they benefit from an enhanced status because of such physical demonstrations.

As much sport revolves around physicality, it has been and remains

it is fair to suggest, one of the central sites in the social construction of masculinity in societies characterised by longer schooling and the decline in the social currency attached to other ways of demonstrating physical prowess (e.g. physical labour or combat).

(Whitson 1990 p. 19)
Two of the more perceptive interviewees in my sample seemed, independently and unaided, to have made the link between Running as a demonstration of physical prowess and the construction of masculinity. One man, in his early forties confided:

'It's funny, but it's almost as though you secretly believe you're a better man than the next bloke, simply because you can run faster'.

Another, younger Runner made the link even more explicitly. He disclosed that he and his wife had occasionally talked about 'why' he ran. He said

She thinks it's part of a 'macho' thing about me beating other people and getting respect from other men. As a sort of 'wishy-washy' white liberal, that worries me a little. But, I have to admit, I think she's got a point.

Two of the more perceptive Runners seemed to have arrived at the conclusion themselves, through a 'detour via detachment', that their Running was closely bound up with their masculinity. Many more, women included, felt it enhanced their status vis a vis non-participants, interpreting as they did other's reactions to their Running in terms of 'giving respect' and 'admiration' or 'being impressed'.

One of the major benefits (if not the major benefit), for many of the men in my sample, from their involvement with Running, was that it afforded
continuous opportunities to demonstrate unusual degrees of mental and physical toughness that reaffirmed masculinity. Through the practice, they felt able to lay legitimate claims to the masculine attributes of physical strength, durability and strength of character. These were the attributes the practice enabled them to feel they had successfully 'borrowed' from the 'masculinity' shelves of the gender 'library'.

There remains two questions: firstly why is it mainly men who choose to Run as a demonstration of masculinity given the more straightforward association of masculinity with other (particularly violent) sports. And secondly, why (although in much smaller numbers) do some women Run. Taking these questions in reverse order, there is no doubt that women's increasing participation in many sports has meant sport has become a contested terrain.

In defence of the, formerly, male presence of sports there have been, over the years, many arguments, contentions and devices used (usually, though by no means exclusively) by men to resist the encroachment of women, both into sports in general and into violent sports in particular. There were nineteenth century theories that too much exertion may 'damage' women. Playing hockey, it was said, would 'inhibit breast feeding' (Mason 1988 p. 7-8), and generations of women were urged to refrain from sport for fear of damaging their child bearing capacities' (Blue 1987 p. 119). Male control of the administration of many sports also meant there were structural obstacles to women's participation:
One cannot justify [unless, perhaps, on the grounds that de Coubertin explicitly envisaged the Olympics for men] the failure of Olympic and National competitions to contain a triple jump, pole vault, steeplechase and hammer throw events for women, or to include any track event longer than 1500 metres for women in the Olympic Games prior to 1984.

(Pannick 1983 p. 1-2 my insertion)

This is not, of course, an attempt to picture hordes of women 'assaulting' entrances to Sports Halls, while the men inside are busy barricading the doors against them; for that is clearly not the case. What is clear is that the majority of women themselves seem to accept (and, on occasion, to promote) patriarchal values. In a recent study:

Young women were more likely than young men to conclude that sport has little or nothing to do with adulthood for them. They did not define sport in ways that would connect it with the process of becoming a woman. In fact the opposite tended to be the case. Becoming a woman, according to the norms they had learned while growing up, usually meant that sports participation was given a low priority in their lives. More relevant to womanhood were activities and relationships through which femininity, in a traditional sense could be reaffirmed.

(Coakley & White 1992 p. 25)

Furthermore there have been campaigns run, for instance, by the (GB) Sports Council aimed at overcoming the reluctance of non-participants (particularly women) to get involved in sports. The (GB) Sports Council Strategy Document for 1983-93 aimed to get one point seven million more men, and three point nine million more women playing at least one sport over that period (Pannick 1983 p. 2), and indeed more women are now playing more
Nearly all of the male Runners in my sample, however, seemed quite sanguine about the presence of female competitors in a race; some even saw it as a benefit.

'They tend to Run in groups, and it can be quite pleasant to follow a row of nice "bums" for a mile or two', was a 'benefit' one of the male Runners mentioned. And while the odd individual did patronise women's participation to some extent, even this attitude was not widespread amongst the men interviewed for this study. These men may well have felt 'threatened' by advances made by women in recent years in the world of paid employment; they may have felt 'threatened' by the advances of modern feminism and the implications those advances may have for their domestic arrangements. They did not, however, on the whole seem to feel 'threatened' by the presence of women competitors; women's participation in Running, and as far as I could tell in sports in general, did not seem to be a 'problem' for these men.

Their sanguinity may well be explained by the fact that each and every race they entered reaffirmed and 'naturalised' gender differences. For while they, as individuals may be beaten by some elite women performers, 'always and everywhere' in their world of road races the fastest man came in ahead of the fastest woman (and usually by a considerable margin), thus reaffirming men's 'natural' physical superiority. They seemed content, then, that both in...
terms of average performances, and at each sport’s ‘leading edge’, men are ‘naturally’ better at sport than women. One of the men interviewed for this study was aware, in a general way, of some academic work that seemed to indicate that eventually women’s athletic records might achieve parity, or even surpass those of men. He was, though, dismissive of the idea, believing (perhaps with good reason) that it would ‘never happen’. It is, though, to this idea that I shall now turn.

As part of the process of the ‘contest’ over sports, the view that men are ‘naturally’ physically superior to women has recently come under increasing scrutiny and attack. The ‘exceptions’ of some long distance swimming records (where women are faster than men) where ‘for the female of the species extra fat is a definite advantage’ (Blue 1987 p. 125) providing, as it does, extra insulation and buoyancy (Cashmore 1990 p. 101), have been emphasised. So has the fact that the gaps between the best men’s performance and those of the best women, both in and out of the swimming pool, have been narrowing, with women’s records improving faster than men’s. In road running, for example, it has been pointed out that, if present trends continue, then by the end of the century, women will be completing the marathon as fast as men (Dyer 1982).

Some authors accept that present trends will continue (Pannick 1983 p. 30; Deem 1986 p. 65); some accept it, but see it as a red herring (Blue 1987 p. 126-7); others accept it and note its potential to undermine masculinity (Kidd
1990 p. 38); but none, it seems, question the simple extrapolation of present trends. If present trends in the improvement of men's and women's records continue, then, by the end of the century the quickest woman will be running the marathon as fast as the quickest man: if present trends continue, then, by the year 2020 the quickest woman will be running the marathon twenty minutes faster than the quickest man: if present trends continue, then, by the year 2150 the quickest woman will be breasting the finishing tape in the marathon as the echoes of the starting gun fade away! Clearly, then, there comes a point where, without technological and/or bio-technological interventions, present trends cannot continue.

While the difference between men's and women's athletic records may well reflect social differences more than biological ones, the same general trend of 'diminishing returns' is likely to affect women's records just as it has men's. As more women participate, creating a greater pool of talent, with the adoption of improved training techniques pioneered in men's athletics and with increasing encouragement and rewards flowing to women's athletics, the gaps between men's and women's records may continue to erode. They may indeed erode to the point where it is biology that accounts for any difference (for biological differences there are) whether it is men or women who eventually prove to be the faster. It should be noted, however, that should women's athletic records ever achieve parity with men's, then men like the majority of Runners interviewed for this study may feel a good deal less sanguine about female competitors lining up beside them at the start of a race.
As we have seen, sports participation, in general has a long association with masculinity (Blue 1987; Brohm 1978; Chappell 1989; Clarke & Clarke 1982; Coakley & White 1992; Connell 1983; Crosset 1990; Davis & Delano 1992; Dunning 1986; Dunning & Sheard 1979; Guthrie & Castelnuovo 1991; Hargreaves Jen. 1986; Hargreaves John 1986 & 1987; McTeer & White 1991; Messner 1987; Messner 1991; Miller & Penz 1991; Rutherford 1988; Scraton 1987; Whitson 1990; Willis 1992) to name just a few who have made the connection. But this is not to the same degree for all sports, or for that matter for all levels of participation.

At present, however, vigorous, physically demanding sporting activity continues to be seen, generally speaking, as a more ‘appropriate’ activity for men, than it is for women. Thus rendering women’s participation in sports problematic; or, more accurately, it renders women’s participation in some sports highly problematic; their participation in others problematic to a degree linked to the level of their participation; and their participation in still others straightforward enough. To explain: while there is a cultural association between female sporting activity and lesbianism, for example, this is not true for all sports. There are some sports that, while they demand intense levels of physical exertion are, nevertheless, seen as highly appropriate activities for women. As such, women tend to dominate participation in these sports, like ice dancing and synchronised swimming and they are considered to be ‘appropriate’ female behaviour to the degree that the male partner of an ice dance pair is likely to have his sexual orientation brought into question.
Physically demanding they may be, but the essence of these sports is the production of an aesthetically pleasing performance and as such they are directly in line with the dictum that men ‘act’ and women ‘appear’.

At what might be considered the other extreme, power sports like weightlifting are seen as singularly inappropriate for women. This may be emphasised by newspaper articles like ‘Does a Nice Girl want to be a Shot-Putter’ (Melaniphy, M. The Guardian 11/1/83) in which Alan Guy contends that a shot-putter may in fact be ‘everything a girl doesn’t want to be’ (quoted in Chappell 1989). Indeed, female shot-putters tend not only to have their sexual orientation brought into question, but their sex as well.

This leaves a large middle ground of sporting endeavour (running included) where women’s participation is judged to be more or less appropriate, dependent upon the level at which they take part. No woman is going to have her sexual orientation brought into question for no other reason than that she enjoys an occasional game of tennis at the local club, but it may be a different question when she is challenging for her ninth Wimbledon Singles title. As Deem puts it:

Women are only accepted as serious participants in sports which are almost entirely female dominated (yoga, gymnastics, synchronised swimming) and as dabblers in other sports; it is alright for a woman to cycle round the park, but not for her to want to take part in the Paris-Roubaix or the Tour of Lombardy races.

(Deem 1986 p. 72)
Such appeared to be the case with road running, for, while none of the female Joggers interviewed for this study hinted in any way that others viewed their involvement as 'inappropriate' (unsurprising since the declared and imputed motives for such activity are strongly linked to 'looking good'), this was not always the case with the female Runners interviewed.

While virtually all the female Runners ignored implicit invitations to discuss this sensitive aspect of their Running, or other's reactions to it, one woman was more forthcoming. During an interview where her husband (also a Runner) was present she talked of some other women's ambivalent reactions towards her because of her Running. She put it like this:

I find I get two sorts of reaction down at the 'mother and toddler' group. Some mums seem to think - 'She runs - she must be a bit "odd" - we'll give her a wide berth', while others seem to think it's great and will ask you about it, and sometimes how they could start too.

Given, then, that the status most male Runners felt they derived from their participation did not appear to flow unproblematically to women in quite the same way, it may not be surprising that, as far as women were concerned, Running seemed to be more easily undertaken with a degree of support. In order for a woman to become involved, and continue in sport it may be that a continually supportive environment is close to being a prerequisite (Hall 1976). Certainly, while many of the male Runners (the vast majority in fact) had partners who did not Run, this was not true of the women Runners interviewed
for this study. Although some of the female Joggers had partners who did no sport at all, those female Runners interviewed (who were at present in a longer-term relationship) had partners who also Ran. They were all also club members. A degree of support, from other club members and from 'significant others' in the neighbourhood and especially in the 'family', seemed, then, to be an important factor in the continuing involvement with Running for the female Runners in my sample.

There was only one instance where a female Runner who was interviewed for the study had been involved in Running when her husband had not. Now divorced, she explained that her Running had become a bone of contention between her and her ex (non-sporting) husband:

He would get really uptight about me Running, and would refuse to look after the kids so that I could go for a Run - He was very awkward about it - Now we're divorced, mind, he's much better. When he comes around to see the kids, he'll always ask me how the Running is going.

Modern sport has become 'a powerful institution through which male hegemony is constructed and reconstructed' (McTeer & White 1991). Especially, perhaps, in the case of contact sports where the 'human body is used as a weapon' and 'aggression, the use of force' and 'violence' have been idealised and rationalised as 'masculising practices'. Here 'real men play in an abrasive way'. Strength and violence is sporting behaviour are in these cases becoming symbolically important in a culture where they are 'no longer
needed in everyday life' (Ibid). Concentration on the links between masculinity and violent sports has led some to consider that running, and one or two other sports are 'gender neutral' (Ibid).

Nothing could be further from the case, for aggression and violence are part and parcel of Running. Aggression, self focused and used to drive the body beyond the normal bounds of endeavour (in effect self-directed violence) is an integral part of any 'worthwhile' performance. As such, it conforms to the sporting 'norms of physical and mental toughness' (Whitson 1990 p. 22) associated with masculinity. While some may have missed the point, others have recognised the more subtle relationship between running and masculinity, and have suggested that it provides one of the new opportunities for the 'development of strength and skill - in other words empowerment'. These opportunities are open to men who do not typically 'shine in confrontational team games, to smaller men [and I would want to add, to older men] and to women' (Whitson 1990 p. 28).

Those who Run, predominantly male, predominantly middle class, and predominantly over thirty may be just those men who are most likely to feel themselves vulnerable to the shifting balances of power identified in the preceding chapter. Unable (or unwilling) to fall back on a 'rough masculine style' which characterises some working class masculinities or its middle class equivalents as in rugby, because their social habitus prescribes a more subtle form of machismo, they may feel more compelled than some of their working
class counterparts to ‘take on board’ many of the advances made by modern feminism. In their social milieu they may feel it is neither acceptable, nor indeed feasible to exercise the traditional patriarchal authority in the house they believed was commonplace in times past. As they approach their fifth decade, they may well be faced with increasingly assertive adolescent and teenaged children signalling the end of any real sway these men may have held over them. They are, furthermore at this time, likely to be confronted by a partner who, with the passage of time has come through a period dominated by childcare and is progressively gaining financial and personal independence. Yet the new norms of their social world prescribe that they should not only accommodate but actively support such changes regardless of any, perhaps deep-seated and unspoken, desires for more traditional arrangements.

As the power ratios of familial relationships move against these men, their unease over their masculinity may be fuelled by the fact that, in a cultural climate where women are encouraged to seek and expect full sexual gratification, it is at this time that the physical effects of ageing and, more importantly, the routinization of sexual relations in a long term relationship may threaten its ‘delivery’. For most of these men, and most men in general, it is also likely that by this time they have realised that their careers are not going to provide them with the conspicuous success needed to satisfy the demand that they ‘be a big wheel’ in the realm of paid employment. Most men’s occupational trajectory will be predictable by the time their fortieth birthday appears on the horizon and for most this means, at least, only qualified
success. It will be clear that their career will not, therefore, provide the exclusive ground upon which an acceptable masculine identity can be built. As one of the Runners interviewed for the present study put it:

I'm never going to be one of those writing in the professional journals in my field, I know that, and have done for a while. But Running is something that, I suppose, I'm quite good at and it's the one area where I feel I have some kudos.

As we have seen, many of the male and female Runners interviewed recognised the demonstration of physical prowess 'on the road' as a source of status enhancement in comparison with non participants. For the men, this often appeared to be a claim (on the odd occasion explicitly stated, but more often implicitly made) to the masculine attributes of physical durability and mental toughness, attributes they felt their involvement in Running had enabled them to borrow successfully from the 'masculinity shelves' of the gender 'library'. As such, it appeared to be one of the prime, if not the key site for the construction of their masculinity. For the women involved, it seems to be a way of 'tapping in' to a source of (traditional) male empowerment, but one where there may still be cultural costs to be borne. Certainly, the Runners interviewed for study, male and female, seemed to set great store by their Running and seemed to derive from it something that was very important to them.

There just remains, then, one of the questions that was posed earlier in this chapter, namely why is it that men should choose to Run as a...
demonstration of their masculinity given the more straightforward association of masculinity with other (particularly more or less violent) sports?

The attractions of road running for those who take part seem to fall into two broad groupings: those to do with practical, lifestyle considerations and those to do with the cultural associations which the practice carries.

In the case of practical issues, for those who Run, predominantly male, middle class and over thirty, the more straightforward association of masculinity with contact sports may not, for them, represent a realistic alternative. The fact that road running is (accidents apart) a non-contact sport may be seen as a distinct advantage by these older participants. The fact that much of their involvement (the training) can be fitted around other time commitments may also be advantageous. While there will be some set time commitments involved for most (races and club training nights are at set times and places), most involvement, especially for those who Run unattached to any club, can be fitted into available time slots.

Runners may train in the early morning, the evening or at any other time convenient to them. Participants can also Run ‘from home’ which means the practice involves the minimum of time spent on preparation and ‘clearing away’. For some, one of the practical advantages appeared to be that the practice ‘burns-off’ large numbers of calories. Several of the Runners interviewed for this study, both male and female, made similar points. As one man put it:
'I can eat anything I like now - anything at all and not worry about putting on any weight'. Another, who was in the midst of high mileage marathon training, put it more simply:

'If it doesn't move, - I eat it.'

This, of course, also ties in with the association of active with attractive and claims to the youthful, vigorous, sexually attractive images that permeate modern consumer culture and were discussed in Chapter Five. Running as good aerobic exercise also fits well with the more middle class view of 'the body as project' as identity comes to be more and more closely connected with the body. As such, it carries strong connotations of 'natural' exercise (see Chapter Two) and participation in this most 'natural' exercise practice may be linked to unconscious desires to return to a supposed more 'natural' and predictable past; to 'escape' the chronic change and uncertainty that 'afflict' modernity. For those most involved in Running, primarily middle class men over thirty, may feel themselves to be more vulnerable than most as many changes appear to be working to their particular disadvantage.

Yet, while these influences are, no doubt, important, for many the unarticulated attraction of involvement in Running is the perceived ability of such involvement to deliver enhanced status; and for men a status based upon physical prowess that can help reclaim masculinity. Involvement in a wide range of sports may deliver enhanced status for those involved, but typically
only when they perform at an elite level (certainly in the case for those outside the sport itself). Top flight tennis players, for instance, gain status (as well as material rewards) from their physical performances. For them, the demonstration of force and skill at such a level leads to empowerment. Road running is, however, virtually unique in that it can and does deliver that empowerment, that enhancement of status to those who participate at a non-elite level - the 'also rans'.

People gain no particular kudos from their sporting performances as a mediocre badminton player, or as an average player with their local pub Sunday League football team. But because non-Runners are perceived to, and often do in fact, stand in awe of the distances covered by Runners in racing and training, involvement is felt to deliver respect, admiration and status - that is, cultural capital - to those who Run at a non-elite level as well. As one of the men interviewed in the course of this study explained:

I went to work on Monday, and one of my colleagues, who is himself quite fit you know, - plays a bit of football - asked if I'd been out running at the weekend. I told him I'd been out training with a couple of the lads and we'd gone 'around the block' as we call it. He asked how far that was - and when I told him it was eighteen miles - his jaw dropped!........ And I must admit - I liked that.

Another Runner generalised the picture:

Yes, I think most people are impressed by the distances you cover. If they weren't there wouldn't be any coverage of the
non-elite Runners in the London Marathon - who would want to watch?

This highlights a further attraction of road Running. While some other sports (usually those perceived as dangerous) may bring some status to those who participate at a non-elite level; instead of being conducted in the wilderness, away from public gaze (as is the case of rock climbing) or at a specially constructed sports facility (as in the case of motor racing) it is conducted in the limelight of the public gaze. Racing and training are for the most part conducted in public space. As such, they may be considered as uniquely public demonstrations of a level of physical prowess that help attempts to reclaim threatened masculinities. It is these attempts which may well, then, be at the heart of the ‘urge to do it on a Sunday morning’. For after all, in order to benefit, Runners do not even have to be particularly good at it!
Conclusion: Edited Highlights and the Classified Results

In this final chapter, it is my intention to sum up the argument and results that have been presented in the preceding chapters and to highlight some of the conclusions that have been arrived at there. Once the review of the foregoing chapters is complete, however, I shall attempt, to look to the future and consider some avenues for further research and end, as I began, on a personal note.

As we saw in the introductory section, participation in non-elite road running is related to sex, age and social class. Its age, sex and social class relatedness is something it has in common with other sports (Sports Council for Wales 1992). In common with many other sports, participants in road running tend to be male rather than female (ibid). In common with a few other sports, participants tend to be over thirty rather than in the 'first flush of youth' (Sports Council for Wales 1993). In common with a very few other sports, golf for example, participants tend to be male, middle class and approaching middle age [(GB) Sports Council 1992]. Road running is, however, probably unique amongst intensely physical and vigorous sports in that those involved also tend to be male, middle class and the ‘wrong’ side of thirty.

Road running, as a practice of mass participation, is a distinctly modern
phenomenon and as such seems to have links with the conditions of modern living in the West. Modern Western life is characterised by lengthening chains of interdependence with an increased division of social functions. The resultant individualization and increased emphasis on individuality (paradoxically only possible through group living - Elias 1991A), has meant that modern life is distinguished not only by social change but by impersonality and uncertainties as well. Although the risks people experience in their daily lives may be of a less violent kind than in previous eras (Elias 1982 [1939]), they are experienced as real enough. The consequent risks of uncertainty with which people have to deal as a result of chronic and accelerating social changes are powerful ingredients in the 'love affair' we have with an idealised past. Whenever that period in the past is thought to have been (Pearson 1983), it is seen as a period when, variously, people did not have to lock doors; when they knew where they belonged; when there was a true sense of 'community'; when there was a sense of stability, security and order that is conspicuously absent from the present, let alone contemplating what the future may hold.

It is not uncommon, that at a time of far reaching and rapid social change that those who live through it should look backwards through 'rose coloured glasses' to an idealised version of a more secure past (Elias 1969). Those involved in road running, primarily children of the 1950s and teenagers of the 1960s have, arguably, lived through a period in recent British social history when many of the apparent 'certainties' of the past began, ever more rapidly, to be broken down. Their social habitus acquired in their early years
may not be 'in tune' with modern reality, not least of all in what are now 'appropriate' forms of behaviour for men and for women in societies such as ours.

Road running as a mass participation phenomenon had its genesis in New Zealand in the very early 1960s. Promoted on the basis of regular natural exercise as a benefit to health it spread to the United States where it was similarly promoted by Bill Bowerman, and others. Once there, it seems to have struck chords with the 'flower power' or 'hippy' movement underway on the West Coast and particularly in San Francisco. 'Hippy' values rejected modernity in whole or in part and idealised 'nature' above 'culture' (to use a dichotomy that was, and still is, the dominant way of thinking). Running as a 'natural' activity has strong links with the past, all the way back to a vision of 'man-the-hunter' chasing game in a 'natural' lifestyle in pre-history. Whatever the seeds of that 'cultural upheaval' on the West Coast, industrialisation, increasing 'artificiality' of life, opposition to the Vietnam War or whatever, running came to be seen as part of a more 'natural' way of life and that, together with the promotion of the practice on health grounds, meant that the 'running boom' began. From the United States and New Zealand the 'running boom' spread worldwide (to the more developed world, at least); and by the time Frank Shorter won the marathon for the United States at the Olympics in Munich in 1972, road running had arrived in Britain on a wave of cowbells, kaftans and cannabis.
Although road running may be a form of 'natural' exercise, the ability to Run long distances does not come 'naturally'. Road Running is an intensely physical practice and as such it usually involves those who Run in a rigorous and vigorous training regime. This means that most Runners will have to train and indeed race in weather conditions that are sometimes far from ideal. Seeing Runners out training at 'odd' times of the day or night, and often in atrocious weather conditions, it is perhaps understandable that many of the non-participating general public find the fact that individuals would voluntarily choose to do such things incomprehensible. Indeed, the Runners themselves attest to the fact that many of their acquaintances readily label them as 'mad' or 'crazy'. The apparently 'compulsive' behaviour of regular road Running, given its intensely physical nature (a non-elite marathon Runner may be Running continuously for between three and four hours), is a form of handing physical adversity and the sharing of physical adversity tends to promote 'bonds' between Runners. These bonds, transitory and one-dimensional though they may be, are nonetheless real (at the time) for that, as many Runners report helping and encouraging (being helped and encouraged by) complete strangers in the course of a race. Furthermore, if non-participants tend to find non-elite distance Running incomprehensible, then the Runners themselves tend to find it inexplicable to those who do not themselves Run. The only way non-participants are ever going to find out what it is like to Run ten, thirteen or twenty six miles, is to do it.

But if Runners can share 'bonds', then they can, and do, also make
distinctions. There are, according to those involved at least three identifiable
groups to be found 'out on the roads', 'out in the parks' or along cyclepaths and

canal towpaths. These groups those involved, and I, refer to as 'Athletes',
‘Runners’ and ‘Joggers’, distinctions also to be found in the running press.
The Athletes (sometimes also called the 'good' club Runners) have the potential
to win (or at least do very well in) the races they enter. They seem to be
driven on by the desire to win, or achieve a high ranking (and the consequent
respect and status) within that small, select group of elite performers to the
point where their motivation becomes readily understandable by non-
participants. People in complex, modern societies, generally, understand the
desire to win.

Finishing behind this small elite group in races up and down the country
is a large group (the vast majority of the field in longer races) of, mostly, men
who know they have no realistic chance of winning any race, yet train and Run
at levels far in excess of that required for basic physical fitness. It is this
group, the focus of this thesis, that I, in common with those involved, refer to
as the 'Runners'.

There is, for some of the quicker Runners, an element of interpersonal
competition with 'known faces', that is, with other individuals they regularly meet
at races they go to on the South Wales 'circuit'. It is in terms of this
competition with 'known faces', rather than in terms of finishing times, that
these quicker Runners measure their 'success', or otherwise, in the races they
enter. For those who Run more slowly, the bulk of the field, interpersonal competition is either far less important, or seems to disappear altogether. While these Runners report an element of ‘categorical’ competition, usually in terms of age, and sometimes in terms of appearance or ‘physique’, this also does not seem to assume any great importance for them. Indeed their participation remains a mystery; that is, until one looks beyond the race for the important competition. For these Runners, the important comparison (and competition is, of course, comparison) is with those who do not Run at all, with non-participants. This is a ‘competition’ they can ‘win’ of course, simply by continuing to take part.

The Running, non-Running divide is, however, not clear cut. The third group to be found ‘out on the road’ as far as the Runners are concerned, ‘muddy the waters’ of inclusion and exclusion. For Joggers are not Runners. The Runners tend to see Jogging as an inferior practice that lacks the pace, regularity and commitment involved in what they do. The Runners interviewed for this study tended to view Jogging as a straightforward body maintenance activity, a view confirmed by the Joggers themselves. Those who unproblematically embraced the label of ‘Jogger’ did indeed report that their satisfactions were extrinsic. It was, indeed, for them a means to an end, to ‘look good on the beach’ to ‘lose a bit of weight’ or to ‘try and keep fit’, not something that was done as an apparent end in itself.

The Runners’ frustrations appeared to be compounded by the fact that,
although they saw the two activities of ‘Running’ and ‘Jogging’ as distinct, others did not. For most of the non-participating general public seem not only unable to distinguish between the two forms of involvement, but also to be unaware that there is a distinction to be made. The tension around the possibility of being (mis)classified as a ‘Jogger’ seems most acute amongst slower Runners (where indeed this is most likely to happen) for they seem to be aware that even some of those involved (at the ‘quick’ end of the ability continuum) may be inclined to (mis)classify them in this way. Nearly all of the Runners interviewed for this study, then, took exception, and many (of the slower Runners, particularly) took great exception when their friends and/or acquaintances enquired how their ‘jogging was going’. There seems, then, to be something very ‘precious’ about Running to Runners, and those interviewed in the course of this study were not slow to point out of their own volition just how important the practice is to them. It is the basis of this importance that has been the principal focus of this study.

Road running takes place in the context of the lengthened chains of interdependence, increased division of social functions and the accompanying reduced dependence on kinship groups and locales that characterise modern social relationships. This had led to a level of individualisation and of socially valued ‘individuality’ that is probably confined to societies of the modern West (although others in less developed countries are heading in this direction). Individualisation has separated people from one another, and with the increasing need to learn self-regulation and to control momentary impulses and
inclinations, there has been a shift in the 'I'-‘we’ identity balance in favour of the former. A shift conditioned, as it were, both by a civilising process and a process of individual ‘civilisation’.

This increased identification with ‘I’ rather than ‘we’ has resulted in an emphasis on the individual body (given the present dominant way of thinking in terms of a mind/body separation) and particularly an emphasis on the appearance of the body as expressive of the self. The appearance of the body is seen to convey vital information to others about the person we truly feel ourselves to be ‘inside’ and therefore people (or some of them) are prepared to ‘work’ on their appearance through dieting, cosmetics, the surgeon’s knife or exercise regimes.

Furthermore, this emphasis on the body (or its outer surfaces) as representative of self comes at a time when the young, trim, active and therefore attractive body has become socially valued as never before, thus redoubling the imperative to engage in forms of ‘bodywork’. Body image or, more accurately, this young, trim, sensual active body image has become a major icon of modern consumer culture used to sell us everything from breakfast cereals to newspapers and held up as something to which we should aspire.

Road running as a body maintenance activity beyond the call of cardiovascular duty is undoubtedly partly about staking a claim to some of
these positive images. It may represent a claim to vigour, sexual attractiveness (through the implications of the practice for body shape), virility and youth - given the sensitivity of some of the Runners in the sample to social age dynamics perhaps, especially, youth. However, while the sorts of positive self-images associated with body maintenance activities obviously 'benefit' those involved in Running, 'claims' to them are certainly not primary reasons for involvement for virtually all of those Runners interviewed for this study. For if they were, it would be very difficult to explain why many of the Runners reported such intense dislike (and all reported taking some degree of offence) at being 'confused' with Joggers who would similarly benefit from an association with these positive images. There seems to be much more at stake than that, something much more fundamental to identity.

When we come into this world we do not enter it simply as human beings, but enter it (with the exception of some unfortunate individuals) as either the male or the female of the species. Gender is a fundamental organising category in societies such as ours (in common with others both temporally and spatially distant). It is part of the conceptual and linguistic air we breathe, and as such is at the heart of individual 'identity'. As said, one is not simply a human being, one is male or female, boy or man, girl or woman. While physical sex differences are vital, the possession of a particular set of genitalia may be a condition of, but it is not sufficient for the construction of a 'gender identity'. There are other attributes and behaviours which are seen to characterise the masculine or the feminine in particular societies and it is to
these that people must look to establish their masculinity or femininity.

Bodies are a primary resource in the achievement of a gender identity. Bodies may be further engendered using style of dress and movement, cosmetics or even surgery to accentuate secondary sexual characteristics. Patterns of behaviour may be adopted which are not only viewed as typically masculine or feminine, but may imprint upon the body and emphasise masculinity or femininity. In the case of males, it is physical strength and durability which may be emphasised (since physical strength is a source of power, and one of the primary tenets of masculinity is that men should have access to power of some description) for these are attributes associated with masculinity:

toughness, physical strength and capability, achievement and the demonstration of virility, the importance of aggressive competitiveness. These qualities mark out the ‘natural’ qualities of the male.

(Clarke & Clarke 1982 p. 82)

In a society such as ours where civil life is relatively pacified, there are comparatively few legitimate ways for men to demonstrate this ‘toughness, physical strength and capability’ (which, of course, carries with it the latent threat of violence) and it is in this context that a demonstration of sporting prowess can take on added significance.

For a minority of individual men, the demonstration of physical strength
may be possible in the world of paid employment through physically demanding work in adverse conditions. But however it is achieved (more often in sport), this demonstration of physical prowess will in itself imply virility. In a culture where the idea of the body-as-machine dominates, since the sex act is a physical act, it is thought susceptible to ‘improvement’ through physical fitness. This physical fitness-sexual performance link permeates modern Western culture and is often, appropriately enough, expressed in sporting metaphor - the ‘Marathon runners keep it up for hours’ car sticker, for example.

However, since power (the sources of which are themselves interdependent) does not exist in isolation, but only as an intrinsic element of interdependent relationships, other men may have access to beneficial power ratios in their relationships with others through their access to material rewards, for instance. This may be through participation in a labour market and the fulfilment of a ‘provider’ role for other family members. It may be through conspicuous success in the economy which yields influence over others through purchasing power, or a few may have influence over most of us through holding a high political office. Some men will exercise authority within their families simply because they expect, and are expected to do so - a source of power based on knowledge.

But from whatever source(s) it is derived, one of the major ‘rules’ of masculinity is that men should wield a significant degree of influence over, at least some, others. In other words, they should benefit from some
advantageous power ratios. To be a man, to achieve a secure gender identity, is to have a continuing degree of power relative to others.

The times they are ‘a changing’ though. The opportunities to demonstrate physical prowess in the world of paid work are shrinking, and were in any event, usually only open to working class men. Male violence, whether directed against other men, or against women has become more and more socially unacceptable. There have been concomitant changes in the nature of familial relationships experienced by many men. The ‘traditional’ authority within the home they may feel their fathers had has ebbed away with the advancement of feminist ideas and the increasingly privileged place of children in the home. Men’s wives or female partners are increasingly themselves moving out of the home and into labour markets, especially once the burden of caring for young children is over, which in itself reduces women’s economic dependence on a man. Women’s increasing demands for full sexual gratification within a relationship (often seen as the ‘responsibility’ of her male partner) has further undermined some of the traditional bastions of masculinity.

It may be that those men of the middle classes, particularly with advancing years who may feel themselves to be most vulnerable to these shifts in power balances. Not only may they feel under more pressure, perhaps, than their working class counterparts to accept feminist ideas (or some of them) that claim more equality for women, but they may feel under pressure actually to encourage these changes in their own households even though that might, on
balance, be to their disadvantage. Furthermore, such vulnerability may be intensified with advancing years as bodily ageing has effects on their ability to demonstrate the physical strength and capability associated with masculinity and the resultant implications for notions of virility.

Certainly, those predominantly male, middle class and over thirty who take part in road Running at a non-elite level feel they derive some status from their involvement. They generally report that they derive the respect and admiration of others on the basis of their physical abilities and capacities demonstrated in and through the practice. Respect and admiration, that is, for an attribute that has traditionally been associated with masculinity. Women Runners, too, get access to cultural capital through their involvement in this socially valued practice, but for them the benefits are more equivocal for precisely that reason; that is, the fact that physical strength and durability are qualities that have traditionally been associated with masculinity. For women Runners, then, there are some ‘unfortunate’ cultural associations to be handled and at least one of the women interviewed for this study seemed to be explicitly aware of them.

The fact that road Running is a particularly convenient vehicle for such a mass demonstration of physical prowess may account for the fact that it seems to be unique in the realms of physically demanding sports in that participants tend to be male, middle class and over thirty. For as others’ admiration for those involved seems to be based upon the physical capacity to
cover the distance required, it means that individual participants do not even have to be particularly 'good' at it for the demonstration of physical prowess to be effective.

If I am right, and attempts to bolster threatened masculinities are at the heart of the 'urge to do it on a Sunday morning' for many of those involved in non-elite Running, then this opens up some interesting avenues for further research. It should be possible, for example, to relate the popularity of road running in different countries in the more developed world and a 'national habitus'; that is, to investigate how ideas of 'masculinity' might vary from place to place with the opportunities for men to construct an appropriate gender identity. Where other such opportunities abound, one might expect fewer individuals out 'on the road', and where they are restricted, for non-elite Running to be more popular. One might have the feeling, for example, that non-elite Running should be more popular in Scandinavia than it is in some Mediterranean countries, but that is a matter for investigation. A similar sort of approach might be used to investigate differential participation rates (should they exist) among the ethnic communities here in Britain, but this is necessarily more complex since change in social habitus may occur with time and between generations.

Another interesting avenue may well be an investigation of casual participation in dangerous sports, or more accurately, those perceived to be dangerous. It is a fairly popular misconception that road running is primarily
about running to raise money for charity. With the notable exception of the London Marathon most participants do not race for charitable causes. As one Runner in the sample for this study put it, he had, he said, raised some money in the ‘early days’ but it had got to the stage where:

‘People would cross the road if they saw you walking down it with a piece of paper in your hand’.

There is a similar conception that those who jump out of an aeroplane (with a parachute) do so primarily to raise money for a charity. While many of them do, in fact, collect money for charitable causes (many charities will pay for an individual to jump, provided they have raised and donated a set sum) whether philanthropy is a primary motivation for those involved, or simply a means to an end, may warrant some further investigation.

Finally, to conclude, as indicated, on a personal note it may have become obvious through the course of this study that while using my own involvement and experience of road running as a starting point was a tremendous ‘advantage’, some ‘detour via detachment’ was necessary. While that experience continued to prove a useful resource in my interviews with Runners, Athletes and Joggers, such a ‘detour’ inevitably involved some appraisal of my own motives for involvement in the practice. So it has been.

At times I found this process distinctly uncomfortable as some of my
own, only half recognised, deep-seated desires and fears began to be dredged
to the surface and exposed to the light of investigation. Although my
interviews with those involved in distance running presented me with some
surprises and a wealth of new detail on many aspects of running; I gradually
began to understand that my own motives might bear some similarity to those
I was uncovering amongst my sample.

Though my 'invitation' into Running began 'accidentally' with a casual
invitation from my brother to join him on a training run one October evening I
now know that my continuous involvement since has been anything but an
'accident'. About three years before that October evening I had given up a
well paid job in multiple retailing in Scotland to run my own retail business in
what was then a prosperous mining community in South Wales. For the first
two years my business also prospered, but with the year-long miners' strike of
1984/85 and the closure of collieries that supported that community, within
months of a resumption of work, turnover (and, therefore, profits) plummeted.

It is reasonably clear to me now that in the circumstances of a business
'going nowhere' financially; in a marriage that had always been more egalitarian
than many and was becoming still more so; having a wife who had recently
returned to full time work; a growing (only) child and being the 'wrong' side of
thirty I may well have been considered a prime candidate for recruitment.

Little did I know then of the, sometimes, uncomfortable investigation that
lay before me and of the inevitable exposure of some of my own fears and desires that it would involve. Uncomfortable and disconcerting (as well as immensely rewarding) it may have been, but I have now 'come out the other side' - and, I am glad to say - still Running.
APPENDIX I

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