

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**PUTTING 'HUMPTY' TOGETHER AGAIN:
A TESTIFYING OF THE EMBODIED NATURE OF HUMAN
EXPERIENCING**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

**Brian William Tuck
2009**

ABSTRACT

The complex functioning of the human body produces the biological, historical and environmental contingencies of lived existence. These experiences of embodiment are chiasmic, dialectical and dialogical, and underpin the narrative dilemmas we create through the storied nature of our attempts to make sense of them. In testifying my own embodiment this autobiographical form of sensual scholarship emphasizes the subjective basis for my body's psychology. By developing the complicating action segments of my life story told through interview data into a chronologically-ordered and textually-layered account of personally significant memories, I craft a story of my panicking body. My upbringing was influenced by discourses that reinforced parental and family affiliation at the expense of my feeling body. Unravelling my need to exercise as a contingency of this affiliation provides retrospective meaning to the distress my panicking caused. Situating my feelings, thoughts, emotions and actions within the broader constraints of my family's history, community, religion and culture reveals the contingent nature of my embodiment. Describing the shifting contingencies of a life lived since my upbringing in the small, rural town of Inglewood, New Zealand, provides the opportunity to recognize and to re-align the dialectics of identity that help to make up my body's psychology. Juxtaposing this narrative meaning-making are my revelations of experiential integration achieved through the flow of exercise. Understood as an extension of my body's fundamental sensuality, this evolutionally-refined capacity for engagement underpins my lived experiencing. Together these sentient and reflexive forms of testimony confirm the inherence of my sensuality and the circumstance of self-hood, and invite you, the reader, to explore the workings of your own body. By revealing the sensual and symbolic strands of my embodiment this story of human contingency reveals something of the fleshy consciousness that we all share, not by speaking for anyone else, but by calling attention to the taken-for-granted nature of its unfolding. By arguing for a psychology more relevant to lived experiencing, my thesis questions the body of Western science and, in particular, psychology's version of it. Articulating the felt nature of my experiencing situates my mind back in my body and, in doing so, fleshes out its psychology. While the insights shared here are personal, the relevance of the felt-body is found in the ways it becomes discourses and narrated.

The content that illness stories offer is valuable for a variety of purposes: for the teller's reordering of her life story, as guidance to others who follow, and to provide caregivers with an understanding of what the ill experience. But the body testifies in excess of all these contents. Illness stories are told by bodies that are themselves the living testimony. (Frank, 1995, p. 140)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

JB, thanks for the time, effort, energy and humour you put into our interactions.

Robbie, thanks for our conversations about bodies, panic, discourse, Foucault, and other related matters.

Mandy, my thanks again, for the suggestions and encouragement that helped make this testimony possible.

Andy, thanks for the support, and your flexibility, that have made this PhD journey enjoyable.

To my family, this story of my body is for you. May its reprieve be a source of insight and encouragement to those of you who may need it.

CONTENTS

List of photographs	viii
Preface	ix
SECTION ONE: THEORISING THE BODY	
Chapter One. A Chiasmic Body	
The phenomenological body	1
The chiasmic body	6
The homo sapient body	9
The Merleau-Pontian body	11
The reflexed body	13
The sensuous body	15
Summary	18
Chapter Two. A Dialectical Body	
The physical body	19
The historical body	22
Psychology's body	24
Summary	27
SECTION TWO: RECOUNTING THE BODY	
Chapter Three. A Dialogical Body	
Narrative research	28
Narrative as metaphor	32
Dis/embodyed narrative	34
Psychology as narrative	38
Autobiography as phenomenological narrative	39
Summary	43
Chapter Four. An Autoethnographical Body	
Theoretical framework	44
Data collection	45
Ethics	48
Researcher	49
Embodied reflexivity	51
Summary	53

SECTION THREE: FLESHING OUT THE BODY

Chapter Five. Re-membering my Body

Early days	55
My father's shadow	61
Incense and agony	69
Something is wrong with me	77
Cloak of secrecy	83
Leaving home	89
The death of God	96
Jill	100

Chapter Six. Re-minding my Body

Letting go	106
Giving myself the run around	109
Contingency, trust and reassurance	116
Cognito ergo sum timidus	122

Chapter Seven. Re-bodying my Mind

An integrated body	125
A flowing body	128
A mindful body	133

SECTION FOUR: TESTIFYING THE BODY

Chapter Eight. Re-living my Body

A disciplined body	137
An action-oriented body	142
A contingent body	146
Coda	152
Summing up	155

Chapter Nine. Shared Embodiment

An ethical body	158
Summary	162

Chapter Ten. Conclusion

Re-Negotiating the Body	163
Summary	170

Postscript.	171
References.	175
Appendices.	
Information Sheet	192
Participant Consent form	194
Authority for the release of Tape transcripts	195
Letter of Ethical Approval	196

PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 1. Me.	54
Figure 2. Dad and I.	61
Figure 3. Mums and Dads.	69
Figure 4. Sixth form.	77
Figure 5. The backyard boys.	89
Figure 6. A Theologian.	96
Figure 7. One of my favourite photos.	100
Figure 8. Two very tired boys.	103
Figure 9. Under 12's.	107
Figure 10. By a nose.	109
Figure 11. Into the unknown.	116
Figure 12. Another favourite.	123
Figure 13. Off to school.	158

PREFACE

I have been running now for fifty years, and most of this time has been spent engaging my body in training regimes designed to improve its athletic prowess and performance. During all this time it never occurred to me that despite all my efforts, including the relentless programme tweaking, these attempts at disciplining my body were ultimately futile. That is until now as I write my life story, and uncover the contexts within which my running has taken place. By being able to situate my moving within the contingencies of my life what becomes clearer is the ways in which it has been a means to an end rather than the end I had previously understood it to be.

This thesis follows my earlier research (Tuck, 2004) that started out as an investigation into life-long exercising. It used a grounded theory methodology to highlight the use of particular language that a group of us (I and eight other co-researchers), used to convey our connections to exercising. Taking a narrative perspective, our terms operated as metaphors to encompass attributions and valuations that we made about ourselves when we exercise. It uncovered how our exercising is tied to specific value judgments that we make based on primarily physical experiences and the psychological implications we draw from them. These value judgments form a meaning hierarchy that is indelibly linked to our moving experiences, past, present and future. Constructing these meaning-making experiences as a journey of initiation, exploration and integration theorises an evolution of life-long exercising (Tuck, 2004), without exploring in greater detail how this evolution takes place through the interpersonal, situational and cultural contingencies of its embodiment.

Moving contributes to the “shaping of our humanness” (Kincholoe & McLaren, 2000, p. 290) through the physical, emotional, mental and social outcomes that it produces (Biddle, 2000). Focusing on these outcomes, rather than the personal, social and situational practices that facilitate and constrain them, contributes to an understanding of a ‘need to move’ (Kluge, 2002; Lang & Jessen, 2000), but fails to take account of the embodied nature of their unfolding. Conceptualising categories of socio-cultural

backgrounds and personalised outcomes to produce themes of initiation, exploration and integration did little to unravel how specifically these ‘typifications’ (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000) help to “organise, give meaning to and shape our lives” (Tuck, 2004, p.12).

The concept of a need to move can be viewed as symbolizing the dialogue exercisers have with, and through, their bodies. This dialogue has helped me decipher an ideology of myself and has reinforced beliefs about my behaviours, based around daily exercising practices. In this way I believe long-term exercisers build up a discourse about their bodies and use aspects of this discourse as blueprints for interpreting other events and experiences in our lives. An example of this is the way we transfer the ‘hard work’ metaphor back and forth between exercising and other life domains of work, education and relationships where the idea of ‘no gain without pain’ is generalised as relevant. On the face of it this transfer of meaning is underpinned by the physiological consequences of our training. It can also be understood from the perspective of relational frame theory (Hayes, Barnes-Holmes & Roche, 2001) where we apply existing ideas to seemingly unrelated contexts through cognitive-based relational framing. In this way we respond to our bodily experiences by utilising previous learning, in the form of sensual as well as perceptual biases, to help us make sense of these experiences and shape our identities from them.

The background theme that arose in my earlier research mentions historical, geographic and social influences on our interpretations of our exercising. Along with intra-personal processes like relational framing they make up the substance of our meaning-making which is a mix of personal, historical and socio-cultural influences.

[S]ociety can . . . be understood as a vast argumentative texture through which people construct their reality . . . an unceasing human activity of making meanings (the horizon of discourse) from which social agents and objects, social institutions and social structures emerge configured in ever-changing patterns of relations (Laclau, 1993, p. 341).

Exercise, then, is a social phenomenon underpinned as it is by the linguistic assumptions

that we are immersed in by virtue of our ‘being in the world’ (MacLachlan, 2004). We are not only rooted to our own bodies but to the social and cultural world we inhabit through our body. Any assumptions about exercise, including our own, can be seen to be a part of this ‘argumentative texture’ that facilitates and constrains our meaning-making. Personal assumptions, along with societal claims, about our body, or anything for that matter, can be seen as hermeneutic claims (Packer, 1985). Consistent with this meaning-making perspective of human existence is the evolution of an exercising identity as an attempt to seek understanding about who we are as bodies.

The human search for understanding is viewed by postmodernists as both a fundamental feature, and consequence, of our experiences (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). For many years now I have been running in, and through, my body. However the sensations, thoughts, emotions, actions and interactions that my body has produced have not always been welcome. The suspicion of my body and its manifestations has been reinforced by a culture Westernised by centuries of religious, political and social practices. Bodies today are still being branded, bombed, burnt, beheaded or banished in the pursuit of ideological goals that seek to constrain and control their manifestations.

When I move I get drawn into the hermeneutic act of making sense of my moving. Where life-long exercisers appear to differ from other individuals is in the particular interpretations and meanings we attach to our moving. To elucidate these perspectives requires returning to the contexts of physical, personal and socio-cultural practices (Packer, 1985) within which each of us are immersed and which provide the all important points of analytic reference. As Wetherall (1998) suggests “[a]nalysis works by carving out a piece of the argumentative social fabric for closer examination” (p. 393). My previous research confirmed the presence of this argumentative fabric without identifying the specific strands relevant to its exercising texture.

Central to the task of teasing out the constitutive elements of my exercising is an understanding of embodiment. My embodiment immerses me into a physical and cultural world that is navigable through the material and symbolic meanings that this immersion

creates. To tease these ideas out further the underlying philosophy of phenomenology that establishes the ontology and epistemology of embodiment is presented here. Linking this philosophical foundation to a narrative methodology highlights the autoethnographic method used here to articulate the constitutive elements targeted. Through the ‘embodied reflexivity’ of my story-telling this research attempts to share insights into the lived experiencing of my exercising.

While acknowledging the gap between lived experience and the symbolizing of it, autoethnography can provide a bridge between the two. Beginning in the unfinished business of my previous research, this attempt to embody my memories requires a way of making their presence felt anew. To do this a philosophy that takes seriously the experiential or phenomenological body, and it’s telling, are necessary. Explicating the chiasmic and dialectical foundations of the feeling body through the ideas of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), help to underpin my narrative methodology and the autoethnographic method I have chosen to explore it. The story of my phenomenological body is constructed out of transcribed audio-taped conversations with another life long exerciser and, together with a variety of other bibliographic data, produces the text that becomes the story of its ‘fleshing out’. This text, and the meanings it contains, allows only an indirect access to my experiential body, but through a dialogical form of self-understanding, communicates with others through the ways I experience it via a commonly shared culture and history.

Section one presents the philosophy of phenomenology that is the theoretical framework upon which this research is based and biased. Using the embodied agency ideas of Merleau-Ponty (1962) as a focal point, an understanding of lived experience is developed that incorporates his, and other, sometimes contrasting, ideas. It builds on his phenomenological perspective to flesh out my body’s psychology, differing as it does from psychology’s traditionally understood version of it. The upshot of this theoretical perspective is an understanding of the unfolding nature of human being through the body’s chiasmic immersion with the life-world that produces the dialectics of its felt embodiment. Chapters one and two explore the feeling/felt body as an important, and

often overlooked, source of personal, scientific and societal insight. These insights include the chiasmic interplay of the physical and the social that catalyses human consciousness and the spatial-temporal significances of selfhood. Through explaining its chiasmic and dialectical abilities these chapters aim at highlighting the way the body's sensuality underpins its sensibility.

This epistemology of human sensuality evokes a methodology of interpretative meaning-making that is explored in chapters three and four, of section two, through the ways the body is narrated and discoursed. The idea of narrative as a particular way of expressing and revealing the felt body takes shape through the sense making that can be found in the stories we tell about it. Autoethnography utilises this storying of the body to help unravel the subjective nature of lived experience by indicating the actual and constructed layers of meaning that make it up. Personal narrative fits within a methodology of narrative and story-telling in general and, whilst constrained by the variety of discourses that infiltrate it, is a powerful and pervasive form of sense making that influences the lived-experiencing of our bodies. These dialectics of the body/self can be revealed through teasing out the layers of meaning that language smears through felt experiencing. Through combining oral, written and pictorial forms of autobiographical data this project attempts to make sense of my exercising by recognising the importance, as well as the elusiveness, of the felt experiencing that underpins it.

Section three attempts to reveal my fleshy body through a multi-layered text of interview quotes, personal memories, diary entries, photographs and more general narration and scholarship. The interweaving of these forms of orientation, action and evaluation (Labov, 1977), reveal my exercising practices as constituted from within the "norms, beliefs, activities, institutions and environments which shape[d] the physical and the psychosocial dimensions" (Yardley, 1999, p. 44) of my experiences. These particular historical, social, economic, cultural and geographic constraints of my upbringing combine with the physical bodies of my family and community to produce the idiosyncratic nature of my subsequent exercising practices. My story reveals some of the ways I came to interpret my body's immersion within the material and symbolic strands

of the nineteen sixties, dairy-farming town, of Inglewood. This town of approximately two thousand people situated me, and my family, within the eastern contours of a mountain called Taranaki, on the West Coast of the North Island, of New Zealand. It is also the story of the life that I came to live after Inglewood and the slowly dawning awareness of my hometown's relevance to my body and the particular practices that came to dominate it.

Section four goes on to unravel the significance of testifying the contingencies of being my body through the embodied insights of its experiencing. It articulates sentient experiencing as the immersion of the physical, felt body within a historical life-world that produces the reflexively, dialectical body. The perceptually-bound nature of my human being finds further expression through the social web of refinement that is the communal and cultural understandings of embodied reflexivity. These understandings are all the while underpinned by the body's fundamental sensuality that activates the field of presence from within which lived experiencing takes place. My fleshy consciousness activates my being-in-this-world (Heidegger, 1962), and through it opens me up to the lived opportunities of its constraints and possibilities. Through reinforcing Laclau's (1993) social flux of human relations this contingent understanding of subjectivity releases the body's "potential for creating new types of subjective experiences" (Markula, 2004, p. 308) rather than imposing them.

The autoethnographic account of my exercising aims at a more 'lived' rendition of experiencing. Aware of the uncertainties of attempting to speak for another's lived experience, this particular form of narrative methodology renders only one voice, my own. Through sharing personally reflexive accounts of the ways I experience my exercising, the meaning-making and understandings that shape this particular practice of my body emerge. My life history helps to shed new light on my exercising longevity through revelations of the contextual and contingent nature of its meaning and purpose in my life. The phenomenological accounting of my exercising also illustrates that, "[i]t is not enough to say that the mind is embodied; one must say [or better still, show] how" (Edelman, 1992, p. 15). By unravelling the body-self dialectics represented in the various

descriptions of key memories of living my body, I share the testifying insights that they provide. These insights come through the voicing of my felt body, whose previous remonstrations were deemed too untrustworthy to be spoken about, and provide an explanation of my 'need to move' by showing what it is and where it comes from.

Voicing my felt body reveals the contingency of its unfolding and underscores the chiasmic, dialectical and dialogical nature of identity and self-hood. By revealing the material and symbolic contingencies of my being, my story showcases the embodied nature of my experiencing that includes this use of language to represent it. By authorising a voice outside of mainstream scholasticism, the voice of my own subjective experiencing, this story becomes a way of developing a greater presence in, and an awareness of, my own body that is not only liberating (Perls, 1969), but also continues the traditions of psychological inquiry that aim at informing and liberating others. My research does this through using the anecdotal evidence of my storied experiences to connect to, and further elucidate, the broader social and theoretical issues of the body (Grant, 2001).

SECTION ONE: THEORISING THE BODY

Chapter One. A CHIASMIC BODY

A Zen master asked a student, "Where is your mind?" The student said, "When I perceive my thoughts, it is as if someone was speaking inside my head. So my mind must be in my head." The master motioned for the student to approach him. When the student stood right in front of him, the master banged his fist down on the student's big toe and said, "Now where is your mind?" (Parent, 2005, p. 14).

The Phenomenological Body

Like Merleau-Ponty (1962), the Zen master views the body as the foundation of consciousness. Consistent with this perspective this research adopts a contextual (Pepper, 1942) view of the world that developed out of Kelly's (1955) theory of personal constructs. Kelly understood human existence to be the combination of a primary, pre-conceptual state of physical being and a symbolic world of interpretations about the material world our bodies interact with. Experience mixes layers of conceptual meaning with bodily-sensed meaning to produce our understandings of it. Like any world view, this contextual perspective tries to explain what is real and how it is real, and in doing so to articulate the dynamics of causality and selfhood.

It approaches these timeless questions by viewing change as a fundamental aspect of life that underpins each individual's reality as a separate reality within the more widely shared reality of the socialised life-world. While the intra-personal world of sensory input and perceptual experience underpins the socio-cultural world of shared experience, each individual, within their own unique socio-cultural context, creates their own 'reality'. What is real is therefore subjective, but these individual constructions arise from the 'connections' we make between our body and the world around us using the historically established connections of society to help us. These interactions are rooted in a felt body that positions us spatially and relationally within a world we experience as a 'now' (Tolle, 2004).

Our bodies may be rooted to this now of experience but, through the meanings they generate, can engage the past and future of time in new ways. This is a refinement of my chiasmic body's situated ability to extend itself through its symbolic capabilities of reflexive awareness that is produced through the sensual body that expresses and refines itself through its dialogues, social interactions and artifactual extensions (Burkitt, 1999). The materiality of our body generates and interacts with a socially constructed life-world that produces an embodied consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Burkitt (1999) describes how our body is both the ontological and epistemological foundation of experience and any interpretations of it.

Knowledge is located primarily in the experiences of the active body, which is part of time and space, such experiences being extended and elaborated in the symbolic (for example, language) dimension. Thus the symbolic/artifactual realm and the bodily/material domain are always interwoven as dimensions of experience, which constantly inform one another in a two-way process that cannot be flattened out on to a single plane (p.5).

Sensation, thought, emotion and action join together in a chiasmic process that unfolds through our experiencing of the world in the interplay of our becoming. Knowledge is no longer a product of the mind that is seen as a separate phenomenon at work in making sense of an objectified world. Knowledge is embodied in the forms of material and symbolic meaning that results from the body's interaction with a life-world across the full range of its capabilities. This phenomenological version of contextualism derives from Husserl's (1970) intentionality theory of consciousness that Heidegger (1962) went on to situate within human experiencing (Hein & Austin, 2001). The history of phenomenology I read as a history of its various protagonists that I see beginning in the distinction made by Kant (1963), between a phenomenal and noumenal world. In giving credence to the idea of human consciousness as a constituent of the world we engage he suggested knowledge required both sensing and sense-making capabilities.

Developing this idea of knowledge as constructed, Dilthey (1977) determined its historical contingency and relativity, while Brentano went further still and proposed knowledge as mental acts that define and represent our world. By distinguishing these

acts of awareness from the objects that they produce he asserted the intentional nature of our consciousness (Bretano, 1973). Using this idea of intentionality to investigate institutional creations like Christianity, Nietzsche (1989), exposed the fundamental uncertainty of human existence by stripping it of objective meaning. Husserl's philosophical depictions of consciousness then followed on to produce a methodology based on the ways we organise and describe phenomena.

Phenomena came to be understood, through this human watershed of understanding, as the appearances of things in consciousness via the mental acts of our sensations, perceptions, thoughts and imaginings. These appearances are our personal representations of things, and the world, rather than being a pre-existing, objective and unaltered world that is relayed to us directly and reliably by our senses. Husserl's student Martin Heidegger refocused this theory of intentionality within a more situational understanding of existence by positing the self as 'Dasein' (1962), meaning, 'to be seen' (sein) 'there', (da) and translated as, 'being in the world'. This idea of subjectivity situates how we become the 'who we are' from the 'what we are'. Our being in the world is a continual interplay between a sensing and perceiving body that incorporates the physical, social and psychological phenomena that comprise our life world at any given moment.

Sartre (1969) concurred with Heidegger when he claimed existence precedes essence and that selfhood is constantly being constructed out of experience. Merleau-Ponty's (1962, 1965) exposition of this momentary experiencing or consciousness is in terms of the way it is always grounded in our 'body'. He further refined his own understanding of consciousness by rejecting Heidegger's transcendent tendencies and viewing consciousness and the mind as the active product of our body's sensuous materiality. His consciousness "does not constitute an interiority . . . does not function as a transcendental ego, as it does for Husserl. It is not an agency underlying the organisation of experience, nor is it the foundation of an *a priori* (transcendental) constitution" (Frie, 2007, p. 61). Merleau-Ponty argued for the sensual-perceptual basis of this being-in-the-world by describing human sensuality through concepts of flesh and chiasm that "radically transcend the antimony of the mental and the physical" (Wertz, 2006, p. 398).

Engaging psychology through this phenomenological grounding of its phenomena, Merleau-Ponty provided concepts of psychological life that no longer required “and even rules out, a constituting subject” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 406). It is this commonality of anti-essentialism that helped merge phenomenology with existentialism (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006) and links these philosophies to the more recent methodologies of postmodernism.

Michel Foucault, who was taught by Merleau-Ponty, takes this fleshiness in a new direction, the direction of the bio-political. He argues for the body’s historicising within certain modes of objectification that produces its subjectification. In integrating notions of knowledge, power and discourse he unravels the disciplining constraints of social expectation and institutional practice. While some may scoff at the inclusion of Foucault in phenomenological thought, it is his ‘critical self’ (1986) that provides the bridge between those he learnt from, and the turn to narrative, that he helped instigate. While Merleau-Ponty’s work underpins the embodied nature of this work, Foucault ratifies the discursive dynamics of its unfolding and expression. As I read Frank (1995), and story my body accordingly, these two French men, along with their peers and predecessors, combine to influence this chant of my body’s dialectical and dialogical contingency.

Phenomenology as the philosophical study of experience seeks to elucidate the defining features of any experience or interaction with the world. In layman’s terms a phenomenological perspective emphasises our experiences as they happen, in the here of context, and now of time, as they take shape through our body’s perceptive capabilities. The ‘bodying’ of experiencing is multidimensional and contextual in opening us up to the constraints of our particular culture. Initiation into this life-world is through the physical capabilities of our senses, but as we process and interpret these experiences of physical stimuli so we shape how we become. Self or personhood, rather than being predetermined and innate, evolves out of these moments of possibility through the immersion of our physical body into a historically, materially and socio-culturally determined world of beliefs, discourses and practices.

As Spinelli (2007) puts it, subjectivity and the self are as much “a particular, perhaps culturally specific, emergent consequence and expression of relatedness” (p. 14). Even though we are physically and reflexively constrained by this social web of understandings, each individual finds their own unique way of integrating them sensually and perceptually into their life. Whilst differing from the mechanistic world view that underpins the empirical sciences (see Crossley, 2001; Packer, 1985, Sarbin, 1986), a contextualist standpoint is particularly useful in framing an understanding of human existence around the emergence of these interactively personalised meanings.

Our agency and actions are not so much of, but ‘in’, the moment, and defy the traditional dualistic world of science. As MacLachlan (2004) says, “Merleau-Ponty ties mind and body inexorably, not in seeing them as two sides of the one coin, but perhaps more in denying the possibility of the shape of the coin existing without the metal that constitutes it” (p. 3). Merleau-Ponty argues for a human world that starts with our sensual-perceptual make-up, through which we engage our world, and the ways in which this engagement is facilitated through our body. As MacLaughlan (2004) adds,

Before the rational mind can dissect the world into concepts and definitions, the capabilities of the body are already engaged with the world in the activity of perception In contrasting Descartes and Merleau-Ponty, we have moved from a dualistic claim of disembodied reason (I think, therefore I am) to one where reason is constrained by embodied form (I can only think through what I am) (p. 4).

It is precisely an embodied existence because our senses permeate a world of pre-existing meanings. The fundamental quality of being-in-the-world opens up the symbolic and intrapersonal world of meanings through the sensually mediated interaction of a physical body with the historical and cultural web of interpersonal significances that this sensuality of ours is always and everywhere immersed within.

The Chiasmic Body

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is his attempt to explain our connectedness to our historical, material and socio-cultural world. It begins in the chiasmic quality of this relationship between our body and the life-world we inhabit. The word chiasmic is understood here to mean, "the intertwined, mutual implication of two positions that might [otherwise] seem to be quite distinct and disparate "entities" e.g. a human body and a physical-social environment" (Keller, 2005, p. 190). Our body's ability to intertwine with its environment comes from its sensual-perceptual ability to produce a 'field of presence' from which experience is derived. This field extends "in two dimensions: the here-there dimension and the past-present-future dimension" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 265). My sensual-perceptual body straddles both these dimensions by situating me, through my physical body, in the here of a 'now' that engages with a there (the physical and symbolic world that surrounds and immerses my body) of that same now. These culturally and historically mediated representations of time and space provide the fertile and dialectical meeting place of the physical with the symbolic that is the chiasm of sensual/perceptual experience.

Keller (2005) reminds us that this field of presence is "principally pre-personal experience and a domain in which things appear to us as styles of usability" (p. 179). It is this usability or significance of a thing that underpins Merleau-Ponty's concept of corporeal intentionality which describes the way we as humans experience our life-world through layers of meaning-making. Beginning in our body, our sensory make-up aligns us in a unique way with the world around us and draws us into our perceptual interactions with it. Things, including other people, contain pre-existing meanings which identify them as materially, historically and culturally situated. These objects of our experience continually catch our attention and 'call us out', triggering the process of corporeal intentionality. Processing of meaning-making involves our immersion with the object of our attention through the common 'flesh' or materiality we share with it.

What makes the weight, the density, the flesh of each color, of each sound, of each tactile texture, of

the present, and of the world is the fact that he who grasps them feels himself emerge from them by a sort of coiling up or redoubling, fundamentally homogenous with them (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 113-114).

Keller (2005) suggests three complementary levels of meaning- making are “continuously initiated with the immediate appearance of an ambiguous and pregnant ‘something’: the structural distinction of a figure, which lends itself to and initiates the generative identification of a theme which in turn facilitates the dialectical tension of an event” (p. 190). The key to this denouement of meaning is the way our body is immersed into, and interplays with, the thing that is experienced as a part of us. Viewed this way the socio-cultural world is constitutively interwoven through our bodies into our understandings and interpretations that produce our make-up and selfhood. In re-conceptualising our life-world in this way, Merleau-Ponty discloses our explicitly ecological and ethical inherence in the world. We are bound into the fabric of nature by virtue of a material body that unfolds through its connections with other bodies and the world that immerses it.

In elucidating our ‘sensuousness’ Merleau-Ponty emphasises the primacy of lived experience. However as Crossley (2001) suggests “habits must be acquired if we are to ‘read’ the world through perception” (p. 73). The interplay between our senses and the world of objects and things that we sense, produce the schemas or ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1990) that facilitate personal agency through competencies, skills and ‘body techniques’ (Mauss, 1979). “Whether a system of motor or perceptual powers, our body is not an object for an ‘I think’, it is a grouping of lived through meanings which moves toward its equilibrium” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 153). Human expressiveness is situated within our domain of actions, meanings and purposes that are constructed “in the space between the players; the relational space of their interactions” (Crossley, 2001, p. 77). Consciousness is not somehow mysteriously external to our body nor is it just in our heads. Being in the world requires being-in-the-world, a sensual and habitual immersion into things, material and symbolic, through the bodies we inhabit.

Phenomenological or existential philosophy is largely an expression of surprise at this inherence of the

self in the world and in others, a description of this paradox and permeation, and an attempt to make us see the bond between subject and world, between subject and others, rather than to explain it as the classical philosophies did by resorting to absolute spirit (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.58).

Forty years on the neurologist Damasio (2005) endorses this biological make-up of the human mind. Our minds are bodied, rooted in a flesh that derives its potency and potentiality from its porosity. His ideas, along with studies in psychoneuroimmunology (Pert, 1997), neuroscience (Carey, 2000; Edelman, 2002, Gallagher, 2005; Robertson, 1999; Sacks, 1984) and biotechnology (MacLachan, 2004), support the notion that our mind is bodied and our body is a complex, yet integrated, expression of our humanity. “Before you know it, your body makes you human, and sets you on a course in which your human nature is expressed in intentional action and in interaction with others” (Gallagher, 2005, p. 247). Merleau-Ponty situates us in our bodies, perceptually, linguistically, spatially and accentuates Bourdieu’s (1990) theory of habitus that is “knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort” (p. 144).

Habit arises out of the milieu and the action cycle of our perceptivity and underpins our miming and mapping of the social structures inherent to an understanding of our social worlds. Feeling out roles and the rules that guide us draws us into the emergent process of self-hood (Mead, 1967) which utilizes our reflexive capability to enable a consciousness of self. Consciousness meshes past experience with present reflection in a process Gadamer (1975) calls horizon fusion which enables new ways of being the self through our body. Viewed this way Merleau-Ponty’s embodied mind is not dissimilar to the one that underpins the post-modern schools of thought that de-centre the subject and develop, amongst others, feminist, Foucauldian and Derridian notions of history, discourse and identity.

While differing in many details these ideas coalesce around the problems with modernity’s construction of reality as logical and rational and centred in and by the human subject. Foucauldian thought in particular critiques this reifying of subjectivity and attempts to undermine its positioning.

History is not predominantly created by a subject, particularly a logical rational subject who has “his” hands on the guiding wheel of history. Instead history is created by a complex array of processes, dispersions, procedures, accidents . . . randomness, dissensions, petty malice, precise scientific methods, subjected bodies, and faulty calculations, to name just a few – and man, the subject, is not running this show called history (Scheurich & McKenzie, 2005, p. 858).

As Markula and Pringle (2006) note, Foucault believed positivist and rationalist foundations of knowledge divide people into rigid and inflexible forms of subjectivity and underpin the discourses and practices of racism and sexism. By questioning these modes of subjectivity and their related modes of thinking and doing these critical schools of thought provide us the opportunity “of changing the way that we live” (O’Leary, 2002, p. 152).

The Homo Sapiens Body

‘Sapiens’ is the present participle for the Latin word ‘sapere’ which means, to be wise and knowledgeable, to taste. It is the uniquely human capacity to know that we know and to be aware of our experiencing as we are experiencing. Merleau-Ponty (1962) describes this interpretive process of reflection. “I am not in front of my body, I am in it, or rather I am it . . . If we can still speak of interpretation in relation to the perception of one’s own body, we shall say that it interprets itself” (p. 150). The ‘reversibility of our flesh’ challenges the Cartesian view of the body by being the dynamic that allows us a socialized extension of our physical body. Mead (1967) explains it as “the ‘me’ which was the ‘I’ at an earlier time. If you ask then, where directly in your own experience the ‘I’ comes in, the answer is that it comes in as a historical figure. It is what you were a second ago that is the ‘I’ of the ‘me’ ” (p. 174-175).

There is no disconnection here, rather as Crossley (2001) suggests, “The I enters into its own stream of experience as ‘me’” (p. 147). This stream of experience includes the socialised network of meanings that act as a ‘backboard’ for my sensuous attempts at purposeful arrangement of my conduct that are my attempts at individuating my body from other bodies. Yet despite the connectivity of body and self the influence of these

socialised forms of 'me' can appear as solidifying around certain events and interactions rather than deriving from the body and take on a life of its own (Foucault, 1980). Sartre (1969) too points up the socio-cultural rather than biological basis for these identity formations when he proffers, "I see myself because some 'body' sees me" (Italics added, p. 260).

I and me are therefore not separate spatial realities but are interconnected temporalities. As Mead has indicated the 'I' that is my sensual-perceptual body is not directly apparent. It is embodied "and repeats its history in the form of habits . . . [with the] 'me' constructed out of the narrative discourse and imaginative re-presentation which the 'I' produces through its various reflexive activities and projects" (Crossley, 2001, p. 148). History takes shape through bodily practices and interactions and our interpretations of these things. Our making sense of things starts in the body and gets written into and revised through that same body. What is often missed here is the process itself, the way identity is an emergent process of the body's functioning, rather than an inherent or locatable structure within it.

The ability to see others and to be seen by them is at the core of the symbolic network of meanings that incorporates our learned and shared habits, beliefs and discourses. We acquire an ever increasing range of skills and abilities by interpreting and drawing on this social web of linguistic interconnectivity (Laclau, 1993). How we interpret our social web includes the way we interpret or circumscribe ideas of the physical body. Both the existing 'socio-cultural' circumscriptions of the body, and the way we individually interpret them, are important aspects for this research. My research aims to unravel this influence of the socialized 'bodies' of my culture by showing how these have impacted on the ways I have come to live my body.

Merleau-Ponty helps us see that our identity and self-hood does not come readily attached to, or prescribed with, the body we are at our birth. These meanings and self-understandings arise out of our body's interaction with a world impregnated with existing symbols and meanings already arrived at by others through their bodies before us. Our

body firstly has to learn, primarily through language acquisition, the bodily and conceptual rules and habits by which this web of symbols and representations is accessed. Through a growing repertoire of linguistic and bodily techniques our body incorporates the schemas that allow fuller participation within society. These schemas provide a bodily history of sensuously significant habits useful for future interactions. Through such material and symbolic practices, subjectivity and self-hood are constructed via the complex interplay of body and life-world.

Along with the environment we inhabit, our bodies become containers of meaning. We constantly sense for and seek out meaning through a filter or history of bodily schemas and perceptual processes that, having worked for us in the past, now guide and situate our current interactions. The different types of physical and mental processes involved come from, and fold back within, the same body. The visceral, sensing 'I' produces the reflexive, sensed 'me' which, in turn, informs and interacts with the 'I' in the on-going milieu-action cycle of life (Crossley, 2001). They are interacting elements or functions of one body in the pursuit of a meaningful identity. However given the influence of society and its current sanctioning of, and infatuation with, monetary pursuit, material possession and economic justification this understanding of bodily integration is rarely heralded. Subjectivity may appear, as a consequence of such cultural influence, as a given, but this remains an error of thought or at least a testament to our current preoccupation and dependence on particular ways of thinking. Subjectivity remains, as it has for the length of our evolution, an acquired and constantly refined outcome of sensual-perceptual processes inherent to, the immensely complex yet vulnerable, organism that is my body.

The Merleau-Pontian Body

Despite lauding many of his insights, Langer (1989) finds aspects of Merleau-Ponty's work uncritical, ill-defined and lacking important cultural, textual and methodological insights. She suggests race, gender and sex issues are not expounded within his conception of a body that appears premised on a male, heterosexual model (Butler, 1989) and assumes women's bodies are the same as men's (Young, 1989). Apart from a brief

mention of class differences and the contrasting of a disabled body, Merleau-Ponty provides no examples of bodily differences throughout his exposition of embodied agency. Race, gender, sexuality, disability, age, ethnicity and class all provide powerful imprints on the body and have direct and lasting effects. They combine to produce political, religious and national discourses that frame, discipline and constrain the way embodiment is actualised. His theory of embodiment can also be conceived of as a metaphysics of presence that “seeks to collapse time into a series of now’s and to deny linguistic spacing by imagining meaning as there all at once” (Butler, 1989, p. 7).

Along with the subtleties of language, traditional science also challenges Merleau-Pontian thought by demonstrating the material separateness of many things that make up our world. Hayes (2004) also highlights the role of the interpretive capacities of our consciousness to make the connections with things that Merleau-Ponty believes reside in our common ‘flesh’. In this theory of relational responding he suggests we are able to ‘reproduce’ and even ‘manufacture’ events in thought and imagination without our body having to be there, despite these fictional events often being based around events that did happen and that have been experienced. Through our reflexive abilities to do this we can transcend the now of time and create unique times and places beyond it. Thus we can become time machines through the cognitive functioning of our imaginations. These cellular-based processes not only engage our materiality but in doing so produce a sense of displacement that, although primarily symbolic, is still felt.

Despite further accusations of essentialism and foundationalism (Sampson, 1998), I would argue along with Langer (1989) that Merleau-Ponty’s body can still be seen as a conduit for the evolutionary process of human advancement and change. As a chiasmic repository of bodily awareness and reflexive insight, the sensual-perceptual body produces the reflexive body that accentuates an embodied as well as an ‘en-minded’ experience or consciousness of the world. Our reflexive experiences endow our bodies with layers of symbolic experience that help refine our pre-conceptual sensuality. The intertwining of the material and the symbolic provides the embodied discourses from which we map our lives. My research is an attempt to situate my exercising as a

particular form of embodied discourse that is constructed out of the interaction of my body and the socio-cultural world that it is immersed in. My lived experience includes my inherent relatedness to others and to the natural world that helps situate me as an individual ecologically and confers with it my physical connectedness to it. The interwoven nature of human existence necessitates ethical and moral responsibilities that as en-minded bodies we are uniquely challenged by and capable of taking up.

At the heart of our ecology, along with all our other 'ologies, is the concern for our body. Given an understanding that our body is interwoven with its environment this concern ultimately relates to the inevitable journey of discovery that our body subjects us to. My research is about my body and the particular role exercise has played in its journey thus far. Exercising is interwoven with the other fibres of my experiencing that texture my existence and juxtapose my subjectivity with the life-world of other material things and, produces the embodied objectivity from which the other, in turn, perceives me. Such a reciprocating dialectic highlights the intentional and interpretational dynamics of the life-world we all share. Like the rest of me, the exercising fibres of my make-up retain these bodied, socially immersed and textual aspects of lived experience.

The Reflexed Body

It is useful to conceive of our bodies as “something we have, as something we are, and as something we become” (Fraser & Greco, 2005, p.4). Our multi-dimensionality highlights the complex and multi-faceted nature of our human form. Traditional science uses a disembodied notion of mind and body to fit our bodily form into a more easily, amenable shape. This conceptualisation misses the subtle interactions within and without the body that give rise to its particular manifestations at any given moment. Biology is therefore only one of a number of perspectives required to account for the complexity of our body. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body is another, as is Baran's 'mindfulness'.

Stop now and look. It is in front of your nose. In the palm of your hand. In the light in your eyes. In the taste on your tongue. You may have ignored this truth your entire life, but you have never been apart

from it for a single moment (Baran, 2003, p. ix).

How then are we to understand our body and I, mine? If Baran has it right then for most of our lives it seems we somehow go missing in our bodies. We get to live our lives much in the way Joyce's (1914) Mr Duffy did, "at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side-glances" (p. 120). Smith and Watson (2001) suggest this type of reflexed subjectivity is influenced in culturally specific ways including the current obsession with the bio-medical, object body as the pin-up body of the day. Subservient to, and at the disposal of, the thinking, rational self this machine-like body is discourses into a disembodied shell. As Shotter (1989) points out, this process of social accountability pervades our talk and our interpretations, along with the very experience of being ourselves. Through this social web of agreed to interpretations and practices it is more than possible to disconnect our bodies from the lived experiencing of them! Foucault (1979) highlights this influence of discourse, both general and local, as central to the construction of our own subjectivity and, with it, its perceived objectivity, by virtue of specific knowledge about our body. The science of positivism is just one, albeit powerful, example of this type of discoursing that can strongly influence the ways we come to view, understand and experience our body.

An objectified discoursing of our body gains further cogency through habitual practices of reflexive awareness and experiential interruption (Wolfe & Sigl, 1998) that precludes in-the-moment or sentient experiencing (the Latin word 'sentire' means, to feel). Through our Western enculturation into logical/rational discourse we become attuned predominantly to these social and cultural expectations that immerse us in the wider 'social body' and less attuned to the very sensuousness which is at the heart of all of our experiences. As Frank (1991) notes "the hyperreal is the point at which my body exists only in images of it, these images being based only on other images" (p. 93). Yet despite these discourses, our bodies remain repositories for our physiology and psychology that together refract the identities and selves we become from the world around us. As Crossley (2001) suggested earlier, this predominance of thinking over feeling can be thought of in terms of our imaginings and narratives of ourselves which have become the

predominant streams of Westernised experience. But underlying this reflexivity is the sensual/perceptual body that, whilst rarely acknowledged, remains a vital source of these re-presentations.

Privileging thought over sensation positions not only our bodies and our awareness of them, but how we come to interpret them, speak about them and live them. Whether we like it or not though our lives involve our body and the capabilities that it enables. The insight of Merleau-Ponty and Eastern philosophy is that the body has much to tell us about life, the world and our place in it. The phenomenological body, while situating us within a world of dizzying freedom (Kierkegaard, 1980) and debilitating futility (Sartre, 1969), also opens up possibilities of creativity and relatedness, identity and community. Ultimately any claims we make, particularly those related to our bodied experiences, rely on self-reporting for their importance and truthfulness. Thus it is to our bodies that we return, in one way or another, to validate what it is that we seek to understand and elucidate.

The Sensuous Body

Synnott (1993) sums up the scholarly tradition (from ancient Greece to postmodernism) of disdain for and ignorance of the feeling body. Psychology and sociology, both disciplines implicated in this research, have recently become more conscious of the role of the feeling-body in understanding human behaviour. A social theory grounded in ‘the body’s perception of itself’ puts “selves into bodies and bodies into society . . . rather than allowing the problems to be abstracted from the needs, pains and desires of bodies” (Frank, 1991, p. 91). Frank’s re-conceptualising of social theory puts discourse back into the body. In a similar vein, psychology’s functional, objectified body is being re-constructed as an experiencing, feeling body in dialectical relations with a contingent self and culture (Stam, 1998). Incorporating Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ of bodily experience and awareness Sampson’s (1998) embodied discourse situates us within an interactive community of bodily and linguistic practices where, “embodiment pervades all human endeavour, all human practices, including discursive practices” (p. 38).

For Sampson (1998), both inside and outside the literature, the body is stepping out of the 'closet'. The research reported here grounds knowledge and awareness in a feeling, sensing body that situates human awareness as more than just thought or reason. Through focusing on a feeling body it grapples with the complexity of experiencing by emphasising the integrated nature of its psychological processes. The realisation of the uniqueness of being alive is liberating (Baran, 2003) and more easily aligned with particular strands of Eastern philosophy than Western thought. Buddhism, for example, argues for us to cease striving and to drop our stories to gain access to the human life force that underlies individual, historical and universal awareness.

Whilst Buddhist meditative practice focuses on the transience of thoughts and experience, these things do adhere through bodily and cultural practices that most temple monks will not encounter in the ways we do in our consumer society. For most of us dependence on language and ideas has come from our bodies as we walk, talk, gesture and gyrate ourselves into relationships of power. Critical literature, through revealing the object-body, has uncovered ways we are socialised into relations of gender, sex, race and other beliefs about the body and its comportment. As Sampson (1998) suggests, any attempt to address inequality, oppression and difference involves liberating the body from its enculturation and the practices that these various forms of socialising promulgate.

Merleau-Ponty's corporeal intentionality highlights the sensory/perceptual basis for the reflexive activities that provide additional layers of meaning to felt experiences. Understanding these foundations assists in unravelling both the sensual and reflexive 'storying' of my exercising by recognising that body stories include bodily-felt sensations along with the reflexive sensibleness of them. Hence this research presumes that reflexive capacities, both individual and cultural, work on the body as much as the body works on them. However, representing lived dimensions of experience is problematic because once one begins to reflect on them one loses the experiencing of them. Articulating experience usually takes the form of a linguistic, reflexive account that is an attempt to recall and restructure original experiencing. My research is no different in this regard, except with the proviso that, any attempt to make further sense of my exercising experiences is itself

an inquiry into a variety of sense making activities now long since experienced.

My attempt to account for the phenomenological body gains traction, with the belief, that even in the remembering of past events the feeling/felt body can be re-membered. It reveals itself not so much through the historical accuracy of this remembering but in the specific body-self dialectics that are shared through it. These dialectics are embodied whereby my feelings, thoughts, reasons and imaginings are re-enacted and re-worked through the performance function of my narrative. My rhetoric helps to position my body, and with it, others too, in relation to the culture that immerses it. Making sense of bodies through the scholarly art of story-telling is all the while underpinned by the sensing body. While my body leaks a sense of its constrained and constructed presence through the words I use to describe it, it is in the silences that surround these descriptions that my feeling body speaks. But to engage this feeling body requires action, the act of listening, no matter how hard it might be to hear. My research shows how, in telling its own story, the felt body challenges the stories of culture and opens us up to the bodies of others.

Summary

The phenomenological understanding espoused here assumes the practical engagement of our senses in all their varied forms as the source of human experience. Sensuality provides a primary or bodily layer of meaning derived through organs and a nervous system that engages my world before my thoughts do. My body is experienced as real to me through the ways I feel it. My sensing immerses me into a world of interaction with other material things and activates a process of meaning-making that symbolises bodily-felt experiences into ideas, images, words and actions that I learn to use to describe and express them. Thus, meaning-making is generated through bodies that filter the socio-cultural constructs of our understandings to a particular point in time and history. Filtering of the felt body through the conceptual practices of its meaning-making illustrates how the porous nature of our bodies underpins its potentiality. We make sense only after we first sense, with our sense-making feeding back into our sensing in a reciprocating and ongoing cycle of interpretation and meaning-making.

These meanings are refined from within the argumentative texture of personal and public practices, habits, discourses and beliefs that make up our discursive horizons. Conceptualising my phenomenological experiences is an activity shared by other humans and culminates in the culture of agreed to beliefs and understandings about our existence as human beings. From this shared discourse of bodies I come to interpret or symbolically represent what I experience in, and through, my feeling body. As I feel, act and narrate my body, I, and other bodies, produce further understandings of it. Both reality and knowledge reside in my body but do so in differing yet complementary ways. The embodied notion of human being is based on a Merleau-Pontian conception of the perceptual-expressive body that asserts our sensual immersion into a life-world of materiality and meaning.

Chapter Two. A DIALECTICAL BODY

Whether by exercise or by plastic surgery . . . fantasises of a limitless improvement and reshaping of the body . . . defy its historicity, its mortality and even its materiality. The contemporary intoxication with freedom, change and self-determination has led to a vision of the body as a kind of 'cultural plastic' which we can shape at will (Grimshaw, 1999, pp. 92-93).

The Physical Body

As already emphasised, my body can be theorised and experienced, reflexively and objectively. These particular expressions of my humanity are, however, still dependent on sensual-perceptual processes that involve the feelings, thoughts and actions that ultimately make them up. Yet these conceptualisations of my body belie its complexity and the way that these capacities intertwine and overlay each other to produce the dialectical processes of its embodied expressions of selfhood. Like Elliott, Watson, Goldman and Greenberg (2004) I prefer the verb 'experiencing' to its noun because it better indicates the dynamic, dialectical and unique potentialities of my body. Using this analogy of embodied expressiveness, I contend that my experiencing is always from within and through my body. My existence is embodied and any sensations, thoughts, feelings and actions that express it, along with my many re-presentations of it, remain rooted in my physical body.

For a moment I stared at that dilated pupil before I realised it was only mine. Whereupon a strange euphoria came over me. Not only was I exiled, paralysed, mute, half deaf, deprived of all pleasures and reduced to a jelly-fish like existence, but I was horrible to behold (Bauby, 1998, pp. 32-33).

Deprived of almost all of his senses by a stroke, Bauby movingly describes the way his expressiveness and selfhood is 'locked-in' to a 'dead weight' of a body disconnected from its senses. His graphic depiction of the experiencing of physical disembodiment illustrates the taken-for-grantedness of our body's sensuality and the fundamentally embodied nature of its expression. In describing the paradoxical roller-coaster ride of emotion his lifeless body subjects him to, Bauby describes the biological rupturing of his

existence that, nonetheless, is still the basis for his phenomenological experiencing. Through his one working eye and the little hearing he has left he pieces together a self from the devastated remains of a body severed from its own fleshiness.

One day, for example, I find it amusing, in my forty-fifth year, to be cleaned up and turned over, to have my bottom wiped and swaddled like a newborn's. I even derive a guilty pleasure from this total lapse into infancy. But the next day, the same procedure seems unbearably sad, and a tear rolls down through the lather a nurse's aid spreads over my cheeks (p. 24).

Bauby's predicament highlights the body as the prime determinant of the self and how, its changes can change it-self (Synnott, 1993). Exposing the subjective elements of these bodily experiences (Sparkes, 1996; Denison & Markula, 2003) raises important questions about the body-self relationship. These include how we come to live our body and how this lived experience of it affects the way we then interpret it. Such interpretations can be seen as acts of consciousness that Solomon (2007) suggests embody "a complex of many experiences; sensations; various ways of being aware of the world, our own bodies, and intentions; and also thoughts and reflections on our emotions, all melded together" (p. 244). In Bauby's case, his documented acts of consciousness constitute an outpouring of emotion as meaning derived from a senseless body that still perceives. Theory and the discoursing of this body-self dialectic remain important, but only in relation to how it is actualised in the living and breathing of it.

The rationale for this research therefore, centres on the usefulness of our embodiment as a vehicle of knowledge and practice. With Sarbin's (1986) idea of storied lives has emerged the idea of storied bodies (Frank, 1995). Reissman (1993) also sees narrative as a way back into the body, as a bridge between the actual and the ideal. Poetics as a stylised form of narrative can evoke through words the felt-experience of being a body. An example of this is my attempt to share feelings of this nature that were evoked in a recent visit with a friend who was in the last two weeks of his life.

**I came to say goodbye today
 You are dying and it's your body's way.
 Your bones protruding through skin glazed white
 Your being ravaged by the fight.**

**I say 'hi buddy, sorry about this'
 I touch your arm and see you wince.
 It's then I know that you can feel
 From inside your body that will not heal.**

**Your head is twisted to the left
 You lie there seemingly oblivious.
 Your face contorts as pain takes a grip
 I wonder what you make of this.**

**I see your Mum as she fusses and fiddles
 Speaking of you without the frills.
 Her tears arrive then find respite
 As she wrestles with your impending flight.**

**I think of Caleb who's just twenty-one
 You, two years older, a lifetime done.
 He bites his nails and drinks his beer
 While you can't eat and death hovers near.**

**What can I say that you might hear?
 To lighten your load and release your fear.
 The words I can't seem to find anywhere
 Your body, I trust, will take you there.**

**I realise too that your journey is shared
 As your body's energy is pared.
 My body too has its due date
 As I fumble and feel for its future fate.**

**I see the photo of you in the foam
 You, dancing in legs that will not roam.
 Your Mum behind you, your tender brace
 The love between you timeless and grace.**

Guy (Author, 2007)

The use of words to express and reconstruct experiencing can help to embody even the self that is disembodied. While discourse aids and abets construction of the body, underlying any interpretation of it is always actual experiencing. Hence the experience of feeling disembodied is pivotal to any discourse that re-embodies. All experiencing,

including our discourses, starts and finishes in our body, and like the other things we interact with, reminds us that this is not a closed loop. The openness of our bodies to the life-world reflects the open-ended nature of our self-hood. Bodies both constrained and facilitated by genetics, biology, environment and history, through these very things express themselves in uniquely human ways.

The physical nature of our bodies provides the key to what we are and how we are. My body is made up of trillions of cells, all designated to achieving specific jobs through their genetic coding and the inherent, evolutionary processes of cell based life. The body's cellular activity involves the complexities of ionic exchange, axonal transport mechanisms, protein synthesis, enzymatic activities, DNA functioning and much more (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). The living organism that is my body is woven together in and through these processes and produces the fundamental awareness and consciousness that is my human being. My intrinsic state of being is not fixed or static nor isolatable to a specific site or mechanism, but is the emergent result of this interweaving of my bodily parts and functions. Chiasmic and dialectical processes of bodily integration produce my uniquely human capacity for consciousness that manifests in the physical, mental and emotional extensions of my body into the world. My human being comes courtesy of a physical body that produces my field of consciousness as the whole that is greater than the sum of its constitutive parts.

The Historical Body

Elias (1991) situates the constrained yet open-ended nature of our existence by redefining the concept of nature. Troubled by reductionism and dualism, he locates our innate potential for learning in an evolutionary body that produces biological dominance through the actualising of potential that “links irreversible evolution to reversible development” (p. 115). Put simply “how could human beings learn anything, if they were not by nature, that is biologically, equipped for it?” (p. 110). Capacity for ‘orientation and communication’, unique to humans and formed from the evolutionary process, situates us back in our historical, material bodies that are the “hinge between

nature and society, nature and culture, and in consequence between natural and social sciences” (p. 115). As Damasio (2005) suggests, Elias does the difficult thing by moving the disembodied spirit of Cartesian “from its nowhere pedestal to a somewhere place, while preserving its dignity and importance” (p. 252).

Feminist research (Nettleton, 2006) has revealed the gendering and commercialising practices that shape this evolutionary body further. Thus the consuming body replaces the labouring body as the dominant body discourse within mainstream Western society. These discursive practices highlight the increasing focus on the body in contemporary society due to the technological, political, commercial and ethical interests that it now raises. Through such “linguistic technologies that reflect particular types of knowledge (or ignorance) . . . [we learn] to behave, relate and obey (Fernandez-Balboa & Muros, 2006, p. 202). The ‘manufacturing of consent’ (Chomsky, 2002) gets written into the body and expressed through habits and practices that reflects the interplay of the actual and the ideal. As Stam (1998) suggests, the need in Psychology is to re-locate the body back within this dialectic of actual and constructed experiencing.

Young (1989) illustrates this dialectic through her portrayal of feminine movement as ambiguous, inhibited and interrupted through a subjectivity that is referred not onto ‘the world’s possibilities’ but rather back onto itself. Feminine movement, she argues, is plagued by this reflexive intentionality due in the main to a discoursing of the feminine body as an object. Objectification implies “a mere body, as shape and flesh that represents itself as the potential object of another subject’s intentions and manipulations, rather than as a living manifestation of action and intention” (p. 66). Being subjected to this sexualised form of gazing influences the ‘inhibited intentionality’ that produces the constricted movement and spatiality of women. This example of ‘ocular-centric’ discourse reminds us of the impact culture has on the body and the way beliefs, with and without consent, can get cemented through the daily practices of bodies. Again this vortex of actual and constructed experiences of the body produces bodies that are more often seen than felt (Morgan, 2005).

It is very much harder to ‘feel’ something when viewing it as an object unless, like Freud, you are looking for outward signs of what might lie within. “He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If the lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore” (Freud, 1953, p. 77-78). Perls (1969) too, advocates for the seen body in a similarly phenomenological way to uncover felt experience. “What we say is mostly lies or bullshit. But the voice is there, the gesture, the posture, the facial expression, the psychosomatic language” (p. 54). Perls, in particular, facilitated client’s actual experiencing of sensations and feelings to help them better align their beliefs with their actual experiences. These therapeutic approaches alert us, once again, to the dilemma of our bodies that are lived and contrived, that are seen from without while seething, often unseen, within.

Psychology’s Body

The within and without of bodies produces the reflexivity of Young and Morgan, like Freud and Perls, that helps them problematise the self that is produced from this dialectic. Through these reflections of bodies, the discipline of psychology, which started its history in the introspection of William James (1890), is being challenged to embrace its roots again and to take the feeling body seriously once more. If freeing humans, from the type of distorted existence that Young (1989) depicts, is the focus of its theory and practices, then Morgan’s (2005) appeal to resist privileging any one theory of the body, including the rediscovered felt body, needs to be heeded. The point this research makes, as part of this imperative, is that the felt body needs to be accounted for in any attempted representation of its practices.

What is also at stake here is the ideological foundation of the discipline. Is continued priority to be given to ‘technocratic rationality’ that “prioritises ‘objective facts’, calculations, and measurements at the expense of ethical values and human sentiments” (Fernandez-Balboa & Muros, 2006, p. 199)? What an acceptance of the feeling body brings to psychology is a world more compassionate and humanised. Such an acceptance

can help to re-conceptualise the 'acting' body that the discipline purports to represent. Instead of relegating the body's potentiality to conceptual capabilities alone, repositioning it back within lived experience requires an inclusion of the beliefs and practices that both constrain and facilitate these understandings of it. By taking greater cognisance of the contextual nature of the body's psychology the wider discipline would become more aligned to people's actual experience rather than its implied version. The mapping of the physical world would become less isolated from its symbolic dimension by beginning to trust the felt body for what and how it is and not what it might be.

What is at stake here is the scientifically unquestioned mistrust of the feeling body which is at the heart of its objectification promulgated by positivist, rationalist and even some narrative understandings. In positioning the body as untrustworthy these discourses privilege their insights over the very bodies that produced them in the first place. Constructions and uses of the body as 'an object of knowledge' (Foucault, 1979) allow this discourse of mistrust to enter the body through the beliefs and expectations that support this particular type of rationalising of it. The body is no longer just physically restrained but 'self-talked' into submission and habits of self-discipline. Ideology, habitus and discourse, combine to reinforce in the body, ideas of the body that denigrate rather than dignify it (Fernandez-Balboa & Muros, 2006).

The civilising of the body is at the root of much of Westernised society and the discipline of psychology itself. Its history requires understanding the ways the feeling body has been silenced through ideology and practice. Our history of subverting the subjectively experienced body has now come full circle. Not that these suppressions will ever cease; rather, the knowledge and investigation of these practices are now more available to scrutiny thanks to the critical stances taken by Foucault and others. Uncovering the ways discourse and practice intertwine to sap our lives of its phenomenological sense de-constructs the body of history and psychology, and allows for the possibility of re-situating it. While not jeopardising the discipline of psychology or its foundations, such critiquing can strengthen and enrich it by reinforcing the kaleidoscopic nature of its endeavours. A repositioning of felt experience as a trustworthy locale of

study within psychology also seems more than appropriate given the ethical and moral imperatives of much of its inquiry. The point being, that this repositioning helps to elucidate the cultural positioning of the object-body and the pervasiveness of its influence.

My research highlights the sentient, feeling body that challenges the metaphysical self or presence that “conceives the truth and being of things as lying outside of time, space, and history” (Allen & Young, 1989, p. 7). The evacuating of mind or self from the physical body that is bound into the material and historical world is an idealistic tool aimed at controlling what happens within that world. Objectifying the body through discourses that do so are, to some greater or lesser extent, an attempt to gain control over our body.

The human body, for all its resilience, is fragile; breakdown is built into it. Bodily predictability, if not the exception, should be regarded as exceptional; contingency ought to be accepted as normative (Frank, 1995, p. 49).

Yet even in its attempts at predictability traditional science inherently acknowledges the types of “psycho-social and material boundaries through which we differentiate ourselves from others and from our environments, and which ordinarily ‘contain’ or embody our emotions but which leak them as well” (Bondi, Davidson & Smith, 2005, p. 3).

The ideological constraints of objectivism and rationality have become superimposed onto bodies as a way of attempting to preserve what are deemed to be their most valuable capabilities. At a time when we live longer than ever before, our body’s incredible powers of sensual/perceptual uniqueness get usurped through a process of metaphysical enervation. In grounding ‘me’ materially and historically this physical body of mine is seen as the key element in the process of my identity and self-hood. The significance of phenomenological presence is, therefore, in sharp contrast to, the modernist structuring of experience that insists on a metaphysical form of presence that is experientially conspicuous by its absence.

Summary

My body is a repository of physiology and psychology that together refract the self that gets constituted from my culture. I experience my body as a feeling, situated body in dialectical connection with a contingent life-world. Non-feeling bodies highlight this connectivity of the body and help elucidate the way identity can be seen as a process resulting from the dialectic of physical and constructed experiences. Critical psychology, in problematising and de-centring the self that gets produced from this dialectic, evokes the role of discourse and culture in its shaping. Contrasted with this is the body's immersion through its senses into a life world of spatial and temporal significance that includes these fragile and multi-vocal attempts to make sense of its own contingency.

Locating my body in this way adheres to the principle of location, location, location whereby it is immersed into the now of this moment, the here and history of this place and the particular how of its expression. The interaction and interweaving of the various aspects of experiencing ignites my 'reality' which are the ways I come to find myself 'there'. The reflexive accounts of my experiencing that my research draws on will indicate the ways in which I respond to this invitation of life and the consequences of them. These introductory chapters have been an attempt to introduce the chiasmic and dialectical nature of human contingency that is the body's physical and symbolic immersion into the life-world. The theorising of human embodiment acts as the back-drop against which my own body's contingencies in the forms of its situated-ness, history and expression might be better illuminated.

SECTION TWO: RECOUNTING THE BODY

Chapter Three. A DIALOGICAL BODY

Accounts of being-in-place and to culture as something constructed out of the interplay of the senses, filtered through imagination and the historical shapings that individuals and groups get from socialization and enculturation in particular traditions and perpetuate by storytelling, can give the overall effort an authenticity complementary to, but otherwise unavailable through, more conventional thinking (Brady, 2005, p. 1004).

Narrative Research

Narrative research can be used as a methodological framework to help unravel the reflexive processes that overlay the sensually-based nature of our experiencing. It does this by seeing narrative and stories as an organizing principle that provides meaning to the random encounters and interactions that make up everyday life (Sarbin, 1986). Such an interpretive paradigm stresses amongst other things the “socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.10). It also clearly involves a physical body that produces stories, whether written, spoken, heard, remembered, or read, that are used in our attempts to construct our own understandings of the body. Utilising an embodied narrative approach (Sampson, 1998), this research seeks to articulate the bodily significance of language as well as the linguistic significance of bodies.

Along with Burkitt, Crossley, Packer, Merleau-Ponty and MacLachlan, this research views human experiences as embodied, unique and meaning-filled. Adopting an embodied narrative understanding of behaviour requires a methodology that will focus attention on the processes we use in the “shaping of a historical ‘reality’ ” (Murray & Chamberlain, 1998, p.293). The meanings I derive from my exercising take shape out of the interplay of past experiences with new interactions, under guidance from the ‘argumentative texture’ (Laclau, 1993) that guide my creations and interpretations of

them. As I enmesh my past with my current ‘experiencing’ to produce new ways of understanding myself I enact new possibilities of being (Gadamer, 1975; Schwandt, 2000). In storying my exercising this enactment takes particular forms of representation in order to do justice to the embodied nature of this unfolding. My text takes on a form of action through this story that performs the self that is this particular version or versions of my reality and its experiencing. Enabled and constrained by context and culture these oral interactions, reflections and writings that make up my thesis and the story it embodies, are performed for audiences that include myself, my family and the Massey School of Psychology along with a number of society’s institutions. I perform this story for the purpose of reclaiming the body I am and to testify to the various conditions that necessitated its reclamation.

The discipline of psychology, amongst others, is caught up in this story of my body because as I draw attention through the sensations, thoughts and emotions that are at the heart of my constructions of it, these constructions include those that psychology generates. In this way institutionalised psychology gets drawn into my story in varying roles as antagonist as well as ally. My story becomes lived experiencing as I engage in the construction of a self “within specific institutional, organizational, discursive, and local cultural contexts” (Chase, 2005, p. 658). My account here takes narrative as a distinctly interpersonal form of discourse that combines these various elements of experience into something of a life history that covers, albeit briefly, most of my life. Yet it is also my life story in that it describes my life and key events during it, in my own words. Incorporated into this life story are aspects of oral history where I share with a running colleague the meanings that certain events held for me. I also use poetry, prose and relevant speeches I have given to facilitate the performance-oriented nature of my narrative. All of these aspects of personalised narrative are dialogic in nature, constituted through the interpersonal and socio-cultural elements of their make-up. The story of my body is only possible through the other bodies that have helped define and situate this negotiated understanding.

In these interactively negotiated constructions of past events I focus an

autobiographical lens on myself and my interactions with others. This is a way of instancing “possible relationships between a narrator’s active construction of self, on the one hand, and the social, cultural, and historical circumstances that enable and constrain the narrative, on the other” (Chase, 2005, p. 667). The apparent anomaly of linking this particular methodology of autoethnography into a theory of embodiment is not so much resolved as situated within an understanding of the body’s dialectic with culture. “Selves act in ways that choose their bodies, but bodies also create the selves that act. We can observe more of the first process than of the second; [it’s just that] how bodies create selves is scarcely understood at all” (Frank, 1995, p. 40). Even though my story tells more of this dialectical selfing of my body than the chiasmic unfolding that is the bodied nature of ‘selfing’, the two are inextricably bound together. Embracing and giving voice to my ‘silent’ body aims at producing a story that “embodies – and gives us insight into – what is possible and intelligible within a specific social context” (Chase, 2005, p. 667).

Through revealing my historical and cultural embodiment my method of analysis reveals the “romantic (and false) notion that narrators reveal ‘authentic’ selves and speak in their ‘own’ voices, as if their selves and voices were not already mediated by the social contexts in which they speak” (Chase, 2005, p. 670). Hence this approach agrees with Geertz (1973) that understanding is interpretation all the way down, but adds that it is interpretation that is always embodied within the material and symbolic worlds that we inhabit. Narrative complements the phenomenological underpinnings of meaning-making by acknowledging the ‘storying’ of lived experience as an interactive ingredient within that meaning-making.

Human action is always figured in signs, interpreted in terms of cultural traditions and norms. Our narrative fictions are then added to this primary interpretation of figuration of human action; so narrative is a redefining of what is already defined, a reinterpretation of what is already interpreted (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 469).

Fitting within the philosophical assumptions of contextualism narrative highlights the opportunity that language and words afford me in telling my story my way. Life-story as a mechanism for reflection and recall provides the opportunity to sum up and connect

events from the unique perspective of my own embodied perspective. As I re-mind and re-member my body through the stories I choose to tell of it I get to breathe new life into it and conjure up new meanings of it. My narrative focus shifts the subjectivity of experience into a shared arena comprising that which is “meaningfully and evocatively about things that matter”, (Ellis, 2004, p. 46). To get to these things requires revealing the particular ways we construct the “fragile sense of selves” (Fine & Weis, 2005, p. 80) that is at the heart of any ‘storying’ of human experience.

Narrative research utilizes structure (the how), content (the what) and function (the why) of the stories we tell ourselves to reveal the ways we interpret and come to understand our experiencing. It takes for granted that what we say is as, or even more important than, what we see. Unlike the positivist proposal that our eyes evidence a reality that resides outside of our body (Sampson, 1998), a linguistic methodology reinforces the constructive and dynamic nature of meaning-making that implicitly involves the bodied yet contingent reality of human interaction. The symbolism of language becomes an important theoretical tool in helping to unravel this rather more unstable and less predictable view of human reality.

Through transforming experience into ideas, beliefs and practices of identity and selfhood, language reveals the learning games we play with each other to interpret and make sense of the body and world we inhabit. Narrative is therefore a reflexive device that utilizes a set of symbols to create coherence and meaning around the actions that is the dialectic of the body-self. This human structuring device, along with its particular contents, including the discourses it utilizes and privileges, has a powerful impact on the way the body gets represented and ultimately experienced. A narrative perspective reminds us of the engagement of the feeling/felt body with the world of prior understandings through the sense-making by-product of this immersion in what is the storying of its telling.

Narrative as Metaphor

For Sarbin (1986) the idea of narrative as a root metaphor (Pepper, 1942) for our psychological worlds fits with his understanding that “survival in a world of meanings is problematic without the talent to make up and to interpret stories about interweaving lives” (p. 11). The universality of story-telling is “tied to the acquisition of skill in using symbols, learning to talk about absent things as if they were present (that is, imagining), making use of the concept of time, and, of course, participation in social life” (Burkitt, 1999, p. 12-13). These symbolic practices are always and everywhere joined with the bodily to create our experiences of the world. Narrative ‘breaks the silence’ of the perceptual world by “spreading a further layer of significance over it” (Crossley, 2001, p. 79). Language confirms the dialogical and dialectical nature of our human agency and reinforces the social well-spring from which our feelings, thoughts and behaviours are verified.

A narrative approach can therefore be used to identify the conceptual meanings I attach to my lived experiences of exercising through the words I use to describe it. Respecting the authorial and actor roles (Sarbin, 1986) behind this type of meaning-making is at the heart of narrative research, as is the unique revelatory power that every story contains: “Every work constructs its version of what is truthful and factual, what could have happened, what did happen, or what will happen here” (Denzin, 1996, p.238). Narrative, in general, deals primarily with themes that emerge from everyday practices and which find expression in the researcher’s story or account of what they believed ‘happened’.

Reflexive ethnography, as one field of narrative, exists along a continuum from the biography of personal experience to the ethnography of someone else’s, and anything in between (Ellis, 2004). Narrative is understood here to mean that which is “oral or written and may be elicited or heard during fieldwork, an interview, or a naturally occurring conversation” (Chase, 2005, p.652). It can be about specific events, a story incorporating an important aspect of one’s life or one’s life from beginning to now. In all cases the hermeneutical position of narrative emphasizes the meanings that these events and

histories have for the storyteller. Narratives that involve these textualised accounts of experience, like memories, are complex.

Thoughts and feelings circle around us, flash back, then forward. The topical is interwoven with the chronological. Thoughts and feelings merge, drop from our grasp then reappear in another context. In real life, we don't always know when we know (Ellis, 2004, p.118).

Disentangling past from present is never a precise science, but rather an attempt to gain awareness of a life or situation so that "it is contoured and nuanced in a meaningful way" (Richardson, 2000, p. 931). Memory is also spatial, so that "the past is bent into strange shapes so that what should be furthest away is in fact closest" (Probyn, 1996, p. 113). These memories consist of events as well as our responses to these events (Hampl, 1995), and provide the opportunity to narrate either. Using memory as a research tool requires articulating the subtleties with which we narrate our lives. "How individuals narrate experience is as important to the meanings they communicate as is what they say . . . speakers construct events through narrative rather than simply refer to events" (Chase, 2005, p. 656).

Narrative as retrospective meaning-making is creative, particular and both socially enabled and constrained. As author I become immersed sensually, personally, spatially and socially in my own story-telling through the type of protagonist I create myself to be. Through its constitutive powers of re-creation, narrative becomes a powerful tool by which we re-live our history and our actions within it. These stories as constructions or tales of ourselves can also be seen as metaphors for the physical/felt body that underpins our particular constructions of it.

Looking for the world's essence is not looking for what it is as an idea once it has been reduced to a theme of discourse; it is looking for what it is as a fact for us, before any thematization. Sensationalism 'reduces' the world by noticing that after all we never experience anything but states of ourselves (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. XV).

Dis/Embodied Narrative

Our phenomenological states of being-in-the-world reflect life's moment to moment requisitioning of us. Life cannot be postponed; it beckons our presence here and now and in every here of every now that follows. The imperative of the moment illustrates the primacy of the sensual/perceptual body as the foundation of our rational and emotional interpretations of it. One of the effects of our socialization into a commodity-based, consumer society is that the sensationalism that Merleau-Ponty speaks of has become 'an endangered species' (Simmons, 2002). While Eastern philosophies like Buddhism have emphasised the acceptance of bodily-felt states for over two thousand years, Western thought continues to play down the 'field of presence' that underlies experience. Stuck in our habituation we reflexively filter bodily experiences to the point of obsession with "events that are not necessarily related formally but rather are related on the basis of arbitrary [or social] cues" (Hayes, 2004, p. 648). By getting caught up in the past and future products of our abstract abilities we become less aligned with our own sensual presence. The prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders within modern societies are testament to this cultural tendency to disembodiment experience that lies at the heart of these forms of confusion about our body (Baran, 2003; Eifert & Forsyth, 2005; Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 1999; Wolfe & Sigl, 1998).

Whilst Buddha's exhortations, not unlike Merleau-Ponty's, call us back to the feeling-body, this subjective body can be re-worked with post-modernist thought. Bodies and felt experience fit within a 'now' pregnant with historical, cultural and environmental 'cues'. Untangling these interactions of body and life-world may well be impossible but acknowledging key aspects of this entanglement is not. An embodied discursive approach attempts to do justice to this swirl of sensuality, thought, emotion and action that I get drawn into in my dance with life. My steps whether stuttering or sure are the unique combination of my subjective and reflexive capabilities and the particular culture that refracts these, through my body, back to me. The trifold of my humanity is inseparably bound up in my moment-to-moment experiences of being, moving and becoming. My dance analogy reflects Buddhist and Merleau-Pontian understandings of embodiment,

and like my exercising experiencing remind me of the connection of the feeling body to any understandings of it!

At this sensuous level, psychoneuroimmunology supports the idea that consciousness and mind are the resultant function of the body's highly adaptable and interconnected processing (Carey, 2000; Damasio, 2005). Yet one of the main reasons we so easily lose a sense of our body is the process of sensory adaptation that tunes us into change rather than our sensual consistencies. While a primarily adaptive feature across our evolution, this ability loses much of its usefulness in more benign situations. The ability to lose touch with the sensual ways of our body can, and does, accentuate its more reflexive functioning. Part of this functioning includes a reflexive ability to experience images of our objectified body that do not map neatly onto our internal experiencing of it (Weiss, 1999). The morphing of self highlights the way the body constructs itself, via culture, as self and society join to "intrude upon the body, inject it, take bits off and add others on" (MacLachan, 2004, p. 181). Trinh (1992) is more explicit about the influence of this 'hybrid reality'.

Experience, discourse, and self-understandings collide with larger cultural assumptions concerning race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, class and age. A certain [bodily] identity is never possible . . . [you] must always ask not '*Who am I?*' but '*When, where, how am I*' (p. 157).

Narrative analysis, like Foucault's (1979), points up the pervasiveness of these personal and institutionalized forms of critical gazing and how we internalize them and apply them, often unwittingly, into our daily lives. Coupland and Gwyn (2003) also highlight these powerful discursive influences on the body. "Bodies that were once controlled by direct repression are, in high modernity, controlled by stimulation. Thus the body in consumer culture is coerced into a normative discourse (get undressed - but be slim, good-looking and tanned)" (p. 4). The discoursing of our bodies includes its genderising, racialising, rationalising, economising, symbolising, sexualising and its cultural iconising. Together with post-modern interpretations of its anthropological, historical, psychological, political, economic and geometric significance "the sociology of the body is about how we are our bodies, how we live our bodies and our senses, and how we use

them and die them too” (Synnott, 1993, p. 262-263). ‘Historicizing’ the body has become the foundation for our own advancement.

Sociologists have gradually built a social science grounded and rooted, ‘embodied,’ in our experience and in our corporeal lives interacting with each other We know better who we are, what society is, and, from other cultures, the range of other somatic and sensory possibilities and options (Synnott, p. 263).

Through our ability to abstract our experiences we project bodily ideals as moral ideals (Frederickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn & Twenge, 1998). Our cognitive fusion highlights once again the importance Western culture puts on thinking and its use in regulating bodies and their behaviour (Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 1999). Coupland and Gwyn (2003) go further and prompt the question “If we are our bodies, and our bodies are themselves elements in the discourse of the self, then what is the relation between identity and embodiment” (p. 6). Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology situates this relationship within the physical and interactive dimensions of time and space found in his field of presence. Included here is the ‘moral, ideological and practical’ (Coupland & Gwynn, 2003) positioning of our body that get interwoven, through its homo-sapient make up, into an identity that is the dialectical expression of its chiasmic qualities. Hence identity and embodiment are inextricably linked, with one not possible without the other. Identities are the result of the symbolic layering of the body’s sensual processes and practices that is the particular interpretation of a body’s immersion into, and interaction with, the socio-cultural world. Coupland and Gwynn (2003) sum up one particularly influential discourse that Westerners contend with in this complex shaping of identity.

Voyeurs all, we necessarily turn our gaze upon ourselves, and it is this introspection that informs a perpetual striving to meet an ideal configuration of body and selfhood, which might express itself in countless ways, but each dedicated to rooting out and banishing signs of waywardness or defect, variance from prescribed norms of weight or shape, deformity or disfiguration; all of which, under the scrutiny of the gaze, are indicative of a marked and a lesser humanity (p. 5).

The disciplining subtlety of this voyeuristic practice serves to reinforce the privileging of mind over matter. Our fundamental bias against the sensual body underpins the social

practices of racism, sexism, genderising, ageism, fundamentalism, scientism, transcendentalism, commercialism, consumerism and every other 'ism' that relegates the body to its functions, objectifies it or dismisses it outright. Remarkably, for all its physiological insights, the bio-medical knowledge bank, by virtue of its positivist principles, reinforces this 'dumbing down' of the body. Docility of bodies occurs as mind relegates body to an inferior and dependent position and produces the disembodied discourses of control, domination and rationality. As I watch the Olympic Games and, once again, witness all the wonderful feats of endurance, flexibility, skill and speed, my incredulity turns to scepticism as I picture the raft of pacifying tactics used to coerce the body into athletic submission. Knowing something of the 'torture' imposed on the body by a controlling mind, what I recognise most now in such 'superhuman' efforts as Mahe Drysdale's bronze medal row at the Beijing Olympics is the cost of such measures. Drugs, corruption, blatant politicking, distorted nationalistic pride, elitism, money and power all aside, what is lost is the chiasmic body.

Existentialism merges together with phenomenology (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006) as philosophies that challenge this disembodiment of life by highlighting the central role that the physical and sensual body plays in understanding life. Like his fellow existentialists, Merleau-Ponty saw the body as the central tenet in an existence that is unique, verb-like, and dynamic and meaning oriented (Cooper, 2003). Life from this understanding erupts in the now, taking up its own history (Heidegger, 1962) whilst "hurling us toward a future" (Sartre, 1969, p. 259) full of uncertainty. Buddhist philosophy also takes a similarly embodied view of human life, inviting us to immerse ourselves in its sensuality rather than transcending or controlling it. "If we wish for greater wisdom and kindness in the world, perhaps we could start by inhabiting our own body with some degree of kindness and wisdom, even for a moment just accepting ourselves as we are with kindness and compassion rather than forcing ourselves to conform to some impossible ideal" (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 135).

Featherstone & Hepworth's (1991) 'mask of aging' points up the difference between experiencing aging 'in' my body as opposed to 'on' my body. Because of this my

exercising becomes useful in allowing me to call on a history of exercising schemas. My bodily history of sensuously significant habits of moving provide me with ‘body maps’ that, together with the ‘narrative maps’ (Pollner & Stem, 1996) I have formed about aging, provide the meanings that situate me physically, culturally and historically. It is from this sensual and symbolic mesh of meaning-making that identities are formed. In highlighting cultural scripts that privilege the biology of an object-body over the phenomenology of a subject-body, then the basis for one’s identity and bodily understanding can be made more explicit (Hepworth, 2003). Conceiving of the body as fleshy consciousness can assist in generating spaces for a re-evaluation of the aging body and its place at the heart of all our experiences. Understanding how identity and self-hood get produced from within the discourses of its reflexive representation via the socialized ‘body’ of society alerts us to the particular ways we conceive of our bodies and the types of subjectivity that underpins it.

Psychology as Narrative

Given the above comments, this narrative approach is distinctively psychosocial in its focus on the interplay between the sensual and social. The thoughts, emotions and actions generated by my movements interact with the cultural and historical forces operative on my body from without. Accounting for the within/without of my exercising experiences provides a window into some of the ways I involve others in the living of my body as well. In this way the methodology incorporates a socially-informed psychological perspective to highlight the types of discourses that I, along with others, use, discard or transform (Chase, 2005) in my attempts to embody through texts what it is like to be in my body.

As I run I express myself in a variety of ways. I take myself to the running track and into my racing just as much as I take myself to my lap top and into my writing. My writing is not my running, but each is a part of the continuous extension of my body into the world I inhabit. Through this commonality of expression, my running supports my writing and my writing, my running. Whether I write of my running, or something else,

they remain connected, and especially so when I write the things I feel, think and do in my running. As I write my running I am mindful of the expressive and bodied nature of writing's connection to running. Although this text is not exactly my lived experience it remains crucial to any understanding of it. Texts are a powerful embodiment practice in their own right, seeking as they do to draw together the threads of my life into a coherent and satisfactory whole. As such they can be turned back on themselves to highlight the more subtle forms of embodiment they attempt to represent. In seeking to understand these levels of representation and embodiment better, this research seeks insight into the particular bodily practice of my running. Given its phenomenological bias it is also presumed that anything this research can do to contribute to greater body awareness will contribute to the quality and betterment of our bodily-shared world.

Psychosocial meaning-making is all-the-while underpinned by a theoretical framework that emphasizes the sensing body as the core of a narrated body. The dialectic of body and mind, of I and me, also reflects the dialectic of I and the other, of self and society. As Merleau-Ponty reminds us, this dialectic is a continuum, whereby one is but an extension of the other. Just as the 'me' evolves from and folds back into the 'I', so the self is constructed out of understandings of bodily experiences that find expression in the ways the body gets written, spoken of and represented in 'society'. These expressions and narrations feed back into the 'flesh' and intentionality of our body and, through mind as body and body as mind, provide the immersed nature by which our personal agency and identity take shape. Note that this identification of mind with body does not specify the mind's location in any particular part of the body. Rather, as already discussed, our 'fleshy consciousness' is the body expressing itself in ways that are greater than any one, or sum, of its parts.

Autobiography as Phenomenological Narrative

My research aims to articulate the unique way that exercise has sedimented its actions and understandings within my body, and how my body's movements sustain as well as challenge them. To do this requires phenomenologically reflexive data that layers

experience with reflexive thought and analytic strategies. Presenting these strands of my existence through a life story form of autobiography provides me the opportunity to both share and analyse the feelings, thoughts, emotions, behaviours and interpretations that provide important snapshots of my exercising experiences. In this way an attempt will be made to not only narrate my exercising body but also to ‘body’ my narrative of it.

My autobiography is initially constructed out of the interaction produced through open-ended interviews with one of the co-researchers from my earlier research (Tuck, 2004). The life-story begins to take shape from within an interactive dialogue that is dialectic, dynamic and socially and historically constrained. By involving another life-long exerciser in my recounting of certain events I am afforded the opportunity to contrast and interweave more recent data with more historical and sedimented forms of reflection. These diary entries, action narratives, poems, speeches and personal writings, along with more scholarly forms of reflexive analysis, combine to produce an autoethnography that draws on ethnographical, anthropological and sociological roots. While supported by a developing body of literature this approach is a contentious form of methodology within exercise research as well as within mainstream psychology. However, it sits comfortably within the wider qualitative fields of social science that adopt contextualistic assumptions about the world. The phenomenological bias of this research is one of a number of theoretical perspectives adopted within this wider research context and is particularly common among autoethnographers of sporting and illness experience (Collinson & Hockey, 2005, Frank, 1995).

Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) that “examines the dialectics of subjectivity and culture” (Collinson & Hockey, 2005, p. 188). The focus is usually on the research process, one’s culture and/or the self (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). However, the particular embodied orientation of this research ensures that my biography implicitly involves all of these areas and could not be otherwise. By using what is effectively a psycho-sociological lens, this research will highlight how I re-present the felt experience of my running conceptually. Uncovering some of the specifics of this meaning-making will provide insight into how this research

process along with the culture in which it is immersed, is indelibly intertwined with the body that produces them.

Writing personally and emotionally challenges “the orthodoxy of the researcher/author as neutral, distanced, absent, silent” (Collinson & Hockey, 2005, p. 193) and thereby attracts criticisms of irrationality and narcissism. Given that “there can be no such thing as a neutral, innocent report since the conventions of the text and the language forms used are actively involved in the construction of various realities” (Sparkes, 2002, p. 12), autoethnography requires evaluation criteria different from traditional approaches. Believability and resonance with readers are two such criteria that appear more appropriate for judging this more unconventional type of text. As Behar (1996) suggests, such personal accounts risk much in that “a boring self-revelation, one that fails to move the reader, is more than embarrassing, it is humiliating” (p. 14). Phenomenology’s lived perspective requires a form of interpretation that aims at a cohesive representation of its historical, dialogical and context dependent nature which of necessity includes its own bias, partiality and incompleteness (Denzin, 1984).

Because of the meaning-driven nature of physical activities like running and swimming, autoethnography can help re-present what it is like to feel “one’s feet strike the ground or knowing the experience of one’s heart pounding” (Rintala, 1991, p. 272). In doing this, the methodology challenges the traditional understandings of the relationships between author, text and reader. In acting as a refractory device for my ‘experiencing’, autoethnography “offers fertile possibilities for the development of very distinctive forms of phenomenological sporting and medical accounts . . . [to] begin to remedy an imbalance in the relationship between theory and practice” (Collinson & Hockey, 2005, p. 198). The usefulness of such analyses lies in the way that the uniqueness of individual lives can be tapped for insights into the ways we learn to live our bodies. In this way lived practice can be theorised to do more than just inform us of the state of our sciences. In revealing the lived state of a body, the personal can reveal aspects of the social through the bodied nature of its make up. The personal retains explanatory power to uncover the relational that incorporates the historical, cultural, political and communal nature of its

make-up. In this way autoethnography can help us to hold on to the fundamental embodiment of being as it is lived through and experienced within these dialectical and dialogical strands of its unfolding.

Summary

Sensations, thoughts, emotions and behaviours intertwine to produce the subjective, reflexive and objective states of being that represent the complex and complementary interactions of my body with the world. Articulating the lived experiencing of this complexity with others, who I know to inhabit similar bodies, creates further understanding of it. It is this commonality of the body and the ways we talk and write it that is the subject of this research. Narrative appeals as a useful metaphor for human psychology, and the body that produces it, by reproducing embodied existence in the storied symbolism of its dilemmas, delights and diversities. Through these accounts of our lived body we fashion out identities and a sense of selfhood that provide continuity and coherence to otherwise random events and experiences. The storying of experience is a meaning-making tool that individuals learn from the stories that culture tells them. From oratorical elegance to the more prosaic, from realist tales to autoethnography, in finding different ways to represent the body narrative influences that body's lived experiencing.

Autoethnography as a particular form of narrative can help identify the ways the phenomenological body is filtered through and re-presented in my conceptions of it. Analysing felt experience through the words that represent it can help to highlight the ways I respond to these experiences through the meanings I attach to them. The symbolic nature of language supports the idea of this type of self-narrative as a metaphor for experience and action. The story of the when, where and how I construct the 'truths' of my exercising practices becomes a metaphor for my body's sensuality. Narrative complements the irreducible nature of my lived experiencing by providing a symbolic way into, as well as out of, its complex make-up. Given that psychology and other disciplines seek historical, cultural, environmental, social and personal truths, all of these aspects of existence reside in some form or other in our body and on it too. Narrative research can reveal the lived body by highlighting the contingencies of its telling. These contingencies include the symbolic and practical constraints imposed upon the felt-body through the discursive attempts that are used to explain it.

Chapter Four. AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHICAL BODY

A goal of life history work in a postmodern age is to break the stranglehold of metanarratives that establishes rules of truth, legitimacy, and identity. The work of life history becomes the investigation of the mediating aspects of culture, the interrogation of its grammar, and the decentering of its norms (Tierney, 2000, p. 546).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that underpins my autoethnographic methodology is Merleau-Ponty's concept of corporeal intentionality. His theory of 'fleshy consciousness' is based on the physicality of the human body that finds expression in meaning-laden ways through its sensually chiasmic and perceptually dialectic abilities. Autoethnography is a form of narrative that attempts to represent this complex of embodied expression. By making rightful claims as a vital dimension of knowledge the feeling body informs narrative psychology and its storied attempts to make sense of our phenomenology. The bodied world becomes a storied world when, through language, we seek to exchange our experiences of it with others. But, as I attempt to write these experiences, my writing becomes a way of knowing that is always dependent on the historical and linguistic practices that contain my own particular ideological preferences (Ellis, 2004). The imprint of linguistic and discursive practices upon my experiencing is both subtle and profound in the ways it represents and extends it. "Persons who construe are themselves constructs of a broader cultural and historical system and are locked in[to] the interdependence of joint discursive practice" (Burkitt, 1999, p. 72).

Stories and the practices they generate shape our understandings of our body and inevitably how we come to experience it. Because of this connection narrative can be used to highlight the ambiguities in these constructions of the body, and to disrupt the 'taken-for-granted' nature of many of them. These discourses that structure ideas and beliefs into verbal and non-verbal linguistic expressions intertwine within and without my physical body to produce the additional layers of meaning that 'reshape' it. Bodily self-consciousness, which Satre (1969) views as a third ontological dimension after the

body-subject and body-object, is a form of the reflexive experiencing that allows me to distance my-self from my-body. Finlay (2006) notes this conceptualizing impedes bodily intentionality when the body turns ‘clumsy’ under the critical gazing of others (Van Manen, 1990). The socio-cultural basis for this type of reflexivity points up the complex process that is the body-self dialectic. “Intertwined with power and discourse, knowledge is no longer a matter of representation . . . [producing instead] inner world[s] by enabling both experts and their clients to perceive, and speak about, the human subject in a particular way” (Morgan, 1999, p. 75).

While acknowledging the influence and importance of language to the body, this research methodology is an attempt at an embodied form of reflexivity. Autoethnography is no realist tale, but instead accentuates and describes the “journey rather than the destination and therefore ellipses the scientific illusion of control and mastery that so often prevails in realist tales” (Sparkes, 2002, p. 102). ‘Outing’ one’s own body may be frowned upon by mainstream psychology, but it is a way to re-embody psychological theory and break down the traditional boundaries erected around it. In doing this, autoethnography also challenges those elements of discursive and critical psychology that reject the body’s pre-discursive sensuality by opening up this sensuality to a form of analysis that psychology was founded upon. Fundamental sensuality is not an essence of selfhood, rather, it is the material, fleshy essence from which selfhood, in all its changeable characteristics, is generated: “I can understand the function of the living body only by enacting it myself, and insofar as I am a body” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 75).

Data Collection

In autoethnography, the researcher becomes participant, and the key instrument of, the research undertaken. The subjective pool of data that I generate includes researcher-transcribed conversations with another life-long exerciser, JB. JB (pseudonym) interviewed me on eight occasions over a period of five months using an informal and unstructured interview format. At the start of the first interview JB invited me to talk about my earliest memories of running and with each subsequent interview encouraged

me to continue my life history, guided by a copy of the transcript from our previous conversation. In the course of our interactions we both used an array of verbal prompts to openly encourage each other, along with, sharing our exercising experiences and insights to facilitate our conversations.

Parts of the interviews were weighted toward my biographical memories, others toward the meanings they engendered. Other parts included more interactional data, while at times the conversation turned more on JB's memories and meanings of exercise and how this was interpreted. Our interaction included a large degree of informality and openness that facilitated an enquiring stance between us. Interviews were held in my centrally-located, Wanganui office which JB was familiar with through previous contact. Each interview was audio-taped and then transcribed prior to the next interview to facilitate connection with the life story of my exercising. These interviews took place during the latter months of 2007 and each one lasted from forty-five minutes to one hour.

Underpinning our interaction was the shared life long connection to exercising that had begun for both of us with our participation in informal games and play and then led on to competitive sports at primary and secondary school. After leaving school we both continued playing our sports, athletics and rugby for JB, soccer and cricket for me. Both of us have run or exercised in some form or other all of our lives, regularly three to four times or more a week. We are both currently involved in athletics, occasionally training and attending competitions together. In more recent times we have developed a friendship through sharing training ideas and our common interest in maintaining our athletic prowess into older age.

I began to write the story of my fleshy body once I had completed these interview/transcription processes. This started with drafting accounts of events and memories that were of particular significance to me and were written to portray the felt aspects of the memories of their previously lived experiencing. These drafts incorporated personal writings, poems, diary entries and photography to help elicit a greater sense of my being there. Combining these various forms of biographic data with excerpts of my

conversations with JB gave my self-narration even more coherence once I had established a central theme to our talks. The theme of my anxiety became apparent through utilising Labov's (1977) narrative structure to tease out the action clauses of our conversations. What this revealed was the scant presence of specific dialogue that met his criteria for genuine narrative sequences (10), within the ninety-three pages of oral interaction with JB. The ten narrative clauses when taken together amounted to little more than a page of transcript and were identified by "matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred . . . which are temporally ordered" (Labov, 1977, pp. 359-360). There are so few because, consistent with being educated and middle-class, I regularly lost the point of my story through "an excess of external evaluation and syntactic elaboration" (Labov, 1977, p. 396).

From my initial readings of the transcripts I pinpointed key memories as needing further expansion, and this awareness together with, the discovery of the action clauses and over-riding anxiety theme, led into the more dramatic accounts of recall that are a key part of the autoethnography that follows. The narrative reliving of experience is at the core of my story and most closely evokes the testimony of my body. And if the validating response of the reader's verisimilitude is to be found it will be found in reaction to these pieces of the "most highly evaluated form of language . . . that which translates our personal experience into dramatic form" (Labov, 1977, p. 396). My oral action clauses, together with their expanded explanations, helped to identify the underlying narrative theme of this my life story. Together, the content of my written accounts of these memories and my orally depicted dramas reveal my life story as an illness narrative that takes its theme from Frank's (1995) idea of the wounded storyteller. The story that started out as an account of my life-long dedication to exercising turns into the story of my panicking. The story of my panic disorder situates my exercising as an attempt to reassert a sense of control over the feelings of unpredictability that began to reach new heights through an unpredictable body. Identifying the disciplining of my body in the persistent adherence to exercise helps uncover my ultimately futile attempts to resist the contingencies of my life, even post-panicking.

Ethics

The ethics process began when potential candidates for the interviewer/participant role were identified in discussion with my supervisors. Initially I was keen to have my wife involved due to the shared interest we have had for the past twenty years in each other's exercising. In reviewing this as an option, it soon became obvious that her participation would be ethically untenable. Given the significant power relationship and the disproportionate share of benefits operating in my favour, coercion of her and our marital relationship would have been difficult to identify and therefore safeguard against. It appeared obvious once these implications had been reviewed that my wife could still play a part, informally at least, in helping to edit my emerging story for the relevance I seek. Attention then turned to the co-researchers of my master's research as potential candidates given their familiarity with my research.

It became apparent that due to availability and accessibility only four of the original eight were realistic prospects to approach for the role envisaged. The role reversal from the previous research would also allow one of these co-researchers the chance to help me elicit my story, much as I had attempted to elicit a part of their story three years ago. After pulling their name from a hat, I approached the person who, after reading the information sheet (see pp. 195-196), agreed to participate and signed the consent form (see p. 197). The release of transcript form (see p. 198) was also signed but only after the data collection had been completed. As part of the consent process with the participant it was also agreed that our potential research relationship did not pose a significant threat to our individual wellbeing or the wellbeing of our friendship. These matters, along with my proposed design and procedures, were endorsed by the Massey University human ethics committee's approval of the project on the 30th of July, 2007 (see p. 199).

In discussion with the interviewer/participant confidentiality was agreed upon with the acknowledgement that potential readers who were co-researchers from my earlier work might put two and two together and come up with the person's identity. On this basis a pseudonym was chosen with the person opting to be called 'JB'. JB remained

unconcerned about the possibility that a very small number of people may still be able to work out his/her true identity. Informed consent appeared to be made easier for JB through their participation in my previous research. The person understood very quickly the role required of them and commented on the reversal of previous roles. Reference was made to the types of interactive prompts and interaction that had facilitated our previous research interaction and JB also became quickly accustomed to, and reassured by, the audiotape technology used.

Researcher

There are a number of implications arising out of the methodology and the bibliographical nature of the interviewing process. These interviews aim for a particular type of honesty, “one that accepts vulnerability and allows [for] the full range of senses to forge co-understandings” (Lassiter, 2005, p. 115). The type of interaction requires trustworthiness between participants, and especially so on my part, as through this story of my life I share personal revelations. Hence the interviewer needed to have and to maintain sufficient credibility in my eyes to facilitate the trust necessary to the sharing of these personal experiences and their aftermath. These qualities were apparent throughout the interview process ensuring I could share my story confidently. A big part of the quality of our interaction, I believe, was based on our previous experience where the interviewer/participant had been in ‘my’ position and acted with similar empathy, judgment and acceptance to that which had been extended to them. The ‘joint’ investiture that we shared through our exercising commitments has in no small way contributed to what has been a rewarding experience for me and hopefully for those of you who read this.

I have felt listened to whilst being challenged to reveal the practical sense of my running. Self revelation is risky within mainstream scholarship because of its critique of the ‘dramas’ of subjectivity and the more general possibility of it becoming a form of humiliation (Behar, 1996). Engaging in this process requires generating data that is sufficiently revealing to turn a good story, through engaging concepts, into relevant

insight. No small task given the paucity of ‘sensuous scholarship’ (Stoller, 1997) in psychological discourse. Fusing intelligence and sensuality challenges long held ocular-centric and control-laden practices that underpin modern psychology. It does so here specifically through the way I interweave these socially constructed conversations of my life into the more subjectively generated memories of my experiences. These oral conversations contribute to this written form of ethical self-stylization that problematises “knowledge, power relations and the self by placing them as ‘objects’ for critical thought” (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 191).

Investigating the ways my body reproduces itself in experience through the text that represents it includes the cultural forms of subjectivity that infuse these very descriptions. My autoethnography is uniquely placed to make clear how these intersect by critical thought that “divorces the academic self from being the subject of someone else’s control and the prisoner of his/her own identity” (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 191). Through this form of Foucauldian ‘selfing’ my story becomes an opportunity to challenge the modernist version of an inherent, reified self and to situate power and knowledge as possibilities, not pre-determining elements, of this self-hood. In self-stylising bio-power through critical bodily practice Foucault (1986) calls upon the necessarily embodied and therefore contingent nature of the body to challenge the persistent ethos of a stable and unchanging core of identity.

As a form of practical intellectualising this sensuous scholarship re-conceptualises psychological constructs as “embodied processes lived in particular cultural contexts . . . rather than ‘internal’ attributes or individual variables” (Morgan, 1999, p. 67). Good autoethnography “creates charged moments of clarity, connection and change” (Holman-Jones, 2005, p. 764), and renews the debate over sensuality and reasoning, subjectivity and objectivity. Rather than viewing these things as incompatible, this thesis attempts to ‘show off’ the body’s chiasmic ability to intertwine the physical and conceptual to produce the intrinsic reversibility that is selfhood. In revealing how what happened to my body differed from what I wanted to happen, my story becomes an opportunity to rethink my body and ultimately re-body my thinking. However, accepting what is, as it happens,

is “very hard work, especially when what is happening does not conform to our expectations, desires, and fantasies” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 61). Learning to let go requires a subtle shift of focus that in turn throws further light on the way we live our bodies.

Embodied Reflexivity

Beginning in my body, filtered through language and understood within its socio-cultural constraints, this sym-biology catalyses my past into an embodied refraction of its ‘presence’. By “repeating the act of connection and creation, breaking that experience out of one form and context and remaking it in another” (Holman-Jones, 2005, p. 769) my body activates its embodied reflexivity. The next section puts this embodied reflexivity into practice by attempting to describe the dialectical process of the chiasmic immersion of my body with the life-world it embraces. Through a layered recounting of memorized events I try to elucidate the practices I take up in these interactions through the interpretations and understandings that are the linguistic constructions of them. Two types of analytical framework are used here to highlight the discursive processes of identity I use to create a more coherent sharing of how I come to make sense of my lived body. These help to reveal how my “body and voice are inseparable from mind and thought as well as how bodies and voices move and are privileged (and are restricted and marked) in very particular and political ways” (Holman-Jones, 2005, p. 767).

I do this by firstly identifying the key action segments (Labov, 1977) from the interview data with JB. This led to the identification of anxiety as an important tenet in my upbringing and endorsed the evocative elaboration of specific memories that I felt compelled to write after an initial reading of the interview transcripts. These elaborations provide expanded action segments for this the written version of my life history. Contextualised within the other biographic data used here these memories begin to take another shape, and eventually find coherence through the conceptualization of an illness journey (Frank, 1995). Through this ‘reliving’ of particular memories of the ways I have experienced my body some of the conditions that were influential in the shaping of these

experiences and the selfhood I defined from them are revealed. As this story of my panicking unfolds so my exercising finds greater meaning when viewed from within the influence of these contingencies of its make-up.

Summary

Autoethnography is a scholarly strategy used here to situate meaning-making back within its sensory/perceptual context. It cannot do this directly, but looks to represent this experiential realm by creating linguistic versions of it. My story attempts, through evocative writing, to conjure up images and ideas of what 'being there' was and is like. Ultimately being there involves being there, but the value in trying to reproduce feeling descriptors of it lies in providing phenomenological insight into bodies and the psychology they generate, both individually and socially. My autoethnography is constructed around the analysis of oral and written accounts of personal memories, along with the additional bibliographic information of photographs, diary entries and other personally meaningful material. The oral accounts involved an interviewer/participant who was chosen from a pre-selected group of exercisers who had assisted with my earlier research. Eight interviews were conducted and were researcher-transcribed with each transcript made available to the participant before the next interview was carried out.

The analysis of these transcriptions and other personally-revealing material led to the 'storying' of my exercise and together with the theoretical conceptions of section one unfold into the insights offered in section four. Approval for the research was obtained from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee on July 30, 2007 (approval number 07/37). Implications of this research are personal as well as societal. Embodied insights remain personal, but the social interpretations of these can find resonance for others similarly embodied. In sharing how I have come to feel more at home in my body my hope is that you, the reader, may be better able to feel at home in yours. In testifying the felt body without adopting the objective and essentialist rationalism of mainstream psychology, this autoethnography also challenges the discursive boundaries that circumvent it's telling.

SECTION THREE: FLESHING OUT THE BODY

Figure 1. Me.

Chapter Five. RE-MEMBERING MY BODY.

To lay bare and unfold all the presuppositions in what I call my reason or my ideas at each moment, we should always find experiences which have not been made explicit, large scale contributions from past and present, a whole 'sedimentary history' which is not only relevant to the genesis of my thought but which determines its significance (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 395).

Early Days

I grew up in Inglewood, a small rural town where "there was only about two thousand people there, if even that, and most small towns had their own maternity hospital and I was born there" (p. 1)¹. I am the fourth eldest in a family of six girls and three boys. My father, not having the resources or connections to become the share-milker he wanted to be, spent the majority of his working life as a labourer/driver for a local roading contractor. When I came on the scene Dad was working at the local dairy factory and we lived in a rented factory house on Rata Street, east of the shopping centre. What I remember most about this house was our garage, "a separate garage . . . that was always a bit of a spooky place" (p. 1). The shed had a dirt floor and beams of rainbow light would shimmer against the dusty and cobwebbed outline of its timbered interior. Whenever I went inside it I always felt an intoxicating sense of presence stirred up by an imagination that the devil had somehow taken up residence in the darkened shadows of its emptiness. Try as I might I could never shake this sense of foreboding and despite numerous attempts to conquer my fears a hideous and shadowy image would inevitably begin to take shape in my mind and drive me out into the light.

Behind the significance of the garage's grip over me was an understanding of the devil/God dichotomy that was the Catholic teaching at the time. "I can always remember the catechism we used to use and we would always have catechism for an hour in the morning, every morning. So we'd be learning about the churches teachings" (p. 22). These personifications of right and wrong were always depicted in the extremes of their polarity. The devil with horns and nasty tail as horrific looking, animalistic in nature and

¹ Page numbers refer to the particular page of transcribed conversation with JB.

exceedingly cunning; God with flowing white robes, beard and benevolent smile exuding an aura of omnipresence, control and aged wisdom. But it was the devil that was depicted, through the innumerable homilies I was subjected to, to be closer to my own make-up, with God an omnipotent but transcendent presence detached from the materiality of daily life. By virtue of the fleshy connections of my body I was deemed to have more in common with the wicked one, than the wondrous one, through the sensual frailties of my senses of smell, vision and kinaesthesia that together, could more easily, conjure up his image and presence. It took until around high school days, when we were introduced to the human side of God, in the stories of Jesus, for the influence of this more medieval characterization of the devil to be replaced by a more enlightened, but even more insidious, version of evil. Whereas previously he was a personified, stand alone character who had to be warded off through various acts of faith, hope and charity, his presence became interwoven into the failings of my own fleshy body. My battle was no longer with an exceedingly clever and cunning opponent who wore a cloak of invisibility but with my own sensuous manifestations. Previously my body could act as an ally in alerting me to the devil's presence - like in the garage. Now it seemed that it could no longer be relied upon or trusted in even its most harmless expressions. But I seem to have digressed from the more mundane matters of my upbringing.

My mother trained as a maternity nurse, became a housewife and mother of nine and worked as a machinist and cleaner. She was Catholic, and while Dad was a convert at marriage the idea never really seemed to grow on him. "I was the fourth child and five followed me" (p. 1), meaning there was a pecking order. My first thirteen years of growing up were dominated by Catholic practices that took account of this pecking order and its gendering. Boys were privileged and although still required to do dishes, make beds and help around the home, my sisters were the true jack of all trades having to master parenting, housekeeping, and cooking, as well as lawn-mowing, fire-lighting and gardening skills. Along with religion, financial hardship was a constant backdrop to my growing up which also came to include running, jumping, bull-rush, swimming, tip and run cricket and hide and seek "as primary school made a big impression on me" (p. 2). The school playground that was "a rugby field with goal posts up all year round" (p. 2)

became the arena for numerous epic feats of physical endurance, enjoyment and informal play. At a time when I frolicked around a miniature sized rugby field at a small Catholic primary school run by Sister of Mercy nuns the Taranaki rugby team were having several tenures as holders of the Ranfurly Shield, the symbol of provincial rugby supremacy in New Zealand.

“I said I don’t want to go. She says, well I’m sorry you have to. And I said I don’t want to go and obviously putting on a bit of an act So she marched me out of the door took me down the street and said off you go. You’re not coming back here till you have been down there and played your first game of rugby it was barefoot rugby and had a bit of a runaround and ended up getting home smiling” (p. 9). After my first taste of it rugby seeped its way into my body as I discovered what it was like to play against boys from schools like Norfolk, Tariki and Inglewood primary as well as clubs like Tukapa, Star, Midhirst and Stratford. We played Toko primary school one Saturday morning, and, as we filed onto the field for our under-eights clash, our bare-feet stung from the cold of the hoar frost that covered the entire ground. By halftime my feet were back to being my own and a couple of tries from darts around the side of a scrum gave us victory 6-0 and a game to savour. I was a half-back who liked to run and would often starve my backs until I came up against better players who could tackle me. But I am getting ahead of myself again because before I discovered the formal game of rugby our lives at home were transported from the eastern to the western reaches of my little town. “Dad proudly told us he’d got a state advances loan at three percent and he got mister Codd, mister Bert Codd to build him a house up the other end of town. I must have been about seven or eight” (p. 4). My memory of the excitement that this caused us includes the evening trips that some of us made with Dad up to the house where we were put to work helping him glue the linoleum down in our new bathroom and toilet. The pungently arousing aroma of the thick dark-green glue remains with me even today.

This home was a basic timber and iron-roofed construction, four bedrooms, a bathroom, separate toilet, wash house, kitchen, dinning room and lounge, all of which were of the decidedly small variety. As a kid it felt like a palace with the only down-side the long,

dark and scary passageway that witnessed my necessary and often frantic early morning excursions to the toilet and back. By this time the dark had come to house bogeymen in general and was not just the lair of the devil as had been the empty garage of Rimu Street. We had the mandatory open fireplace with hearth, which, despite most of the heat elusively disappearing up the chimney, did stave off what were cold and often wet winter conditions courtesy of our ever-present and dominating mountain. We only needed to look out over our back hedge to be reminded of its magnificence as it engulfed us in its hulking yet mystifying presence. Its presence would even be transmitted through its frequent disappearance behind the shrouded sulk that would envelope us in the grey, relentless drizzle that was its regular hibernations. Its brooding, whether apparent or otherwise, dominated us and our surrounds so much so that my own mood swings began to keep time with those of its own.

When I was growing up under its influence I did not recognise its significance other than noting the extremes of optimism or pessimism that it seemed to excite in my body. These days I still see this same mountain, different name, from my property some one hundred kilometres to its southeast. I no longer feel its presence the same unless and until I engage with these memories that reactivate the overriding sense of its timelessness and resilience. Despite this lack of consciousness, the tug of its attachment remains alive within me through the ways the impacts of its physical configurations and compositions seeped into our bodies, physically, mentally and emotionally. Our new home bought with it a new environment, “we had moved to the town boundary and we were surrounded by farm land. There was farms, mainly dairy cows but obviously with the land, there was forests. I can remember one, two, there was three big clumps of trees for us kids, big forests right at our doorstep. There was also exciting things like a stream . . . a makeshift bridge . . . suddenly we had an incredible amount of freedom” (p. 5).

Together with siblings and/or various neighbourhood kids this environment became my own personal playground for bamboo horse-riding, pine needle fires, track and hut-building, crawler and eel fishing, water-pipe escapades, tanalising fluid experiments, hide and seek, fresh-air, moving and constant exploration of its contours and boundaries.

Although we lived on the very boundary of town it never occurred to me that this edge of civilization would continue to move. The very first signs of this came early as we discovered what we thought was just another exciting opportunity for exploration, “these big pipes . . . I was a bit too scared to go all the way up though cos I didn’t know where it went” (p. 6). It was another four or five years before the road went in and even when that did it still left us with two forests to roam in. But the march of civilization in the form of subdivision and new housing meant my natural environment would continue to shrink around me until one day nearing the end of my secondary schooling I looked out and it had disappeared. However, before this got even close to happening I still had plenty of walking to do.

Like my adventures into this natural playground, much of the rest of my early life involved walking! For the first thirteen years of my life I walked everywhere, to school, to church, to athletics, to rugby, to tennis, to practice, to the shop, to grandmas, to my cousins. Everywhere I went always required a journey courtesy of living on one side of town and everything and everyone else on the other side of town. The only time Pukatea Street began to work for me, mobility wise, was when I went to high school because it was only five minutes away. By then I had found part time work as a paper boy and by necessity become the proud owner of my first, albeit, second-hand push-bike. I was very proud of my ‘new’ bike and all its attachments including the green alkathene pipe that my cousin had spliced and wrapped around the horizontal framing bar. Seriously mobile at last the sense of freedom that I got when I rode it hinted at a life full of excitement and promise.

Yet being a mobile male did have its drawbacks as “Sister Aloysius, used to handicap me for some reason even though these girls used to beat me off scratch . . . would put me back two or three yards . . . and I’d cry” (p. 11). These spontaneous outbursts of emotion that, sadly, I seemed to have no control over, began in my final years of schooling at St Patrick’s Convent primary school. These ‘howly-bags’ (p. 11) were a source of consternation and embarrassment as I struggled to understand the attachment I had grown to winning. “I don’t remember the girls ever crying when I beat them. So there

was something about me that was a bit different” (p. 11). My sense of being different wasn’t entirely unfamiliar to me because just being at St. Pats marked me out as different from the mainstream kids who all went to the public primary school and would chant ‘Catholic cats stink like rats’ and throw stones. What was also frustrating about their intolerance was that the short cut home was past their school, and because of the threat of physical harm I was forced to walk the long way home again. Their collective indifference, I always reassured myself, was based on jealousy and bigotry. However, when my difference became more subjective, as in these strange episodes of acute discomfort and disillusionment at losing, this provided troubling overtones that could not be rationalized away. Even many years later this sense of failure and disappointment continued to plague me. “I was thrashed and I felt, and I guess what made it worse for me was . . . I didn’t enjoy it” (p. 15). While not of the same magnitude as Vince Lombardi’s desperation, where winning was not everything it was the only thing, this need to win has remained strong throughout my life. Desire to succeed did not only apply to the sports field but filtered through to most areas of my life. One area that was of particular importance was my parent’s happiness. I would even take their frustrations to heart and find myself caught up in their remonstrations.

My Father's Shadow



Figure 2. Dad and I.

The photo shows me and my Dad at my mother's seventieth birthday party. At the time Dad was sixty-seven and suffering from the emphysema that would lead to his death four years later. The significance of this photo is in the irony of the cans of draught beer that sit on the table next to us. Dad would never have normally left these cans unopened and unfinished. At this time in his life alcohol of any quantity exacerbated his emphysema and he rarely imbibed and when he did he took days to recover from the effects. I, on the other hand, had long before grown a dislike for alcohol and the sorts of behaviour it could lead to. My dislike of, and the trouble I have mentioned above about accepting, others being better than me "I think stem back from my upbringing from my home environment . . . Mum was a very strict Catholic. And we were brought up with a very strict Catholic upbringing" (p. 17). In contrast to my Mum, Dad was a reluctant convert who enjoyed his beer and would come home drunk and "we would often have a ruckus at night . . . he'd be pretty well pissed and Mum would have his tea in the oven . . . burnt to

a crust and an argument would ensue . . . And Mum just couldn't hold back . . . And as the arguments ensued we would get more fearful that something might happen. Particularly that Dad might hurt Mum" (p. 18). The fear and uncertainty hinging around Dad's drinking occasionally required the presence of the local priest, but never the police. And with his presence came the embarrassingly public, admission of our problems.

Through the reflexive context of some forty years after their happening, I describe these childhood experiences, situations and events. In this context I impose upon these experiences a time-warped perspective and, by virtue of this, come to review and re-experience them differently. My flexibility of perspective-taking endows upon these events a felt sense of surreal absurdity that is the reliving of them in this particular re-telling of it. I experienced their actuality within the morally-derived imperative of a discourse of bodily and worldly mistrust that my mother's belief system and the wider church's authority sanctioned. What obviously never occurred to me during these early and impressionable days was that I was the bigot. Our unquestioning acceptance of Catholic doctrine came with an even greater price than the ostracism of the state primary kids. It came with the price of regular bodily eruptions of confusing ambivalence that were felt most acutely when confronted with Dad's drunken deviance.

Feelings of moral embarrassment and disappointment came on top of the more earthy expressions of fear and doubt, and these in turn plagued my attempts to assimilate his blatant breaches of spiritual protocol; and especially so when the resident priest occasioned such displays. What our confessor's presence seemed to ignite most in me was the rather sickening realization of the hopelessness that confronted us as a family as our public humiliation was further reinforced in the futility of his directives. I somehow knew that my parent's marital affairs, along with the related fortunes of their children, would take something greater than the miracle of God's intervention to put right. Such spiritual solutions appeared impotent in the day-to-day, lived experiencing of my parent's differing realities. The struggle to contend with the ambivalence generated in my own body by the verbalized venting of their differences came to be reflected in my own

marriage when I too vented frustrations of my own kind with Jill, sometimes in full view of our children. Even after attending marriage guidance classes that clarified the difference between showing and sharing emotion, I still struggled to apply the second, more constructive form of expression. The process of sharing emotion is never easy even when one is aware of its potential. The displays and shows of emotion from my parents leaked out into the landscape of our family life in such a way that it helped contour and eventually penetrate nine other bodies. Never more so than when Dad would arrive home in an intoxicated state and we would get to witness the latest playing out of their frustrations, anger, and misunderstandings.

The clock ticks by five, too early yet, too soon to tell. It's now five thirty and disappointment starts tickling my tummy and with each minute takes up more residence but no, not yet, there is still time. Fait accompli most likely, but to him the benefit of the doubt I give. It's now six and it is done and dusted. In accompaniment now pangs of anxiety, not fear just its cousin, doubt, disguised as usual in the aftermath of my anger. He wasn't coming home any time soon despite my hopes and even if he did, he'd still be pissed, bugger him. Now I'm angry for even believing he might, what a sucker to think he might do what's right. Why does he do it? It only ends in frustration and tears for everyone! So stupid! You'd think he'd know by now, but it never seems to change. It's now eight thirty, these worries forgotten, but the bang of his boots and the wrap of the door re-awakens my body as it takes a new course. Sheepish at first his body appears as in he struts with his head cocked slightly, giving it away in the twitch of his lips and the slur of his smile. It doesn't take long for the quarrel to start, their words getting louder as the warning bells fire. I am drawn to them like a moth to the light as I shrink into the wall and watch helplessly the way he argues his right. He seems full of fight and Mum, as resistant as ever, claims her more morally elevated position. I can only try to quiet her with my looks and muffled gasps of fear, but she is now oblivious to my rising panic. He could so easily take a swipe and leave her on the floor, but the more I mentally hush her, the more she takes umbrage at the senselessness of his actions that booze away all her hard work. His meal in the oven dried out and tasteless, now the only thing

left as his focus of scorn. Meanwhile the threads of doubt transform within me into a tapestry of terror that blindsides my thoughts. Speaking now becomes impossible and I only wish that Dad could know the distress I feel. He doesn't, and I am once again caught in the impotence that is their division. This burst of emotion from all sides takes another turn as my father, losing his bravado, turns his attention to us, as we await this inevitable outcome from the insecurity of our various positions within the house. His first attempts at familiarity, ungainly and fumbling, lose their effect almost immediately at the subsidence of their original din. He clutches at us ham-fisted, not realizing the strength he uses in his attempts to draw us near. All we hear is his liquored breath and our replies are only pleading and then disgruntled. He leaves off long enough to eat his tea, fussed into recovery by a still muttering wife. He soon disappears to his bed unseen, the stench of his flatulence a sour reminder of what had just been.

When he was drunk it was like I was witnessing his shadow and I'd then come under its gloomy spell. I wanted it not to be him and the next day, through its re-ordered normality, would seemingly make a lie of what had happened the night before until the clock ticked by five once again. He could turn up sober and sincere some nights, delaying the inevitable that was his insatiable thirst. Ironically my own false hopes for his sobriety bestowed on me a similar form of addictive practice. The volatility ignited by Dad's addiction left its imprint across all of the lives who witnessed it. Not being able to voice the feelings generated in my body by their encounters meant I could not locate nor validate their occurrence. Life during these times seemed like a rollercoaster ride, the elation of sporting and academic achievements along with the thumping lows that were the uncertainties and self-doubts of my parent's incompatibility and disagreements. My suspicion of life seemed to emanate outwardly from the ways Mum and Dad regularly demonstrated their fractious relationship to us. As a child growing up in a large family where sitting around the kitchen table was a mission in itself, things were hardly ever what they might seem. The logic of such a large family dependent on a labourer's wages, rather than questioned, was sanctioned within the moralistic sanctity of Catholic marriage. Catholicism, by colouring life with such simplistic dogma, provided a moral

high ground that bore little or no resemblance to the ways that it unfolded in my experiencing of it.

Despite the discrepancy of this constant state of emotional flux in my life one figure loomed largest on almost every other front in our lives. My Mum, who, without any secondary schooling, saved Mister Harwood's life as he arrived at our front door bleeding profusely from a chainsaw cut to his leg. Who not long after this saved her own daughter from a similar fate after she had fallen through the glass front door and severed an artery. She simply bound these horrendous wounds sufficiently and tightly enough to ensure blood loss would not be fatal. Many said this was her nursing training but I saw these incidents as examples of her pragmatism. The same resourcefulness enabled her to find ways to clean, clothe, feed and provide us all with the necessities of life whilst contending with the physical, financial and emotional hardships that her body, relationships, history and culture bestowed upon her. The pragmatism of her lived experience contrasted with the idealism and naivety of her religious beliefs and practices to which all of her children were rigorously introduced. "Mum ruled the roost on that score. And so we were all bought up as strict Catholics . . . just how powerful an influence that was in those early days" (p. 21).

However as their wedding photo attests, both Mum and Dad began their lives together with the hope and happiness that is blind to the particulars of how relationships unfold. Their relationship came to include the thoughts and feelings that contributed to and helped make up their second son's particular assumptions and understandings of certain events and possibilities. Whilst my recounting stands as a record of my interpretations of these things, including Dad's drinking and the arguments with Mum, it also carries these and other aspects of history forward into another time and place, just as their own relationship carried aspects of their upbringing into an era that included me. There is much that could be said about Dad's parents to his right and Mum's to her left. I am however, not the one to do this, lacking the sufficient knowledge and experience of their lives to do so. Suffice to say Dad's family was non-Catholic and, I now believe, none to happy about his conversion to Catholicism which was a prerequisite for his

marriage to Mum. He effectively had to choose between family and the woman he loved. All I know is that as Mum's religious beliefs came to dominate my early years they also became the constant marker against which life and my Dad was judged. Dad generally fared poorly in most of my estimations, with him being the constant transgressor and Mum as the transgressed. His drunkenness was viewed as sinful, destructive and blatant wrongdoing, but even more importantly illogical because of the little money we had anyway. It was not hard to reason (especially by the rest of us), that he could ill-afford to booze it away! But little did I know at the time about the futility of moralistic reasoning to remedy such a powerful addiction!

Yet whilst I silently cursed Dad's waywardness this displeasure was centred on his actions not his identity. I grew up with the sense of being caught between my parents, rather than simply occupying Mum's side of the divide. I think this almost impartiality was influenced by the nocturnal adventures I came to experience with my Dad. I used to be a bed-wetter and a pretty good one, not growing out of it until my early teens. I remember one of the first times I awoke to the sensation of being encased in a cold and damp state of confusion. I could not fathom what had happened, believing someone had played a trick on me and doused me with water. Finding no obvious culprit standing before me in the darkness of the early hours of the morning, I realized I needed another bed to regain not only my composure but the required state of sleep. I removed my wet pyjamas and set about seeking refuge with my mother. I moved quietly into her room, and as I tugged away at her arm I received a mild rebuke in sleep-riddled tones that clearly signalled a no-go zone. Somewhat surprised by this I then realized that I was left with only one other option, the other side of the bed. To my initial surprise my Dad's response was immediate and in the positive as he opened the blankets and drew me into his warmth. Nothing was ever said, between my Dad and me or with my Mum, but every time I needed respite from my urinary mishaps there was only one side of my parents' bed I would go. And it was always a place that was made welcome to me. What was also not lost on a young boy of six or seven was that Dad kept his body between me and Mum to ensure she gained the respite she needed. It never occurred to me that, in doing this, he was probably doing right by both of us. It also never occurred to me that my bed-wetting

took no account of the state that my Dad was in when I sought his assistance. Hangover or not, the welcome always remained the same and the warmth of his body instantly reassuring.

I think that this sharing of bodies with my Dad was behind my belated attempt to return the favour some forty years later. When Dad died he did so suddenly at about seven o'clock in the morning. I got a phone call from my sister about seven thirty letting me know the news and it wasn't until about ten o'clock later that morning that I made it to his bedside where other family members had been gathered. As it turned out, I ended up sitting with my Dad, alongside my youngest son, as other family members left to arrange the rest of the day. In preparation for his removal by the undertaker, the nurse was about to give him a final wash before transferring his body to the mortuary. The gentle washing of his dead body with a warm cloth was something that I happily volunteered to do. In washing his rather wizened but still quite wiry-looking body, I experienced a comforting sense of attachment to the man who had been both the boon and the bane of my life. Although I could not provide him the warmth he had me in those years of my bed-wetting, I could at least caress his breathless body with gentleness and appreciation. In embracing the naked lifelessness of his body in this way, my body found a new connectedness to the man who helped beget me. I felt a new sense of acceptance of the ways he had influenced my life, including the acknowledgement of his alcoholism and the confusion it wrought.

Heroes come in all shapes and temperaments. Snell was formidable and shy, Mother Teresa, tiny and uncompromising, Hillary wiry and determined. You were all of these, and more, and it was only after you died that I realized that, although I looked up to these people, you were my real hero. Unlike them you couldn't brag about much, but, for me, you had the aura and magic that these icons embody.

It started when I awoke with a start to find my bed wet, once again. Dopey with sleep I'd trudge off to your bed where you would let me slide in. I'd even get up early, just you, Mum, the porridge and me. Then you were gone and not seen till late when, not yourself, you'd become someone else. Sundays you were always grumpy, your body groaning from the week that had been. I waited for you on the front step, but that ended in tears, me not understanding a workplace for men not boys. You were born here and your early days I know of only through your stories of

Waitoriki School, cow pats and your father's beatings. I also know how your share-milking dreams dissipated into a life spent working the roads. You inherited little by way of education, advantage or opportunity, refining instead your addictions for alcohol and nicotine. These impediments just as much the products of a generation of narrow-mindedness, as they were your own. Part of this the dissension I felt between Tuck and Kuklinski, agnostic and Catholic, labourer and land-owner.

I was looking for advice to find my way, but try as I might it just didn't work, until those last few years with you out of breath. We struck up a chord as you shared a little and I withheld my criticism long enough to listen. I got to know about your fragile grip on the world you knew and the one you didn't. Those words of wisdom that I'd sought so hard, I realize now, never came because you didn't know how.

In those closing years you revealed enough to share that Mum was the sunshine of your life. Your daughters too, brought you respites of happiness, the battle lines you'd draw up only hiding the hopes you had for them. You never really knew how to talk to us, and as usual we'd find the cue to pissing you off and reinforcing your fear. You made me even cringe sometimes, but only because you'd camouflage your feelings in frustration or booze.

Your body a projection of vitality and despair, always working and losing itself in the job just like the drinking. Even when you could barely breathe you'd be out with the paintbrush working a stroke at a time. In behind all this was your gradual decay finally sapping your breath and the strength that had been you. And your addiction, never treated nor understood, contouring the path we trod on our knees.

It is one thing to talk of heroes, quite another to share a disease. All of us tarred with this same brush by living in bodies that bear the memories of things felt long past. There is no going back other than to recognize the untreated paths of addictive wavering. Time, in turn, just made things worse as we sheltered and shivered under the illusion of its passing.

This is about you Dad, but Mum's addiction didn't help, her religious beliefs adding fuel to a fire that wouldn't go out. I myself, feeling torn between you, was left only a choice of right or wrong with neither making much sense. The dysfunction of yours was part of the social fabric that condoned it so well. When is it time to address these perceptions and the crap that comes with the ignorance it spawns?

You are now dead, father of mine, your body used up after three score and ten. I'm at a loss now to know what to say, believing as I do, in the breath of death being the last. All part of the path I got to tread, down through the years that include the regret, but like the pain you've endured, can today be the day that begins its release!

(Eulogy, Dad's funeral, 12/12/02)

Incense and Agony



Figure 3. Mums and Dads.

The photo of Mum and Dad with their parents on their wedding day is taken against the backdrop of St Josephs Catholic Church in Inglewood where they were married. The two abiding sensations that remain with me from my experiences of this church, a structure little-changed to this day, are the gentle aromatic tug of incense and the bite of the wooden kneeling rail. “We didn’t really quite have the fun things that some of the other churches had. We just had to go to mass . . . being bored out of our skulls. For an hour, but that was the way it was” (p. 21). On the twenty-first of August 2007, these very same sensations assailed me once more, providing me another opportunity to relive the place that came to mean so much. It was the occasion of my auntie’s funeral, and while I declined the invite of the kneelers I indulged the familiar waft of incense. Returning to the pews that came to dominate my childhood and teenage years reignited briefly those bodily sedimentations of the church’s practices that I so obediently followed. Kneeling meant some times up to ten or fifteen minutes of minor torture with fidgeting strictly monitored by the all-seeing nuns who were my constant guardians throughout primary school days. As it turned out, I was not only good at suffering the kneeling rail but also at internalizing the beliefs and regulations of the church as espoused in the catechism

booklet that took centre stage in our primary school curriculum. I was also good at maths, English and social studies, but they seemed to be of less significance in the important people's scheme of things. The only noticeable difference between what was then, and what is required now, appears a more relaxed approach to the kneeling requirement.

The incense still wafts, soothingly as ever, through the predominantly aged gathering. Many of these same people are recognizable to me from forty years earlier. Together with the same statues, woodwork and stations-of-the-cross that had always exuded a timeless quality, these relics of my past somehow combine to elicit in me the feeling of being caught in a time warp. I feel myself looking in on this strangely familiar scene but no longer able to be a part of it. The priest's mutterings, words which once held meaningful nuance and purpose, turn into a bland consistency of naivety and ignorance. There seems to be more of the darting-eyed 'not so certain's' present today than the reverential, closed-eyed believers, courtesy of the influx of non-believers that frequent these occasions of respect. Together all three play out a scene that jolts me into a sense of indifference and makes my body wince in disapproval. Images of the gospel scene, describing a frustrated and angry Jesus, with whip in hand, driving the priests from their temple, flash through my thoughts. I want to say something to honour my memory of a banana cake-making genius, but instead I look across to my mother seated two rows ahead, her head bowed in reverence. This view of her prayerful pose so reminiscent of the times I, and the rest of us kids, snatched glimpses of her as we prayed together at home, ever hopeful of an ending to what always seemed like an eternally slowed march of rosary time. The proceedings wind on with the occasional splash of humour breaking the monotony of what is a lifeless celebration of the lifeless. Yet this is exactly what my aunty was not. A stalwart Catholic and life long member of the choir yes, but lifeless, no. Rather the opposite was true of her, and it seems a shame to me as I sit here celebrating her life to do so with such a whimper! (Diary entry 21/08/07)

But these thoughts and feelings are just my view of things after being 'away' for so long.

I asked my Mum what she thought afterwards, and she said she enjoyed it because she said she thought it fitting, so I guess maybe aunty would have been happy too. Entwined together in their coping by resorting to the only court of appeal they knew, their faith in a benevolent creator, their lives bore witness through the practices of religious zealotry that came to swamp those around them. Aunty outlived her husband, but not by much, while my mother lives on, now five years after Dad's death, still cherishing the memories of his still felt presence. It was at her eightieth birthday in May, 2007, that I realized the extent of the influence of this remarkable woman on my own life.

**Oh! You are a big girl now.
And my, how you have grown!
Not in height or even your girth,
But in the stores of experience and worth.**

**I wonder what your future beholds.
But let's instead your past unfold.
And there seek some of those special moments,
That gave your life its fullness and sense.**

**First there was one, followed quickly by two.
Even three and four didn't provide the clue.
Then a lull, which must have been heaven,
Before five, six and then little old seven.**

**Each one came with a different name.
Ensuring the clothes line never looked the same.
Then arrived eight and in time, nine,
Making it harder still but completing the line.**

**Potential prime ministers, poets and popes,
But alas all such potential has long since eloped.
Opting instead for things more mundane,
A boy and a girl, for both Elizabeth and Jane.**

**More can be said of what was declined,
But let's look forward, rather than behind.
For the future is where life likes to go,
Bouncing us around just like a yo-yo.**

**Mary the first to produce an heir,
Denise, the next, with a girl so fair.**

**The rest of us followed in varying degrees,
The tradition of she's, many more than he's.**

**Warren to Sara and her little foetus,
Most grown up now, despite all of the fuss.
What must you make of this eerie scene?
Bringing with it, all the places we've been.**

**What do you think of this life of yours?
That's guaranteed to us life's open doors.
I trust you hold close these ones that you love,
Some who have already, left for above.**

**Speaking of those I must mention your Bill,
A troublesome lad, who tested your will.
Together for nearly fifty years,
Full of surprises, doubts and tears.**

**I used to wonder why you would persist,
But now I think I've gotten the gist.
Having been married myself, now, for some time,
I understand better, life's rhythm and rhyme**

**It's not about what you hope to achieve,
But in helping others, themselves to believe.
In what they have in significant measure,
Is already within them, a constant treasure.**

**This I think of, as I look at you now,
Along with the things you did, I don't know how.
My breath I owe you, and one other,
My thanks for this and you my mother.**

(Speech, Mum's eightieth, 21/04/08)

It seems like I spent a lot of time in Saint Joseph's church. Every Sunday we would all head off to church either in our neighbour's car for the early mass or walking to the ten thirty one. If we walked we got an ice cream afterwards. If we went by car we didn't have to walk. It was a hard call because, despite my love of ice creams, church was over a kilometre away! It didn't stop there either because on entering primary school Fridays became an additional compulsory day of attendance. "Friday was the day when we had mass again (p. 21) . . . But that used to be the highlight of the week cos, um, often we'd have takeaways. It'd be fish and chips because Friday was fish day" (p. 22). Meat, for some reason unbeknown to me even today, could not be eaten on Fridays. I liked fish, so

this particular significance was a bonus because fish usually meant chips, and on my menu of delights chips came a pretty close second to ice creams! Induction into altar-boyhood with my brother's help via six thirty mass on Friday mornings represented a kind of privileging for me and led into my involvement in the ceremonial aspects of church-hood. Reinforced by a zealous attention to my catechism book, Mum's exhortations of a life of sanctity found fresh ears. Catholicism also meant more mundane matters like cleaning and polishing shoes until they shined like the sun. The smell of the nugget was often enough of a fillip, a bit like the incense thing at church, but the end product was always worth the effort, and Mum used to say you could tell a man by the state of his shoes! She also said you could tell a man by the state of his dress, his hair, his hands, his fingernails, his room, his car (that might have been Dad). Anything, it seemed to me at the time, could be enhanced by grooming.

The idea of spiritual grooming was heavily foisted upon us as kids and depended on the concept of a soul and to states of sinfulness. "There were big sins and little sins, but at the guts of it there was the idea that you had a soul, obviously. And this was something that, sort of, terrified us really, that there was a part of us that could be stained . . . sin . . . came to be a big part of my life" (p. 23). The idea that sin could condemn one "to burn in hell forever . . . venial sins, the minor stuff, you went to what was called purgatory . . . you'd served your sentence and you could then go to heaven" (p. 24), came with the church's doctrine on the soul. My attempt to grasp the overriding idea of a soul somehow separate from my body meant accepting once again the polarity of a disrupted and disembodied existence. The moral imperative of the soul as good and the body as bad held no middle ground and had direct consequences for my experiencing. Like the previously mentioned characterisations or pictorial embodiments of good (God) and bad (devil), life became "very negative, very dominating, very yeh, and so life was lived constantly looking over your shoulder in terms of 'shit what have I done now' " (p. 25).

Religion was the ultimate grooming endeavour whereby the soul is prepared, amid the necessary distractions, diversions and disappointments of earthly life, for its resting place in heaven to await eventual reunion with its body on the day of redemption. This is

where my thinking tended to get a bit confused. Roman Catholicism defined life and death so simply that this very unequivocality engendered, through an automatic reflex of questioning, the opposite. For example, I couldn't help but try to imagine how I might inhabit my soul without my body and how this might actually feel and how long I might have to feel whatever way this would feel before I would presumably feel the same way I feel now when I was once again reunited as a body/soul. Which also begged the further question of when would time be called and what of the potential generations never to be? Once I started to tease away more of this seemingly endless thread of circular thinking I could only stem the flow of doubt by reminding myself once again of the ultimately blind nature of faith. But the lack of any intelligible shape to its truths always worried me so it was just easier not to even begin to question the logic or lack of it, let alone explore the paths that this questioning opened up.

While based around religious ethics of hard work and dedication, Mum's exhortations for hygiene, presentation and persistence worked their way into my body and sedimented their presence through both church and more general activities. Mass attendance, altar-boyhood, lectern-ship, and a growing unease with my body, heightened this ethos and eventually led to Seminary study. Other disciplines of fire-lighting, dish-washing, bed-making, lawn-mowing, paper-delivering, gardening, firewood-stacking, walking (everywhere), studying, game-playing, exercising and competing also became imbued with spiritual characteristics and values. All of these things turned into a measure of my ability to see things through, to complete the task at hand, which in turn was a test and refinement of my spiritual and mental character and the preparation of my soul for its ultimate reward in heaven. Thus these more ordinary activities of life came to represent opportunities for the enacting of the cornerstone values of faith, hope and charity that were the keys to enhancing my spiritual worthiness en route to heaven and redemption. "In those days we didn't have, we didn't have much of, sort of, material possessions. We were a pretty poor family, obviously with nine kids. Dad was just, he was, he was a roadman, he was a labourer so he didn't get a big wage and a good chunk of that wage, as I said, explained last time, he boozed away. And I can remember most of the clothes I inherited were hand-me-downs. Very rarely did we, did I get brand new clothes" (p. 25).

We might have lived in a relatively new house, but effectively it was a state subsidized house that Mum has subsequently told me we came close to losing. It was only through her entering the workforce again as a cleaner, even while still parenting young children; that she helped stave off a mortgagee sale. One thing about big families is the availability of baby-sitters, and my two elder sisters took over parental duties in her absence. “I can even remember the odd time her saying ‘well you’ve spent most of it what am I going to do now, where am I going to get the money to pay for our food and the kids need new clothes’. You know the usual story. So yeah, I don’t think that was easy. And in the end, as part of that, for me, you didn’t tend to ask for things” (p. 26). The family of Tuck bodies, whilst a part of the Catholic community, existed within the historical and social conditions of the time along with the wider community of Inglewood residents.

Inglewood as a small, rural, dairy-servicing town of nineteen-fifties and sixties Taranaki provides a contrast of historical, cultural and social conditions typical of small town New Zealand at the time. Smaller satellite dairy factories were common and returned the local milk supply back to the community for consumption as pasteurised milk or cheese. These were the days of the mandatory morning tea milk drinks, courtesy of a government building strong young bones, in glass bottles with silver aluminium tops that we’d perforate with straws to drink them with. Work was primarily farm, trade or labour-based with the town lawyer, accountant, bank manager and odd business owner retaining special kudos in the town. Neither of my parents ever attended a high school. The limited aspirations and actualities of education and work choices, the lack of mobility options, the hand-me-down utility of clothing and other resources, the accessibility to, and use of, the natural landscape all provide a backdrop to the cultural expectations that infiltrated my home, school and communal environment.

These cultural influences included the gendering of bodies through dress, behaviour, education, family and work roles. A work ethic based on the labouring body underpinned values and expectations in general and, together with a rigid, black and white moral code based on an Anglo-Saxon version of Middle Eastern, theistic religious beliefs, served as the underlying glue of compliance within our rural-based community. These religious

beliefs and cultural practices also served to support the patriarchal practice of sons helped into farms, while daughters were simply and conveniently reassured of the God-given inheritance contained in marriage and motherhood. Chauvinism ensured my mother's responsibility for the care of nine children with no resources other than her own wits and insight. Meanwhile her brothers got to reap both the short and long term rewards of property ownership which produced the type of security and stability unattainable to her. Dad's problem wasn't that he was born a girl. Rather he was born to parents whose own parents could barely make a living for themselves from their farm let alone help anyone else into theirs. Decades later this original farm resides in the hands of an adopted grandson, of my father's generation, who came to live with and assist my maternal great-grandparents farm the property while their first and second generation descendants were off trying to make a living for themselves and their families. Thus my mother's gendering and my Dad's poverty were weaved together with these other historical, social and cultural influences of small town 1950's and 60's New Zealand. The historical combination of these beliefs and practices provided the context of our bodied lives as Tuck children growing up within the neighbourhood, community and environment of Inglewood. My mother also used to reason that one addiction can lead to another. And so it proved to be, with the legacy of my parent's combined addictions, a growing sense of dis-ease within my own body.

Something Is Wrong With Me



Figure 4. Sixth form.

My high school years proved to be a roller-coaster ride of sporting and scholastic success mixed in with even more emotional upheaval. However, some months before I found myself lining up alongside my fellow 3R3 classmates outside our new classroom at Inglewood High School I experienced an event that came to change my life. I was twelve-going-on-thirteen when something appeared to go drastically wrong with my body. Up until this incident, although somewhat suspect, things appeared at least manageable. It was the day I saw a classmate suffer an epileptic fit at the local swimming baths.

The concrete, rough and uneven, oozes its warmth through my body. I snuggle into it feeling the contours of its companionship. Lying there next to my friends I am content, for the moment. But wait what's the fuss, a commotion of some kind. Something is happening on the other side of the pool, people standing around something – a body! It's thrashing about out of control, jerking crazily, hopelessly battling against the concrete that is now so suddenly cold and unforgiving. No friend to me now, I feel its harshness, all its enveloping comfort gone. Why doesn't someone hold it down, soften the blows that this wretched body somehow bestows on itself. Oh my God what if it dies! I don't want to look as it just won't stop. Now what's happening! I feel like I'm being sucked away on a wave of terror, an adrenalised rush washing me adrift in its blurring of thoughts and feelings and everything else! Got to get off this ride; drying my throat, pounding my chest, racing my thoughts, filling my ears, my arms, my eyes. Got to get away, get up, do something, please! Can't move, my body paralysed; stuck fast, rigid and frozen. If only I could move it might just save me from whatever this hell is that my body has become. Won't, can't move, no matter how hard I will it – frozen to the spot, mesmerized by my own helplessness. Just watching incurs this wrath, if only I could drag my eyes away, my body might follow? Don't watch, don't watch, but it's too late! My thoughts in tune now, hooked into the drumbeat that is this pulsing absurdity of my body. I can't stop it now, how did it start? If only I knew I could, I would . . . and on it goes and where will it end, oblivion? No can't have that, I'm losing my body, that's enough, not my mind as well! And now suddenly when it seems it can't get any worse, there's a change, subtle at first but still a lull. I don't know how but the fury is dissipating, oh so slowly, and I can move. But this comes with little respite as the ripples of its subsidence begin the worried chant of its flight. What in God's name was that, like being possessed, charged with a lightning bolt, so sudden and so swift. A sense of shame felt right down to my core, of losing my own body and with it my voice. What is left in this aftermath seems almost worse with my body numbed into a sense of its own self-doubt. Feeling ripped open yet not a scratch to be seen, how do I explain it, and worse still, from where next will its fury come?

What was different about this episode of body ‘electrics’ was the sense, though brief as it was, that my body had betrayed me? The particular felt sensation of becoming lost in and from my own body was very powerful and came to further influence a disjointed perception of my body. While my Dad and Mum were pivotal figures in my early life, through adolescence it was my body that seemed to replace them as the bearer of bad news. None more so than when, as described above, I learned to panic. The ‘alarm system’ I had been physically endowed with quickly took a more obsessive turn and became a perceptual device for serious sensual evasion. It is hard to describe the discomfort, even when I wasn’t panicking, that descended upon me from that day on. One way I can relate it is by virtue of the nursery rhyme that most New Zealand children grow up with. I well remember the illustration of Humpty in the nursery rhyme book at school depicting him as a humanized egg sitting at the bottom of the stone wall cracked all the way through.

I suffered a similar type crack, and the fissure, while not visible to others like his, was felt deep to my core. When I first encountered Humpty I could not get how he could not be fixed, especially with all the king’s assets handy. It was when the breach experience of my panicking began to take hold in my own life that I came to loath the rhyme and what it seemed to indicate for me and my apparently luckless future. As it had turned out, a rather confusing nursery rhyme character from my earliest days came to represent how I felt, split apart with no hope of recovery. He also symbolized my Dad’s body that seemed incapable of repatriating its shadowy alternate. Mum’s too, calling attention to the gulf that existed between her religious beliefs and the world she inhabited. And he came to be a symbol for the irreconcilability of their relating bodies as well. Thus, the rather strange allegory of Humpty Dumpty took on the dimensions of these greater significances and, through it, became a haunting reminder of the irrevocable divisions that existed in my life.

What emanated from this initial shock of flaying limbs and uncontrolled gurgling was a form of rehearsed horror that had me thinking I too would be smitten with this form of extreme public humiliation! “The most vivid image I had in my mind, that used to drive

my panicking, or the adrenalin bursts in my body, was that I would end up writhing on the ground throwing my arms and legs all round the place” (p. 50). The vision of his body twisting and contorting uncontrollably played out over and over again in my thoughts as I conjured up scenes of my body suffering a similar fate in an ever growing number of situations and events. High school seemed to exacerbate the problem and I found myself becoming traumatized to school assemblies, church gatherings, classroom lessons, any potentially, as well as actually, crowded place and eventually, open spaces in general. “In this assembly situation the last thing I wanted to happen was for me to end up on the ground writhing . . . JB. With all those people watching. R. Watching because it would be so embarrassing” (p. 50).

And more sensual evasion was to follow in the form of what I can only describe as the experience of feeling even more detached from my body. The peculiar sensation of becoming de-personalised, where I felt I was outside of my body and looking back on it, was different from anything else I had experienced up until that point in my life. I can only describe it as feeling like I was being undermined from the inside (of my head), unlike my more regular panic attacks that were always perceived as being generated by threats from the outside. My first experience of this mental form of contortionism occurred in the fourth form and further reinforced the grip of fear that my body quite regularly became encased in.

It was a sunny, muggy sort of afternoon typical of the late summer weather our maunga, Taranaki, dispensed to the various reaches of its domain. We were waiting to get into the art room for our twice-weekly exposure to our more creative sides. It was not a particularly remarkable day up until then until, for no apparent reason, I began to feel myself lose a sense of bodied connection to the words I was speaking to a classmate next to me. It started with the words I was saying, as I became more aware of their differing tone. It was as though someone had turned down the sound and I wasn't sure whether it was my hearing or that I had unknowingly reduced the volume in my voice. Considering this was enough to get my body's attention, and the words themselves seemed to drift into another dimension! A realm of sound

where I kept hearing my words in such a way that, they, seemed somehow detached from my utterances of them. This sense of not feeling unified with my words had a type of numbing effect on my body and generated a sense of panic around the idea that I had somehow come undone! My reaction to this sense of separation quickly followed with some force. I initially thought I was going mad and that I was literally losing my mind or rather my body! Enter extreme feelings of doubt that turned very quickly into a cascade of adrenalin and the reviling of a self that could be so disjointed, unstable and unreliable. I couldn't move, shocked as I was into a 'freeze' as much to ensure I gave no hint or credence to the outside world that things on the inside were seriously amiss. Then the sound of the school bell suddenly ringing through my ears seemed to override my prostration before the fireworks of my imagination, and I was able to move. The moving brought with it new foci and the changing scenery wrought a reduction in intensity and a calming of my body. The introduction of a feeling of sanity sent waves of hope cresting through my mind that once again, I had survived somehow intact, and not been left writhing crazily on the ground behind me. While dogged by the usual admissions of 'more through good luck than good management', I happily settled for this and the subsiding of my adrenalised body.

Thereafter, these feelings of disconnectedness took precedence in subsequent panic episodes, and produced feelings of being so locked inside of my head that I seemed to lose a sense of connection with the rest of my body. My felt-sense of becoming so thought-fixated and body-disconnected always had me believing that this could well be what losing my mind is actually like. And even when I inevitably regained my 'togetherness' this provided little solace apart from the relief of making it back into myself, that is my body again! The rollercoaster ride of physical, emotional and mental responses became the particular way of being my body, and for many years following was the source of much anguish and denial. Despite these experiences of aversion and disgust with my body, I never got to the point of contemplating suicide. I put this down to the irregular nature of their occurrence, so whilst I would 'panic' as much as three or four times a day sometimes and given that this might take up an hour or so of the day that

still left me pretty much functional for the majority of my waking hours. Whilst my panicking proved very debilitating and a source of personal shame and doubt it was in the fifth form that it started to get on top of me. “Probably the worst year was the fifth form year” (p. 55), being the school certificate year of 1972 when, with a broken arm and confused and uncertain identity I knelt beside my bed one night and prayed a pact with God.

In hindsight this ultimatum was mine and mine alone, but at the time it was designed to call ‘him’ out from the unseen and irrelevant places he seemed to inhabit. The deal went like this, “I feel stuffed up and there are three things I want you to do and if you are the God who I believe you to be you will help sort these things out” (p. 29). I bartered a vocation in priesthood (which didn’t seem too bad an option at the time) for School C, the fixing of a broken arm, and the getting of my ‘head’ right. The first two were wishes relevant to what had turned out to be a pretty shitty fifth form year. The last, the on-going issue of “this growing anxiety that had, sought of I guess, gotten a hold of me and I thought there was something wrong with me. I thought I was a little crazy” (p. 30). It was the call for help that I needed to make, but sadly, the wrong person to ask. At first it appeared to work, my arm healed up and I not only passed SC but did so in all of my subjects. Things however didn’t go as planned with the third part of the pact.

Cloak of Secrecy

The problem with my fear was its apparent anonymity. I did not know what it was or where it came from, and this 'out of the blue' form of terrorism left me completely bewildered. By internalizing its nature I triggered an obsession with its re-emergence. My body quickly developed a high state of alertness and became the focus of its own exceptional surveillance abilities as I awaited its next eruption, much like the nervous anticipation of the aftershocks of a particularly violent earthquake. The swimming baths scenario where I had witnessed my classmate's disability had felt like a magnitude nine on the Richter scale of body-quakes, and aftershocks of varying intensities continued for the next thirty years of my life. These body experiences continued to plague me at school, at home, at work and at play. I couldn't shake a sense of impending doom, my body never quite trusted as it rebelled at least once a week and often more. Adolescence bought with it a new wave of bodily sensations through various manifestations of physical, mental and emotional awakenings. Experiencing this dizzying array of sensuality proved bewildering for me, especially given the problems I was having with it anyway. Hence these new forms of arousal were interpreted as potentially dangerous manifestations of what was already an unreliable body. The heightened state of alertness bought with it the catastrophising habit that ensured any unfamiliar bodily sensations were deemed aversive and to be avoided at any cost.

As if my growing bodily tension was not enough, during high school I had also begun to experience bouts of palpitations, usually during or after heavy sessions of exercise. "I remember feeling absolutely shattered so I sat down and I was like breathless. And all I could feel was my heart racing like billy-yo, it was going flat out" (p. 54). The second time this happened I headed home with a mixture of fear and curiosity and showed Mum my pounding chest. She told me to lie down, commented on the exaggerated nature of my heart beat, and advised me to rest. Her advice seemed logical, but I interpreted her comments to be full of anxiety and consternation about the soundness of my heart. The suspicion with my body now got more specific with particular sites of distrust identifiable as my heart and my head. Any signs of deviance from the norm like an elevated heart rate

or a headache, would bring with it a growing sense of trepidation and would eventually end in a panic attack. The uncertainty about my body was fuelled by my unwillingness to remain open to its manifestations. My resistance to life as it unfolded in my interpretations of my body's manifestations fed my thoughts and lived on the fringes of my reason, much like my religious beliefs, where attempts at validation appeared to be either futile or too dangerous to even contemplate.

And as with my religious beliefs, I was not prepared to really question the logical basis for my body's disparity because of the fear of making things even worse. Because I would not risk exposing my panicking to confirmation, I also forfeited the opportunity to discover its resolution. Again, as in much of my religious upbringing, my thinking about my body remained black and white. Adrenalin and fear meant abnormality while freedom from fear and uncertainty was deemed normal. My excessively dichotomous thinking left no room for even the slightest experiential possibility of fear being a necessary, and important, dimension of sensory experiencing. Hence this perspective of body-ignorance and disconnection became sedimented into my everyday life through a reflexive form of blinkered helplessness that weaved its illusory biases through my body. Realizing that panicking experiences are an ultimately harmless, and sometimes, quite useful manifestation of bodily-felt interpretation is not easy, especially when you are caught up in the terror of their momentary unfolding! With each flight of reflexive fantasy I continued to deny myself the opportunity of experiencing my bodily sensuality for what it was, as well as the chance to share this with others. After finishing school I sought the refuge of church activities and, through my confused aspirations for priesthood, ended up in seminary training in the South Island.

But before I made the sojourn south I had another three years to see out as a form of spiritual apprenticeship, or so the recruiting priest suggested with his stays of my acceptance into the training programme. I think he was worried about my lack of maturity and who could blame him. I was still living at home, I had never had a girlfriend, I didn't drink, I attended mass daily, I was very shy, and I knew little of the working world save from my hibernation within the draughting section on the third floor

of the Lands and Survey building in New Plymouth. You would have thought I'd have been the perfect candidate, especially given the vows of chastity and obedience that were required for the role. And if he had known what really was making me tick at that time he probably would have saved me the hassle of trying to continue my particular little charade. Behind my charade, of course, was more fear, the fear generated by the social stigma of being 'mental'. While my panicking was driven by the desire not to appear foolish in front of others, keeping it hidden came from an even greater desire to be normal. Even though I certainly did not feel normal, it seemed to me that by keeping this to myself I was at least able to retain a semblance of normality. "People who are mentally ill, what happened to them. JB. They get, my a, put down at Porirua. My uncle ended up there . . . R. Well if I was in Taranaki, I'd have been sent to Lake Alice. And do you know what happened at Lake Alice²?" (p. 51).

Seeing mental illness as a shameful abnormality was further reinforced with the confusion I felt over witnessing my sisters suffer depression and the effects of their own unhappiness. "It's not easy to talk about this or to admit to it, but all the girls, that's six of them, all of the girls have suffered some form of depression and major depression" (p. 28). It was during these years that my eldest sister was hospitalized in Tokonui for what was called, hypomania, in those days, and I witnessed two other sisters (at differing times) lying unconscious in a hospital bed suffering the uncertain effects of prescription drug overdoses. "Karen, Mary and Jane . . . all tried to commit suicide at some point" (p. 28). Although suicide conjured up the worst-case scenario from a religiously moralistic sense, it was their actions that frightened me most, not only because it jeopardized their own physical safety but because it also aroused feelings of uncertainty and doubt in my own body. These feelings of mental and physical calamity radiated between my body and theirs, and together our bodies were further reinforced as faulty and faltering. Witnessing such bodily effects provided further jeopardy for my own body, and only served to undermine what little confidence I had managed to retain in it. Even today my body continues to go out to one sister, in particular, as she struggles to cope

² A psychiatric hospital, located near the town of Bulls in the North Island, which was closed in the 1990's as part of the government's health reforms. It was the subject of abuse allegations that resulted in the Crown reaching an historic financial compensation agreement with a large number of its patients.

with the horror of losing a daughter, something that I can only imagine bestowing its own kind of unforgettable branding on her body, and with it, her mind.

The very strong social stigma surrounding mental illness that pervaded New Zealand society and my family's particular rural community during the sixties, seventies and eighties helped to contain my anxiety within its self-imposed silence. People with any sign of mental illness were even worse off than children, they were neither to be seen nor heard! My secrecy became more like a duffle coat of uncertainty and despair as it weighed me down further through the witnessing of the break down of these bodies too close to me. While my sisters came under the direct influence of the institutional stigmatizing of their un-wellness, I always felt like an undisclosed cheat, appearing normal on the outside while riding the emotional waves of guilt and suspense on the inside. It wasn't so much a case of 'but for the grace of God there go I' but rather 'there go me but at least no-one else will know'. My silent suffering was, I realise now, consistent with the gendering of mental illness at the time. While my sisters' pain was displayed for all to see, the social expectation of male staunchness ensured the muting of my body and any outward expressions of its pain and confusion. From within this vacuum of contrasting pretexts would erupt the confusion common to our bodies, along with the muttered attempts of communication that would always fall short of meaningful understanding between us. Just as we used to huddle together as children in various parts of the house feeling the hostile tones of our parents' voices, so these episodes of my sisters' despair and confusion would produce huddles of similar bodily confusion. After the initial shock of these uncertain and frightening events wore off, a sense of helplessness would descend upon me once again as I condescended my body into silenced inaction. Numbing my body fed the always muted nature of its expression, which in turn, numbed my openness to further experience. What our bodies shared most through these cycles of repression and silence was the need to voice these feelings of confusion, uncertainty and despair, and to be heard. Instead what we experienced was the incoherent babble of psychiatry that served only to reinforce the stigmas that muzzled us.

Despite my own particular cloak of secrecy hiding its share of inner turmoil, my last year

at school went reasonably well, on the surface at least. "I ended up getting U. E [University Entrance] accredited which was always good, you didn't have to sit the exams. I ended up being the all round sportsman . . . represented Taranaki in soccer with my cousin and we won the North Island championship . . . I kissed, got my first kiss that year and what a kiss that was" (p. 55). Continuing the trend from my last year at high school, my first year out working produced a successful sporting year in soccer and cricket, but a rather unremarkable work environment. "Was the first thing that came along. It was anything, anything, just get me out and get a bit of money and pay Mum some rent and help . . . to cut a long story short I think the real reason I took that job, and it was just the first job that came along was because of the fear" (p. 59). I had an ambition to do physical education at Otago University in Dunedin, but my thoughts were still taken up with the unfinished business of my anxiety problem. I basically ended up treading occupational water until I could get to priest school. By the end of my second year with the Lands and Survey department as a draughtsman I had had as much "as I could take. It was the most boring job I ever had, or I could ever imagine" (p. 60).

Following my escape from my governmental service I gained a job as a warehouseman selling industrial supplies with a company in New Plymouth. The nature of this work contrasted with my previous job, and I settled into a routine of work, sport and church activities that distracted me sufficiently enough to reduce the frequency of anxiety attacks that I had previously been experiencing. I would arrive at work at eight o'clock in the morning, and the phone wouldn't stop ringing until well after five, and it was my job to answer it. Work days used to whiz by in an awful hurry, and I had little or no time to even think about panicking. Sport occupied much of my time outside of work and my continued success in this arena helped to offset the preoccupation with my inner turmoil. This was not always the case as sometimes "I'd be fielding and I'd be throwing the ball and I don't know it had something to do with vigorous or abrupt movement and it would spark off my palpitations and that would erode my confidence . . . So if I'm going out to bat I'd be thinking Jesus am I going to have a panic attack out here while I'm batting" (p. 61). At this particular time I was house-sharing with my sister and her son, and along with the return of her alcoholic husband, and their escalating confrontations, came more regular

bouts of panic. And then about Labour Weekend of that same year I got word of my acceptance into Holy Name Seminary in Christchurch. With this news came a cautious optimism about the opportunity to keep my part of a bargain that would see me, once and for all, overcome my body's unpredictability.

Leaving Home



Figure 5. The backyard boys.

My journey to envisioned sanity began with the Seminary in Riccarton Road, Christchurch where, along with our Malaysian student boarders, we seminarians took up residence. Our home was a large, two-storey, Victorian-style manor that combined ornate ceilings, expansive hallways and quaintly elegant drawing rooms with a strangely sympathetic accommodation wing of more modern heritage. Set amongst picturesque grounds and acres of sports field this architectural mix of a bygone era and modernity was further imbued with the Jesuit influence of its managers. Their influence was primarily intellectual, and through an initial grounding in philosophy paved the way for a rethinking of the theological values that I had previously taken for granted. It was at Holy Name Seminary that I also got to experience the joys and horrors of the freedom and homesickness that come from leaving home. Much of the first term was spent sleeping off the shock of returning to study after a three year sabbatical, as well as mixing study with my usual sporting pleasures. The first six months was the rockiest and when I began to suffer insomnia quite badly it was recommended I live in a half-way house called Rosminian house a short distance from Holy Name. "I was struggling a bit

and I was panicking just then and getting quite anxious and not sleeping very well so I got talking to the rector and he said to take a bit of time out . . . allowed me to get my shit together enough to go back in and cope” (p. 66). My temporary hiatus from the Seminary proper enabled me to attend lectures at the college as I gathered my increasingly frayed emotions about me. Most of all, it allowed me to overcome the insomnia that threatened to scuttle my ‘calling’, and to help vanquish the remnants of my homesickness once I had rejoined my fellow seminarians. Meeting new friends and the growing excitement of a big city worked their magic and by the end of my second year I had begun to enjoy my new home.

Up until that point in time, the traditional training pathway for Catholic priesthood had been two years of philosophy study at Christchurch followed by the mandatory four years of theological training at Holy Cross College in Mosgiel. But, due to financial constraints, at the end of my second year in Christchurch, Holy Name was closed as a Catholic seminary for good. The end of 1978 was momentous for this reason, and for the undertaking of my first overseas trip to Sydney, to work in a holiday job at a Catholic nursing hospital for the elderly. This was prior to our move south to Mosgiel to start the serious business of theological study in the third year. Although never managing to get along to the Sydney cricket ground to watch my cricketing heroes do battle, my stay in Sydney was nevertheless an intriguing one, where I spent equal parts of my time working, sleeping, TV watching and swimming. “I regret I never went to the Sydney Cricket ground and watch them play cricket there. And that was the time of the World Series cricket, which was quite exciting, and those one day matches” (p. 68). The reason that this did not happen was down to my anxiety. I was quite simply overwhelmed by the size, pace, noise and my suspicions of the place. Because of my brother’s unwillingness to put myself and another fellow seminarian up, we arranged accommodation with the local suburban priest in his presbytery. In return we were to help out at Church gatherings and masses which we happily did. What this did was to give me a safe haven from which, apart from work and the odd sojourn into the city, I was reluctant to venture far from. The regret came with the lost opportunity to explore a new world and to fashion new friendships and opportunities. I often think back on this experience and wonder what

might have been, not only relating to my following comments but, that if I had joined a cricket club I suspect getting into sport in Sydney may have influenced my life a little too dramatically for my own liking. The intrigue came in the form of the numerous hours I spent lusting after one of the young laundry employees who, when I first met her, was wearing the shortest skirt I had ever seen on a human body. It never occurred to me at the time, engrossed as I was in the pair of legs that seemed to go on forever, that this was a simple matter of pragmatic choice given her working conditions rather than a deliberate ploy to titillate a naïve young seminarian. Titillate means to cause someone to tingle, and tingle I did, rehearsing the image of this young lady over and over in my head. But rehearsing her image was as much as I did, being too shy and compliant to the weight of expectation I felt from the Saint John of God sisters who ran the place, to even start up a conversation with her.

It was during the two years in Christchurch that I had begun to actively seek out the company of the opposite sex, and I ended up developing several relationships over that time. “But the highlight of Christchurch was the girls. Started to get an interest back in girls” (p. 67). These relationships involved kissing and cuddling, and whilst such activities sorely tested my vow of chastity, it did remain in tact. Because sex was not involved I reassured myself that these relationships were more platonic than sexual when they were not. This stance of mine must have been the source of confusion for my female companions who would have been left wondering what my real intentions were. I remember one particular ‘friend’ who demanded I tell her whether I loved her or not. She explained to me that she had met someone else but she needed to know where she stood with me first before she could move on. She had fallen in love with me and needed a greater commitment than my holiday visits. What exacerbated this problem I had with relating to the opposite sex was the lengthy time frame before my induction into priesthood’s official ranks. It also didn’t help clarify matters when the Jesuit head of Holy Name happily consented to letting me use his car to escort a young lady to the local Saturday night barn-dance! Regardless of the style of consent or even rebuke, these brushes with romance had sparked something that seemed to suit me, and continued even to a lesser degree in the more austere setting of Holy Cross College in Mosgiel. Along

with my departure from Christchurch came the demise of several other good friendships as well. The lack of companionship bit hard as I struggled to rekindle new relationships in what became the strange, new world that lay south of the Waitati. All of my closest friends were gone, and I felt even more alone in a place that appeared as isolated, aloof, and as cold as it had been rumoured. The somewhat carefree tone of Christchurch had changed into a more serious and unwelcoming one as the hills of the Taieri came to close in around me. The beauty of the Canterbury plains that stretched out across a cold but clear mid-winter morning to snow-capped mountains in the distance was now a distant memory, and served only to highlight the inhospitable nature of my new home and its inhabitants. It was through my sporting activities of soccer and cricket that I was able to make some new and telling friendships and through these same contacts that I was able to continue to meet women who I was attracted to.

The problem with my attraction for the opposite sex was that I couldn't really share it with anyone. I certainly could not share it with any of the staff, who were all, priests or nuns of some kind. I could not share it with my 'spiritual adviser', whose role was that of a spiritual mentor, because he too was a member of staff. Not only was most of my seminary companions really serious about their vocational aspirations, but their sexuality differed from mine as well. "Most of them were gay fair to say . . . either gay or very confused or both. Um I was just confused" (p. 65). I pretty much was the only student who played sport outside of the College, and who mixed socially with the locals that included eligible young women. The clash of 'callings' came to a head one fairly dreary Sunday afternoon in July of 1980. The particular Sunday happened to be a retreat day where the hours from nine to five were designated contemplation time. I maintained this expectation until just after lunch, when, rather furtively, I made my way along the disused railway line then ran along our back boundary down to where it met Gladstone Road. Once there I was able to walk more freely back up the road to where two of my team mates lived. We had been selected for the Otago soccer team to play against Canterbury that day at the Caledonian football ground. It was only later that night after my more casual return to base that I was given notice of a meeting with the rector. I had not realized that he was something of a sports fan himself and this, together with the fact

that the game had been broadcast over the local radio, had given my supposedly secret escapade away. He was none too impressed with my deliberate flouting of College rules and expectations, and proceeded to inform me of my other breaches of protocol as well. These included the numerous times I'd been seen in the company of young women, the rather inappropriately raunchy skits I'd helped perform on several of the College's entertainment nights, along with some 'unbecoming' expletives voiced while playing for the College in sporting clashes against local club sides. Taken together as a sign of the lack of 'a true vocation' (God always called a person to priesthood rather than the other way around) the rector then, "kicked me out" (p. 69). At the time it never occurred to me to ask how come he could get away with flouting expectations by having his radio on! I was too preoccupied worrying about what the hell I was going to do next!

With hindsight his decision thankfully helped to put me out of some of my misery, but at the time I was too devastated to realize this, and could only walk around the perimeter of the sports field bereft of any idea of what to do. It wasn't so much a sense of betrayal that I felt, but rather an overwhelming sense of being lost and even more alone than ever before. The three and a half years I had spent fulfilling my part of the bargain had simply been a waste of time, and I had even less to show for it than when I started, or that's the way it seemed at the time. As part of ending my increasingly tormented stay at the College, my spiritual advisor recommended I seek counselling, and offered to pay the cost of any sessions. I declined his offer of payment but did decide to go through with his suggestion. I also arranged short term boarding with a local couple, the husband being the college's bursar. My new living arrangement enabled me to complete my second year of study toward the theology degree, and in the process, work out my plans for the following year.

Through the counselling I undertook in those last few months of 1980 I met a clinical psychologist for the first time and, despite my fears of psychiatry being triggered again, I found some value in our talks. Initially things did not go well as alarm bells went off when he mentioned the words borderline schizophrenia in his initial assessment, a condition that I believed only applied to people who were certifiable. Thankfully,

however, instead of locking me away he proceeded to focus on recommending the benefits of masturbation and because of his credentials (he had a PhD in psychology from an American University) I implemented his advice, not that this was a particularly difficult imposition given my recent release from chastity duty. Our interactions, however, were marked by only occasional responses on his part and because of my perception of this as a hesitancy to engage, his words carried little warmth. This sense of his aloofness prevented me from sharing the feelings and thoughts that had plagued me for much of my life. Having refused to share my deeper secrets with anyone else previously for fear of being carried off to the nearest mental hospital, the barrier that was his psychoanalytic approach proved too great an obstacle to overcome. It was to a man of a decidedly 'warmer' disposition who I finally disclosed my inner turmoil and shared my fears of my likely mental illness.

It was through this man of friendly persuasion and infectious humour who, by the way he made obvious his delight at being in my company, helped bring the reign of silence that had protected and plagued me since my early teens to an abrupt end. "I went and boarded in Mosgiel with a local couple. He worked at the Seminary, he was the bursar, he was their accountant" (p. 69). Jack was forty years my senior near enough, was the sort of person who seemed to make it easy for me to share these long hidden parts of my life. Through his encouragement, honesty and openness in discussing aspects of my counselling sessions and, in particular, my initial, albeit very belated, exploration of my sexuality; I came to confide in the man who had taken me under his roof. Ultimately it was through my confessing to him of my anxieties of being crazy that he was able to reassure me that I wasn't by virtue of the fact that other people including himself suffered from similar insecurities. It didn't take each of us long to realize that, despite the age difference, we had much in common through our commonly shared Catholic backgrounds. We both found in the other a trusted ally to whom we could disclose our most sensual of bodily manifestations and through which I began to realign my thinking body with my feeling body.

Our friendship continued through to my marriage to Jill, at which time aspects of my

allegiance to my friend found rightful resonance in my relationship with her. I remain forever grateful for the timely intervention that was my relationship with Jack, and for the way he helped me begin to accept my body again. Jack is now ninety two and we have not seen very much of each other since my move to Wanganui in 1989. Much more could be said about the ways he and his wife supported me, particularly through the wilderness-like years of '80 and '81, that even ran to Jack employing me at the very College that had turned its back on me. "I boarded with them until the end of that year, they went overseas the next year so I house sat for them and then I left Mosgiel to go flatting in Dunedin in 1981" (p. 69). His companionship did a great deal to alleviate my distress, but as I ventured more confidently out into a less threatening world further rehabilitation lay in wait for my body. By the time I completed my theology degree I was flatting in Dunedin across from the School of Physical Education. Although this School became the focus of further forays into self-understanding, it was the theological study that had most helped to clarify many of the beliefs and practices that up until then had dominated my interpretations of life. "And even as a layman, which I now was, I could carry my study over. And it was the best thing I did because when I look back what it enabled me to do in finishing my study I was able to work out the church thing"(p. 70).

The Death of God



Figure 6. A Theologian.

In the right hand corner wall of my office hangs a rather second rate picture frame containing the diploma that you see me clutching in my graduation photo. The rather innocuous looking piece of paper heralds my reprieve from a life of religious oblivion. The deconstruction process that became my theology studies allowed me a point of reference that blossomed into full-blown rebellion, intellectually at least. Not so easy, however, to be free of the bodily habits and practices inculcated over the previous twenty five years, and the ways they had become sedimented within my life. Taking the guise of tests of my religious credibility these actions, both specific and more general, were influenced by a particular understanding of God as well as my own essence. God for the most part of my childhood and teenage years was all-knowing, all-seeing and therefore a

hugely pervasive presence in my life, able to detect all thought, sensation and action, and instantly judge its moral make-up. Internalising the spotlight of this type of scrutinizing gaze required only a sufficiently credible code of practice that was provided in the form of the commandments, and a credible authority figure in the person of my mother. These commands became the points of surveillance by which I regulated my behaviour and scored my spiritual progress. I had no real problem with those denouncing murder, coveting of a neighbour's wife, and stealing. It was the more subtle demand of not bearing false witness which seemed designed to take all the fun out of enjoying the more mundane accolades that my sporting successes provided. False idols were those that, in whatever shape or form, diverted attention away from the appropriate form of allegiance to God, and required at one point the donating of my favourite, and most effective, cricket bat to the cricket club as a gesture of necessarily sustained religious loyalty.

*I also had trouble with taking the Lord's name in vain, often yielding to the pangs of remorse after a series of expletives in response to an ordinarily frustrating mishap. I was required to be especially stoic about my body, and in particular its sexual manifestations. Conceived of as carnal pleasure, with a heavy negative emphasis on the word carnal, any form of excitation that elicited self-indulgent gratification was deemed self-centred and therefore sinful. Restraint and self-control were the required prerequisites for disciplining the hedonistic and decadent tendencies of my physical body. Thinking rude and lewd thoughts was one thing, venial sin at the most, but to attempt outright action of any kind risked the dreaded mortal kind of uncleanness of soul. I knew very quickly that any sort of sexual stimulation, whether self-induced or otherwise, was up there with murder! Consequently my 'dare not touch' attitude ensured my adherence to a moral practice that reinforced further alienation of the physical and more sensual aspects of my body. My alienation was influenced, at the particularly untimely occurrence of adolescence, by my growing infatuation with a prayer book called *Imitations of Christ*. This piece of religious propaganda came to add its distorted view of humanity to my already troubled perception of my own body. In portraying Jesus as the iconic resistance figure of the 'flesh', this recruitment guide for monastic life reinforced, along with the weekly televised mystical incantations of David Carradine's *Kung Fu* character, the*

strange allure I had conjured up for the selflessness of priesthood.

In aligning myself to these dubious depictions of selfhood I was unwittingly confirming the idea of a self that was not only separate from my body but also in contest with its sensual manifestations. As already described, this belief of a spiritual self was discoursed through historically-bound institutionalized practices that, through replication, came to sediment particular moral and practical forms of compliance in and upon my body. Through the particular discourse of Roman Catholicism I unwittingly subjected myself to a form of religious bio-power that nurtured an identity of strait-jacketed proportions. My submission to spiritual rule bound beliefs and practices began to crumble when put under the microscope of critical scholastic scrutiny and eventually collapsed as my body uncovered its biological purpose. Intellectually, I came to question certain aspects of this religious discourse through the influence of two theological lecturers in particular. “It was really only in that fourth year of my study . . . that I started to break those shackles. Started to challenge the beliefs” (p. 25). Their ideas, by not explicitly confirming the existence of a historical Jesus, called it into question. Their attention to the bible’s editorial make-up, combined, with my friendship with Jack, and the growing acceptance of my body’s sexuality, to enable me to unravel aspects of my body’s morally-based emasculation. And with these new understandings the appellant process to the requisite spiritual impeachment from my body began. “I started to realize that it was a load of poppycock, a load of bullshit, for me. In that I could no longer adhere to or live by those sets of beliefs and particularly the rules” (p. 25). The rather innocuous looking piece of paper that is my theology diploma stands for much more. It represents a part of my life that I had to reconstruct, and signifies the letting go of past beliefs and practices that had consigned my body to a religiously derived, scrapheap of indifference even while I was still in it! The repatriation of my body from its spiritual wasteland was the rethink of all that religiously had gone before, and by this time had come to make the sense that I had previously not dared to consider. “Through my studies I was able to work through the fact that there really wasn’t a God, not a God that they were saying existed and that, yeah, I was able to put that side of things to rest” (p. 70). But as with any repatriation this continued to be a work in progress.

Despite its religious liberation, my body continued to be racked by powerful panic reactions. As it paraded its adrenalised presence before me, my body continued to leak its sympathetic nervous array of rage through the cloak of reflexive resistance that was its attempted muting. My cloak of silence wasn't only designed to silence these fireworks of my body directly, but also as an additional layer of protection against the potentially embarrassing discovery of the ignorance of its muting. Of course, the more my body called attention to its disembodiment, the more confusion reigned. An inability to validate these feelings of confusion and uncertainty came to be reinforced through the discourses of family, religious and sporting practices that impregnated the sixties and seventies of my childhood and teenage years lived in New Zealand. One such discourse that I was subjected to along with the rest of my generation was being devalued as a non-adult human. Throughout childhood and adolescence it was understood that I had a right to be seen, rather than heard, and that, because of my age, my status mandated a compliant stance toward adult wisdom and direction. Listening to my elders was premised on the accepted reality that they, by virtue of their age, 'knew best', barring of course the usual criminals, creeps, simpletons or persons of mental defect who could not be relied upon. These unreliable others included a neighbour who, in those days was called intellectually handicapped, but like me, loved cricket. There was also my uncle who I just couldn't make out because he didn't have a wife and whose children, my cousins, lived with him at my grandmother's house, where he seemed to sleep most of the time. Then of course there was my Dad who didn't fit any of the above criteria except when, in his alcohol-induced state, he seemed to embody them all! The silencing of youthful voices underpinned the reinforcement of a range of cultural practices foisted upon young bodies that included the particular religion that came to dominate and problematise mine. My embodying of the particular types of beliefs and practices that was impressed upon me as a child and teenager growing up in Inglewood helped produce the contingencies of my body that included its panicking. While critical study, a trusting friendship, and my growing freedom from moralistic obligation provided turning points in my life, another was about to arrive that allowed me an even fresher perspective on my body. It came in the form of a trainee social worker from Balclutha who I met at the Department of Social Welfare office in Dunedin where, with my theology degree, I had been working for over a year.

Jill



Figure 7. One of my favourite photos.

“So in 1984 a girl by the name of Jill appeared on the horizon. She had started work as a social worker in Balclutha . . . she and her team used to come and join us in Dunedin periodically for training sessions” (p. 72). When I first met Jill I was taken with her bright yellow Toyota Corolla hatchback against which my coupe paled into insignificance. Yet, despite my vehicular jealousy, she came across to me as especially friendly with a warm and welcoming smile. However, it was a particular day some weeks after her first appearance in our tearoom that I really noticed her and later that afternoon I made my rather fumbling pitch, “I asked her out for a drink on Friday night” (p. 72). What transpired from that evening is now etched in history and in the three bodies that bear direct witness to our twenty-four years together. “Went out to the pub . . . and then um, you know, the rest as they say is history” (p. 72). It becomes hard

when I try to compress into words the meanings that our relationship has generated. But the one thing that has stood the test of “the dramas, the ups and downs and obviously the realities which usually are different realities between the two of you over the years” (p. 84) has been “the way we shared those as well” (p. 86). The initial intoxication of our physical bond led quickly to the responsibilities of parenthood, and with that a growing sense of commonality that began to reach across almost every aspect of our lives, so that “there was a sense of it feeling right. I felt comfortable” (p. 84). It became a comfort that radiated out through our physical bodies into a sharing of our exercising activities, occupational and parenting roles, finances, hopes, goals and aspirations that together came to make up our joint understandings. “What the sex seemed to do was to accentuate that somehow here was this other person who, who, who I felt was a real part of my life, you know. And without her . . . it wouldn’t be right” (p. 86).

I remember the moment like it was now. You walked past me in your tights and patterned skirt, showing me only the outline of your legs! I knew then that something had changed, not you, but me, the feel of you transforming my view. This spark of interest became a flood of nerves that washed me up at your desk on that day you obliged my request for a drink. That first date then quickly became the dimension of life that I had never known. The love we uncovered was intoxicating, reducing our bodies to an extension of the other. Like nothing before or ever since, the aroma of you seeping to my core. You are now fifty and this appeal has never dulled, still igniting my body at the chance of a touch.

You were born to Pat and Ralph and made up a family with Bill, Sue and Russ. Life wasn’t easy but family and friends lightened the load and helped you through. Caversham, MacAndrew, Queens High and Teachers College all combined to send you on your way. The classrooms, a place of “good morning Mrs Tuck and . . . God . . . Bless . . . You!” Dunedin became home for us both and then two others, Caleb and Nellie, whose births you could never forget. The second even harder than the first, generating feelings I just can’t fathom. And with our move to the North another called Jerram, who could forget. Can’t say we were the best of planners but needing each other even more through those tempestuous hours.

(Speech, Jill’s fiftieth, 1/07/07)

Our move to Wanganui came after the eighteen months I spent in the Dunedin office of National Mutual as an agency manager trainee. My position required me to convince people of the need to buy life insurance which took me some time to find “the trick to it,

which was to ask for the cheque” (p. 74). The job produced an initial windfall of money, reminding us both of when, so recently, we had been too poor to pay the panel-beater because the weekly unemployment benefit payment hadn’t arrived as we had planned for. And so “after about two years and then, then we were offered a management position either in Timaru or Wanganui . . . Jill didn’t want to go to Timaru so we opted to come to Wanganui” (p. 74).

There have been a number of highlights in my life recently, with the joint celebration of Jill’s fiftieth and Caleb’s twenty-first birthdays a chance to share some of them with family and friends. Over the past twenty-four years of marriage and parenthood three abiding memories of the deepening threads of this companionship remain. They are the births of our three children. Both of our lives were inextricably changed by these events, and while the source of much friction, their presence has always been a consolidating influence in our lives. Our interaction as a family came through thoughts, feelings and actions and included many other contributors from a life world of relationships that became our home in the North Island town of Wanganui. While two of our children were born in Dunedin our youngest, we quickly learnt, was the consequence of our passionate farewell to a city we loved. Dunedin in one way and another had managed to play a part in the lives of all my children. Starting with Caleb’s birth, my body found new meaning through the ‘magic’ that it seemed to share in this unfolding of life. Jill had been through a long and painful labour that necessitated an epidural. As she grew more tired her dilating slowed until, at the intervention of the professorial unit, she was given the muscle-relaxing painkiller Cytosine which seemed to have immediate effect and she began to dilate more normally with Caleb born several hours later. “To hold him was the most unbelievable experience of my life” (p. 86), and it was with some difficulty that I tried to share the wonder of this experience as we honoured him along with his Mum at their joint birthday celebration.



Figure 8. Two very tired boys.

Caleb, when you were born, I got to hold you first, because Mum needed time to recover. I had read somewhere that the first person to breathe on a newborn somehow got to impart their spirit into that child. So I breathed all over you thinking a little of me could be a good thing for you! You responded by looking at me through big, round eyes and produced what appeared to me to be a bemused look on your face as you tried to take in the world opening up before you. Caleb, you astounded me as you lay in my arms, both of us unable to fathom what had just happened. I watched with awe the wonder of you unfold, all six pound six ounces and small enough to fit in a shoe box. For an instant I found at long last my place in the world. It was you, and some short years later, your sister and brother too, who put to right my part in this world of existence.

Such was your serenity they thought you weren't breathing and whisked you away much to my regret as it broke our connection. But all was well, though, and you were soon snuggled up to your Mum enjoying the warmth and comfort of her body. As you, and then Nellie and Jerram too, awakened this wonder in me, so my understanding of the connection with your Mum has grown. While jealous at first, I

came to realize, that the way she is with you comes from the way you were once a part of her, and tonight reminds me again of this play of life. Caleb, the days since that early Saturday morning have come and quickly gone. Your mother and I have shared your highs and lows to date, and it has been our joy to share this journey. May this key I give you now remind you of life's preciousness and the magic that will always be you!

(Speech, Caleb's 21st, 1/07/07)

Being present at Caleb's birth shook me to the core as my body ignited in the awe and wonder of him. His birth electrified my materiality so powerfully that life, in those brief seconds, unfolded with a clarity that authenticated my existence beyond any doubt. The births of Nellie and Jerram reverberated through my body in similar fashion, reaffirming once again my miniscule, but still significant, part in the resounding yearning of life. "A further extension of the feeling of being a part of something so much greater than what you thought you were" (p. 87). The preciousness of each of their tiny bodies began to awaken in me the preciousness of my own. As I reflect on my children the impact they have had on my life is no more evident than now with their departures to various parts of the world, while both Jill and I look on in a sort of helpless wonder at the passing of time and the advent of their maturation. All the while somehow sensing that their futures, though more self-determined now, will still contain us, but in different and, as yet, unknown ways. Just as we continue to deal with the independence issues of our own relationship, so now we are being confronted with the independence issues of our children. Some of these remind me again of my Christchurch and Mosgiel days as I remember how I had to contend with my own student days. I have spoken briefly about the stress of returning to full time study and how it took me time to adjust to this. I now find myself offering advice to my youngest son as he struggles with the demands of tertiary study after several years of non-existent study habits. I am also reminded of my weight, and how I ballooned out from ten stone four, a weight I had maintained for a number of years, to nearly twelve and half stone within a six month period courtesy of the ease and availability of food and the bingeing habit I got into. This, too, is a current topic of conversation in my home, as several of my children have had to contend with similar type hostel accommodation. Jill finds the individuating process especially hard, as she grapples with the sudden disappearance of bodies she has spent her lifetime fussing over.

Our anxieties take the form of grief and sadness over the lack of their noises, their messiness, their questions, their concerns, their hunger, their music, their uncertainty and their bodies. Letting go is about the body and, as I am discovering, is a complex issue involving physical, mental, emotional, behavioural and social upheaval. In embracing these complexities, it has become clearer, that to let go of someone else first requires a letting go of one's own body, and the types of mental and emotional attachments and habits that often impede its release.

Chapter Six: RE-MINDING MY BODY

It is not that there is experience because there is an individual, but that there is an individual because there is experience (Kitaro Nishida).

Letting Go

Despite my panicking I managed to successfully complete my primary, secondary and tertiary educations, and even managed to meet and marry the woman of my dreams, and help her raise our three children. It was during my children's early teens, on a warm and overcast day in March of 1998, while sitting in my home office at Allison Street in Wanganui, that I opened Davison and Neale's (1998) book at page one hundred and thirty six. It was on this page, some thirty years after I had first experienced the terror of my own body, that I was finally able to give a name to what had become my nemesis. Using Salkovskis, Clark, Hackmann & Gelder's (1999) advice, I practiced trusting that the palpitations of my heart, and the fuzzy sensations of my head, would not escalate into unwanted disaster. And so it proved, as I let the surge of adrenalin from my initial sensing tumble through me without adding any complicating thoughts to its agitated processing. Experiencing this de-moralised wash of feeling disrupted the catastrophic thinking that typically followed, and that led to the cascade of emotion that had held me hostage from the truth of my body's sensuality for so long. Confronting my illness at this particular time coincided with psychology's behavioural insights into the insidious yet amenable form of anxiety disorder that was my panicking. This confrontation unfolded over a few short weeks and brought to a head thirty years of silent suffering. Opening up to the glare of psychological scrutiny only came about because of the reworked mix of relational, historical, situational, sexual and constructed understandings of my body that had originally closed me off to such insights. As my cloak of silence was cautiously removed, so the experiential resistance that underpinned it was also revealed. As I began to unpick the relationally-bound nature of its stitching, the padded network of its distorting embrace began to disintegrate. With this unravelling, life began to take on a new sense of promise, the promise that comes with new understandings of past events and my place within them.



Figure 9. Under 12's.

On November 26, 2005, the Otago Daily Times published an article (p. 48) entitled 'Reincarnating De Carle'. My small, but relevant, part in the prelude to this article is best captured in the above photo taken in Gisborne in August of 1969. It is a photo of the Taranaki under-12 soccer team that attended the North Island tournament, held at Childers Road soccer ground in Gisborne, that year. What followed for me was further representation for my province that included winning the under sixteen tournament in Auckland in 1973. My return to Childers Road came, many years later, courtesy of the team highlighted in the ODT article. The article lays out something of the history of the Dunedin City soccer club that, at the start of the 1981 season, I was drafted into by the coach of my previous club. It turned into quite a season, with the team finishing runner-up on goal difference in the league, and winning the coveted knock-out competition called the Chatham Cup, on a balmy September afternoon at the Basin Reserve in Wellington. After playing against Rangers (round of sixteen), scoring against Christchurch United (quarterfinals), and warming the subs bench for the semi-final against Stop Out, things did not work out the way I had hoped for in the final. The first choice left midfield player went down injured with fifteen minutes to play, and I duly warmed up ready to replace him, as I had done on a number of occasions already that

season. However, the coach had other ideas and decided to pull the left wing back to fill the now vacant midfield position and send on the substitute striker to take his place up front. I was devastated because in the few seconds that it took to make these sudden and unforeseen changes I not only felt cheated of what I believed to be my merited involvement, but I lost the opportunity to become a part of a historic Chatham Cup winning team. It was an experience that weighed heavily for many years, and came to prominence again when I was reading the story of the two monks in Parent's (2005) book 'Zen Golf'. The gist of the story went something like this: Two monks encountered a young woman unable to cross a stream and, despite their monastic rule forbidding them to touch women, one of the monks carried her across on his back. The other monk brooded over the implications of being a party to such a breach of conduct until he finally asked the other monk why he had done it. To which the offending monk replied, "oh her? I set her down when we got across the stream. Why, my brother, are you still carrying her" (p. 171).

I have until this year, twenty-five years after the actual incident, quietly seethed over the perceived injustice of my near-substitution, and have only just owned up to the anguish it has caused. As I re-read the ODT article recently, I was able to re-live the torment I felt having to return numbed and confused to the reserves bench as I watched another player run onto the park and take what I deemed to be my place in the annals of New Zealand soccer. Now as I read the names of that history-making Dunedin soccer team, minus my own, I can finally put the coach, along with the Cup, down, and enjoy the relief of their combined weight being lifted off me. Acceptance, it seems, comes slowly as I recall the Buddhist idea of wisdom as the yielding to, rather than the resisting of, the ebbs and flows of life. The team photo used in the ODT article was taken some weeks after the Cup final and included the full squad of players used that year. I still have this photograph, and the scowl on my face, and the rather contorted nature of my pose, give away the frustration that I came to experience as a member of this team.

Giving myself the run around



Figure 10. By a nose.

Time to talk running; and I will continue to run, but no longer because I 'have to'. I will keep running because I want to and because, in my running, I get the opportunity to experience the uniquely cross-pollinated and interwoven nature of my being as it erupts through an awareness of the sensual, pre-conceptual nature of my body in motion. For this to happen all I need do is to let go! To let go of 'having to' be fit, stay fit, time my build-up, maintain my flexibility, work on my leg action, avoid straining, introduce speed work, fine tune my block starts, think hot feet, resist excess, allow for recovery, taper, be competitive, target PB's, be strong, and be a winner. All of these hopes, plans and goals, a world of ideas and beliefs filling up my before, during and after, to the point I lose the connection that is, that can be, my running. The drama captured in the above picture of

the finish of the 1997 Wanganui Masters Games two hundred metres final belies this loss of connection. You can see me winning by the proverbial nose. What the picture does not tell you however is the level of tension that has built up in my body to the point that I could hardly make it to the finish line. The tension was nowhere near as evident when I had won my semi-final effortlessly about two hours prior. What had occurred in the time between was a combination of nervous tension, and to a lesser extent, physical fatigue.

In the final I hit the home straight well ahead, just as I had in the semi, only to detect the beginnings of the tightness and loss of flow that is the hallmark of lactic acid. These sensations began to slowly blossom into a form of panicked thinking as I pictured my fellow competitors running me down in the closing stages of the race. Sixty metres out I began to vacate my body for the finish line ahead. My thoughts had me ahead of where I actually was, which only served to exacerbate the tension and tightening of my already fatiguing body. My desire to win began interfering further with my physiology by accelerating the typically gradual build up of lactate. The muscular build up of intolerance produced the choking, restricted type of moving that eventually got me to the line first, but only just, and quite contrary to the desired flow of my body's power and precision. Two hundred metres can be like that, although even when moving in a slow jog my body can call attention to itself in similar, but less spectacular, ways.

When I first start running I feel the stiffness of my joints and their sinewy attachments along with the initial reluctance of the muscles themselves. My proprioceptors alert me to the increased stretch and strain as muscle works against its bony fulcrum, just as they did in the race above. The vestibular processing of my own spatiality also unfolds through the processing of contour, camber, elevation and obstacle awareness; further alerting me to the complexity that is the sophisticated, inbuilt sensitivity of my unfolding moving. My senses broadcast their incessant updates in the form of a blended, interoceptive sense of my physicality that is instantly modelled against conceptualized images of previous performance and states of motion. Melting all too quickly into a mental chart of diagnostic and prognostic comparisons, my feeling body gets replaced by, and becomes lost to, my thinking and constructing body. While I run, more often than not, I get drawn

into the playground of these thoughts, and the emotional responses that depend upon them. When I look back on nearly fifty years of my running, apart from my early childhood days when running was often just for the exhilarating fun of it, I have rarely remained in its sensations. Feeling the air against my skin, my feet against my shoes, the rustle of my shorts against my legs, the texture of my singlet, the smell of the grass, the heat of the sun, the chill of the wind, the chatter of the spectators, the rhythm of my limbs, muscles flexing and extending, the tug of weariness, the ache of lactic, the labour of breathing and much more. If I do happen to let go of my thoughts and venture more fully into this sensuous realm my body's sensuality coalesces into an embodied chant of selfless flow.

This sentient form of moving has, I recently discovered, always been available to me, and is not just the product of the 'unthinkable' speed I describe in the next section. Earlier this year I decided to start regular swimming to assist in recovering from my sprint training. I have always swum, ever since I discovered the joys of the Inglewood town baths as a child. However, apart from some tuition in Moana Pool as part of the aquatics course at the School of Physical Education in Dunedin, I am pretty much self-taught. As a result my swimming has never been particularly enjoyable, because my technical inefficiency has ensured that any distance over several lengths becomes an unpleasant exercise in breathless panicking. Consequently my gulping for air, after more than a few lengths, further ensures deterioration in my style and even more discomfort. All this changed however, when, on the advice of a fellow swimmer, I finally managed to slow my swimming stroke down. It sounded funny to me at the time to have to slow everything down because my goal had always been to swim faster by training myself through the breathlessness that usually affected my swimming. I had been puffing my way up and down the local pool, three times a week, for seven months of the year, in a seemingly, never ending battle between sinking and swimming. To have to slow down seemed the worst thing for me to do, but out of frustration, and for the sheer hell of it, I tried it! I slowed the movements of my arms down and tried to synchronise my breathing to these longer, slower repetitions and immediately something changed in my body!

A break through day today. For some reason decided to swim a little slower than usual in w/u when doing freestyle. Carried this over into freestyle set and noticed I didn't have to stop at the wall the same – no breaks after 10 & 16 laps, or even later on. Was able to keep swimming for 800m. So too for tumbling set, able to cruise through to 20 laps with only moderate effort at end! (Diary entry, 1/08/07).

Over the next few weeks I came to experience a whole new world of aquatic empowerment. It felt like the stopwatch in my head suddenly stopped ticking, and all I could feel was the deliberate, unforced and reassuring motion of my arms. Because I had to focus on them to slow them down into deliberate and measured movements, I became my arms, and the tension seemed to go out of them. Once this happened I noticed something remarkable take place. The tension began to seep out of other parts of my body and, lo and behold, although subtle at first, my breathing actually got easier.

Got into the rhythm or feeling of riding or rolling over the top of my supporting arm's shoulder when turning to breathe. Seemed to make things even more relaxed and seemed to allow more time to breathe (Diary entry, 20/08/07).

By relaxing my arms I allowed them a longer extension and a more exaggerated pull and, rather than causing me greater breathlessness, produced the opposite. Although slowing down produced more time underwater it also produced a slightly longer time for my in-breath, courtesy of my less frantic action.

The amazing thing is that even with alternate breathing (every three strokes) recoveries are still close to or more than 30%!! I could not have imagined this progress, even three weeks ago – having to breast-stroke after tumbling & only managing 30 laps with 3X longer breaths at wall for freestyle. It all started when I slowed myself down, especially relaxing my arms more (Diary entry, 24/08/07).

End result was a more relaxed movement through the water, where I felt supported by the water rather than resisted by it. For the first time in my swimming life I got to feel the water hold me rather than try to submerge me. My newly found buoyancy replaced the breathless frenzy that had been my swimming and allowed me new achievements.

Another milestone, 1500 metres non-stop, alternate breathing. Felt a little heavy in the water today for the first few laps and especially the last ten. But breathing was

excellent and only rarely felt a little panicked. I must be pretty relaxed because managed it in about ½ hour and recovery was 28/19.5 = 30% (Diary entry, 31/08/07).

I am now able to replicate this more supported and enjoyable interplay of body and water. It took my arms to bring me back to my breathing, which allowed me a more rhythmical cycle of breath, and with it a bringing together of body and mind. Previously, when I swam, my thoughts would be rushing ahead of where my body was, creating a sense of annoyance and frustration that quickly turned to physical strain and tension. My frustration was the result of the lag affect of being somewhere I needed to be, like in the middle of my third length, but not where I wanted to be, which was at the end of my exertions.

The secret it seems is not to rush it, to stay in each stroke extension & pull, each breath in and each breath out, each length whether first, twentieth or sixtieth, each moment – be there in my body, bring my awareness, my focus, my attention to only that! When I do that time and distance vanish, I become one, through my breathing & my body, with the water (Diary entry, 31/08/07).

My thoughts were always off somewhere else, taunting me with an image of the finish wall, even when my body was often many lengths from it. In running, this is called ‘getting ahead of your self’ and is cleverly depicted in the TV ad featuring a skeletal Mils Muliani chasing his own ghostly outline on the way to the try line, where they are reunited. The secret I have discovered is to stay in my body wherever, whenever and however it is, rather than being, through my thoughts, in a place it is not. Through this awareness I have discovered I get the most out of what I experience, regardless of the particular context and content that can, and usually does, include the tiredness, frustration and pain that comes with physical training. An example of this was my swim leg of the triathlon event held at Lake Wairua in Wanganui in February of 2008.

Started slowly it seemed to me, slow, deliberate arm strokes allowing rhythmical 3 stroke breathing. No early signs of tiredness just other swimmers drifting back. Then me and D side by side, my breathing starting to get laboured so revert to two, two strokes then three. Much better, able to continue and stay with D. Past the second, then quite quickly the third lot of floats and the end in sight. Now getting tired, breathing quicker, using more 2 stroke breathing but still freestyling all the way to the end,

including overshooting and clamouring through weed – then standing up delirious with my achievement! (Diary entry, 16/02/08).

To explain my delirium is to understand my previous attempts at lake swimming as an exhausting mix of initial enthusiastic freestyle that turned quickly to breaststroke and eventually to dog paddle. Adding to the breathless panic that this clumsiness induced was the ever present thought of the watery void that surrounded me and that lacked the usual reassuring presence of walls and a floor that I could touch, and into which I could sink without a trace! To complete my first fully-fledged freestyle lake-swim was truly a momentous achievement for me, and has provided me with a lasting memory.

Starting slowly, almost too slowly it felt like, I wanted to try and be relaxed in my efforts. As usual the others swam past me leaving me, and my breathing in their wakes. But this only lasted a couple of minutes as they started drifting back past me which was a shock and took a little adjusting to especially when I realized I hadn't changed a thing. They had started out too fast and were now struggling to maintain their speed through their growing breathlessness. As for me I hadn't even changed what felt like the very slow but rhythmical rotations of my initial efforts. So too my kicking, and the excitement of this initial success had me concentrating on trying to maintain this steady and relaxed state. As I did this one other competitor loomed out of the pack behind me and joined me stroke for stroke. Recognizing her as a good swimmer made me feel even lighter with the pull of my stroke continuing to feel so effortless. Up past the second lot of floats and on quickly past the third that marks two hundred to go and I'm only now starting to feel the exhaustion kick in. My ally now begins to change course off at a tangent to me in her alignment with the exit ramp. I don't care about following, content to just concentrate on continuing my breathing patterns. I don't want to spoil the moment, the experience, my conquering of the course, by stopping to look where I am going. I swim on feeling really tired now and breathless but continuing this unstoppable flow that is my excited body. Only to find I have now gone past the ramp and have to deviate hard left and swim my way back through the grasp of lake weed. Who cares, I even enjoy the stalling tactics of their embrace and then I clamber onto the concrete ramp

joyous with achievement. I stop briefly to take in these feelings and then tentatively wade my way onto the grass verge and up to the changeover point where my team member awaits. Once tagged he sets off and leaves me to take in my achievement more fully and to savour this moment!

It appears I am not alone in the experiencing of this presence of my body. “Whenever I quiet the persistent chatter of words within my head, I find this silent or wordless dance already going on – this improvised duet between my animal body and the fluid, breathing landscape that it inhabits” (Abram, 1996, p. 53). I have begun to transfer the ‘successes’ of my swimming into a more regular duet with daily life. Now as I sit at my desk punching my keyboard, hot, tired and resistant to my body’s urgings, I relax a little and welcome these feelings as part of my experiencing. By cultivating these feelings I get to inhabit my body with a reducing sense of disconnection that comes with the reassurance of respecting and trusting the contingencies that are my embodiment.

Contingency, trust and reassurance

It seems somewhat absurd to me now as I write these words to say it took thirty years to confront these fears of mine because of my resistance to even the slightest possibility that I might be mad. The silence, both within my family and in the wider community, around such issues certainly didn't help. Neither did sharing the public and private humiliations of my sisters' admissions to psychiatric wards along with witnessing their ongoing displays of pain and confusion. What this denial meant for me was a life half-lived in search of a seemingly unattainable cure, because I would not risk the exposure of my own trauma. I felt caught in a no-man's land where "lacking the vocabulary and the opportunity to approach their illness in any other way, their experience is genuinely one of passive bewilderment" (Yardley, 1999, p. 43). As my body has unfolded through these experiences of different times, places, people and community, slowly but surely, it has become more of the body I am rather than the one I would have preferred it to be.



Figure 11. Into the unknown.

My growing awareness began with my walk out to the Air New Zealand Friendship as it sat waiting on the tarmac of New Plymouth airport on a beautifully sunny, February morning in 1977. The plane was waiting to fly me off into the unknown, to a place known

as Holy Name Seminary, in a suburb of Christchurch, called Riccarton. The two years spent there awakened firstly my intellectual capacities, then my emotional ones, after the somewhat secluded and sleepy existence of post-high school Inglewood. Further transformation of my body took place at Holy Cross College in Mosgiel when, in my third and fourth year of study, the demythologizing of my Catholic beliefs began through the challenging of my indoctrinated beliefs about Christ and the Christian community. My subsequent relationships, with my friend Jack and primarily with Jill, helped me to uncover further the disconnected beliefs that underpinned many of my bodied practices and provided further momentum for my eventual release from the ideological grip of Catholicism. Their bodies, and those of my children, came to reaffirm the need for a greater awareness of the self and selves that I had become through my life as businessman, athlete, husband and father. All these things leading me back to the body that is the psychology of this research, and with it, insights into its unfolding. I came to understand this unfolding as the living of my body back in it through the acceptance of its fleshy expressions as they manifest in my being-in-this-particular-momentary-experiencing-of-the-world. It is also the growing relief and freedom that comes from beginning to relinquish the need to be 'somebody' or to achieve 'something'. After fifty years of searching I have come to realize that the secret to my life is not about having the ability to control my body and its various manifestations but having the opportunity to experience my body the ways it is. It is through opening up to these manifestations that I discover the fundamental nature of my embodiment and with it the explanation of the contingencies and connectedness of my life.

My connection to the world and to others is fundamentally sensual and this sensuality underpins the experiential nature of human embodiment and being. In attempting to 'show you what I'm made of', I have utilized a post-modern version of embodiment that views presence as the significance generated from a physical body immersed within a historical and cultural world. Capturing the meanings of bodied presence requires identifying this creation of significance "through its accumulating place within a chain of signs, how it differs from other signs and can be displaced by situating the signs with a different context" (Butler, 1989, p. 7). Accounting for my embodied presence affirms the

symbolic and material spacing of this contingency of my body and the meanings it generates. These meanings, along with the identities they generate, lie within the timing, space and history of 'bodied' moments that have been my experiences. When, like Matilda's Mum (Jones, 2006), my body's doors have flapped open in terror and awe, these experiences through the shifting contingencies that helped beget them have come to contour my body anew. In the recognition of these changing chains of significance lays the answer to the mystery that is my body and my need to move.

In revealing the embodied nature of these significances, and the contingencies that facilitate them, this project reveals something of the nature of my being, and the ways I have come to express it. The changing circumstances of time, people, places, ideas, opportunities and understandings that is my life history highlight the flux of events, and the meanings they generate, that together produce the dialectical body-self that I become in this telling of them. Immersed within these contingencies of becoming, human bodies share the verisimilitude of consenting presence through which the theoretical statements I make here gain authenticity. If, through this common fleshy consciousness, you, the reader, can find something of yourself 'here', then this thesis has succeeded in its attempt at reassuring you of your own body's trustworthiness. Its trustworthiness is the experienced or felt resonance of your body with mine as we reverberate together through the contingent connectedness of our embodiment. In this way we not only share, but get to celebrate, the material and symbolic nature of our immersion within a life world of sensual unfolding and expression.

As Parent (2005) says, through our body's ultimate trustworthiness we come to experience that "nothing in our fundamental being is flawed or missing" (p. 23). We may be missing a tooth or two, some or all of our hair and its colour, our flexibility and stamina, even our good looks and body tone, and the day will come when our body will finally make good on its stamp of immortality. Yet these signs of deterioration and decay provide their own special type of guarantee, the guarantee of our connectedness within and without. In the weakness and fragility of its materiality, the body's strengths lie. By opening ourselves up to the liberating paradox of our own flesh and blood, we open

ourselves to a world of experiential understanding: a world where identity and selfhood are expressions of self-understanding derived from the immersions of our material body with its life-world, rather than the other way around. The experiential essence of life reminds us that to find the answers we seek we need look no further than to the body that contains us, that we have, but most of all, are. As Baran (2003) suggests, of all the sacred places to visit the most profound is that which is within.

It is this type of pilgrimage on which I have embarked, and which, is testified to in this story of my body. Another way to understand this experiential journeying of mine is through Kabat-Zinn's (2005) ideological taunt, "reality is merely an illusion, albeit a persistent one" (p. 512). What I have discovered in the process of unravelling my illness is the persistence of beliefs that helped to distort my experiencing. Coming to experience and understand my body as fleshy consciousness uses its embodied nature to undermine the prevalence of the illusions that the disembodied discourses and practices of my upbringing helped to create. By experiencing my body in the when, where and how of its now, I unravel the mystery that is its manifestation. These manifestations unfold from within the field of consciousness that is the sensuality of my intrinsic being. My sensuality bodies my mind and facilitates the phenomenological discernment of the reality of particular illusions, and the illusion of particular realities.

In requiring an active acceptance of our sensual/perceptual make-up, this capacity to be present bestows a form of wisdom that is the elusiveness of unfolding presence. "The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will . . . But it is easier to define this ideal than to give practical directions for bringing it about" (James, 1890, p. 424). In indicating as much, William James would be heartened were he alive today, to know that this potency of the mindful body is available to each one of us right here, right now! However, like James, most of us get caught up with distinguishing between our body and our mind. Much of this has to do with the problem that appears to arise were we to fully accept our body. If we accept it we are forced to embrace its inevitable demise, and the unsavoury consequences that go with this. Lack of acceptance, on the other hand consigns one to a

life of indifference and resistance. There is, as well, the possibility of a middle ground: accept certain parts and reject others. I have tried all three, to some greater or lesser extent, and the more I experience my body the more I am convinced of its contingency. However, believing this is one thing; trusting it in experiential practice is quite another.

When Kabat-Zinn (2005) talks about ‘reality as illusion’ I take his meaning to be referring to the illusion of control that we humans get so fixated with. The illusion of control relates to our bodies, and to the natural world from which it arises. The human world of materiality is the one that most orientates us, and within which the phenomenological font of life gushes. It is this world of my physical body, and the ways it manifests itself through history, culture and other bodies, that I want to portray here. I have talked at length about the way my thinking or constructing body is an extension of this materiality of mine. I have also talked about and attempted to describe the ways that my thinking has come to divorce me from it. However, this is misleading, as my thoughts themselves were also a source of fear and the butt of my rejection similar to body sensations. Consistent with cognitive-behavioural perspectives of traditional psychology, I came to believe that exerting mental control over my thoughts, as well as my sensations and emotions, usually in the form of more acceptable thoughts and feelings, was the path to happiness and fulfilment. As I attest to, and, as John Kirwan keeps saying from inside my television set, this ‘is not what is needed’. Respecting my body has required me, as my swimming, running and other adventures reveal, to risk experiencing my actual body as much, if not more than, my constructed versions of it.

In beginning to accept the way my body feels and even thinks, the ‘me’ that is generated in my non-acceptance of these responses comes into view. The identification of a reified and fixed self as the ‘me’ that seemingly controlled and dominated my body can now be seen as the source of its dissociation. Like most of my European family, my upbringing has been steeped in a dualistic subversion of the body. Given my strict Catholic upbringing, the flesh of my body was worked over by a belief system of derogatory self-surveillance straight out of the Garden-of-Eden. The experiential cocktail that life served up to me included the particular mix of parental addictions that aided this suffocation

and denial of my physical body and its felt expressions. I well remember the night that as a very naïve, young adolescent I sought a view of my mother's breasts, only to be greatly disappointed with the great lump of guilt that descended upon me immediately after my failed attempt to do so. The naivety and confusion that surrounded my understanding of bodies also led to a number of clumsy, undignified and embarrassing attempts at affection and foreplay with potential partners.

My romantic ineptitude is well remembered, but also tinged with a few memories of the succulent kisses that I did get to experience. The pleasurable experiencing of my body was a reassuring reminder of its all too momentary presence in my life. A fuller appreciation of its sexuality came some years later when, through the discovery of more body-friendly practices of masturbation, sex and more genuine love-making, the suppression order that hung upon my body began to be lifted. Many more years were still to follow before I began to realize that the value-laden criteria and assessment of personal worth that continued to constrain my body were constructions of a self that was illusory. With this awareness has come a greater clarity in regard to the appearance of things, including the greater certainty and trustworthiness of the physical body, which has come through the acknowledging of my embodiment and the uncertainty of the contingencies that this produces.

Cognito Ergo Sum Timidus

**It arrived one day with a crack of its whip,
Jolting me awake in the spread of its grip.
Its tide of adrenalin flooding me frozen,
And leaving me open to no other decree.**

**The rush of its tentacles reaching my thoughts,
And there becoming the havoc it wrought.
Images of madness and death spur its progression,
Seeping into limbs that lose their connection.**

**My flesh erupting in full-blooded zest,
It's searing assault like being possessed.
Being laid bare and not having a choice,
Adhering only to its invisible voice.**

**This residue of fear works its poison through me,
The uncertainty of life all that I can see,
Leaving me hazy in its reflected midst,
The thought of the next time I'm powerless to resist.**

**My body you see I viewed as a foe,
My mind somehow, only in tow.
That's how corrosive this fear can be,
Separating it from the very thing that is me.**

**The secret it seems is to understand our kind,
Body and mind, not separate, but intertwined.
Our thoughts and emotions, our flesh's greatest prize,
From our materiality they do arise.**

**But as Buddha once said now quoted by some,
When the student is ready, the teacher will come.
The teacher came in the form of my body,
Rather than resist I learned to swallow.**

**The sensations of pain along with its pleasures,
Growing more accepting of its physical treasures.
Accepting these often anonymous signs,
I found the same could be applied to my mind.**

**Thoughts that once would transport me listless,
Now just a part of life's earthy kiss.
When, where and how my body is alive,
Found in the dance of its fleshy jive.**

(Author, 2007)

The release of my body from the anguish that was its panicking did not come soon enough for some others.



Figure 12. Another favourite.

Like my parents before me, arguments with my wife were common, and these verbal outbursts and displays of emotion, while not involving alcohol, still exposed my children to anxiety and uncertainty. The damage was done with words and bodies in/flexed with anger, frustration and righteous indignation. These embodied intonations, just like my father's before me, created an aura of fear and doubt that broke the bonds of security and dependability that my children sought from me. These practices of disembodied communication, based on my childhood experiences of them, undermine the relational foundations by which a young body comes to be experienced as vibrant, trustworthy and competent. The sense of unease and disconnection that I experienced was so easily transferred in slips of tongue. My research is, in truth, an attempt to redress any imbalance that these slips of mine may have induced in my own children, by aiding their awareness of the doubts and mistrust that these actions of mine may have caused. This scrutiny of the contingencies that influenced these actions of mine reveals their genesis in the misunderstandings of my body. By calling attention to these things, this story

showcases the dependability and reassurance that can be found in the feeling and felt body. Through voicing my sensual body I am better able to take responsibility for it, and in doing so, become a better model of its inherent trustworthiness.

Rather than ending, this story of my panicking starts anew in the bodies of those who I, like my father before me, helped to beget. The story of my panicking will only be put to rest when my body, and theirs too, no longer shrinks from its own make-up. Guided by the revelations of its particular unfolding, my hope is that this story of my anxiety will help console others about their own, and provide them a way back 'home'. While my story folds into and out of time, chronologically and reflexively, it is always historically situated, given the relational nature of my body to time, space, places and other bodies. These things happened to me, and through my body I got to experience the significances of the felt meanings they generated. My presence, then, is not a subjective referent of a mind lying outside of my historical/material body (Butler, 1989), it is the result of my embodiment. My story parades the personal truth of this revelation for others to sample if they wish. While it targets the people I am closest to, through the commonality of a fleshy consciousness, no-body can be excluded. A more open acceptance of my feeling body has helped unravel the source of its unfolding. In acquainting myself with this sense of being, much of my doing is revealed to me in a new light. Part of this doing includes this attempt to situate my body in this story about it, and through the bodies of my children it is returned to the present in this attempted reclamation of it.

Chapter Seven. RE-BODYING MY MIND

Beginning in my body, filtered through language and understood within its socio-cultural constraints, this sym-biology catalyses my past into an embodied refraction of its 'presence' (Chapter five, p. 57).

An Integrated Body

**The gnaw of suspense begins to rise, stalks my throat and fills my eyes.
 "Runners, behind your blocks, please!" Adrenalin pulses.
 "Take your marks!" Feet positioned then hands, breathe.
 "Set". Heart thumps, body rises, arms strain . . . "Crack!"**

**An eruption of bodies, sudden and frantic,
 A rush of flesh sucking me into its realm of motion.
 The faster I go the slower it feels, my torso melts into the track,
 Time slushes, loses its grip and my feet take flight.**

**This flow, unfolding and effortless, shapes experience anew.
 Sensuous and unwavering, seducing me into a timeless trance.
 Time neither horizontal nor vertical, just seamless and serene.
 My body dissipating into harmony, powerless and spellbound.**

**Then, from nowhere, the finish line, irritation invades.
 Tranquillity subsiding, tension rising, limbs losing their rhythm.
 My embodied chant draining away with the impending decree,
 Enveloping me now and awakening me in its rush of reason.**

Embodied Chant (Author, 2006)

Sensation, perception, action and interaction unfold through feeling states in my body that sees my body dissolve into a ubiquitous state of presence. Sensation, thought and emotion interact with an environment that through this bodied act of my moving produces a coherence of experience that feels holistic and unifying. The experiencing of bodied harmony blends the physical, mental, behavioural and social into felt expressions of connection, effortlessness, freedom and tranquillity that epitomize this uninhibited sense of flow. However, it is easily disrupted as the body calls attention to itself in similarly bodily felt expressions of strain, tension, doubt and breach. In this running context, both connection and disconnection can be viewed, and are certainly experienced as, felt forms

of consciousness, before words and thoughts have time to further dissect their meaning.

Such immersed forms of consciousness have been labelled as emotional states, and typically been studied under their presumed guise as things, structures or objects of our physical and mental make-up (Cannon, 1929; Plutchik, 1980; Schachter & Singer, 1962). In more recent times however, a more “non-objectifying view of emotions as relational flows, fluxes or currents, in-between people and places (Bondi, Davidson & Smith, 2005) has emerged. Solomon (2007), not unlike Denzin (1984), suggests that emotion; typically thought of as residing in our brain or as a structural form of awareness, do neither. “What Aristotle and even the Stoics recognized is that our emotions are not [just] ‘in us’ and private but out there in the world, in social space. Our emotions arise, for the most part, in the nexus of our interpersonal relationships” (p. 158). He goes on to equate emotion with consciousness, or more specifically, emotion as an act of consciousness that “involves, in one way or another, the self engaged in the world, the self with interests and concerns in the world” (p. 242). Reflecting Merleau-Pontian phenomenology, this understanding of emotion situates the neurological, psychological and social dimensions of its make-up firmly in embodied intentionality and action.

These emotions that invade, colour and contour my running come out of the “profound complexity of acts, meanings, interpretations and experiences sited in and on the socially located body” (Wilton, 1999, p. 62). Rather than seek to further theorise the physiological structuring of my running’s catalytic pathways, this research seeks an understanding of the complex of interactions that is my emotional connection to running. It seems to me that attempting to quantify, rather than qualify, its make-up would only serve to reinforce the lack of reassurance already experienced by a current generation who, although bombarded with the ‘need to exercise’, remain largely unmoved. Which indicates that the ‘terrain of experience’ common to these people is not illuminated in these discourses of it? Markula and Pringle (2006), in their genealogy of modern day fitness practices, concede that such promotions “aim to regulate behaviour and produce normalised subjectivities” (p. 71). Phenomenological understandings, in describing the “pleasure and empowerment [the emotion] gained through fitness and exercise practices

which occupies a different kind of theoretical [and bodily] terrain” (Grimshaw, 1999, p. 101), allows for the type of personal verifiability that science plays down or ignores.

As Grimshaw (1999) suggests, this emotional terrain, while not traversed by traditional science, is neither a substitute for, nor is rendered redundant by, this same science. Phenomenology, by understanding emotion as a form of embodied consciousness, occupies the terrain of feelings of inhabitation and orientation that can lead to bodies being experienced as “more integrated and mobile, and which led me to project myself differently into the world” (Grimshaw, 1999, p. 111). Emotions are interactive, coming “into being at the shifting interface between people and their environments, a dynamic and mutually constitutive relation” (Davidson, 2003, p. 143). And as the poetics of my running describe, the emotionality of it is played out in the enlivening and awakening of feelings, thoughts and actions that parade my presence before me.

My sensual body, as the foundation for this lived or phenomenological experiencing of myself, remains the foundation of my emotions. Emotion arises in the interaction between sensuality and perception that is the interface of body and life-world, of self and other. I began this debate with the statement that the sensual/perceptual process cannot be separated because of the chiasmic and dialectical nature of its unfolding. My emotionality reinforces this idea by blending physiology, cognition and behaviour to produce the ‘texturing’ of personalized experiencing. These are the ways I come to feel my body from the inside as I engage with and make sense of the world outside of me. My consciousness meets with, and makes of, the world only in, and through, the physicality of its make-up.

Becoming present to my sensual body and the perceptual ways I find myself ‘there’ requires dwelling in its bodied expressions to ascertain the interpretational significances that make them up. “For this reason emotionality and its investigation must lie at the heart of the human disciplines; for to understand and reflect on how this being called human is, and how it becomes what it is, it is necessary to understand how emotionality as a form of consciousness is lived, experienced, articulated, and felt by persons”

(Denzin, 1984, p. 278-279). Fleshy consciousness is consciousness experienced through its manifestations of lived experiencing. Emotions, as a unique blending of my body's sensual/perceptual capabilities, are a particularly powerful manifestation of my body, and retain an important role in its expression. Understanding how consciousness might unfold through emotionally laden acts of the phenomenological body leads to an exploration of 'flow experience'.

A Flowing Body

Murphy (1996) describes flow as a "special place where performance is exceptional and consistent, automatic and flowing" (p. 4). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) theorized flow as a structuring of eight phenomenological dimensions, of which the merging of action and awareness appears the most important (Young, 1999). My experiencing of it does not conform to any sort of structure, but is consistent with other athlete's descriptions of a unified feeling where body and mind are experienced in harmony through effects such as increased concentration, enjoyment and an unhurried sense of time. An altered sense of time can be described as being absorbed into the moment so much that time seems to stand still or become irrelevant to action and movement. Preoccupation with, or the ability to remain in, the current moment appears to experientially complement the heightened awareness and effortlessness of action. The idea of staying in the moment was described recently, by a rugby commentator, as crucial to the outcome of the World Cup rugby quarterfinal between the New Zealand All Blacks and French teams played in Cardiff in November of 2007. She suggested the All Blacks would win through their players remaining focused on the executing of game-specific skills.

Her comments related to the applying of practice-based skills (including game plans and strategies) to specific game-time situations, and proved prophetic as the All Blacks, trailing by two points with ten minutes to go, began to make decisions based on previous match situations rather than their current one. These decisions, along with the growing awareness of the time left to play, conspired to take them 'out of the moment', and resulted in their earliest exit from a World Cup in the country's history. By being unable

to stay enough 'in the moment', the All Blacks passed up a number of opportunities to dropkick a goal for the three points they needed to win the match. Their inability to close out this particular game of rugby helps to point up the usefulness of a general state of awareness that can reliably apply the honed skills of fitness, practice and planning to situations as they arise in sport. It speaks of a decision-making awareness that is fluid and attuned to the body's immediate environment and its requirements, where action and awareness merge to provide feedback that allows one to perform to the best of one's ability.

My own peak experiences of flow feel very much like the combining of my body's expressiveness into feeling states that transcend time and space. Speaking of the All Blacks again it has always struck me that they are at their most focused, and in the now, when performing their pre-game haka. It is when I feel them most immersed into their identities as New Zealand rugby players, identities that then dissipate to some extent as they enter the game proper. Even their brightest on-field activities pale into insignificance when compared with the 'presence' of their haka! The research into states of flow and presence are just beginning to provide insights into mechanisms of performance that are likely to have important ramifications for sporting teams like the All Blacks, and athletes in general. My own running fills my body with powerful feelings of suspense, excitement, adrenalin, acceleration, velocity, harmony, tranquillity, powerlessness, frustration, judgment, and achievement. I become present to these feelings through the sprinting actions of my body as I stride down my lane. However, there has always been an involuntary element to this flow-experiencing of my running because I, like the All Blacks (apart from their haka), could never access its potentiality when I most wanted it.

Davison and Neale (1998) suggest this becoming present to one's own life, whether on the rugby field, running track or wherever, is not only valuable, but is engendered by encountering the world immediately, non-judgmentally and sentiently. It requires a certain letting go or allowing what will be, to be. The real problem with the All Black situation described above, I suspect, was the unwillingness to accept, in those last ten

minutes, the possibility of defeat. As a result of being distracted out of their current situation through a growing anxiety about the future, they lost the composure that is only found in playing in the moment. Influencing this type of in-game awareness for individuals in sport is the expectancy around winning. The weight of expectation within athletes themselves is exacerbated by the additional weight of cultural expectation generated through owners, managers, coaches, marketers, media and supporters alike.

A recent example of the effect of expectation on my body was a hundred metre race at the 2008 Taranaki Masters Games. The race was my first run against a close competitor for nearly three years. I had previously managed to race well against him to the point that he had yet to beat me over any distance. We were both aware that he had been running well during my long lay-off, and without saying so we were putting our 'reputations' on the line. It was a miserably wet and windy day with conditions anathema to fast times. As the rain and wind lashed our bodies and soaked our clothes, times became irrelevant. It was all about getting to the line first, regardless of the conditions. As so often happens in such situations where winning becomes the only thing, a third party intervened to spice the event up even more. In this case it turned out to be the starter. Despite my apprehension of fronting up in my first competitive 'hundred' for some time alongside an obvious threat to my reputation, I remained quietly confident. I had been racing well, albeit over short distances only, prior to the event, with some especially pleasing sixty metre performances to my credit. I knew I would be quick out of the blocks and that he would struggle to catch me if I got a good start.

This proved to be so, when I got out well ahead of everyone on the first gun, only to realise thirty metres down the track that there had been a false start. The excitement of my great start had dulled my acknowledgement of the misfire, and along with the faint hope of the race's continuance had me running further than I would normally. On returning to my blocks for the restart I was still able to buoy myself with the knowledge of my explosive start and again, on the second gun, this proved to be so again. This time I only got twenty metres down the track before my false start had the same voices calling me back once again. I made a rather weak attempt at remonstrating from my position

half way down the track, but to no avail. While all this was going on, my main opposition had expended little or no energy in barely leaving his blocks each time. I remained convinced of my superior acceleration, and so, for a third time, I prepared myself to prove this. I got out quickly again and had no sense of anyone around me until the sixty metre mark. It was then that I heard for the first time the sound of approaching feet, something I had not been accustomed to for some time! Very quickly these sounds turned into a body alongside of me that then proceeded to draw away from me as we closed to the finish.

I ended up being beaten comprehensively, because despite my valiant efforts to stay with him my legs were spent, and I was forced to watch in a state of helpless and stunned suspense as he drew away. I have been in situations of false starts before, and on these occasions I have resisted the urge to continue running even when my start was a good one. I had run my race by the time the gun went off for the third time and I 'tied up' badly through the lactic build up in my leg muscles. I had been unable to restrain myself sufficiently to retain my anaerobic capacity to produce a more consistent race, and the accolades quite rightly went to him. I was so distracted with what might have been (my good but ultimately false starts) that I was not able to stay sufficiently in the moment to refrain from depleting my body's energy resources necessary to perform well. Weighed down by a self-imposed expectation and hope of invincibility, I lost the perspective of the moment, and with it, the clarity of decision-making that this produces.

Linehan (1993) says that tolerating the moment is an acceptance and an acknowledgement of what is. In becoming present in my sprinting body the many hundreds of hours of technical training seemingly dissolve into what is a felt-form of ubiquitous harmony that is its flow. Elusive as this state of connectedness is, through greater understanding of attitudinal and emotional presence, acceptance and willingness its benefits become more accessible (Gardner & Moore, 2004). Discovering the avenue and ease of accessibility to this state of unity for myself in daily experience is somewhat unsettling, especially given the amount of effort devoted to it's, as yet, undefined scientific determinants. My uncertainty is tempered by studies such as Gardner and

Moore's (2004) adaptation of the clinical usefulness of this Buddhist concept of mindfulness to sport that combine phenomenology and science to confirm what Eastern meditative practice has been aware of for centuries. In distilling this knowledge of the sensual/perceptual body through two and a half thousand years of meditation and martial arts practices, Eastern thought has offered up to Westerners the opportunity of an insightful way of playing, living and being.

The linking of flow-experiencing with the practice of mindfulness aims at a better understanding of its dynamics, and comes after more traditional behavioural research that emphasizes cognitive strategies of self-regulation (Blackburn & Twaddle, 1996; Meichenbaum, 1977). A growing field of research has already confirmed the ameliorative effects of mindfulness in clinical applications (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 1999; Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Linehan, 1993; Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2002; Tacon, McComb, Caldera & Randolph, 2003). Baer and Krietemeyer (2006) suggest these approaches “operationalise and teach a particular way of paying attention to present-moment experience that until recent years has received very little attention in Western culture, yet may have significant potential for reducing symptoms and increasing well being in a wide range of populations” (p. 26). Its relevance to sporting populations has also been vindicated by other research (Chatzisarantis & Hagger, 2007; Little & Simpson, 2000; Robert-McComb, Tacon, Randolph & Caldera, 2004; Wolanin, 2005). These studies suggest the development of an accepting and non-judgmental attitude by the athlete toward the various cues, both internal and external, generated during performance can affect motivation, decision-making and outcomes. It appears that implicitly acknowledging the presence of these cues, whilst developing a non-judgmental stance toward them, creates a more present-focused, less distracted awareness that facilitates preparation, goal setting and performance.

A Mindful Body

A bodied yet de-centred understanding of consciousness disrupts the notion of discourse as “the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject” (Foucault, 1972, p. 55), and with it the inherent and fixed nature of self-hood. Instead, discourse can be seen as the bodied practice that most shapes our understandings of expressed emotionality and subjectivity. These, and other practices of our body, influence the ways we experience life and come to understand things materially and symbolically as interpretations through a perceptual process that is instinctual and context-dependent. The heuristic essence of existence requires my presence in engagements with my life-world, and through it reveals the integrity of things, including the integrity of my own body. These experiences of life, as Kabat-Zinn (2005) suggests, are magical and only require us to ‘show up’ for them. He suggests that in waiting for something momentous to occur in our lives, we do not “realize that something very special is already occurring . . . life emerging in each moment as awareness itself” (p. 63). Awareness itself is the basis of a mindful body that allows us the opportunity to rediscover the integral nature of our body that is its creative fragility.

In meeting my senses at their point of contact lies the secret to being present to them as they unfold through a consciousness that allows me awareness of what I experience as I experience it. I am referring here, as is Kabat-Zinn, to the field of consciousness that is available to us in our everyday awake state. It is this state of awareness that provides us the ability to be conscious of our body and what we think, feel and do as we are thinking, feeling and doing it. This state of awareness can be viewed as our body’s fundamental sensuality that underpins all sensing and perceiving, and produces the consciousness of self that is my being at any particular when, where and how of that being. Being aware of a feeling state, even one as ‘emotional’ as my flow experience, clearly hints at, but does not guarantee, experience of this more fundamental level of sensuous consciousness. To appreciate this requires identifying the way our more general awareness or consciousness underlies the sensations, thoughts, actions and emotions that make up our experiencing, whilst being more than them. “When you identify with awareness instead of

its contents, small mind becomes big mind” (Parent, 2005, p. 20).

“Big mind” is what makes Merleau-Ponty’s field of presence possible, and opens up the opportunity for senses to merge through perceptions into the experience of human being. The meeting of inside with outside made possible through my physical body appears to most people as automatic or unconscious due to our body’s ability for sensory adaptation. However, given the uncertainty, resistance and silence that came to prevail upon much of my experience of experiencing myself, I came to lose this innate sense of oneness that I was born with. I well remember the feeling of being so much in my thoughts that I would even lose a sense of my own physical body at times. The sense of momentary detachment from my body rather than from the world around me (I retained a clear sense of where I was, when I was and this particularly strange way of how I was), as I have already indicated, terrified me. With hindsight I now realize I was experiencing my body’s capacity for ‘big mind’ which I interpreted negatively by catastrophising its occurrence.

My newly experienced wave of awareness had me interpreting its developmental arrival as the possible loss of my mind rather than the gaining of it! Knowing we are not just the acts of our consciousness, even though we might ‘feel’ or ‘think’ that it is this way, means we can embrace these acts without being defined by them, and come to understand them as states of experiencing and being. The body’s grounded-ness in sensual awareness decentres us and opens us up to our most basic nature, a nature that is bodied and bounded yet holistic and expressive. Our fundamental nature, typically disguised by layers of thought and emotion, is not concerned with a solidified sense of self that these acts of consciousness typically generate and fixate over. As thought and emotion become more and more sedimented into our lives, we end up devoting much of our living to the “unexamined habit of grasping and clinging for what is not fundamental, all the while missing or forgetting what is” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 328). The sensuous nature of our body opens us up to the world through this field of awareness that is intrinsic to our being. In catastrophising my body’s awakening to itself I rationalized away its fleshy essence, or at least distorted its presence, and instead of embracing it, I negated it.

The sensual/perceptual body is more than the rational or emotional body; it is the body in flow that is the expression of embodied holism. Sallis (1973) reminds us how easily we are seduced into missing the moment-by-moment magic of this connectedness of our body. “We tend to lose ourselves in the thing perceived so as to forget the perception itself, so, likewise, we lose ourselves in what is expressed and forget the expression itself which first made the idea exist for us” (p. 100). The mindful body is nothing other than the body coming to its senses about its own sensibility. Perception can then be understood as the dialectical unravelling of this sensing, and can be seen as the extension of, and the folding back into, the fundamentally chiasmic capacity for experiencing itself. At the heart of all experience is this fundamental consciousness that is the chiasmic, dialectical and dialogical contingency of the body. Without it we would not be aware of our own experiencing, given it were even possible to experience anything without it! The mindful body, in re-minding us of this prowess to be present to ourselves while being ourselves, illuminates the truth that is our conscious fleshiness.

A conscious fleshiness allows the cross pollinating of the sensual and perceptual body to enable us to feel ‘ourselves’ and to act in response to these feelings. Actions and practices emanate from bodies that are both similar and unique in the generation of, and response to, these feelings. What is of interest here is that even despite my catastrophising, exercise helped me to retain vestiges of embodied experiencing. For example, compare my flow experiencing to Grimshaw’s (1999) comportment. “‘I and ‘my body’ pulled against each other . . . I did not want to ‘be’ my body . . . I ‘carried it around’ under sufferance” (p. 111). Like Young (1989), she talks of the dis-ease with her body that is constructed around gender-related issues and her own inactivity. She was not ‘at home’ in her body when it came to moving it in any major way. Her story is one where through moving her body in new ways she finds a bodily orientation that ‘feels’ better and allows her to project herself differently into the life-world. Interpreting Merleau-Ponty more positively, she states “we can ‘dilate’ our being-in-the-world by developing fresh bodily skills” (p.111).

I developed bodily skills early on in my life that dilated my being-in-the-world along with

other habits and practices that diluted it. When contrasting the flow-experiencing I achieved through running with the disconnection experiencing of my catastrophising, it is not surprising I retained exercise practices that gave me, albeit briefly, a semblance of unity and connectivity. Yet even my panicking body is an expression of its embodied agency in connection with the world it interacts with, in the here and how of the now. The degree to which I am willing to be present in my body as it meets the world in sensual immersion determines the particular orientation that is the dilation or dilution of my 'being-in-the-world'. The experiencing of life is point blank, and contrasts with the linguistic meanings that layer my body as I struggle to re-mind and re-member it through these symbolic interpretations of it.

SECTION FOUR: TESTIFYING THE BODY

Chapter Eight. RE-LIVING MY BODY

Exercise habits can turn into disciplinary techniques. It is important, therefore, to assess whether a practice of self-care is used merely to comply with the dominant discourses or to actively increase the understanding of one's self as an ethical being (Markula, 2004, p.308).

A Disciplined Body

It's now 3.55pm on a warm, sunny Wanganui afternoon. I am packing up ready to go off for a swim at the W.E. pool. I feel like I just want to go home instead. I never feel like swimming, and only ever think of the things that will make it a pain for me – e.g. the wash; loud, noisy kids getting in my way; getting tired and the thought of always having to do it! It never feels like something I really want to do until I'm warmed up and doing it or finished it. The pleasure I get is always usually only in hindsight? Running is much the same – the warm-up reminding me of my aches and pains and it is only for a brief few seconds during a couple of reps or a race itself that I feel good about it (Diary entry, 23/01/08).

In this diary entry I am still reporting the drudgery of my exercising even after discovering the slowed, sensual unity of a more mindful swimming body during 2007. The lack of enjoyment has been a constant in my exercising life, and if I am completely truthful it has never been something I have done for pleasure. My insight comes despite my daily adherence to its regimes for nearly fifty years. And this awareness found further understanding some months later as I drove to Palmerston North for my regular Wednesday teaching commitments.

A “bingo”day. Driving over to Palmy I got to thinking about how Frank has helped me situate my exercising within the context of my panicking. By disciplining my body on a daily basis I was trying to control it and bring back its former predictability! I realise that this predictability was lost when hearing my parents argue What made the fear worse was that I couldn't acknowledge it to anyone. Sharing feelings wasn't an accepted practice within my family or within the Inglewood community or N.Z. society at large I made sense of the chaos . . . by putting the blame on myself Of course my body was only the innocent refractor of the uncertainty of my family situation . . . Identifying my body as untrustworthy required my objectification of it firstly as a way of reassuring myself that I (my mind) was still okay, and secondly, as a way of being able to work on it and make it okay too. The

problem with this approach is as Frank says – it's not only an unpleasant way to live but by using exercise to remedy its contingency and unreliability I created another contingency in its place, that of dependence on the very regimes of exercise I instigated. I had to continue to implement them to produce the desired effect. Taken to its logical conclusion I could never be free of them (Diary entry, 13/08/08).

Thus my life-long commitment to exercise finally made sense through the revelation of its futility. I realise now that it has always been a pointless venture in terms of what I had hoped to achieve. Futility haunted my running and produced the lack of enjoyment, lethargy, effort and energy that was such a big part of it for close to fifty years. After all these years of trying to quell its uncertainty and unpredictability, I am back where I started, in the same contingent body, albeit somewhat older and now a little wiser. While ultimately futile, my exercising did have its good points, short term at least, that included the physical outcomes of endurance training, as well as the emotional outcomes of goal-based achievement.

With regard to achievement, I can now situate my need to win at primary school and ever since. Winning was an important measuring stick for the attempted control of my physical body and its unpredictability, and was a form of tangible confirmation of the regaining of its stability. But like my exercising in general, my dependence on winning was even more futile. For a start, when it did happen it was always temporary, only ever as good as my last race and constantly dependant on the next one. It also required the impossible task of trying to control other bodies that might be better suited to the race or particular game situation. I achieved this by picking and choosing my competitions where I could, and failing this, suffering often extreme levels of pre-race or match stress that would then drive my do-or-die efforts during it. The main reason the majority of my sporting efforts have been so successful was because of this degree of desperation. Winning reproduced briefly a sense of predictability and reassurance that I had sought as a young child experiencing the 'chaos, hostility and confusion' (to quote a sister of mine) of my family situation. Losing, I believe, came to reinforce what I seemed to fear the most; a loss of control over events at hand. Scape-goating my body as the culprit of my family's chaos allowed me to retain the necessary faith in my parents to keep the world around me from completely falling apart. However, the problem with this solution was

the constant feeling of rupture that accompanied the experiencing of a mind deemed superior to its objectified and dependent project, my body.

Unravelling my exercising allegiance as a way of controlling my body came about through the unfolding nature of this inquiry. My selection, organisation and evaluation of the various parts of chapter five and six initially proceeded without any great awareness of the importance of the sequencing of events. I constructed the first versions of my body's re-membering and re-minding more out of a gut-feeling for their importance than any pre-arranged plan or logic, all the while wondering how I might end up interpreting them. It was also, I thought at the time, written in a way to show off my body and its manifestations to you, the reader, so as to immerse you better into the experiencing of it. It was only when editing these chapters, more for fine-tuning than any substantive changes that these incidents took on the dialogical and dialectical characteristics of narrative identity-making. The discovery that this thesis is selectively storied, interpersonally situated and culturally sanctioned reinforces the narrative truth of its telling which is found in my human need to make sense of things that include my childhood, and the beliefs and practices that it spawned.

As I wrote and rewrote these events, I began to organise and connect them chronologically. Such sequencing gave the events more impetus, and enabled the meanings I derived from them to link better with the significance of my life history as a whole. The narrative truth or truths that are embodied in its telling are not the same as the historical truths upon which it is based. But it is this sort of narrative truth that can be used to unearth the felt significance of events experienced in ways that redefine the experiences themselves, often many years later. Because 'story', in this re-creative sense, is much more than a simple description of historically accurate events, the real intent of my telling lies in the revelation of feelings, thoughts and emotions that are the significances of a body that 'raged in silence'. By voicing my previously mute and docile body, even thirty to forty years after its silencing, this narrative opens the dynamics of its muting up to scrutiny and, with it, to change and further interpretation. There is also the hope that in voicing these particular dynamics of mine other similarly muted bodies

may find their voices too, and with it the opportunity to also live their bodies differently.

The opportunity to ‘unravel’ my past comes courtesy of the conceptual power of human language. In the previous three chapters I have given you abbreviated versions of my life through depicting certain events in certain ways. Let me now unpack aspects of these abbreviations by using language as a conceptual tool to focus on the ways I go about constructing them. The first thing to acknowledge is that these events, as narrated in differing tones of dispassionate as well as emotively reflexive guises, are re-constructions of mine. They serve to highlight the felt, emotional and thinking contributions of my body in its engagement through its memory of these events. These words create places and people from memories of historical situations, and produce through them a new layer of re-experienced meaning. Unlike being there; time, space and current linguistic conventions provide a sort of hiatus from which I re-order and censure memorised experience even while I linger in the symbolic after-glow of its effects. The rush of its immediate unfolding is gone, and this after-glow is the seductive redolence of my felt-body’s synaptic regurgitation of its lived-through significances. The language I use here become the result of the activation of memories that make up the sensual/perceptual processes of human recall. Containment of past events within neuronal tissue is itself the result of perceptual interpretation, open as it always is to the vagaries of physical and conceptual biases. The truth of any event, and especially the memory of that event, is interpretational, not historical, and even more so today as I attempt to remind my body of these interpretations, which are interpretations of interpretations of further interpretations (Geertz, 1973).

Hence my narrative is an attempt to remember, and remind myself of, the experiences of a dissociated body through the time-travel that is my reflexive re-living of it. In this way I get the chance to ‘take another look’ at things as they unfold within a temporally displaced version of my body. My language works to reawaken the embodied residue of the memorising processes that is now these past events. But while words catalyse the body they also constrain it, and in conforming to the discourses of my day my body becomes confined by its designated parameters. The most dominant discourse common to

most health and illness stories is the medical discourse that uses an interventionist strategy of mind over matter, that objectifies the body as deviant, deficient or diseased, and the patient/mind/self battling to regain control of its decline. The disconnection of self from body that is told through my story conforms to discourse that sanctioned its division as a necessary tool in its preservation. A ‘fight’ analogy becomes implicit in my story as well, whereby my mental resources are pitted against my physical resources in the ‘battle’ for control of my life and soul. In terms of my experiencing, my body became a prototypical body sanctioned by a culture whose medical, spiritual, colonialist and gendered ‘knowledges’ were trusted implicitly and unquestioningly put into practice. Through this understandable adherence to pervasive, powerful and dualistic meta-narratives of health, gender and sexuality, my body was consigned, unwittingly, to years of silenced rebellion that was its panicking.

With postmodernism came the narrative scrutiny of psychology and Frank’s (1995) sociological typology of restorative, chaotic and questing bodies helps transfer this scrutiny back onto feeling bodies by contextualising the psycho-social nature of its interpretation and, therefore, how I came to represent my body in my concerns about it. While his theoretical frameworks “are not the truth of the stories . . . only a means of heightening attention to stories that are their own truth” (p. 24), they serve a most useful purpose. As listening devices, these conceptions of the dialogical body helped me to recognise the way that my body had been required to fit within the dissociating constraints of my culture’s obligation to disembody experience through its efforts to control it. But before Frank (1995) helped me unravel these particular narrative truths of my body’s telling, it was my discussions with JB that set me on the road to its various depictions. When transcribing our oral interactions, it soon became apparent that much of our conversations revolved around certain events that had retained significant meaning for me. Even before I began a more thorough analysis of them, these transcripts prompted me to write about these events in more evocative detail. These events included my parent’s arguments, my Dad’s drinking and my Mum’s religiosity, which in turn led to the descriptions of my panicking and some of the occasions of its fallout. As these events and circumstances were revealed through their telling, so my bodily sedimentations of

them and their effects were invoked. Experiencing, for example, the re-felt resonance of the silenced ‘raging’ of my panicking body through my writings of it brought with it the well-remembered pain and powerlessness of the confusion and torment that it wrought. But along with this pain came promise as Labov’s (1977) structuring of vernacular confirmed my initial hunch to follow my senses.

An Action-Oriented Body

My analytical section of work sits within the unfolding process of this research that started with my readings of embodiment in late 2005, and led into the interviews with JB between August and December of 2007. In transcribing these conversations during that time, the centrality of particular events became obvious, and I then drafted up the evocative accounts of them that are now central to my story. These drafts were produced initially around my parent’s activities, and then flowed into depictions of my own. It was in July of 2008 that I used Labov (1977) to identify the significance pieces of my conversations with JB. His understanding of oral narrative as “narratives of personal experience, in which the speaker becomes deeply involved in rehearsing or even reliving events of his past” (p. 354) enabled me to identify the ten pieces of transcribed text that met his criteria. Interwoven within my conversations with JB were narrative clauses that describe my experiences of social (p. 9, lines 10-26), competitive (p. 15, lines 5-17 & p. 78, lines 30-38), emotional (p. 18, lines 14-24), spiritual (p. 23, lines 18-37), physical (p.34, lines 19-27; p. 57, lines 35-46 & p. 58, lines 1-5) and relationship (p. 69, lines 1-20) anxiety. The only other piece of ‘Labovian’ narrative is on page 87, lines 24-29, that describe the joy and fulfilment I felt at my son’s birth. These pieces taken together comprise barely more than a page of the ninety-three pages of our verbal interactions. Despite their scarcity, all of these pieces ‘of being there’, except one, contained the common theme of anxiety.

These action clauses become the catalyst for the writing of a rather frightened, lonely and overwhelmed boy and young man struggling to make sense of his situation. Conflicted into silence by allegiance to a dysfunctional family situation, his body

manifests his uncertainty through a growing sense of isolation and fear that takes the form of a panic disorder that threatens to derail his existence. The disorder affects his everyday life, and he is portrayed as carrying it around within his body wherever he goes. Beguiled into believing its absolutism, he seems destined for constant misery and anguish. But, like any good story, interwoven into this journey of emotional oppression are events of physical and symbolic significance that lead him to challenge rigidly held beliefs and practices that have held sway over his body. His defusing of religious beliefs leads into a rediscovery of his sexuality which in turn leads to wider friendships and more openness about his needs, and ultimately to marriage and children. Whilst still contending with less regular but still undisclosed panic attacks, he manages to maintain a relatively stable family and work environment. The stabilising of his situation eventually leads him to explore the nature of his anxiety, and to discover a means for its release.

The resolution of his panicking provides the springboard for a new twist in the tale of recuperation. Whilst providing a point of evaluation for all that had gone before, it also acts as a reorientation that sets the scene for more dramatic developments to come. The new complicating action arises out of the control that the now panic-free subject is used to exerting upon his body and, by implication, other bodies too. These implications are drawn out through several accounts of his exercising experiences, whereby he describes the contrasting effects of controlling versus letting go of his exercising body. Letting go takes the form of trusting his body enough to remain in its present moment sensations, thoughts, emotions and actions. Trust allows him to let go of experiencing his body in a preconceived way long enough to experience it the way it is. The active acceptance of his body activates a process of resolution of previous dilemmas, and forms the basis for an evaluation of his own being. It allows him to return optimistically to the present ready to deal with life and the uncertainties of its future unfolding. The story becomes the portrayal of a body oppressed by fear, isolation and ignorance that finds rehabilitation through engagement, trust and insight.

The use of the third person in the last two paragraphs helps to highlight how the functioning power of language affects the constructed nature of any story, including my

body story. Consistent with a journeying theme, this text helps to order events to produce the particular characterisations I want to achieve with my body and those around me. I situate myself (my character, myself as subject) through a particular discourse that is a readily available and popular linguistic device used by Westerners to tell the story of their lives. In telling it this way, my story becomes bound by the conventions and constraints that this discourse produces: for example, a trajectory that requires a movement, typically from good to bad to good again. The journey theme usually emphasises the destination (some hoped for resolution) and focuses on the aspects of the journey to emphasise this end result. Rarely do such biographical journeys focus on the merits of these events in themselves. Metaphoric concentration of language helps to make sense of people, places and events in certain ways while precluding other linguistic possibilities. Armstrong's (2000) account of his battle with testicular cancer is an example of this type of restitution story.

Like Lance Armstrong's story, mine is also about my attempts at disciplining my body so as to try and control its emotional lability. It was Frank's (1995) idea of the "wounded storyteller" that gave momentum to the initial Labovian analysis that had opened up my data for closer inspection. Along with Frank, Armstrong (2000), more unwittingly, confirms the unpleasant way to live that is this form of dissociated state of being that I too had engineered under the now recognisable duress of my culture's bio-medicalised fitness discourse. "Once, someone asked me what pleasure I took in riding so long. 'Pleasure?' I said. 'I don't understand the question?' I didn't do it for pleasure. I did it for pain." (p. 88). Through this discovery of my thesis as an illness narrative, my panicking took on a whole new feel, and with it the opening was created to reintegrate my previously 'mindless' body. The compulsive nature of my exercising became even more evident through the experiential revelations of my exercising body in flow that revealed the dramatic effects of acceptance practices as opposed to resistant ones. Both the theory and practice that this work highlights reinforces the embodied nature of experience by revealing the feeling/felt body through the various textures of its telling.

Labov's (1972) structural analysis allowed me to uncover the way I use language, like

Armstrong, to shape my accounts of various life events, and to produce certain meanings consistent with this shaping. Frank (1995) helped me build on this understanding by pointing out the contextual aspects that lie behind this linguistic structuring that include the historical and cultural influences at work in the events I describe, as well as in the words I use to describe them. My initial accounts orient the reader to my presence in a large family that resides in a conservative, rural town called Inglewood. This dairy farming town on the West Coast of the North Island was built upon the volcanic soil of a lone mountain, named by European settlers as Egmont, but always known by local Maori as Taranaki. As the story of my growing up in the still relatively colonial times of the nineteen fifties, sixties and seventies, unfolds, other contingencies of Catholicism, alcoholism, economy, geography, sporting beliefs and practices, amongst other things, colour and contour the felt terrain within which we lived. These influences act as catalysts within the narrative framework I use to produce the complicating actions of my characterisation while also attesting to the contingencies of my embodied experiencing.

Just as pertinent to an account of my growing up are influences I do not expand on, including sibling relationships, my friendships at primary and secondary school, the interaction with neighbours, the geographical and social climate, the rivalry and suspicion between Catholic and non-Catholic, the socio-economic make-up of the community, inter-family relationships, my grandma, the constraints of a large family, and so on. These additional influences provide the basis for the further mix of contingencies that helped shape the interpretations of my seminal experiences. My characterisation of a fearful and silenced body reveals the account of my life from within a narrowly chosen band of events that could just as easily have included others. All of these contingencies helped to produce the panicking body that I became, and while variations of these could have produced a potentially different version of its unfolding, it is this particular blend of the personal, social, historical and cultural that catalyses these interpretations of my body into the story that it is.

A Contingent Body

Looking a little deeper into my account reveals the way that, although the early sections are designed as reflexive evaluations of important events, they do more than this. They thicken the plot of my stricken body by linking its development to events that chronologically unfold. In recounting my panic experiencing, I shift hastily into the near present as if to comfort myself with the discovery of the ‘truth’ of it. Just as I do when I suggest I ‘could not begin to write about my panicking until I had relived it’ by still writing about it first. The hint of resolution so early on in my story is juxtaposed with the discomfort of the essentially unexplained ‘wait’ of thirty years that preceded it. Across these thirty years are drawn out examples of the changes that, when accumulated together, become the initiation process that enables a more curious and questioning body to emerge from a previously fearful and withdrawn one. My emphasis in the telling of these events shifts from the events themselves onto the feeling/felt aspect of them, before a further shift back in this chapter to the contextual importance of the events themselves.

I highlight a number of turning points across this expanse of time: leaving home, theological study, Jack, exploring my sexuality, romance, marriage, children, work and psychology. While these may appear within my story as steps toward the inevitable confrontation of my un-wellness, they also serve to point up other unfinished business and the inevitability of such. The apparent resolution is just that, apparent in the sense that it requires more, and is but another beginning or stepping stone toward the discovery of what my body reveals next. As the plot ‘thickens’, further complicating action arrives in the form of my exercising body. Again the emphasis here is on the emotional and feeling aspects of my experiencing, refracted as it is through the displaced experiencing that is my memory and hindsight.

The real turning point in my story arrives in the form of my sensual body, which, although apparent throughout my narrative, does not reveal itself fully until pages 113-115. Here I attempt to explain the breakthrough experience of staying in my body ‘wherever, whenever and however it is’. Resolution culminates in an action, the

performance of active awareness that is Abram's (1996) wordless dance. Discovering the body I am completes my journey from boyhood to manhood and reveals the motivation of its narration; the unfinished business that is always and inevitably the upshot of my body's immersion with the life world it engages. Despite this immersion, my story may still appeal to some as a journey of individual authentication, at least up until I meet my wife and we embark on the journey of parenthood together. The obvious turning point to my apparent social isolation, prior to Jill's arrival, appears to come when I meet Jack, and find in him someone who I can finally confide in. However rather than a journey of individuation this story is a journey of relationships through which I find myself liberated from the prison of self-doubt that my autonomising created. Through people like Jack, and those others who helped normalise the sensations, thoughts and emotions that I believed to be dangerous, I no longer felt I was so alone. This did not resolve the indifference I continued to feel in my body, but their encouragement opened the way to further explore the relationships that had helped create this uncertainty in the first place.

Even though I include aspects of my relationships with my parents, Jill, my children, and others like Jack and JB, there is almost complete silence around my siblings and our interactions as we grew up together witnessing the regular bouts of our parent's marital discord. Sibling interaction within my family, certainly from my experience of it, was often marked more by what we didn't or couldn't say to each other than what we did. Despite silences these precious others ensured that my body didn't just develop 'on its own'. Relationships of silenced bodies constitute a powerful range of contingencies that influenced understandings of my body, and eventually this attempt at the resolution of it, and what it became for me. While certain details of my family interactions are described here, many more are left unspoken. Together these interactions were the catalyst for my body's immersion into the particular historical, cultural, familial and communal strands of its experiencing. In particular, the dearth of sibling interaction highlights the contingency of silence and the insidious affects of its muting constraints that were perpetrated upon my body, and theirs, through the more general contingencies of religious and cultural beliefs and practices that underpinned it.

I did not share my feelings with my brothers and sisters because it was not the done thing, and especially because sensations and emotions were viewed as unreliable and corrupting. Our code of moral conduct was a modern one grounded “in religious, legal and scientific norms that dominate[d] the self” (Markula, 2004, p. 306), and included our gendering, whereby boy’s bodies were deemed to be ‘different’ from girl’s bodies and any exploration of either, even through discussion, was dangerous. Bodies in my day were definitely not felt, and if they were, required absolution. The religious and social fundamentalism that was enshrined within my particularly small, homogenous and predominantly uneducated community, and which pervaded provincial culture in New Zealand at the time, privileged the mind while desecrating the body in ways that reinforced its untrustworthiness. Distrust of the sensual body facilitated much of the unspoken confusion that often surrounded our attempts to interpret its various manifestations.

The traditional isolationist discourse, championed in humanistic psychology, tells the story of the self “unique, bounded and motivated from within” (Cheals, Morgan & Coombes, 2003, p. 69) as representative of a reified inner world of subjectivity. An inner world constructed this way crumbles when understood as just another attempt to make sense of and apply coherence to bodied experiences. The coherence found through the linguistic resources I use to construct it exists in the telling, but not necessarily in the experience at the centre of the telling. My sensing, feeling body constructs reality, or more rightly generates interpretations of it through the interactive processes of engagement with the life world that contains it. Language, in smearing additional layers of meaning onto these bodied experiences, filters them further through symbols that constitute understandings or concepts of self or identity that are a reconstitution of the experience itself. What is suggested here, both in the construction of language conventions and our use of them, is that bodied experience requires this application of linguistic resources to better reveal its significances. What is not usually mentioned in this ordering of experience is what is lost, overlooked and rearranged in the process. And this is the case as well with the ways I structure, emphasise and narrate my experiences to produce a ‘version’ of events that I think tells you what I hope for you to know about my

body.

Language, therefore, reconstitutes experience, but does so through the constraints of the personal, historical and cultural conventions of its use. These conventions differ between individuals, communities and cultures through the variety of uses to which vocabulary, history, beliefs and understandings are put to sanction certain discourses over others. Words can be seen as linguistic forms of manipulation that constrain felt, bodied experiences within vocabularies, belief systems and discourses that are used to interpret them. Armstrong's (2000) narrative is an example of this and conforms to a discourse of restitution (Frank, 1995) that sanctions a 'cyborg' ethic of the body (Butryn & Masucci, 2003; Sparkes, 2004) over a more interpersonal one.

Language used this way, while only ever attempting to represent thoughts and feelings, can come to be viewed as providing a window into internal states of being. The unwitting acceptance of a narrative's ability to accurately depict, and at times dissect, our bodies, is at the heart of Foucault's (1980) 'biopolitics of the population'. While society promotes and funds ideology and practice through its various institutions for the supposed benefit of the individual, this is rarely the outcome. Using a dualistic understanding of the body, political and religious institutions alike, typically promote discourses of governance over the body through specified codes of beliefs and practices. Like the current bio-medically based fitness discourse, the commandment discourse, which in more recent times has been diluted down to a love-thy-neighbour discourse, has, at the same time, not had the desired effect of attracting, or even retaining, adherents to their particular brands of morality.

Despite the lack of numbers participating in fitness and religious activities both discourses retain their presence in our community through the reflexive reach of their underlying ideology. Markula and Pringle (2006) make the point that these types of bio-power are not in themselves good or bad. But given that they remain powerful regulators of behaviour and identity, they are deserving of the type of scrutiny that reveals the presumptions and biases underpinning them. The story of my body provides an insight

into the regulating ‘power’ of church and state through the ways institutionalized knowledge came to influence the interpretations of my body and its sensual manifestations, and thereby facilitate the practices I came to live by.

Western religion, along with its sciences, as part of their vocabulary, history and culture, align language more readily with thought than with feeling. Stam’s (1998) contrast of the body’s psychology with traditional psychology’s body reinforces this viewpoint, while a brief examination of my own functioning proves the point. Thoughts, primarily in the form of ideas and images, have me reliving past events as well as anticipating their future occurrence. These cerebral, and surreal, forms of time travel can get in the way of our ability to be present to ourselves, to “settle into your own body, into a sense of just being alive” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 421). To experience this type of unfettered presence requires an acknowledgement of how our bodies are so easily preoccupied in thought. Just sitting still and trying, with eyes closed, to focus on your breathing alone reveals this. Before long (a matter of seconds) you will notice (if you even notice at all) that you have lost focus on your breath, and have become preoccupied with some train of thought that has taken you back into the past or forward into the future. The simple truth of this preoccupation, along with the appreciation of the futility of its occurrence (none of my concerns or doubts about the past or future has ever come true!), can be liberating.

Liberation lies in the opportunity that the present moment affords us. Living a little more in the present moment, rather than only in our thoughts of past and future, requires becoming reacquainted with our physical bodies. By staying a little longer in our sensing bodies, even for a few minutes a day, we begin to discover what we are losing when consumed by our thoughts and emotions. The loss is the missed opportunity of experiencing the vibrant contingency of the moment. One way to rediscover this vibrancy is to turn our expertise at thinking back on itself. Usually when we are thinking we are engaging ourselves in some frustrating aspect of unfinished business from the past or some anxiety producing possibility in the future. When these thoughts and imaginings are being played out in our mind, focusing on the feeling of frustration or anxiety that is

generated from these rather than following the cascade of thought that usually follows, even just for a little longer than you normally would, can alleviate the tension they produce.

Staying with the feeling requires experiencing it for how it feels now, in your body, regardless of your thoughts and value judgments of it. If you feel it for long enough you will experience a change in its intensity and its duration, with the feelings becoming more bearable and fading away quicker. Staying in these feelings, that are the sensual manifestations of the body's contingency, reveals their fundamentally transient nature, and this same understanding, when applied to thoughts and emotions, negates any need to alter or control them. All of these expressions of our humanity reveal themselves as parts of a larger whole that is the body's field of awareness or consciousness. The field is not confined to our preoccupation with thought, nor is it defined by emotions, or even our actions. Understanding the body in this way re-awakens us to the sensuality that underpins the perceptual processes producing these manifestations of thought and emotion in the first place, along with the other expressions of our being.

The body is even more powerful and pervasive than language, but not as modern science would have us believe in its analytical revelations of its physiology and anatomy. While science privileges the body's machinery, everyday folk (including scientists themselves) privilege their lived experiencing of it. One of the aspects of this phenomenological perspective of living through our bodies is the contingency of its mortality. Parent (2005) suggests "the importance of this for the human condition is not the physical fact of impermanence but our reaction to it" (p. 173). The reaction within modern society is often one of denial or muted ambivalence. But die, we must, and this finiteness of our sensing body and the significances it produces retains immense value in its own right. As something we share with others our physical fragility opens up a world of understanding that better situates the contours and configurations of experience that define life. The bodied, bound, social and symbolic mix of our human existence evokes the primary task of accepting my body these ways it is, including its mortality, and which produces the compatibility with, and compassion for, the other who struggles to do the

same.

The contingency of our physical body underpins the contingency of our language that not only constrains us but also enables us to connect to others through our ability to refract the vibrancy of the lived moment. Yet it is also stuck within a certain reflexive perspective that is often devoid of the catalysing elements of that moment. These moments of experiencing are where “clichéd discourses dissolve and the indivisibility of experience emerges” (Stephenson & Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 161), and raise the obvious question of how to represent these ‘immanent unfoldings’, because represent is the best we can do. Unfolding is unfolding and representing unfolding is representing unfolding and the inherent difference between the two is not problematic unless it remains unacknowledged or misunderstood. What I have found useful is a way of being in my body that reveals the embodied richness of its contingency. The body’s contingency is its embodiment and in the mindful experiencing of the sensual nature of its unfolding is revealed my actual body and the constructed versions I produce of it.

Coda

My psychological biography is the story of my feeling/felt body and the embodied nature of its experiencing. Its experiencing emanates from the body’s chiasmic capability to create a sensual/perceptual field of presence that is its immersion with the life-world. Our fleshy-bound potency is where the evolutionary refined capacity for consciousness and the social world of meanings intertwine. From this dialogical dialectic of materiality, intentionality, history and culture unfold the mix of beliefs, expectations and practices that become the expressions of my being human. My phenomenological being-in-the-world includes the historical, social, cultural, geographic and interpersonal contingencies that contributed to a childhood I remember as full of emotional uncertainty and confusion. Sequestering my feeling body as the culprit of this uncertainty resulted from the contingencies that influenced its experiencing and helped determine these meanings I formed from it. These historically-generated, geographically-situated and socially-sanctioned forms of personal and cultural beliefs, knowledge and practices included the

stigmatizing influence of discourses of dualism, gendering, rationalism and mutism. Learning to adhere to these discourses of dishonesty included learning to ostracize my feeling body, and led to an exacerbation of its perceived unpredictability. From the age of twelve, ideations of my body's potential for embarrassment, insanity and death came to dominate my life and helped to produce its regular bouts of 'fleshy' rebellion.

Much of my life has been spent using sport, and running regimes in particular, in an attempt to re-establish a sense of my body's predictability. My felt body, in this telling, reached a point of resistance that could not tolerate its exiling any longer. Testifying my dissociated state of being reveals some of the conditions that helped to produce my body's silencing. As a form of embodied reflexivity, this autoethnography opens my body up to the verisimilitude of other bodies, and while the voice you hear here may appear chaotic, naïve, and still uncertain, it is my own and through it I reclaim my body's integrity. Through my words and the silent sensuality that swirls around them, this retelling of my body locates my thoughts, emotions, reasoning and actions back in a feeling body that is the core of these expressions. Experiencing my body's unity is liberating and, as I have discovered, can be cultivated through a technique of focused attending called mindfulness. My research completes the unfinished business that was my disciplined body through the rehabilitating insights of its embodiment. In doing so it calls into question the dominating subjectivities that have held sway over my body and helped to produce its silencing. Submitting to these essentialist and dualist discourses numbed my body and perpetuated its suffering, and in testifying to this I challenge the discipline of psychology to do better by other feeling bodies.

It is in the silence of this suffering that this story finds its genesis. It was through the inability to articulate my body's contingency that this suffering made its mark. Embodying the uncertainty that impregnated the world around me, my body became even more traumatized through the confusing and resistant discourses that my culture imposed upon it. These forms of resistance were aided and abetted by the shame I felt about the effects that this trauma induced upon my body. Consistent with the theoretical insights of the feeling body, Frank (1995) reveals the trajectory of this type of suffering and the

forms of resistance it can produce:

First they resist the call: the disease, or trauma, or chronic pain that is being forced upon their bodies. As their stories develop and as they develop in their stories, they resist the silence that suffering forces upon their body-selves. Finally this resistance finds a voice, they make suffering useful. In the wounds of their resistances, they gain a power: to tell, and even to heal (p. 182).

But rather than being just an intellectual accounting of this resistance and suffering as a wounded storyteller, I can gain from my trauma. A boon is “purchased with the wound; the self is thus found through the body, hence the body-self” (Frank, 1995, p. 181). It is through the traumas of resistance and the ways it works through the body that the self gets revealed. In finally turning this resistance into a voice of witness, I also get to remake the body-self I become in this telling. The re-telling of my body is not narcissistic, as some might suspect, but part of the “process of learning that their own suffering touches and is touched by the suffering of others” (Frank, 1995, p. 178).

While this story of my ‘illness’ will not reach the lofty heights of Labov’s (1977) most competent speakers, my hope is it will at least challenge his claim that nothing academic, if even briefly, ever creates “a deep and attentive silence” (p. 396). My story will likely not make the best-selling list, because like Kaye (1993) the subtext is wrong. Kaye’s problem is the trauma of dying; mine the trauma of living, with neither of our stories meeting the required standards of recovery and restitution. While I may not be dying, it turns out we both find in our bodies a better way to occupy them. “Even the unseen carnage below the surface seemed to be part of something perfect, and I felt a part of that perfection” (Kaye, 1993, p. 260). The perfection he speaks of is the experience of the harmony that is there within the chaotic uncertainty of nature’s pulse. By attending more closely to my fleshy body, the state of ‘big mind’ that Kaye alludes to becomes real for me too, and reveals the connection we have through our sensuality to the contingencies that are its flow of life.

Flow, as I have discovered, is the non-judgemental experiencing of my body’s fleshy consciousness. Known to Eastern cultures for over two thousand years, the West has only

recently discovered the effectiveness of mindfulness to defuse thinking and reason, as functions of being, rather than being itself. Being, in this wider sense, is understood here as the body's fundamental sensuality that is our evolutionally-refined capacity for physical and symbolic engagement that underpins all experiencing. Becoming more attuned to the body's sensuality opens up this field of fundamental sensitivity through a more value-free experiencing of its manifestations. These manifestations include the physical, mental, emotional, behavioural and social aspects of our embodiment that unfolds from and folds back into the phenomenological body of lived experiencing. The uniquely human and dynamic interplay of the experiencing body produces the fleshy consciousness or field of presence that merges consciousness with the life-world and catalyses my being-in-the-world.

Summing Up

By converting the resistance of a silenced body into a voicing of its silencing, my illness narrative testifies my contingency. Through these fleshy revelations of my fear and confusion I generate a new relationship with my body, a self that is “newly connected to its own memory” (Frank, 1995, p. 127). Through this rendering comes the opportunity for the reader, too, to reclaim his or her own bodied connection to the past through “the capacity to tell, and to hold on to, her own story” (Langellier, 2001, p. 146). Voicing the body in this way supports the experiential ontology of a ‘fleshy consciousness’ that underpins this reflexive epistemology of its telling. It does this through the testimony that is my feeling/felt body as it reveals itself through the embodied truths that are the descriptions of its suffering and disruption. Frank (1995) puts it better when he said “the body grounds the story that in its telling allows the body to realize itself. The body ‘realizes’ itself in the dual senses of gaining self-reflection and of making itself real in action” (p. 165).

These actions are the communicating of a body that combines voice, memory, and responsibility into a testimony of its living. “What is witnessed is memory, specifically embodied memory, a memory of experience now written into the tissues” (Frank, 1995,

p. 165). Testimony, of this nature, is both sensual and symbolic, and occurs within the interpersonal and socio-cultural constraints of its make-up. These understandings of my body that is this story of it, arises from a myriad of interpersonal relationships that include my family, friends, acquaintances and fellow writers. Positioning these others in the ways I do within my narrative helps me to make sense of my relationships and shapes the way I come to experience myself and, the body, I am. The context of this shaping includes the historical and socio-cultural life-world that my body engages with and is constrained by. My body's engagement begins in the biological contingencies of its own cellular processing, and involves the integration of stimuli that is the basis for my further interaction, knowledge creation, self-understanding and communication.

My deciphering inevitably involves consciousness that is predominantly viewed as the intentionality behind our thoughts, sensations, emotions and actions. The narrative reintegrating of my body's psychology is an example of this intentionality, whereby my "past is reinterpreted in terms of the present and takes on an enhanced meaning" (Frank, 1995, p. 127). However, explaining it another way, the fundamental state of consciousness that our chiasmic and dialectical body produces underpins our more intentional states of awareness, and infiltrates all of our various forms of meaning-making. Writing my panicking body required the unique interactions of my fleshy body that gives rise to this consciousness that, whilst accessible through sustained attention, is easily lost to preoccupations with thought and emotion. Attuning to this ever-present, embodied and holistic essence of our being, albeit for brief periods, is difficult given the dualistic discourse of our consumer-driven culture. Yet occasionally, the pervasiveness of modernity can be "undermined, deconstructed, by the sheer force of certain modes of experience" (Freeman, 2008, p. 174). The phenomenological integration experienced in my swimming and running activities testify to this and reveals the harmonious nature of the body's lived voicing.

The physiological experiencing of a more mindful body helps to throw further light on its conceptualizing including this narrating of it. By opening up the body and its various manifestations phenomenologically, as well as discursively, this narrative provides

contrasting ways that can help psychology and society to better reconnect the mind to its body through the ultimately sensual nature of its being. While our acts of intentional consciousness are important functions in our daily lives, it is the body's chiasmic and dialectical ability to produce consciousness itself that is truly amazing. Having this underlying state of awareness available to experience facilitates our re-acquaintance with the holistic nature of our body. My research shares how re-writing my body in a certain way led me to identify "a certain relation of the body to the world" (Frank, 1995, p. 24). In re-locating my dissociated body, this narrative reveals the disciplining practices of my exercising resistance to its uncertainty. The irony of this resistance is revealed when these same practices provide the opportunity to realign my body in ways I had not thought possible.

Chapter Nine. SHARED EMBODIMENT

I will tell you not what you want to hear but what I know to be true because I have lived it. This truth will trouble you, but in the end, you cannot be free without it, because you know it already; your body knows it already (Frank, 1995, p. 63).



Figure 13. Off to school.

An Ethical Body

The voicing of my body attests to its sensuality, the importance of feelings, and their intrinsic trustworthiness. Coming to trust my feelings has helped me to share them, and through this sharing, to attest to their integrity. The integral nature of my embodiment is never a straight-forward process given that my body attests its unity through the paradoxical nature of its own contingency. My panicking was not the result of a structured, autonomous psyche or psychological identity replete with its intrinsically-

generated cognitive biasing. My interpretations came about through my biological, interpersonal, social, cultural, geographical, environmental and ecological embodiment that produced the unique historical contingencies of my lived experiencing. These strands of human dependency include my genealogy, physiology, anatomy, family, community, culture and country and to separate my body from these relational contexts would deny its actual existence and denigrate its complexity.

Along with personal insights, this project situates the place of feeling bodies within the discipline of psychology. Understanding how knowledge is generated through narrative reveals how psychology's meta-narratives of subjectivity and self-hood have come to dominate the more personal and lived accounts of psychological experiencing. These meta-narratives cite the presumed untrustworthiness of such experiencing, as the reason for not exploring the complexity of its make-up. As my story shows, the configuring of my life within particular temporal sequences positions my body and others, along with the institutions around us, in moral and ethical ways. Like psychology, and science in general, I narrate experience by manipulating events from my past to fit with particular beliefs and practices that suit my rendition of it. In this thesis, my rendition parts company with traditional approaches in the ways I choose to voice the felt body rather than suppress it. By positioning my body within an ethics of its own embodiment, my story manifests a communicative form of discursive power rather than a manipulative one (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Eastern thought and Western phenomenology, along with post-modern critiques of the fleshy body, have combined to help open up new ways of living embodiment. In adding my testimony as a feeling body to a chorus of voices, this account takes seriously the embodied nature of self-hood that includes the "underlying relations of power and the complexities of their formation" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 191). By contrasting the dominating and disembodied moral codes of religion and science with the embodied morality of my lived body, my story de-centres the reified self that was at the heart of the practices of its domination and control. In this way, my story becomes a form of ethical self-stylisation or askesis (Markula, 2004) that challenges the orthodoxy of hegemonic

discourse, and contributes to reshaping the self that I can become. My autoethnography creates this ethical practice of selfhood through the reflection and solidarity that is the “willingness to recollect the failure [of voice] and offer it to others with an indication of what should have been done not to speak for them, but to speak *with* them” (Frank, 1995, p. 132).

My silence did not help my mother, sisters, brothers or even myself. It certainly did not help my father, who I tried to hate, but just could not. All in all, my silence helped no one; it only made things worse. If there is blame, it cannot be pinned onto my muted body or those of my siblings, but rather belongs to other bodies who were privileged a voice in such circumstances. These are the voices of my parents, teachers, and other authority figures whose versions held such sway over our devalued ones. Yet these bodies, too, contended with their own array of contingencies that included their particular mix of places, times and historical influences. What could have happened was that I and my brothers and sisters were encouraged to share the things that troubled us, and then consoled in the telling of them. Dad and Mum, too, could have been encouraged to share their problems and, like us, better supported in their sharing of them. Church and state, along with the community within which we experienced both, could have treated the feeling body differently, more kindly and more humanely. These things could, rather than should, have been different, but to require their difference would downplay the truths of my human embodiment. It would require nothing less than a different world than the one I grew up in.

The world in which I grew up, I create through the central theme or plot of ‘something is wrong with me’. The theme of my psychological problems arise and unfold within specific interpersonal contexts which include my muted sibling relationships, fractious parental interactions, competitive sporting rivalries, rigid Catholic expectations, and uneasy bodily awareness. The broader social and cultural contexts of New Zealand’s provincial rugby, racing and beer mentality; my particular region’s racism; my society’s gendering of bodies, its chauvinism and valuing of male staunchness; and the bio-medical, religious and educational forms of dualistic, patriarchal and paternalistic

discourse; ensured that the censoring of our feeling bodies was pervasive and profound. The theory and practice of the phenomenological body as the font of sensuality from which selfhood is derived provides a stark contrast to the ideas, beliefs and practices by which I grew up. The story of my experiences could have conformed to a more acceptable narrative of restitution, and with this ensured the continued dominance of the self that is produced by the voice of bio-medical discourse. By listening for my felt-experiencing, in the spaces that it inhabits between the words I use here to symbolise it, I uncover my body's voice and, with it, its own expertise. While this experiencing of phenomenological authority is "not generalisable outside of asking audience members to recall and reinhabit their own moments" (Holman-Jones, 2005, p. 772) of uncertainty and confusion, doing so helps create understanding beyond "simple, essentialist identification and toward a generative engagement with" (p. 781) our shared embodiment.

Summary

A different world from that which I experienced when I was growing up would have meant that I would not have been a part of it. My upbringing was what it was and could have been no other way, given my embodiment that was the contingencies that shaped it. What also becomes clear is the restorative power of voicing this contingent body of mine. In reinterpreting my past through the re-membering, re-minding and re-bodying of its experiencing, it comes to take on new meanings. Because my “present is no longer a contingent graft on a past that was supposed to lead elsewhere” (Frank, 1995, p. 127), a life of regret has been foreclosed and with it the feelings of uncertainty, doubt, and incompleteness that contoured it.

While others may never have the opportunity to speak as openly as this, my story also becomes an opportunity for them to use my words to validate their own felt-experiencing. While I may be late in offering my solace to those who endured with me, I realize more than ever how much we were bound together in our worlds of turmoil. I would have much preferred to have talked this way with you when it happened, but despite the silences then, and since, I have always been grateful for your being there with me. Which brings me back to my children, and the hope that these revelations help facilitate the resolution of their own upbringing; the acceptance of the contingencies that, including their father, make it up.

Chapter Ten. CONCLUSION

Critical reflexive practice which, by calling into question our present modes of subjectivity and their relation to truth, our present modes of thinking and doing, is capable of transforming the way that we relate to ourselves and others, and thus of changing the way that we live (O'Leary, 2002, p. 152).

Re-Negotiating the Body

Running bodies, like fit bodies in general, are usually slim and taut, and because of these characteristics are classified within a broader social discourse as belonging to 'disciplined' selves. Identifying bodies and their 'owners' in this way is based on the modern scientific discourse that constructs the mind as "an inherent, fixed self located within the body but somehow transcendent from it. That by working on and controlling this self, can improve the body, the machine" (Denison & Winslade, 2006, p. 100). Through the influence of medical and physiological research, this discourse enacts institutionalized narratives such as health "as an illness-free existence and fitness as an economical solution to the increasing cost of taking care of disease in western societies" (Markula, 2004, p. 319). Through endorsement of selective behavioural practices, these narratives facilitate a reflexive style of self-inspecting gaze that ensures internalised, self-regulation (Foucault, 1980).

Self-regulation is an example of Foucault's bio-politicking of the masses, where the responsibility for health is personalised in such a way that, amongst other things, its broader social, cultural and environmental origins are minimized. In endorsing this bio-medicalising of fitness as "an ultimate truth rather than [being] . . . one of many sociocultural explanatory frameworks" (Lyons & Chamberlain, 2006, p. 205) traditional psychology remains oblivious to the political and economic contingencies of such regulatory 'power'. Through constructing and privileging particular kinds of bodies and their associated subjectivities (in the case of the 'healthy' body, fit is good, flab is bad), such discourse influences understandings and experiences of well-being.

The utilitarian purpose of such discourse comes into view when, despite its cultural

pervasiveness, this ‘fitness’ narrative can be seen as failing to achieve its desired regulation of Western obesity. The various studies cited in section one of this thesis confirm that fitness and exercise practices produce somatic sensations that in turn generate the meanings that drive such practices. Yet, within mainstream psychology, these feeling bodies, rather than being felt, get constrained and depersonalized within an inflexible and disembodied model of fitness. In failing to explore “how these meanings work, what they do and where they come from” (Lyons & Chamberlain, 2006, p. 205), traditional psychology denies important aspects of the exercising and fitness experience. In separating the mind as a discrete, rationalizing entity from a body subordinated to the role of machine or material container, such ideology robs the individual of their experiential actuality. “I felt like some detached observer of my own self, where my mind and body were separate and distinct entities. It was all really uncomfortable for me” (Denison & Winslade, 2006, p. 100).

Discomfort, as my story reveals, became the norm for me, and the complexity of the experiential body makes redundant its modelling as a biological machine or object of economic and fiscal management. What would be helpful here, I believe, is to re-personalise exercise within the feeling/felt nature of its experiencing that in turn underpins the meaning-filled context of its reoccurrence. One way to do this is to take a phenomenological view of exercise as a form of ‘mindful endeavour’ capable of reconnecting us with our physicality, regardless of our size, shape or health status. In allowing bodies their own experiential presence, mindful exercising does away with the need for a pre-determined, unitary, body-numbing obsession with duration, intensity and frequency. In opening up a pathway back into the fundamentally sensual and experiential nature of our existence, mindful exercise becomes an exploration of the body I am, rather than the body I will never be. Such an alternative form of fitness discourse also provides psychology with the opportunity to showcase a more liberating way of not only having a body, but also being a body.

The idea of mindful or ‘actively aware’ exercise is not new to Western thought, existing within critical (Markula & Pringle, 2006), clinical (Linehan, 1993) and sporting (Parent,

2005) literature. What this research aims to do is to contribute to this growing experiential evidence by adding further insight into the lived and meaning-laden nature of the felt-body's experiencing. By unravelling the personal effects of exercise on my life, this autoethnography provides insight into the processes that underlie my well-being. In this way, this research builds on the existing knowledge of predominantly outcome-based research by revealing the phenomenological contributors to states of bodily presence that mindful exercise produces, and that underpin the well-being outcomes already indicated.

While idiosyncratic aspects of research are traditionally weeded out of scientific results, the experiential nature of this investigation requires their presence here. These crucial aspects of this research take the form of experience that is transformed through the history, language and culture of bodied memory into the words on these pages. To assist with this transformation, the initial chapters of the testifying of my body draw on diary entries of my daily exercising from November 2005, other autobiographical sources including family and personal photographs, newspaper clippings, poems, speeches, as well as various writings prior to and during the research period, and excerpts from the transcripts of my conversations with JB. Drawing on the memories these particular data sets provoke produces my attempt to write my experiencing in the form of recollections of my body's history and presence. The mix of places, times, people and perceptions intertwine in an attempt to represent what is the messy, yet eloquent, speechlessness of my body. I traverse a number of key moments in my life, and although open to the haphazard recall of memory and interpretation, I have attempted to find words that aim at describing my 'being there'.

By joining relevant pieces of transcript with memories, diary entries, poems and speeches, along with photos of personal significance, this reflexive collage interweaves these aspects of memorized bodily presence to assist in uncovering some of the contours of my body's unfolding. Elucidating this unfolding begins with a Labovian (1977) analysis of the transcribed conversations I had with JB. Through identifying the structural components, in particular the action-oriented segments, of these interactions, an overriding theme is revealed, and then reconciled, within the broader context of the more

personalized recounting that both preceded and followed it. My reflexive recounting reproduces Frank's (1995) idea of wounded storytelling so as to elucidate the psychological dramas that unfold within this story of my body. Taking on the wider significance of its relevance for other bodies, my story becomes a testimony of my body through words that reach back into history to reprise the conditions that silenced it and other bodies with it.

The relevance of my body is found in the ways it is constrained within culturally based narratives that helped connect my body to its environment through other bodies. By revealing the personal and relational particulars of these processes of coercion, my story becomes an opportunity to communicate with other bodies who share similar repressions. In narrating the story of my body's problems in this way, I situate these and my own body within the broader socio-cultural and historical boundaries that shape the experiencing of them. These descriptions of my feeling, thinking, emotional and behavioural states make up the constructions that constitute the body-self dialectic of my meaning-making. My autoethnography, in revealing the socially contingent nature of meaning-making that is this psychology of mine, produces a unique form of single-case study. In uncovering the relational nature of my meaning-making, this form of scholarly self-analysis produces phenomenological insights into the intrinsically interactive nature of my body and its immersion with the life-world. In revealing the chiasmic, dialectical and dialogical nature of personal truth and the politics of its discoursing, these insights help to re-think and re-body the self that is possible.

What my story also invites is an alternative point of reference for the body and its expression. Human psychology, as a scientific and ethical endeavour, is rooted in the lived experiencing of bodies, and therefore needs to give greater credibility to the lived recounting of these experiences. Furthering the authority of knowledge that currently resides predominantly within positivist and objectivist disciplines requires the necessary input that is the felt expertise of bodies. In endorsing felt experiencing as a valid form of knowledge, narrative can become an avenue by which the body that is lived can be reclaimed through the authorial ownership that it creates. Narrating of the body-self is

dialectical rather than disembodied, and holds onto the fundamentally embodied nature of experience by retaining the products of its senses through their symbolic configuration. While the tone, clarity, loudness, conventions and body language of its syntax folds into the muted silence of writing, even here the body whispers its presence. In the silences between and around the words it crafts, my narrative finds a way to reveal the sensual body it represents. It is in and through these silences that the feeling and phenomenological body finds expression, and through which the listener/reader verifies its authenticity.

Verisimilitude binds bodies together in the scholastic pursuit of knowledge, just as it does in everyday social interaction. Stories can act as forms of testimony, and as I summon my voice through this telling of my body I bear witness to the conditions of its telling. These conditions bind me to others through the ways these same conditions have impacted their own voices, and with their muting the loss of their bodies too. The psychological significance of my story lies in the understanding that, as I recover my voice, and the body that produces it, this enables others to begin to recover theirs (Frank, 1995). I write this then, as Frank says, “out of my need to make sense of my own survival, as I watch others seeking to make sense of theirs” (p. xiii). As I do, my story becomes a symbolic space for recuperation from and re-creation of the vagaries of experience that is the search for one’s truth (Lykes, 1997).

I lived for many years alongside my six sisters and two brothers in a family environment that oscillated between love and warmth and chaos and confusion. My Mum’s religion and my Dad’s drinking combined with a range of other historical, social and cultural influences to produce the ambivalence, insecurity and fear that permeated much of our early experiences. The unpredictability of this experiencing was filtered through my body and produced the ‘uncertainties’ of self that in turn impregnated my interpretations and understandings of that same body. These particular body-self dialectics are something I can rightly share with my siblings, bound as we are, through the commonality of childhood contexts that were this milieu of sensuous symbolism. Whilst my interpretations of these shared experiences are unique to me, this story of my

body disrupts the silence that has hung over all of the members of my family.

Contributing to these events and their interpretation are these ‘silences’ that we took for granted and that still influence us today. While our responses to the occasioning of uncertainty were both personally, as well as socially, muted, this narrative opens this silencing up to new possibility.

However, with possibility can come pain, and the opening up of these silences to scrutiny brings acknowledgement of the devastation it can cause, including the suffering, regret and grief it creates. But what I have found here is that, by giving ‘voice’ to the wounds created through these childhood silences, I feel a new contour and coherence to my body not previously felt, and while not replete it has regained a sense of unity that it previously lacked. In publicising this reclaimed voice of mine, albeit some forty to fifty years later, I offer it’s rendering as an encouragement for you, the reader, to find your own. In testifying the conditions of its silencing, this story also contributes to eking out a little more space for the feeling body and it’s voicing within mainstream psychology.

Here I am defending my right to be heard within the psychological community as a feeling body. Psychology has been complicit, through its dependence upon the dualistic assumptions of empiricism, in the subjugation and dominance of felt experiencing. In much of its research it pays lip service to this font of everyday life through hypothesising away its relevance. By repositioning psychology back within the confines, constraints and contingencies of our embodiment my story endorses a focus on the lived body. In providing bodies with an opportunity to explore their subjectivity the discipline might become less inclined to impose it. The main purpose of this work was not to theorise the feeling body because that would have served to subordinate it further. It was, instead, designed to show it off, and through this re-living of it to begin to hear what it has to say. It was only in this listening for my body that I have come to better understand how it speaks.

And with this statement the particular positioning of my body, and those around it, including the body of a well-known nursery rhyme character, are revealed. My story

allocates the moral high ground to feelings and in doing so turns the tables on the thinking and reasoning that held my body captive for so long. Yet if left this way my story, although emphasising a different perspective, would be little different from the Church and state discourses that constrain the body through the subjectivities they project. The point of my story, while signifying that feelings can be a more ethical or substantive guide than thought or reason, serves to reinforce that all of these manifestations of the body are complicit in its embodiment. What I have found of particular significance in this story of my body is the relevance of Frank's (1995) idea of the body's testimony. Just like Humpty's crack, my body bears the hallmarks of the contingencies at work in its dissociation. These contingencies cannot be undone nor can the scars, regrets and missed opportunities resulting from their embodiment. What I testify then more than anything else are these cracks and scars, themselves. The breaching of my body's integrity, and its aftermath, like Humpty's brokenness, cannot be smoothed over and restored to their original state. These sedimentations, instead, require a process of renegotiation and through the affirming of their presence in my body come to acquire the value that is the uniquely embodied nature of my experiencing.

A key question raised by this dissertation remains, 'is the finding of my own voice enough?' My summarised account of the fifty years of searching, that includes the detours, dead-ends, and dog-legs necessary to find it, testifies emphatically in the affirmative. Up until I found a voice for my actual body, my dissociated or constructed body was experienced as illusively disturbing and alienating. The value of this voicing, that is the uniqueness of my body's authority, does not lie in its power to persuade, predict or to control, but in its power to evoke the harmony and creativity that came with the acceptance of its contingencies. Narrating the experiencing of my felt body produces a more communicative expression of it. This communicating body is one that is better able to take its contingent place, along with other bodies, within the social web of shared experiencing. Taking a greater responsibility for my own embodiment, in turn, produces the empathy that extends the acceptance of my own body to other bodies sharing an embodied existence as well.

Summary

Why did I write my life story/history as a testifying of my embodiment? When I was twelve I felt so alone I did not think it was possible to feel that way. My story testifies that, while others may experience similar confusion, they are never alone. Contingency comes with our fleshy make-up, but through the unpredictability of this connectedness to our life world we are also guaranteed our alliance with others. I need never have questioned my sanity, because the anxiety at the heart of my isolation was proof itself of my allegiance to a life world of family, communal and cultural relationships. By revealing the experiential extremes of being a body terrorised by adrenalin, as well as oozing with tranquillity, my purpose is to share the sentient nature of my seduction into the socialised world of selfhood. In doing so, I want to remind you also of how the body can, and does, get discourses and narrated in ways that deny or diminish its sensuality.

My story of contingency I read as a narrative of renaissance through which the lessons of my 'aloneness' are re-lived to invoke answers that were unavailable to me and my family at the time of its experiencing. By rediscovering new meanings from these old contexts, my life can be revitalised into new ways of living it. These insights help to provide a better understanding of the contingencies that come with our human embodiment. Underpinned by the acceptance, rather than the denial, of our humanity, this understanding takes seriously the chiasmic, dialectical and dialogical nature of its make-up. Acknowledging this is one thing, living it is another, and while my anxiety caused me suffering, it is fair to say that others have suffered more. "I have been all the way to the bottom. And it is solid" (L'Engle, 1989, p. 229). Experiencing the solidarity of these defining qualities of human embodiment in life has been reassuring but to know they apply just as much, if not more so, in death, redefines contingency. If only the bottom is solid then that makes my embodiment, the thing I most feared, the thing to be most valued.

POSTSCRIPT

On the twenty second of November 2008 I celebrated my sister's fiftieth birthday with her, along with other family members and some of her friends. The weekend coincided with providing my sisters, and one of my two brothers, with a copy of relevant parts of the initial draft of my dissertation. I gave two sisters a complete rendition of my work while the other five received a compilation of chapters five, six and nine, along with the summary of chapter ten. As well as inviting their feedback they were made aware that their comments would form the basis of a postscript section of the work that they could also read, once it was completed. The next day I met up with three of my sisters, along with two of their partners, and the conversation turned to my story. This was the first discussion of several that were to follow with my siblings about their responses to my work. None of these conversations were recorded and the comments I make here are based on my selective recollection of words spoken, and my summations of them, within the context of my requests for their feedback.

In the discussion on the morning of the twenty-third, one of my sisters, who had read most of chapter six, commented how she had never known about Dad comforting me the way he did after I had wet the bed. She also said that Dad had not shown her any similar forms of affection. My other sister said she had hated Dad and he had always 'come after' her with aggressive intent, which frightened her. My other sister commented that this was because she was always calling him 'a dirty old man', which he took as very demeaning. Both of my sisters indicated that Dad's actions were of a punitive, rather than sexually abusive, nature. At which time my third sister said that she had not received any real affection from Dad either. I indicated to my older sisters that despite his apparent lack of warmth Dad had cared for them both because he used to talk to me about them and, despite his often-frustrated dealings with them, he had always worried about them. My comments were reinforced by one of their partners who revealed that most of the conversations they had had, revolved around them as well. Our discussion then led into talk of the third sister, who, being youngest, was often doted on by pretty much all the older family members. She replied that she could not remember this happening and my

other sisters and I took great delight in regaling her of particular incidents of our affection toward, and our nurturing of, her. One of my older sisters talked briefly about the bewitching hour of five o'clock, and how it had negatively influenced her first marriage, and how she had come to identify her own anxiety around this time. I did not pick up on this as I knew from her comments that she had not yet read the relevant parts in my story. One of my sisters then likened families to an octopus, with its tentacles representing the various members of a family, who were all joined at the body, this body being representative of the overall family. She explained that our lives were inextricably joined together whether we liked it, or not, and this linking included the extended members of our partners, and their families, as well.

On the evening of November the twenty fourth I rang another sister, who had not been at the fiftieth, to check to see if she had received the couriered package that contained her compilation version of the dissertation. She had, and expressed her appreciation in being able to read my story. We talked mainly about Dad and how she continued to miss him and how much she had realised that she loved him. I gathered from what she said that it had been important to her to tell him that she loved him and she was able to do this just before he died. She went on to say that there appeared a lot of information in my story and that she was going to take her time to read through it again, gather her thoughts more, and then share some her views on what I had written, after Christmas.

On the following evening I rang one of my brothers and got an altogether different reaction. He had read only a short excerpt of the collated copy he had received and told me, based on this, that digging up the past was a waste of time. He suggested that carrying around baggage did little or no good to anyone. I reminded him that in my experience while it was often easier to detect the frustrating presence of unfinished business in other people's lives, it had been a lot harder to acknowledge and resolve my own issues. Whilst he suggested that he had had little understanding and awareness around the break up of his first marriage, he indicated that he was unlikely to read any more of my story believing it to be a waste of his time. He was also quick to point out that there was no real point in casting the blame for past afflictions onto Mum or Dad,

whom he believed did the best job they could given the circumstances of the day. At which point I could have said read on and you'll discover more, but I did not. During our conversation he also mentioned that despite his views his wife would be reading it. I said I would call again at a later date to gauge any further feedback that they might wish to share.

Yesterday, being the tenth of December, Jill and I travelled to New Plymouth to share a pre-Xmas lunch with Mum and three of my sisters, along with a brother-in-law and a niece. Little was said about my dissertation apart from a comment from one of my sister's husband about her crying when she had read my work. His comment came about in response to my thanking her for the comments she had made on the Xmas card she had just given me. I quote, "thank you for sharing your discoveries with me. Firstly, I am awe-struck at the drive, motivation, and enthusiasm that has seen the unravelling of your life's story. Secondly, may this bring peace and serenity to your daily life." I was able to tell her that it had. Two days previously I had rung another sister, who was at the lunch, and she had commented that she was finding my writing very 'technical' and really hard to read, but that she was going to just take her time to work her way through it. I thanked her for her perseverance and told her I would appreciate any feedback that she wanted to give me once she had done this.

The weekend of the tenth and eleventh of January I spent in New Plymouth, catching up with my family again, including my brother who was holidaying with his wife from the United States. I haven't seen them since Dad's funeral six years ago. Saturday night was spent with them, my Mum, three sisters, two partners and two nieces. We had a lot of laughs and got to hear how they will return to NZ one day to retire. Although I had previously emailed him offering him a copy of my thesis he had not replied and no mention was made of it during the evening. No one else mentioned it either and I took this to mean that at this point in time feedback was complete. This fact, along with another incident, surprised me during the weekend. On Sunday morning my brother and his wife got up, visited Mum and then headed off up North for some sightseeing. This, despite the fact, that, at least four of us, had made an effort to be with them for the

weekend. I found out later he had delayed his trip north for a day so we at least got to have a night with him.

My attempt to witness to the conditions and contingency of my embodiment has drawn a mixed reaction. There have been tears, laughter, concern, consternation, admiration, confusion, hostility, silence and even apathy. I was aware my story would not be a popular one, but I thought my family could benefit from reading it. To date I believe only two of my siblings have read it. This makes me even more aware that this is my story, and my version of events, only. Time will tell if anything further will be gained from it, by those I thought might relate more closely to it. These responses confirm, that whilst I may have found a way to put my body back together again, its relevance for others is not guaranteed. Instead, its significance can only be negotiated with these others, who in turn, have come to story and make sense of, their embodied worlds, somewhat differently.

REFERENCES

- Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more than human world*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Allen, J., & Young, I. M. (Eds.), (1989). *The thinking muse: Feminism and modern French philosophy*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Armstrong, L. (2000). *It's not about the bike: My journey back to life*. London: Random House.
- Baer, R. A. & Krietemeyer, J. (2006). Overview of mindfulness and acceptance based treatment approaches. In R. A. Baer (Ed.), *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches: Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications* (pp. 3-27). Burlington, MA: Academic Press.
- Baran, J. (2003). *365 nirvana: Here and now*. London: Element.
- Bauby, J. D. (1998). *The diving bell and the butterfly*. J. Leggatt (Trans.). London: Fourth Estate. (Original work published 1997).
- Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston: Beacon.
- Biddle, S. J. H. (2000). Exercise and health psychology. In S. J. H. Biddle, K. R. Fox, & S. H. Boutcher (Eds.), *Physical activity and psychological well being* (pp.741-762). London: Routledge.
- Blackburn, I., & Twaddle, V. (1996). *Cognitive therapy in action*. London: Souvenir Press Ltd.

- Bondi, L., Davidson, J., & Smith, M. (Eds.) (2005). *Emotional geographies*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. R. Nice (Trans.). Cambridge: Polity. (Original work published 1980).
- Brady, I. (2005). Poetics for a planet: Discourse on some problems of being-in-place. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.; pp. 979-1026). London: Sage Publications.
- Bretano, F. (1995). *Psychology from an empirical standpoint*. A. C. Rancurello, D. B. Terrell & L. McAlister (Trans.). London: Routledge. (Original work published 1874).
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **84**, 822-848.
- Burkitt, I. (1999). *Bodies of thought: Embodiment, identity and modernity*. London: Sage Publications.
- Butler, J. (1989). Sexual ideology and phenomenological description: A feminist critique of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception. In J. Allen & I. Young (Eds.), *The thinking muse: Feminism and modern French philosophy* (pp. 85-100). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Butryn, T., & Masucci, M. (2003). It's not about the book: A cyborg counternarrative of Lance Armstrong. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, **27**, 124-144.
- Cannon, W. B. (1929). The James-Lange theory of emotions: A critical examination and an alternate theory. *American Journal of Psychology*, **39**, 106-124.

- Carey, S. (2000). Cultivating ethos through the body. *Human Studies*, **23**, 23-42.
- Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.; pp. 651- 679). London: Sage Publications.
- Chatzisarantis, N. L., & Hagger, M. S. (2007). Mindfulness and the intention-behavior relationship within the theory of planned behavior. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, **33**, 663-676.
- Cheals, K., Morgan, M., & Coombes, L. (2003). Speaking from the margins: An analysis of women's spirituality narratives. *Critical Psychology*, **8**, 55-72.
- Chomsky, N. (2002). *Media control*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Collinson, J. A., & Hockey, J. (2005). Autoethnography: Self-indulgence or rigorous methodology. In M. McNamee (Ed.), *Philosophy and the sciences of exercise, health and sport: Critical perspectives on research methods* (pp. 187-202). London: Routledge.
- Cooper, M. (2003). *Existential therapies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Coupland, J., & Gwyn, R. (2003). Introduction. In J. Coupland & R. Gwyn (Eds.), *Discourse, the body, and identity* (pp. 1-16). Houndmills, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crossley, N. (2001). *The social body: Habit, identity and desire*. London: Sage Publications.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Rowe.

- Damasio, A. (2005). *Descartes' error: Emotion, reason, and the human brain*. London: Penguin Books.
- Davidson, J. (2003). *Phobic geographies: The phenomenology and spatiality of identity*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Davison, G. C., & Neale, J. M. (1998). *Abnormal psychology* (7th ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Denison, J., & Markula, P. (Eds.), (2003). *Moving writing: Crafting movement in sport research*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Denison, J., & Winslade, J. (2006). Understanding problematic sporting stories: Narrative therapy and applied sport psychology. *Junctures*, **6**, 99-105.
- Denzin, N. K. (1984). *On understanding emotion*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Denzin, N. K. (1996). The facts and fictions of qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, **2**, 238-245.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Dilthey, W. (1977). *Descriptive psychology and historical understanding*. R. M. Zaner & K. L. Heigis (Trans.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. (Original work published 1894).
- Dreyfus, H. L., & Wrathall, M. A. (2006). *A companion to phenomenology and existentialism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Edelman, G. M. (1992). *Bright air, brilliant fire*. New York: Basic Books.

- Edelman, G. M. (2002). From brain dynamics to consciousness: How matter becomes imagination. Paper presented at 23rd Jean Piaget Society Conference: *The embodied mind and consciousness: Developmental perspectives*, Philadelphia, 6-8 June.
- Eifert, G. H., & Forsyth, J. P. (2005). *Acceptance and commitment therapy for anxiety disorders: A practitioner's treatment guide to using mindfulness, acceptance and values-based behavior change strategies*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications Inc.
- Elias, N. (1991). On human beings and their emotions: A process-sociological essay. In M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *The body: Social process and cultural theory* (pp. 103-125). London: Sage Publications.
- Elliott, R., Watson, J. C., Goldman, R. N., & Greenberg, L. S. (2004). *Learning emotion-focused therapy: The process-experiential approach to change*. Washington, DC: APA.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. New York: Altamira Press.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.; pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Featherstone, M., & Hepworth, M. (1991). The mask of ageing and the postmodern life course. In M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *The body: Social process and cultural theory* (pp. 371-389). London: Sage Publications.
- Fernandez-Balboa, J-M., & Muros, B. (2006). The hegemonic triumvirate – ideologies, discourses, and habitus in sport and physical education: Implications and suggestions. *Quest*, **58**, 197-221.

- Fine, M., & Weis, L. (2005). Compositional studies, in two parts: Critical theorizing and analysis on social (in)justice. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.; pp. 65-84). London: Sage Publications.
- Finlay, L. (2006). The body's disclosure in phenomenological research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, **3**, 19-30.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and discourse on language*. A. Sheridan (Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1969).
- Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. A. Sheridan (Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1975).
- Foucault, M. (1980). The eye of power. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. Harlow, England: Harvester.
- Foucault, M. (1986). *The history of sexuality, volume 3: Care of the self*. R. Turley (Trans.). New York: Pantheon. (Original work published 1984).
- Frank, A. W. (1991). For a sociology of the body: An analytical review. In M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth & B. Turner (Eds.), *The body: Social process and cultural theory* (pp. 36-102). London: Sage Publications.
- Frank, A. W. (1995). *The wounded storyteller: Body, illness, and ethics*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Fraser, M., & Greco, M. (2005). Introduction. In M. Fraser & M. Greco (Eds.), *The body: A reader* (pp.1-42). London: Routledge.
- Frederickson, B. L., Roberts, T., Noll, S. M., Quinn, D. M., & Twenge, J. M. (1998). That swimsuit becomes you: Sex differentiation, self objectification, restrained eating,

and math performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **75**, 269-284.

Freeman, M (2008). Beyond narrative: Dementia's tragic promise. In L-C. Hyden & J. Brockmeier (Eds.), *Health, illness and culture: Broken narratives* (pp. 169-184). New York: Routledge.

Freud, S. (1953). Fragment of an analysis of a case of hysteria. In J. Strachey (Ed.; Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 7, pp. 3-122). London: Hogarth. (Original work published 1905).

Frie, R. (2007). The lived body: From Freud to Merleau-Ponty and contemporary psychoanalysis. In J. P. Muller & J. G. Tillman (Eds.), *The embodied subject: Minding the body in psychoanalysis* (pp. 55-66). Lanham, Maryland: Jason Aronson.

Gadamer, H. G. (1975). *Truth and method* (2nd rev. ed.). J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall (Eds.; Trans.). New York: Crossword. (Original work published 1960).

Gallagher, S. (2005). *How the body shapes the mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2004). A mindfulness-acceptance-commitment-based approach to athletic performance enhancement: Theoretical considerations. *Behavior Therapy*, **35**, 707-723.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Grant, B. C. (2001). 'You're never too old': Beliefs about physical activity and playing sport in later life. *Ageing and Society*, **21**, 777-798.

Grimshaw, J. (1999). Working out with Merleau-Ponty. In J. Arthurs & J. Grimshaw (Eds.), *Women's bodies: Discipline and transgression* (pp. 91-116). London: Cassell.

- Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (2000). Analyzing interpretive practice. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 487-508). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hampl, P. (1995). Memory and imagination. In D. Hunt (Ed.), *The dolphin reader* (pp. 1003-1014). Boston: Houghton.
- Hayes, S. C. (2004). Acceptance and commitment therapy, relational frame theory, and the third wave of behavioral and cognitive therapies. *Behavior Therapy*, **35**, 639-665.
- Hayes, S. C., Barnes-Holmes, D., & Roche, B. (Eds.). (2001). *Relational frame theory: A post-Skinnerian account of human language and cognition*. New York: Plenum Plus.
- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (1999). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: An experiential approach to behaviour change*. London: The Guilford Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, (Trans.). New York: Harper & Row. (Original work published 1927).
- Hein, S., & Austin, W. J. (2001). Empirical and hermeneutic approaches to phenomenological research in psychology: A comparison. *Psychological Methods*, **6**, 3-17.
- Hepworth, M. (2003). Aging bodies: Aged by culture. In J. Coupland & R. Gwyn (Eds.), *Discourse, the body, and identity* (pp. 89-106). Houndmills, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Holman Jones, S. (2005). Autoethnography: Making the personal political. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 763-791). London: Sage Publications.

- Husserl, E. (1970). *Logical investigations*. J. N. Findlay (Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (Original work published 1900).
- James, W. (1890). *The principles of psychology* (Vol. 1). London: MacMillan and Co.
- Jones, L. (2006). *Mister pip*. North Shore, New Zealand: Penguin Books.
- Joyce, J. (1914). *Dubliners*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain, and illness*. New York: Delacorte.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005). *Coming to our senses: Healing ourselves and the world through mindfulness*. New York: Hyperion.
- Kant, I. (1929). *Critique of pure reason*. N. K. Smith (Trans.). London: Macmillan. (Original work published 1781).
- Kaye, D. (1993). *Laugh, I thought I'd die: My life with ALS*. Toronto: Viking.
- Keller, K. D. (2005). The corporeal order of things: The spiel of usability. *Human Studies*, **28**, pp.173-204.
- Kelly, G. (1955). *The psychology of personal constructs*. New York: Norton.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1980). *The concept of anxiety: A simple psychologically orienting deliberation on the dogmatic issue of hereditary sin*. (Vol. 8). R. Thomte (Trans.). Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1844).
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2000). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*

(2nd ed.; pp. 279-314). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kluge, M. A. (2002). Understanding the essence of a physically active lifestyle. A phenomenological study. *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, **10**, 4-28.

Labov, W. (1977). *Language in the inner city: Studies in the black English vernacular*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Laclau, E. (1993). Politics and the limits of modernity. In T. Docherty (Ed.), *Postmodernism: A reader* (pp. 329-344). London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Lang, R. H., & Jesson, D. U. (2000). Contributors to lifelong moderate physical activity in the lives of women. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, **60**, 2393.

Langellier, K. M. (2001). You're marked: Breast cancer, tattoo, and the narrative performance of identity. In J. Brockmeier & D. Carbaugh (Eds.), *Narrative and identity studies in autoethnography, self, and culture* (pp. 145-184). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Langer, M. M. (1989). *Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception: A guide and commentary*. Tallahassee: The Florida State University Press.

Lassiter, L. E. (2005). *The Chicago guide to collaborative ethnography*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

L'Engle, M. (1989). *Two part invention: The story of a marriage*. New York: Harper Collins.

Linehan, M. M. (1993). *Cognitive-behavioral treatment of borderline personality disorder*. New York: Guilford Press.

- Little, L. M., & Simpson, T. L. (2000). An acceptance based performance enhancement intervention for collegiate athletes. In M. J. Dougher (Ed.), *Clinical behavior analysis* (pp. 231-244). Reno, NV: Context Press.
- Lykes, M. B. (1997). Activist participatory research among the Maya of Guatemala: Constructing meanings from situated knowledge. *Journal of Social Issues*, **53**, 725-746.
- Lyons, A., & Chamberlain, K. (2006). *Health psychology: A critical introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MacLachlan, M. (2004). *Embodiment: Clinical, critical and cultural perspectives on health and illness*. New York: Open University Press.
- Markula, P. (2004). "Tuning into one's self": Foucault's technologies of the self and mindful fitness. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, **21**, 302-321.
- Markula, P., & Pringle, R. (2006). *Foucault, sport and exercise: Power, knowledge and transforming the self*. London: Routledge.
- Mauss, M. (1979). *Sociology and psychology*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Original work published 1950).
- Mead, G. (1967). *Mind, self and society*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Meichenbaum, D. (1977). *Cognitive behaviour modification: An integrative approach*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *The phenomenology of perception*. C. Smith (Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Original work published 1945).

- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964). The film and the new psychology. H. A. Dreyfus & P. A. Dreyfus (Trans.), *Sense and non-sense* (pp. 48-59). Evanston: Northwestern University Press. (Original work published 1949).
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1965). *The structure of behaviour*. A. L. Fisher (Trans.). London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. (Original work published 1942).
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The visible and the invisible*. A. Lingis (Trans.). Evanston Ill.: Northwestern University Press. (Original work published 1964).
- Morgan, M. (1999). Discourse, health and illness. In M. Murray & K. Chamberlain (Eds.), *Qualitative health psychology: Theory & methods* (pp. 64-82). London: Sage Publications.
- Morgan, M. (2005). Remembering embodied domination: Questions of critical/feminist psy-discourse on the body. *Theory & Psychology*, **15**, 357-372.
- Murphy, S. (1996). *The achievement zone*. New York: Berkeley.
- Murray, M., & Chamberlain, K. (1998). Qualitative research in health psychology: Developments and directions. *Journal of Health Psychology*, **3**, 291-296.
- Nettleton, S. (2006). *The sociology of health and illness*. Cambridge: Polity
- Nietzsche, F. (1989). *Beyond good and evil*. H. Zimmem (Trans.). New York: Prometheus Books. (Original work published 1886).
- O'Leary, T. (2002). *Foucault and the art of ethics*. London: Continuum.
- Packer, M. J. (1985). Hermeneutic enquiry in the study of human conduct. *American Psychologist*, **40**, 1081-1093.

- Parent, J. (2005). *Zen golf: Mastering the mental game*. London: Collins Willow.
- Pepper, S. (1942). *World hypotheses*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Perls, F. S. (1969). *Gestalt therapy verbatim*. Moab, UT: Real People Press.
- Pert, C. B. (1997). *Molecules of emotion*. New York: Scribner.
- Plutchik, R. (1980). A language for the emotions. *Psychology Today*, **13**, 68-78.
- Pollner, M., & Stem, J. (1996). Narrative mapping of social worlds: The voice of experience in alcoholics anonymous. *Symbolic Interaction*, **19**, 203-223.
- Probyn, E. (1996). *Outside belongings*. London: Routledge.
- Reissman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. London: Sage.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing - a method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.; pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ricoeur, P. (1984). *Time and narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rintala, J. (1991). 'The mind-body revisited'. *Quest*, **43**, 260-279.
- Robert-McComb, J., Tacon, A. M., Randolph, P., & Caldera, Y. (2004). A pilot study to examine the effects of a mindfulness based stress reduction and relaxation programme on levels of stress hormones, physical functioning and submaximal exercise response. *Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine*, **10**, 819-827.
- Robertson, I. (1999). *Mind sculpture*. London: Bantam.

- Sacks, O. (1984). *A leg to stand on*. London: Picador.
- Salkovskis, P. M., Clark, D. M., Hackmann, A., & Gelder, M. G. (1999). An experimental investigation of the role of safety behaviours in the maintenance of panic disorder with agoraphobia. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, **37**, 559-574.
- Sallis, J. (1973). *Phenomenology and the return to beginnings*. Pittsburgh: Dusquene University Press.
- Sampson, E. (1998). Establishing embodiment in psychology. In H. J. Stam (Ed.), *The body and psychology* (pp. 30-53). London: Sage.
- Sarbin, T. R. (1986). The narrative as a root metaphor for psychology. In T. R. Sarbin (Ed.), *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct* (pp. 3-21). New York: Praeger.
- Sartre, J-P. (1969). *Being and nothingness: An essay on phenomenological ontology*. H. E. Barnes (Trans.). London: Routledge. (Original work published 1943).
- Schachter, S., & Singer, J. E. (1962). Cognitive, social and physiological determinants of emotional state. *Psychological Review*, **69**, 379-399.
- Scheurich, J. J., & McKenzie, K. B. (2005). Foucault's methodologies: Archaeology and genealogy. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.; pp. 841-868). London: Sage Publications.
- Schwandt, T. A. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.; pp.189-214). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G., & Teasdale, J. D. (2002). *Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression: A new approach to preventing relapse*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Shotter, J. (1989). Social accountability and the social construction of 'you'. In J. Shotter & K. Gergen (Eds.), *Texts of identity* (pp. 133-151). London: Sage Publications.
- Simmons, P. (2002). *Learning to fall*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Smith, S., & Watson, J. (2001). *Reading autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Solomon, R. C. (2007). *True to our feelings: What our emotions are really telling us*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sparkes, A. (1996). The fatal flaw: A narrative of the fragile body-self. *Qualitative Inquiry*, **2**, 463-494.
- Sparkes, A. (2002). *Telling tales in sport and physical activity: A qualitative journey*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Sparkes, A. (2004). Bodies, narratives, selves, and autobiography: The example of Lance Armstrong. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, **28**, 397-428.
- Spinelli, E. (2007). *Practicing existential psychotherapy: The relational world*. London: Sage Publications.
- Stam, H. J. (1998). The body's psychology and psychology's body: Disciplinary and extra-disciplinary examinations. In H. J. Stam (Ed.), *The body and psychology* (pp. 1-12). London: Sage Publications.

- Stephenson, N., & Papadopoulos, D. (2006). *Analysing everyday experience: Social research and political change*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Stoller, P. (1997). *Sensuous scholarship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Synnott, A. (1993). *The body social: Symbolism, self and society*. London: Routledge.
- Tacon, A. M., McComb, J. Caldera, Y., & Randolph, P. (2003). Mindfulness meditation, anxiety reduction and heart disease: A pilot study. *Family and Community Health*, **26**, 25-33.
- Tierney, W. G. (2000). Undaunted courage: Life history and the postmodern challenge. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 537-553). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tolle, E. (2004). *The power of now: A guide to spiritual enlightenment*. Sydney: Hodder.
- Trinh, T. M. (1992). *Framer framed*. New York: Routledge.
- Tuck, B. W. (2004). *"It's just me": A grounded theory of the experience of being a long term exerciser*. An unpublished thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Weiss, G. (1999). *Body images: Embodiment as intercorporeality*. London: Routledge.
- Wertz, F. J. (2006). Phenomenological currents in twentieth-century psychology. In H. L. Dreyfus & M. A. Wrathall (Eds.), *A companion to phenomenology and existentialism*

(pp. 394-411). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

- Wetherell, M. (1998). Positioning and interpretative repertoires: Conversation analysis and post-structuralism in dialogue. *Discourse and Society*, **9**, 387-412.
- Wilton, T. (1999). Temporality, materiality: Towards a body in time. In J. Arthurs & J. Grimshaw (Eds.), *Women's bodies: Discipline and transgression* (pp. 48-66). London: Cassell.
- Wolanin, A. (2005). *Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) based performance enhancement for Division 1 collegiate athletes: A preliminary investigation*. Psy. D. dissertation, La Salle University, United States – Louisiana. Retrieved November 26, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database (Publication No. AAT 3139154).
- Wolfe, B. E., & Sigl, P. (1998). Experiential psychotherapy of the anxiety disorders. In L. S. Greenberg, J. C. Watson & G. Lietaer (Eds.), *Handbook of experiential psychotherapy* (pp. 272-294). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Yardley, L. (1999). Understanding embodied experience. In M. Murray & K. Chamberlain (Eds.), *Qualitative Health Psychology: Theories and methods* (pp. 31-46). London: Sage Publications.
- Young, I. (1989). Throwing like a girl: A phenomenology of feminine body comportment, motility, and spatiality. In J. Allen & I. M. Young (Eds.), *The thinking muse: Feminism and modern French philosophy* (pp. 51-70). Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Young, J. A. (1999). *Professional tennis players in flow: Flow theory and reversal theory perspective*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Monash University at Melbourne.



SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
 Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata
 Private Bag 11 222
 Palmerston North
 New Zealand
 T 64 6 356 9099 extn 2040
 F 64 6 350 5673
 www.massey.ac.nz
 http://psychology.massey.ac.nz

The Need to Move: What is it and where does it come from?

INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Brian Tuck and I am completing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology at Massey University. My supervisors for this study are Professor Andy Lock and Doctor Mandy Morgan at the School of Psychology, Massey University, Palmerston North.

Contact details

I can be contacted on (06) 345 8156 (business), (06) 348 7258 (home) and by email at B.W.Tuck@massey.ac.nz. Professor Lock can be contacted on 0508 439677 ext. 2061 or by email at A.J.Lock@massey.ac.nz and Dr Morgan on 0508 439677 ext. 2063 or by email at C.A.Morgan@massey.ac.nz.

What is this study about?

This research is an attempt to create a clear and understandable account of my exercising. My previous research explored the experiences of a group of life long exercisers but failed to make clear their underlying motivations. It is now time for me to share my exercising experiences and to create a story that is clearer about the origins of my exercising.

Autoethnography, as socially relevant biography, is a way in which I can make my exercising experiences personally and culturally revealing. Using this meaning making nature of narrative allows me to highlight the ways I use words to interpret my actual exercising experiences, i.e. to describe what it is like to be in my body when I run or swim.

What would you have to do?

As the interviewer/participant, you play an important role in this meaning making. Talking with you about my exercise allows me the opportunity to make more sense of when, where and how I do it. Through the words we use to describe it my story takes shape and provides the means by which my actual exercising experiences can be better understood. Together we create the words of my story that come to represent the feelings that get generated in my moving body.

In this role you will engage with me in a series of audio-taped, unstructured interviews that are designed to get me talking about my exercising life. Each interview will last up to sixty minutes after which you will be provided with a copy of its transcription. You will get the opportunity to read through the transcription before any further interviewing takes place. This is to provide you with the opportunity to check our conversation and make any changes before we undertake the next one. It is likely up to ten separate interviews will be needed to provide the data from which a life story of my exercising will be produced. Based on ten interviews your time commitment, including reviewing transcripts, will be up to twenty hours.

What can you expect?

You will be asked to provide your name on a consent form and this form will be kept separate from the audiotapes and analysis information to ensure your anonymity. It is also understood that you will not receive any financial reward for your participation. During the course of the study audiotapes and transcriptions will be kept in lockable premises. On completion of the study any audiotapes will be destroyed and transcriptions kept by Dr Mandy Morgan at her office at Massey University, Palmerston North for a period of five years, after which they will be destroyed. A bound copy of the completed work will be provided to you. Notwithstanding all of the above you have the right at any time before completion of the study to:

1. decline to participate
2. decline to respond in any particular way
3. withdraw from the study
4. ask any questions
5. ask for the audiotape to be turned off
6. review and make changes to any transcripts.

After completion of the study you retain the right to:

1. an unidentifiable acknowledgement of your role in the study
2. a copy of the completed thesis.

Articulating the sensuality of exercise has implications for the way each of us lives our body. By being sufficiently subjective, complex and moving this account of my experience of being a life long exerciser will hopefully resonant with readers, provide new questions for the practices of psychology and add to the social and psychological life of New Zealanders.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 07/37. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pago, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 8015799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.



SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
New Zealand
T 64 6 356 9099 extn 2040
F 64 6 350 5673
www.massey.ac.nz
http://psychology.massey.ac.nz

The Need to Move: What is it and where does it come from?

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/~~do not~~ agree to the interview being audio taped.

I ~~wish~~/do not wish to have my tapes returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: Date:

Full Name - printed





SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Te Kura Hinegaro Tangata
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
New Zealand
T 64 6 356 9099 extn 2040
F 64 6 350 5673
www.massey.ac.nz
http://psychology.massey.ac.nz

The Need to Move: What is it and where does it come from?

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TAPE TRANSCRIPTS

This form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview/s conducted by me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used by the researcher, Brian Tuck in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature: **Date:**

Full Name - printed





Massey University

30 July 2007

Mr Brian Tuck
School of Psychology
PN320

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT
TO THE VICE-CHANCELLOR
(Ethics & Equity)
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
New Zealand
T 64 6 350 5573/350 5575
F 64 6 350 5622
humanethics@massey.ac.nz
animalethics@massey.ac.nz
gtc@massey.ac.nz
www.massey.ac.nz

Dear Brian

Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 07/37
The need to move: What is it and where does it come from?

Thank you for your letter dated 27 July 2007.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr Karl Pajo, Chair
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B

cc Prof Andy Lock & Dr Mandy Morgan
School of Psychology
PN320

Prof Ian Evans, HoS
School of Psychology
PN320