Doing the damage? An examination of masculinities and men's rugby experiences of pain, fear and pleasure.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the
University of Waikato
by

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The University of Waikato
2003

ABSTRACT

Doing the damage? An examination of masculinities and men's rugby experiences of pain, fear and pleasure.

Rugby union's prominent and historic link with males, within Aotearoa/New Zealand, has helped constitute it as a key signifier of masculinity. Feminist-inspired research suggests, however, that heavy-contact sports, like rugby, help (re)produce a problematic form of masculinity that marginalises other masculinities, contributes to health problems and facilitates male privilege in society. Despite these points of view, there have been relatively few empirical examinations of relationships between sport, pain and masculinities. This thesis provided such an examination.

The prime research question, that underpinned this study, was: "How do men's rugby experiences of fear, pain and/or pleasure articulate with discourses of masculinities?" The research approach used to examine this question was based on semi-structured interviews with a purposeful sample of fourteen men, and differed from previous such research in three key ways. Firstly, I interviewed men with a broad range of rugby experiences and did not specifically examine the experiences of elite sportsmen. Secondly, I analysed the men's rugby experiences of pain and injury, as well as their emotional experiences of fear and pleasure. Thirdly, I used Foucauldian theory to analyse the men's interview accounts rather than drawing on the Gramscian inspired concept of masculine hegemony.

The results suggested that rugby was typically linked to dominating discourses of masculinities, through promoting belief that males should be tough, relatively unemotional, tolerant of pain, competitive and, at times, aggressive. This linkage was particularly influential during the men's school years. At this time, rugby acted as a normalising practice for males, a dividing practice between males and females, and as a producer of pleasure, but also, at times, tension, fear and pain. Rugby's pervasive influence provided a discursive space within which the men negotiated understandings of masculinities and self. However, these negotiations did not result in the simple affirmation and reproduction of dominating discourses of masculinity. In contrast, these negotiation processes were often undertaken with varying degrees of tension. The dominance of rugby

in the men's schools, for example, resulted in many of the men experiencing tensions between fears of pain, skill limitations and the knowledge that participation in rugby was normal, and expected, for all males. These tensions encouraged many of these men to quit participation in rugby at a young age and for some, when older, to develop resistant readings of rugby and masculinities. These resistant readings positioned rugby players as uncritical thinkers, weak in character and foolish for risking injury. Yet, the men's relationships with rugby were not only complex and divergent but also, at times, paradoxical: many of the men performed an inconsistent range of practices in relation to rugby that simultaneously disturbed and supported dominating discourses of masculinities.

Despite nearly all of the interview participants expressing some concerns about aspects of rugby with respect to violence, risk of injury and/or its links to masculinities, the men reported that they rarely disclosed their concerns in public. The dominating discourses of rugby, that positioned rugby as 'our national sport' and as a 'man's game', made it a formidable task to publicly critique rugby. The technologies of domination associated with rugby and masculinities still exerted considerable influence over the adult men. However, many of the men, including some who had been passionate adult rugby players, did exercise power against rugby and dominant masculinities. This resistance was exercised primarily through discouraging others, typically their sons, from playing rugby. Although not revolutionary, this micro-level form of resistance, if repeated on a grander scale, would contribute a challenge to rugby's state of dominance.

The dominance of rugby provided a discursive space that produced, challenged and resisted dominating discourses of masculinities. My research findings, therefore, support the recognition that sport does not consistently or unambiguously produce culturally dominant conceptions of masculinities. In contrast to researchers who have examined institutionalised heavy-contact team sports through a lens filtered by hegemony theory, my results question the extent to which sports like rugby can be primarily regarded as producers of dominant and problematic masculinities. Although this finding could be regarded as a more optimistic reading of sport/masculinity relationships, my results reveal that concern about rugby's dominant social position within Aotearoa/New Zealand is still warranted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the men who participated in my research work for their generosity of time and sharing of rugby experiences. It was a pleasure undertaking the interviews with you all.

Special thanks to my supervisors - Bevan Grant, Pirkko Markula, Jim Denison – for their assistance and guidance throughout this project. I thank Bevan for his pragmatic and positive approach to getting 'the job' done, his speedy feedback of draft chapters, humour and perceptive comments. Pirkko and Jim were particularly influential in shaping this thesis. Indeed, without their assistance this thesis would likely have looked very different. I thank them for introducing me to the world of qualitative research, the many theoretical conversations, and their challenging and constructive feedback. Your help was most appreciated. I also thank my departmental friends for the many research conversations and advice particularly Toni Bruce and Clive Pope. Thanks also to Hugh Senior for his friendship, help and humour, the daily emails were much appreciated.

Lastly, and most importantly, I thank my family: my marriage partner, Dixie, for her love, wide-ranging support, insightful comments and generous help; and our two young sons - Zachary and Luke - for enriching my life in a variety of very interesting ways and helping me appreciate the complexities and joys associated with growing up male. I also thank my Mum and Dad for their love and assistance over the years. My mum for helping me develop a healthy and caring understanding of the body - particularly her concern for injury on the rugby field - and my father for encouraging critical thinking with respect to social issues.

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PROLOGUE

A narrative of self: The Beast and the magic water

In the 'bunker' of the change rooms, under the grandstand, our high school First XV coach grunted, "Shut up and listen". For a brief period, just the sound of sprigs on cold concrete and the smell of liniment pervaded the air, "They've got a big forward pack, but if we can hold 'em back for the first half, we can roll 'em in the second. We've gotta get the bloody ball to our backs. Bull, you watch their flanker, he's one tough bastard. Make sure it's tight on the back of the lineout. Robbo, you get stuck in from the whistle. No holding back, *you hear*? And Pringle, I hope you've got your kicking boots on." He finished by instructing, "Now troops, take a minute and think of the tasks you have to perform out there".

Nervous and excited with anticipation my mind darted. I looked around, what I was doing here? For some time I had felt uneasy about playing rugby. I didn't like the arduous trainings, the continual press-ups, tackling drills and constant pressure to perform. Most of all I was scared of getting hurt. These were feelings I didn't share with the boys. "Come on Pringle, join the huddle, it's a minute to game time." I snapped back to attention.

With our arms draped tightly over each other and jogging on the spot, our Captain talked with a sense of urgency: "Remember, if there's any 'trouble' out there, we're all in. We're a team. We don't let our team-mates down. No backward steps. Right, time to do the damage!" With these words of strategy, we left for the field.

Early in the match, we won a scrum close to the opposition try line. Our halfback fired the ball, in a bullet like pass, directly into my hands. That was when I caught my first glimpse of him: a tank with pumping knees, charging down on me. Out of fear, I stepped inside and ducked his swinging arm. At that moment I saw the gaping hole in their defence. Nothing felt sweeter than sprinting with the ball under one arm having eluded the punishment of a tackle. On my way back from the try line with my head held low, hiding the smile on my face, 'The Tank' stopped direct in front of me. He stared me in the eye and with head shaking, spat: "You watch it Curly. Next time I'll bloody nail you." He finished by pressing one finger to his nostril, and blew mucus near my boots. A team-mate, grabbing him by the arm, said: "C'mon Beast, it's not worth it." Once again, intimidation set in.

It was not long before we had earned another scrum in an attacking position. I yelled out the planned move, "Rum and coke". My fullback nodded solemnly in agreement with his thumb held up. However, from the side of the scrum, I could see 'The Beast' looking at me. I didn't want to be here. The ball travelled slowly from the back of the scrum toward my outstretched arms, as 'The Beast', with eyes wide and crazed, sprinted at me. My eyes darted nervously between ball and charging player, and I fumbled the catch. Off balance, I took the full impact of his diving torso in my chest, his forearm in my face. My head jolted back and landed heavily on the ground, as the ball spilled forward. "Play advantage", the Ref yelled, legitimising the tackle.

I was dazed, with pain coming in sharp bursts, 'The Beast' pressed my face further into the ground using it for leverage to stand. He then turned 'gentlemanly' and helped me off the ground, "C'mon mate, up you get". The salty taste of blood saturated my mouth. With the tip of my tongue I explored two now jagged front teeth. And gingerly touched my dirty fingers on my cut lip and cheek. With enthusiasm for the game destroyed, I walked off the field.

My coach came running: "What are you doing? We need you out there."

"I can't play anymore. My teeth are broken, my cheek is numb, and my head is spinning."

"That's no good mate." He fleetingly looked at the eager eyes on the bench and then quickly back at me. "Open you're mouth, let's have a look." With this he put his fingers into my bloody mouth and tried to wiggle my teeth. I recoiled from the sharp pain. "They're solid" he diagnosed, "they won't fall out, just a couple of chips missing, no problems." He then took his crumpled hanky from his pocket and started to wipe blood and saliva from my face. From behind, my assistant coach – my geography teacher - tipped water from a bucket on my head, then slapped me staunchly on the back, "Now get back out there and win this game."

Angry with my coaches, confused as to why I should continue to play, and in pain, I jogged back onto the field of 'play'. However, by the end of that winter, I found the courage to quit playing rugby: at least, for a period.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Introduction

I presented the narrative of self in the prologue to reveal some of my lived rugby experiences and to help introduce the prime themes of this research thesis, which revolve around rugby union (hereafter known as rugby), fear, pain, pleasure and masculinities.[1] My general aim in undertaking this research was to explore the significance of rugby in the lives of a diverse group of men, with particular respect to examining the articulations between their experiences of rugby fear, pain and pleasure with ways of knowing about what it means to be manly. Within this introductory chapter, I continue to illustrate my relationship with rugby and detail how my interest in rugby and masculinities as a research topic developed. I then discuss the relevance and purpose of my research, and provide details about how this thesis is structured.

Living the contradictions: My life as paradoxically shaped by rugby

Throughout my childhood and teenage years, active involvement in competitive sport dominated my daily routines and helped shape my subjectivity as an able-bodied, white, heterosexual 'sporting' male. The sport that had the most lasting influence was undoubtedly rugby. Perhaps strangely, it was my earliest involvement in rugby which had the largest impact on me. In my last two years of Primary School (aged 9 to 11 years), I played in the red jersey of Stoke Tahunanui and was coached by my beloved teacher - Mrs Leversedge. For two years straight, we never lost a game. It was here that I began to think of myself as a rugged, fast and skilled rugby player: as one of the boys. This self-image became what Hall (1992) might describe as my 'comforting story of self'. I relished the status gained

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[1] My use of narrative as a representational tool was inspired, in part, by the recognition that a growing number of social commentators have used and encouraged narrative inquiry as a valid form of writing and researching (e.g. Bruner, 1987, Clandinin & Connelly, 1998; Denison, 1999; Duncan, 1998; Messner, 1994; Richardson, 2000a, 2000b; Sabo, 1980; Sparkes, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000; Tinning, 1998; Van Maanen, 1988). In essence, narrative researchers describe the lives of individuals in a story-like manner, with the desire to engender an emotional response from the reader. Narratives of self, as highly personalised texts, can provide an evocative analytical tool for representing and examining how particular "frameworks of meaning invite or constrain, celebrate or oppress ... the dominant storylines that frame body-self relationships" (Sparkes, 1999, p. 27).

from my teachers and peers for my abilities to run with the ball and score tries. And at this age, I never worried about getting hurt. I had not yet been disciplined to accept that winning was more important than a pain free body. Rugby was a grand game and I lived for Saturday mornings and the opportunities to perform on the frosty half-fields.

For many years, throughout both primary and secondary school, I was lucky enough to be selected for provincial representative teams and to gain the privileges associated with being a successful rugby player. I was driven in teachers' cars, invited to their houses, provided with ice-blocks when young and sometimes beer when older. I had a certain respect among my peers and even amongst the teachers: I was given days off school and opportunities for trips nationally and internationally. My secondary school First XV was lauded in school assemblies, newspapers, and even on the radio, and as a First XV player I was encouraged to wear a distinguishing school uniform to help signify and reinforce my social status. Rugby located me in a privileged subject position. And this position was seductive: I was soon tied to a subjectivity that was closely shaped by rugby.

The influence of rugby, although difficult to determine with any precision, helped contour my bodily actions and social relations. By the time I was thirteen years of age I was careful who my friends were, what we talked about, and even how I sat or walked: my hands had to be in my pockets, my sleeves rolled up and my shirt hanging out. Occasionally I would feel compelled to spit. In fact, I became proficient at spitting; I would spit for accuracy, distance and style.

I was also careful to hide certain emotions. I learnt at a young age not to cry in front of my peers, not to hug or sit too closely to my male friends, and to distance myself from anything perceived as feminine, including my mum. Thus although I still enjoyed having a cuddle at home with mum or having her tuck me in bed, I was careful not to be witnessed showing affection to her in public. Likewise, I was particularly careful to hide my asthma. Asthma was a sign of weakness, so my inhaler was always carefully concealed at the bottom of my rugby gear bag. Nor did I let the boys know that I liked drama and cooking, or enjoyed playing the piano, and had once knitted a scarf. Above all, it was important to be seen as tough; walking to school on a cold morning in bare feet, although uncomfortable, was worth it. Similarly, one could never flinch in catching a high

ball on the rugby field or avoid taking the tackle or being tackled: throwing a pass in desperation – a hospital pass as it was called back in the 1970s - was a sin. The performance of these techniques of self took considerable practice to master, but they congealed over time and eventually felt natural.

As I aged into my mid-to-late teens and my body got bigger, as did the bodies of the boys I played against, my relationship with rugby changed. I became worried about getting hurt: yet, rugby men were meant to be tough and ignore pain. My coach would preach pre-game rhetoric such as, "The bigger they are, the harder they fall", or more usually, "Hit them low around the legs and they'll come down". However, I was concerned that my opponents were being indoctrinated by the same speeches.

To publicly criticise rugby was akin to criticising who I had become, therefore, I did not talk of my dislike for 'taking the tackle', or how I worried about being hurt, or that I hated being at the bottom of a ruck. I didn't tell my team-mates that prior to each game I was made a little anxious by the threat of injury, particularly if the opposition looked big and strong, or by the concern of letting the team down by missing a tackle or dropping a catch. However, and perhaps strangely, I had no qualms about inflicting pain on others. I knew when running with the ball that it was entirely appropriate to pump my knees high and drop my shoulder into an opposition boy's chest or fend him forcefully in the face. If I got to the try line and saw a boy lying on the ground I could feel perversely good: it somehow reaffirmed my strength, ability and status.

Nevertheless, in my last two years of secondary school, I started to think of myself, in part, as gentle and sensitive. I took pride in the fact that I had never been in a real physical fight and, although a decade too late, I was influenced by the anti-war and protest music of Bob Dylan and John Lennon. My burgeoning self-image did not gel well with my aggressive actions on the rugby field; but I was only vaguely aware of this contradiction.

I should have been aware of the contradictions surrounding rugby and my actions on the day the 1981 South African rugby team played Nelson Bays, my local men's representative team. I walked down the main street protesting apartheid and violence, and then slipped away from the protest action into Trafalgar Park to watch the game. I particularly wanted to see my high-school coach play, he had told me it would be the biggest thrill of his life playing the Springboks. I not only

saw him play and his team get beat, but I also saw him leave the field with a bloodied and broken nose.

I was acutely aware, however, of the tensions caused by my fear of pain and the expectation that 'real' rugby men are tough. But I did not want to simply quit rugby as my sense of self was still closely tied to the game. Indeed, as a member of the First XV I was actively using my status as a rugby player for my own social advantages. Yet this was a time when resistance to the dominance of rugby in Aotearoa/New Zealand was at its pinnacle; the disastrous 1981 South African Springbok tour had promoted a strong backlash against rugby.[2] And this backlash helped legitimate my decision to withdraw from rugby participation. This was a difficult decision and one that I revisited for many years to come, and even reneged upon for a short season of social-rugby in my mid-twenties.

Although I have not played rugby now for well over a decade and I have grown critical of select aspects of rugby culture, I have not completely rejected rugby. I still watch and enjoy - with degrees of tension - the occasional game on television. My relationship with rugby, therefore, has been complex and, at times, difficult to negotiate; but rugby's impact has always been significant. Indeed, my youthful rugby experiences encouraged my decision to study physical education at the University of Otago (1983-86) and, in many respects, they provided a prime stimulus for undertaking this research.

Development of my thesis topic

While a physical education student, I was introduced to critical sociological ideas about sport. These ideas helped challenge my beliefs that sport was inherently positive and started to fuel my sociological imagination (Mills, 1959), particularly with respect to sport and gender issues. Yet at this time, despite the recognition that the sports-world was a male-domain, there was little academic concern about how sport linked with masculinities: the problems of men's sport were relatively 'invisible'. As such, my interest in sport and gender issues was predominantly concerned with the difficulties that sportswomen faced. My girlfriend's father, for example, was coach of the New Zealand women's softball team, and even though the team had won the world championships, I was aware of

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[2] Throughout this thesis to help respect partnership between Maori and pakeha (people of predominantly European descent) I use Aotearoa/New Zealand to refer to what is more typically called New Zealand.

how little media coverage or status was granted to the team. I was also becoming aware of discrimination against sportswomen at a more local level. While a student, for example, I played volleyball for the university and was mildly concerned by the late practice times the team had been given: 8 to 10pm two nights a week. The men's basketball team used the gymnasium before us and I believed that volleyball, as a minor sport, had been given unfair treatment. Yet, I was selfishly glad that I was not in the women's volleyball team as they practiced after the men's team: 10pm to midnight. In part consequence of my growing awareness of problems facing sportswomen, I completed a final year study that examined the supposed phenomenon of 'role conflict' in female athletes.

After completing my degree and two years as a physical education teacher, I undertook further study to complete my Master of Education. My dissertation topic was again primarily concerned with sportswomen: a content analysis of the print media coverage of the 1990 Commonwealth Games to compare and critically contrast the quality and quantity of coverage devoted to sportswomen and sportsmen (see Pringle & Gordon, 1995). It was not until the late-1990s, when I first started thinking seriously about the possibilities of doctoral studies, that I discovered the corpus of research concerned with sport and masculinities (e.g. Bryson, 1987; Messner, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990, 1994). With further reading, I recognised that there had long been concern about the influence of sport on masculinities (e.g. Donnelly & Young, 1985; Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Sabo & Runfola, 1980; Sheard & Dunning, 1973). This literature in combination with my own tension-filled experiences of rugby encouraged my interest to research the articulations between men's experiences of rugby and masculinities.

In the following, I detail the prime sociological concerns about male sport and its links to masculinities, and how these concerns shaped my views of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand and led to the development of this research thesis.

Sport and masculinities

Although men have traditionally dominated the world of research, men themselves have only relatively recently become topics of investigation (Connell, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Messner, 1990a; Paris, Worth & Allen, 2002). This interest in studying men has grown so quickly that masculinity is now recognised as "something of a hot topic in academia" (Law, Campbell & Schick, 1999, p. 15).

Masculinity has been defined as the manner in which men perform what they believe to be their manhood (Mosse, 1996), or as that complex range of meanings attached to males (Kimmel & Messner, 1998). This increased interest in studying masculinities has been partly influenced by sweeping social changes that have occurred in the last few decades; the era that Rail (1998) referred to as 'postmodern times'. These changes relate, in part, to economic and political transformations, such as more women in full time employment, the gay and feminist movements, the growth of feminist scholarship, changes to family forms, consumption patterns, communication technologies, and the shape of global capitalism (Connell, 1995; Law et al., 1999; Mac an Ghaill, 1996). These social changes, particularly the growth of feminist scholarship, have helped many understand that gender is a "basic organising principle of social life" (Messner, 1990a, p. 136), and that gender should be an important focus of social research.

Masculinities have also become a focus of research as it is increasingly assumed that many of men's behaviours and attitudes are directly or indirectly linked to poor health (Sabo & Gordon, 1995). Masculinities, in this respect, can be considered "dangerous to men's health" (Sabo, 1998, p. 347). Kimmel (1995), for example, stated:

> Men are nearly six times more likely to die of lung cancer than women, five times as likely to die of other bronchopulmonic diseases, three times as likely to commit suicide, and two times as likely to die of cirrhosis of the liver and heart disease.... Masculinity is among the more significant risk factors associated with men's health.... But masculinity is not only a risk factor in disease etiology but it is also among the most significant barriers to men developing a consciousness about health and illness. "Real men" don't get sick, and when they do, as we all do, real men don't complain about it, and they don't seek help until the entire system begins to shut down. (p. vii-viii)

Although Kimmel's statistics are based on data from North America, they are representative of patterns of illness in Aotearoa/New Zealand (e.g. Adams, 1997; National Health Committee, 1998).

Masculinities are also believed to contribute to a range of other major social problems. Evidence from Aotearoa/New Zealand suggests that 79% of pathological gamblers are men, 69% of fatal road accidents kill men, and that men are over-represented in their use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs, and are both the victims and perpetrators of the majority of violence (Adams, 1997). Moreover, concerns with violence in Aotearoa/New Zealand are not just restricted to the actions of some adult men. A survey of school students, for example, found that over 70% of students had personally experienced violence at school, and that these experiences were primarily related to the actions of youthful males (Wood, 1994).

This evidence suggests that masculinities articulate with a range of problems that have adverse effects not only on men, but also on youth and females: "Far from being just about men, the idea of masculinity engages, inflects, and shapes everyone" (Berger, Wallis & Watson, 1995, p. 7). This recognition of the pervasive and, at times, problematic influence of masculinities has encouraged numerous researchers to examine the gendering processes associated with "the transformation of biological males into socially interacting men" (Kimmel & Messner, 1998, p. xv). A growing number of researchers, more specifically, have directed critical attention to understanding the reciprocal relationships between sport and masculinities.

Critical sport writers have long considered that sport and masculinities exist in a symbiotic relationship: sport, it is assumed, helps affirm traditional notions of masculinities, while these notions help shape sport (Connell, 1987; Messner, 1992; Sage, 1990). Messner (1988) argued that sport's demands for players to be competitive, strong, skilled and aggressive are congruent with dominant masculinities. He further contended that throughout the twentieth century, whenever the concept of masculinity was supposedly in 'crisis', sport served as a crucial domain for reaffirming the faltering notion of male superiority.

Although the sports world is no longer an exclusively male domain, sport is still regarded as vitally important in influencing how men and boys "define and differentiate the meaning and practice of masculinity" (Rowe, 1995, p. 123). Indeed, the belief that sport involvement 'turns boys into men' exerts considerable influence. Evidence from North America, for example, suggests that teenage males would rather fail in the classroom than in sports: in fact, failing in sports was

viewed as the most "aversive context in which to experience failure" (Roberts & Treasure, 1993, p. 4).

Yet the recognition of the significant relationships between sport and masculinities has also been a cause for concern. Many critical commentators have illustrated that sport, particularly the popular winter football codes, problematically link aggression, bodily force, competition and physical skill with maleness (e.g. Bryson, 1990; Connell, 1987; Hickey, Fitzclarence & Matthews, 1998; Lynch, 1993; Messner, 1988; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Miller, 1998a; Nauright & Chandler, 1996; Phillips, 1984, 1987; Rowe & McKay, 1998; Sabo & Runfola, 1980; Sheard & Dunning, 1973; Trujillo, 1995; Whitson, 1990; Young, 1993; Young & White, 2000; Young, White & McTeer, 1994). Hickey and Fitzclarence (1999), for example, warned that the primary messages that boys receive about 'appropriate' masculinity through sports are grounded in traditional notions of masculinity, so that boys "in intensely 'male' ways... are supposed to learn how to get back up after being knocked down, how to express themselves physically, how to impose themselves forcefully, how to mask pain and how to release anxiety" (p. 52).

Sport has also been viewed, more problematically, as a "crucial site for the 'legitimate' training in, and expression of, male violence, both on and off the field" (Miller, 1998a, p. 194). Although defining the concept of sport violence is elusive (Goldstein, 1983; Hughes, 1984; Husman & Silva, 1984; Jackson, 1993; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1993; Schneider & Eitzen, 1983; Smith, 1983; Stephens, 1998; Weinstein, Smith, & Wiesenthal, 1995; Young, 2000), the recognition that many of the popular 'heavy-contact' sports revolve around players abilities to withstand and inflict pain, has encouraged a number of researchers to label these sports as violent (e.g. Curry, 1993; Hickey & Fitzclarence, 1999; Hutchins & Phillips, 1997; Messner, 1992; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1993; Young, et al., 1994).[3] Messner (1990b), for example, stated:

> It seems reasonable to simply begin with the assumption that in many of our most popular sports, the achievement of goals (scoring and winning) is predicated on the successful utilization of violence – that is, these are activities in which the human body is routinely turned into a weapon to be

[3] Like all words, the meaning of 'violence' is constructed socially; in this sense, violence is a subjective term. Goldstein (1983), accordingly, argued that it is impossible and undesirable to have a single definition of sport violence.

used against other bodies, resulting in pain, serious injury, and even death. (p. 203)

The possible link between masculinities, sport and violence, both within and outside of sporting contexts, is of prime concern given the recognition that violence, in its various forms, is often recognised as a major social problem (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Sabo, Gray & Moore, 2000). Yet, until relatively recently social concern about sport violence has been minimal. Russell (1993), for example, contended that sport is perhaps the only setting outside of wartime "in which acts of interpersonal aggression are not only tolerated but enthusiastically applauded by large segments of society" (p. 181). Nevertheless, an awareness of the complexities and social costs of violence has increased and concern about sport violence has grown. Commissions, for example, have been recently appointed in Australia, Canada and United Kingdom to examine issues pertaining to sporting violence (Tenenbaum, Stewart, Singer & Duda, 1997). Numerous position papers have been produced with detailed recommendations on how to reduce sporting violence (e.g. American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine, 2002; Hillary Commission, 1997; Tenenbaum et al., 1997), and since the early 1970s, an increasing number of researchers have examined diverse issues pertaining to sport violence (Weinstein et al., 1995). In a recent literature search on the web, for example, I found 221 references pertaining solely to violence surrounding soccer in Europe (Social Issues Research Centre, 2002). Sport violence, for some, is accepted as a social problem.

Many critical sport commentators, in light of the possible links between sport, violence and masculinities, have described sport as a major, if not the prime, social institution through which a dominant but potentially problematic form of masculinity is constructed, reconstructed and affirmed (e.g. Bryson, 1990; Connell, 1995; Young et al., 1994). Moreover, this dominant form of masculinity, often referred to as hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985), has been widely theorised as contributing to male dominance in society. Bryson (1990) concluded that the "major sports to which we are exposed construct and reconstruct male dominance through a complex of ideological processes that link maleness with valued skills and the exercise of sanctioned and highly valued strength, power, and aggressiveness" (p. 175).

Concern has also been directed towards the costs associated with being a 'successful' sportsman. Messner (1992) argued that the processes through which young elite sportsmen become committed to sporting careers could create identity and relational problems. Messner, more specifically, contended that given the hierarchical and competitive context of sport, that male athletes' relationships with others "become distorted" (p. 152), and that they are encouraged to problematically view their bodies as machines. He claimed, in consequence, that male athletes lack intimate and warm connections with other people and are typically alienated from their bodies.

However, concerns about the costs of participation in heavy-contact sport have more typically been directed to the significant and diverse costs of injury. Research findings, for example, have revealed that for many elite-level *male and female* athletes, sport is a source of chronic pain (Nixon, 2000). Numerous researchers have also suggested that male and female athletes typically accept pain and injuries as a normal aspect of sport participation and are, therefore, willing to participate in varying degrees of pain (e.g. Curry, 1993; Howe, 2001; Messner, 1992; Nixon, 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994a, 1994b, 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Roderick, Waddington & Parker, 2000; Young & White, 1995; Young, et al., 1994). Masculinities, however, appear to be closely linked to the problems of sport injury: males, in general, are more susceptible to sports injury than females; and sportsmen, in comparison to sportswomen, suffer disproportionately from catastrophic athletic injuries (White & Young, 1997). A Canadian study, for example, of 556 incidents of sport and recreational incidents that resulted in death or long-term disablement, found that 84.7% involved males (Tator, 1987). From an extensive review of sports injury research, White and Young (1997) argued that masculinising processes contribute to the disproportionate level of injured male sporting bodies. They suggested, therefore, that sport is a prime institution that promotes the construction of "dangerous masculinities" (p. 1) that can act to encourage men to "ignore or rationalize the risk of physical harm" (p. 1).

The critical analyses related to sport and masculinities helped stimulate my concerns with respect to the place of social importance that rugby holds in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Rugby and masculinities in Aotearoa/New Zealand

In Aotearoa/New Zealand rugby union is often experienced and made sense of in intensely different ways. Rugby has been variously defined as a sport for gentlemen or barbarians (Dunning & Sheard, 1979), as an elitist or egalitarian sport (Laidlaw, 1999), and even as a way of life, cult or secular religion (Richards, 1999; Thompson, 1988), but more typically as a *man's* sport. Although critical social commentators have labelled rugby as a producer and supporter of masculine hegemony (Thompson, 1988), and succinctly as violent (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1993), many New Zealanders celebrate rugby as 'our national game' (Nauright, 1996). McConnell (1998) stated that regardless of whether New Zealanders love it, hate it or try to be indifferent, "rugby union football shapes New Zealand social history and everyday life" (p. 11). Critical examination of the social influence of rugby is an important topic. Fraser (1991), for example, argued:

> The place rugby enjoys demands analysis. It is not simply a sport but it encompasses such matters as the class structure, mateship and male bonding, the perpetuation of sexist attitudes in New Zealand, not to mention the social functions it performs in diverse communities around the land. (p i)

Although rugby holds a place in the heart of many New Zealanders, it is not the country's most popular participation sport. The Hillary Commission (2000) estimated that rugby was the sixth most popular adult male participation sport behind golf, cricket, netball, tennis and touch football respectively. Moreover, rugby's popularity as a participation sport decreases with increasing age (Hillary Commission, 2000). Yet, in terms of club participation rates for school-age males, rugby is second in popularity behind soccer (Hillary Commission, 2000). These participation rates are in contrast to a time-period prior to the 1970s when rugby participation was virtually compulsory for boys (Star, 1999a), and soccer was a marginalized sport played by what many regarded as "ex-pats and poofters" (Keane, 1999, p. 49). Further, although a growing number of females enjoy participating in rugby, the participation rates are still relatively small. Nevertheless, rugby's contemporary place of social importance ensures that it gains pride of

place in many secondary schools, family and work conversations, and that it dominates the sports/media complex (McConnell, 1996; McGregor, 1994).

Coakley (1994) argued that in heavy-contact sports, such as rugby, "intimidation and violence have become widely used as strategies for winning games, promoting individual careers, and increasing profits for sponsors" (p. 172). Winning in rugby is undoubtedly reliant on the use of tactics, skills and fitness, but also the players' abilities to withstand pain and, at times, deliberate acts of violence. The more ably a rugby player can run around, over or through other players, or knock them to the ground in 'bone-crunching' tackles or 'big hits', the more respected that player typically becomes. However, few rugby players would state that they play rugby to deliberately hurt people, yet many may admit that they play hard in order to dominate the opposition in an attempt to secure victory.

A result of this competitive attitude is that many rugby players suffer from injuries. Research findings suggest that rugby injuries are relatively serious, frequent and costly (Dixon, 1993; Nicholl, Coleman & Williams, 1995; Pringle, McNair & Stanley, 1998; Quarrie et al., 2001). It has been estimated that the average rugby player, regardless of his/her position, misses approximately 12% of a season due to injuries (Quarrie et al., 2001). Accumulating evidence also suggests that since rugby's open professionalisation (in 1995) the risk of serious injury has increased at all age levels of participation (Garraway, Lee, Hutton, Russell & Macleod, 2000; Howe, 2001).

Recent findings from New Zealand's mandatory injury compensation scheme, administered by the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) (2001), lend support to the contention that the professionalisation of rugby is linked to an increased rate of serious injuries. ACC (2001) estimated that serious rugby injuries tripled in incidence from 1994/5 to 1999/2000. More specifically, 21 rugby participants, from 1999 to 2001, have been reported as permanently disabled from spinal or brain injuries (ACC, 2001). The incidence of spinal injuries, although relatively small, is of particular concern. However, rugby injury, at its most dangerous, can also cause death. From 1979 to 1988, eighteen New Zealand males died of rugby injuries: on average, therefore, one player died per year (Dixon, 1993). ACC (2001) findings suggest that the current morbidity rate for rugby has not changed.

Related to the assumption that rugby, since 1995, has become a more dangerous sport, is the growing speculation that a recent downturn in participation rates is linked to the threat of injury. Newspaper journalist Greg Dixon (2000), for example, contemplated:

> Some Auckland schoolboys may be running scared of rugby, the game's administrators believe. A 16 per cent slump in the number of Auckland secondary school rugby sides this season compared with 1999 is being blamed on the increasingly physical nature of the sport. (p. A 7)

The New Zealand Rugby Football Union with concern for the high injury incidence rate, and in conjunction with ACC, initiated numerous projects to make the game safer in the early 1990s. The resulting injury prevention recommendations have focused predominantly on educating coaches, referees and participants with regard to fitness requirements, use of protective equipment and sporting technique (Gerrard, 1996). These recommendations appear to have had some success in decreasing incidence of minor and moderate injuries (ACC, 2001). Nevertheless, the cost for new and recurrent rugby injuries, for the 2000/01 financial year, was $NZ20.8 million (ACC, 2001). This cost, which accounted for 22.8% of the total sports injury cost, was disproportionately related, in an overwhelming manner, to males under the age of twenty-five years.

These injury statistics suggest that a gendering process plays a significant role in the production of rugby pain and injury: which, in a somewhat circular fashion, brings the discussion back to concerns about the relationships between sport and masculinities. Of particular concern is research findings suggesting that tolerance of pain and performances of aggression are valued by many male athletes as "masculinizing' (Young et al., 1994, p. 176). Such a conclusion raises concerns about the potential influence of rugby to help constitute "dangerous masculinities" (White & Young, 1997, p. 1) within Aotearoa/New Zealand.

However, little is known about the influence of rugby with respect to how men within Aotearoa/New Zealand understand and negotiate their relationships with masculinities. Although interest in examining the socio-cultural influence of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand has grown since the late 1980s (e.g. Fougere, 1989; Maclean, 1999; Nauright, 1996; Phillips, 1996a, 1996b; Richards, 1999;

Star, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1999b; Thompson, 1988, 1999a; Thomson, 1993, 2000; Tod & Hodge, 1993; Trevelyan & Jackson, 1999) there have been surprisingly few *empirical* investigations of the relationship between rugby and masculinities; Park's (2000) critical examination of haemophilia and masculinity, and de Jong's (1991) social history of rugby being two prime exceptions. A review of the international literature also reveals that little attention has been directed to understanding men's sporting experiences of pain, fear and pleasure, with particular respect to how these experiences articulate with the social construction of masculinities. With these research limitations in mind, I now turn to the prime purpose of this study.

The research purpose

In light of the critical analyses of sport and masculinities (e.g. Bryson, 1990; Connell, 1987; Messner, 1992; Hickey et al., 1998; Rowe & McKay, 1998), I became concerned about the likely influence of the socio-cultural dominance of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand. I was concerned that the prevalence of rugby could help produce and affirm an influential form of masculinity with sporting prowess, competitive aggression, acceptance of some acts of violence, sexism, homophobia, risk taking and tolerance of pain; and that this form of masculinity could adversely impact on men's health and more broadly on gender relations. I was also concerned that the dominance of rugby could act to marginalize other more gentle and respectful forms of masculinities.

However, I also recognised that attempting to understand how a specific social practice, such as participation in rugby, impacts on male subjectivities is complex. Through reflecting and writing about my own relationships with rugby (Pringle, 2001a, 2002) I was aware that rugby did not bend me into one particular masculinity type but that it was, nevertheless, influential in shaping my sense of self. Moreover, I recognised that it was partly through my experiences and fears of rugby pain, that I became critical of the notion that 'real men' should tolerate pain in stoical fashion. Through reading other men's accounts of their sporting experiences of pain, such as narratives of self re-presented by Sparkes (1996), Sabo (1980) and Tiihonen (1994), I became aware of the complexities associated with the constitution of male athletes' subjectivities, and of the difficulties of resisting dominant ways of performing masculinity. Sabo's (1980) narrative, for example,

told of how he eventually questioned and rejected the value of heavy-contact sport, but only after he had "made it in athletics" (p. 77) and had endured many seasons of pain and injuries.

I was also aware that rugby players do not solely exist in rugby cultures, but are subject to a variety of influences that likely impact on their senses of self. I thought, for example, that although rugby players may learn to tolerate pain in rugby and be encouraged to play hard and, therefore, indirectly harm other players' bodies, that in different contexts they are typically encouraged to be respectful of themselves and others. Males, for example, are increasingly encouraged to drive safely, be careful with diet, practise safe sex and be non-violent. Given these complexities and my concerns about rugby, I wondered how men experience and make sense of rugby pain, fear and pleasure, and how these experiences influence their understandings of self and masculinities. This questioning helped develop my prime purpose for undertaking this research, which was to explore the influence of rugby in the lives of a diverse group of men, with particular respect to examining rugby's influence on understandings of masculinities.

Organisational structure of thesis

In order to clarify the content of this thesis, I now briefly outline its structure. In chapter two, I discuss the theoretical framework that underpinned this research. This details my ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that constitute my interpretive/critical research paradigm. I also discuss Foucauldian understandings of discourse and power, as they were central to my research. In chapter three, I explore how rugby, as a sport involving varying degrees of corporeal risk, came to be socio-culturally dominant within Aotearoa/New Zealand. I do this through reviewing critical literature concerned with rugby's social and historical development and its links to masculinities.

In chapter four, I review literature that has primarily examined the relationships between masculinities, pain and sport. I begin by introducing Gramsci's conceptualisation of hegemony and then detail how pro-feminist researchers have appropriated this concept. I follow this by reviewing literature that has investigated media images of sports and masculinities and more empirically based research that has examined male athletes' understandings of sporting pain. I then compare and contrast the theoretical tools offered by Gramsci and Foucault,

and argue that Foucauldian tools may offer advantages for examining the relationships between sport, pain and masculinity. Lastly, I state my prime research question.

In chapter five, I present the chosen research method: in-depth interviews with a purposively selected group of fourteen men. I also detail how I used Foucauldian ideas to help analyse the interview transcripts. In chapters six, seven and eight, I present a discussion of the results from my analysis of the men's experiences of rugby. These chapters are presented in chronological order of the men's rugby experiences. In chapter nine, I draw conclusions from my analyses and address the salient issues that arose within my research and in relation to previous literature. Finally, in the epilogue, I reflect on how undertaking this research has influenced and changed my understandings of rugby.

CHAPTER TWO

Getting Theoretical: Introducing My Research Paradigm

Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that underpin and shape my study of the articulations between men's rugby experiences and masculinities. Collectively this set of assumptions constitutes my research paradigm. The term 'paradigm', often associated with the work of Kuhn (1970), can be thought of as a fundamental set of beliefs that guide actions and "define the worldview of the researcher-as-interpretive bricoleur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a, p. 157). The beliefs are termed fundamental, because it is assumed that their ultimate truthfulness can never be established (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a). Guba and Lincoln (1989) stated: "if we could cite reasons why some particular paradigm should be preferred, then, those reasons would form an even more basic set of beliefs" (p. 80). Paradigmatic beliefs are important to debate, analyse and reflect upon as they help shape how researchers view social realities, construct knowledge and judge the value of research projects (Sparkes, 1992). These beliefs, therefore, permeate and influence all actions related to research. Questions of paradigm, therefore, take precedence over questions of method (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For these reasons, I locate this chapter in this site of prominence within my thesis.

In this chapter, after introducing my 'postmodern' research paradigm, I discuss the theoretical ideas of Michel Foucault, as his writings have influenced my understandings of social realities, regimes of truth, and gendered subjectivities and I draw on his ideas extensively throughout this thesis.

Positivist and postmodernist paradigms

My research paradigm developed in relation to a postmodern critique of positivism. In this section, therefore, I detail my understandings of positivism and postmodernism.

There is not universal agreement about the number or names of the prime research paradigms. Yet there is general agreement that the positivist and postmodern paradigms are based on mutually exclusive assumptions (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2000a; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Markula, Grant & Denison, 2001; Sparkes, 1992). There is also general agreement that the positivist paradigm, given its dominance in research over the last century, has provided a reference point for the development of postmodern paradigms (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). So what are the tenets of positivism?

Within a positivist research paradigm an external-realist ontology prevails with the assumption that there is a 'hard reality out there' (Sparkes, 1992). The social world is viewed as tangible and consisting of relatively unchangeable facts. Researchers who adhere to positivism believe that these facts can be discovered through rigorous objective study or unbiased observation (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Henderson, 1991; Olssen, 1991). Thus, positivists believe that they can stand apart from what is being studied and that knowledge can be constructed in a neutral manner. Sparkes (1992) asserted that "this separation of mind and the world, or dualism, is a key issue because it leads to the view that truth has its source in this independently existing reality" (p. 22). Positivist research is, therefore, claimed to be value free and not bound by social context; hence, knowledge is viewed as being generalisable across time and place. Further, it is believed that knowledge can be transformed into principles or universal laws that can explain and predict what happens in the social world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This knowledge construction process is typically undertaken through reductive analyses that divide a phenomenon into parts, so that these parts can be categorised and studied in relation to other parts (Henderson, 1991). Social constructs such as masculinities or violence, for example, are treated as existing somewhat independently of individuals so that they can be known, described, measured and statistically analysed from some detached objective vantage point. Positivist research is also typically underpinned by the modernist belief that scientific research will contribute to a progressive accumulation of knowledge for the betterment of society (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Gergen, 1990).

The successes of positivism, particularly in physical sciences such as biology, chemistry, physics and medicine, are well documented and widely celebrated. Positivism has also generated considerable knowledge about the human body in relation to sport and health. However, concerns about the tenets of positivism have also long existed. Max Weber (1864-1902), for example, who is considered with Durkheim and Marx to be one of the founding thinkers of

sociology, argued that people cannot be studied using the same scientific procedures used for studying the physical world (Marsh, Keating, Eyre, Campbell, & McKenzie, 1996). Weber, more specifically, asserted that people construct meanings about the social world in a manner that is not always predictable or consistent and this, therefore, necessitated the need to use alternative knowledge construction processes from that of the natural sciences. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), a compatriot to Weber, more specifically argued that the focus of the social sciences concerned the products of the human mind, and these products are constructed via the workings of human values, interests, emotions and subjectivities (Sparkes, 1992). Dilthey, therefore, argued that there is not an objective *social* reality; as social reality is always tied to human subjectivity: positivist assumptions are, thus, not appropriate for study of social realities.

Critical theorists working in the Frankfurt School in the 1920s also critiqued the notion of researcher neutrality, as they observed how value-free science could be used as tools of "domination in the hands of technocratic and capitalist elites" (Peters, Hope, Webster & Marshall, 1996, p. 10). Likewise, the early work of Nietzsche and Heidegger also challenged the grand narratives of modernism (Rail, 1998; Rosenau, 1992). Elkind (1995), for example, described how Nietzche played language games via parody, irony and satire to illustrate that language is ambiguous and therefore the truths of reason, which must employ language, must also have plural meanings. Perhaps not surprisingly, Nietzche has been referred to as the "spiritual grandfather of postmodernism" (Peters, 1996, p. 34). However, it has only been in relatively recent years that 'anti-positivist' paradigms have been established with a strong degree of legitimacy within the social sciences (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The legitimisation of these paradigms has been closely linked with postmodern social theorising and the associated interpretive, linguistic or postmodern turn(s) in social theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Yet given the multitude of meanings that surround postmodernism, including the critical view that it is an attack on reason and truth (Habermas, 1981), I recognise that it is important to define how I view or understand postmodern social theory.

Markula, et al. (2001) stated: "*postmodernism*, as a term, is probably the least possible to delimit or define, and this has undoubtedly led to much confusion and also arguably undue dismissal of research under this rubric by many

academics" (p. 257). Kellner (1988), for example, reported that there is no unified postmodern social theory, but that postmodernism is an eclectic term of diverse meaning used in contexts as seemingly disparate as architecture, literature, painting, philosophy, geography and sociology. Yet there have been various attempts to more definitively outline the elusive character(s) of postmodernism (e.g. Denzin, 1991; Rail, 1998; Rosenau, 1992). Denzin (1991), in a categorical manner, defined postmodernism as simultaneously referring to four interrelated phenomena: (1) a sequence of intersecting socio-cultural transformations following World War Two, (2) a movement in the visual arts which represents a shift away from an elitist style to a more eclectic mix inspired by aesthetic populism; (3) the emergence of a new cultural logic associated with developments in late capitalism and (4) a form of writing and researching which shuns attempts to build a positivist and post-positivist science of society.

This last perspective of postmodernism is typically labelled as postmodern social theory: it rejects positivist notions of reality and truth, and disputes the modernist assumption of social progress (Rosenau, 1992). And it is this notion of postmodernism that I draw upon in this thesis. Richardson (2000a), more specifically, asserted: "the core of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the 'right' or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge" (p. 8). To help elaborate on the characteristics of postmodern social theory, and to refute the arguments that postmodern social theory is pessimistic and nihilistic, I discuss the work of Lyotard (1984).[4]

Lyotard (1984), as an influential promoter of postmodern social theory, reported that he used the word 'postmodern' to represent the condition that had developed since the end of the nineteenth century in which "the game rules for science, literature, and the arts" (p. xxiii) have been significantly altered. Within this condition, Lyotard rejected any modern science that acted to legitimise itself with reference to some grand narrative, such as emancipation and progress.

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[4] Although I draw on Lyotard's (1984) ideas I accept that there are also contradictions and problems with his work. Kellner (1988), for example, argued that although Lyotard was sceptical of metanarratives, his text *The Postmodern Condition* can be viewed as a metanarrative. Kellner, therefore, labelled Lyotard's analysis of postmodernism as undertheorized and paradoxical. Likewise, Lyotard's sceptical stance toward truth can be viewed as somewhat contradictory, as by denying truth, he indirectly acted to privilege his position and therefore affirmed the possibility of truth (Rosenau, 1992).

However, Lyotard's view of postmodernism is commonly thought of as an attitude representing incredulity toward grand narratives. Lyotard's sceptical stance is politically motivated: he was primarily concerned about the terroristic manner in which the Enlightenment metanarratives appeared to have been created outside of a social context, and in how they asserted a voice of authority over truth which acted to silence other discourses (Peters, 1996; Rosenau, 1992). In this manner, Lyotard argued that the truth promoted by meta-narratives, such as positivism, eliminated the arguments of the 'others'. His political concern, therefore, was in recognising the legitimacy of multiple voices and truths.

Many social commentators have since supported Lyotard's sceptical stance toward metanarratives by vividly illustrating that within the postmodern condition, where life experiences are marked by fragmentation, diversity, mobility and differentiation, the credibility of modern metanarratives have been challenged (e.g. Giddens, 1991; Pavlich & Ratner, 1996; Rail, 1998; Rojek, 1997). Further, postmodern social commentators have argued that social reality cannot be satisfactorily explained by the modernist notions of class, race, or gender, or the privileged discourses of Marxism, liberalism or any other form of totalising thought (Foucault, 1977a; Kellner, 1988; Lyotard, 1984; Rail, 1998; Rojek 1997). Postmodern social theory can, therefore, be thought of as a rejection of the search for universal 'social' truth.

In addition, postmodernism can be thought of as a rejection of the modernist assumption that science and technological innovation will lead to social progress, enlightenment and universal emancipation. Lyotard (1993) for example, stated:

> We can observe and establish a kind of decline in the confidence that, for two centuries, the West invested in the principle of a general progress in humanity. This idea of a possible, probable, or necessary progress is rooted in the belief that developments made in the arts, technology, knowledge, and freedoms would benefit humanity as a whole ... After two centuries we have become more alert to signs that would indicate an opposing movement ... We could make a list of proper names - places, people, dates - capable of illustrating or substantiating our suspicions. Following Theodor Adorno, I have used the name 'Auschwitz' to signify just how impoverished recent

Western history seems from the point of view of the 'modern' project of the emancipation of humanity. (p. 48)

The rejection of a search for universal truth does not necessarily mean that postmodernists endorse nihilism. However, Vattimo (1988), as an extreme postmodernist, argued that nihilism should be regarded as an acceptable and viable stance. In contrast, Lyotard (1984) argued that the loss of universal meanings should not be mourned, as we can now celebrate difference and diversity, which can reinforce "our ability to tolerate the incommensurable" (p. xxv). Moreover, postmodern scepticism toward universal truths and the privileged position of a 'Eurocentric male voice' has also helped create space for a plurality of local rationalities, and the opportunities for voices from previously silenced groups to be heard (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Pavlich & Ratner, 1996). In the last twenty years a range of new academic perspectives or disciplines, such as queer theory, post-colonial studies, men's studies and feminist poststructuralism, have emerged to help challenge the dominance of natural science. Although, some of these 'voices' are still viewed as existing only on the academic fringes (Middleton, 1996), the postmodern condition has lead to what Vattimo (1992) described as an explosive situation in which the legitimacy of many others has been promoted. Rosenau (1992) concluded that postmodern social theory has constituted "one of the greatest intellectual challenges to established knowledge of the twentieth century" (p. 5). Lincoln and Guba (2000), in less grand fashion, argued there can now "be no question that the legitimacy of postmodern paradigms is well established and at least equal to the legitimacy of received and conventional paradigms" (p. 164).

Postmodern social theorising has not only critiqued paradigmatic assumptions of positivism but it has also helped erode "beliefs that any one paradigm is sufficient to answer the important questions of today. Thus, not only has the dominant, natural science paradigm come under fire, but the boundaries between paradigms themselves are breaking down" (Bruce, 1995, p. 10). Lincoln and Guba (2000), for example, stated that the boundary lines that have helped separate the postmodern paradigms from each other are beginning to blur. Thus, an increasing number of researchers informed by postmodern sensibilities are now blending elements from the different postmodern paradigms.

From a political perspective, I read the postmodern turn as an important shift in the direction and politics of social research. This turn, for example, has encouraged many researchers to respect local context and knowledge, and to appreciate the complexity and diversity of social realities. Importantly, it has also helped challenge many researchers (including myself) to reflect on their paradigmatic assumptions, or more specifically, questions of significance related to ontology, epistemology and methodology (Bruce & Greendorfer, 1994; Sparkes, 1992). These paradigmatic reflections are crucial, as the assumptions generated from exploring these issues, help lay a foundation for undertaking the research process or the 'art' of interpretation (Denzin, 1994).

In the following sections I illustrate more explicitly how postmodern social theorising has helped shape my intertwined assumptions regarding issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology.

My ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions

Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggested that the prime ontological question revolved around whether individuals viewed the world as external to themselves, in which reality is 'out there' and can be captured, or whether reality is a product of individual or internal consciousness. My scepticism toward metanarratives encourages my belief that "what is real is a construction in the minds of individuals" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 243). I accept, therefore, that there are multiple, often conflicting, views or constructions of social realities. This perspective is similar to what Sparkes (1992) labelled as the internal-idealist ontology.

My ontological perspective leads to an acknowledgement that researchers cannot stand apart from the reality they are observing, as it is impossible for them to achieve some 'God' like perspective. I accept that how I research/write is, therefore, reflective of how I subjectively view reality. Thus, I view knowledge as a subjective construction, and researchers as interpreters with value laden eyes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Epistemologically, this represents a subjectivist position, as knowledge can never be "certifiable as ultimately true but rather it is problematic and ever changing" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 26). Geertz (1973) recognised the subjectivity of research conclusions by stating, "what we call our data are really our constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (p. 9). Denzin (1997) expressed a similar argument by

stating that the researcher discovers the multiple stories or truths of the lived experiences of others, and then she/he writes his/her own story of this event. In this sense, I accept that social science research is not politically neutral, as it has been crafted via the influence of the researcher's beliefs and values. Social science research is, therefore, reliant on the *art and politics of interpretation*, or how the researcher artfully moves from the "field to the text to the reader" (Denzin, 1994, p. 500).

Ontological and epistemological assumptions have consequences for research methodologies. Sparkes (1992), for example, stated:

> Essentially, ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions which have methodological implications for the choices made regarding particular techniques of data collection, the interpretation of these findings and the eventual ways they are written about in texts and presented orally at conferences. (p. 15)

The linkages between ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs help negate the argument that the research problem fundamentally determines the research method (Sparkes, 1992). In contrast to this argument, I accept that a researcher's ontological views helps her/him to conceive of particular research issues and of particular ways to examine and write about these issues (Gardener, 1991; Richardson, 1992). Sparkes (1992), for example stated: "Methods are not simply technical skills that exist independently of the purpose and commitment of those who do the research" (p. 15).

Within this thesis, given my internal-idealist ontology and subjectivist epistemology, I was drawn away from a nomothetic methodology in favour of an ideographic approach. An ideographic approach "emphasises the analysis of the subjective accounts which one generates by 'getting inside' situations and involving oneself in the everyday flow of life" (Patton, 1978, p. 6). Ideographic research is typically conducted in natural settings with the aims to help make sense of "phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). In this sense, ideographic research is concerned with securing rich descriptions of individual's points of view to help understand how the constraints and complexities of everyday life shape the construction and interplay of multiple

meanings and subjectivities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b). Ideographic research is typically known as qualitative research.

The implications of the 'triple crises'

My paradigmatic assumptions are based, in part, on the acceptance of a blurring of boundaries between science and art, and between fact and fiction. Such assumptions are not without problems (Lather, 1986; Richardson, 1992, 1994; Sparkes, 1992). Denzin and Lincoln (2000b), for example, stated that a "triple crisis of representation, legitimation, and praxis" (p. 17) confronts researchers who adhere to postmodern paradigmatic assumptions.

The crisis of representation recognises the limitations of language for capturing and textually replicating lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Language is not transparent; that is, language does not provide a direct or pure link between our feelings or experiences, and our ability to communicate these feelings (Burr, 1995). Language, in this sense, becomes problematic as it can be viewed as helping create our social reality, and paradoxically, as not entirely adequate for describing our social reality (Polkinghorne, 1988). The research text, therefore, is no longer viewed as an authoritative representation of social reality: lived experience can be viewed as "created in the social text" by the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 11). This representational crisis, therefore, warns: "there can never be a final, accurate representation of what was meant or said – only different textual representations of different experiences" (Denzin, 1997, p. 5).

The representational crisis has helped spawn a research climate characterised by uncertainty, tension, hesitation and contradiction, but also hope, reflexive interpretations and the promotion of different ways of undertaking and representing research (Deznin, 1997). The crisis of representation, more specifically, questions the value of the art of interpretation; it reframes the research text as just one of many potentially different representations of different experiences (Denzin, 1997). This questioning of textual value is closely linked to the crisis of legitimation, which is underpinned by the recognition that there are no objective ways to judge the worth of research. Lincoln and Guba (2000) stated that the prime, but *unanswerable* question, raised by the crisis of legitimation is:

> How do we know when we have specific social inquiries that are faithful enough to some human construction that we may feel safe in acting on them, or, more important, that members of the community in which the research is conducted may act on them? (p. 180)

The crises of representation and legitimation are also interlinked with the crisis of praxis; which is primarily concerned with the political effectiveness of research under the conditions of postmodernism. Related to the crisis of praxis is the recognition that a postmodern ontology can encourage a slide into relativism (Parker, 1992): in which all knowledge claims are treated with scepticism, "since there is no transcendent standpoint from which 'the Real' can be directly apprehended" (Gill, 1995, p. 169). However, Sparkes (1992) stated that most postmodern researchers believe that judgements of truth are "always relative to a particular framework, paradigm, or point of view" (p. 35). Such a stance, therefore, highlights the importance for a postmodern researcher to write in a critically reflexive manner to help confront, but not solve, the problems of relativism and the crisis of praxis.

Denzin (1997) reported that an important shift within postmodern research has been a more general growth in a *reflexive* stance towards writing that openly acknowledges how and why research decisions were made. Gill (1995), for example, argued that as a feminist researcher she was not aiming to find some ontological 'truth' but was interested in social justice; therefore, her political values were made explicit in her writings so that they could "be *argued* about" (p. 182). Gill labelled this stance as 'politically informed relativism', and suggested that if research values were not transparent that this could lead to political paralysis and a stagnation of social transformation; an untenable position for politically motivated researchers. Mills (1959), in his classic work on the sociological imagination, made a similar point:

> I am hopeful of course that all my biases will show .... Let those who do not care for (my biases) use their rejections of them to make their own as explicit and as acknowledged as I am going to try to make mine. (p. 21)

I agree with Gill and Mills' reflexive epistemological stances and accept that although my pluralist ontological assumptions raise issues associated with relativism, they also encourage me to highlight my subjective and political views within my writings.

Evaluating postmodern research

Postmodern paradigmatic assumptions in combination with the challenges posed by the triple crises have encouraged many researchers to rethink the legitimisation terms and techniques of positivist research, such as *validity*, *generalisability* and *reliability*, as they reflect the problematic goal of finding universal or objective social truths (Sparkes, 1998). Early attempts, in the 1980s (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985), to devise legitimation criteria for qualitative research often 'paralleled' or were similar in sentiment to the positivist perspectives on validity (Sparkes, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985), for example, suggested that to help establish research legitimacy, qualitative researchers should use the notion of 'trustworthiness'. However, their interpretation of what constituted trustworthiness (e.g. credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) paralleled the positivist notions of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. In essence, Lincoln and Guba's notion of trustworthiness was concerned with proving to the reader that the research process had been correctly undertaken and that the knowledge produced was truthful (Sparkes, 1998). Hence, Lincoln and Guba's legitimisation techniques did not appear to reflect postmodern concern with multiple truths, interpretations and realities.

In contrast, a number of researchers have recognised benefits in searching for specifically postmodern legitimation criteria (e.g. Garratt & Hodkinson, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Sparkes 1998; Wolcott, 1994). Denzin (1977), for example, advocated that the criteria should stem from the "qualitative project, stressing subjectivity, emotionality, feeling, and other antifoundational criteria" (p. 9). More specifically, Guba and Lincoln (1989) rejected the concept of validity and developed a list of criteria that stemmed from the assumptions of the postmodern paradigms and were based on a broadened concept of authenticity. The authenticity criteria, amongst other aims, were designed to encourage a raised level of awareness (e.g. ontological and educative authenticity), to encourage researchers to provide a balance of viewpoints in their research (e.g. fairness and ethics), and to

help produce social actions (e.g. catalytic and tactical authenticities). In this sense, Guba and Lincoln (1989) advocated that the concept of authenticity needed to be viewed as an open array of choices and not as a predetermined checklist of criteria.

In recent years, there has been a growing acceptance that *lists of criteria* of judgement are advantageous (Sparkes, 1998). The advantages relate to the acceptance that a list can always be "challenged, added to, subtracted from, modified, and so on, as it is applied in actual practice – in actual application to actual inquiries" (Smith & Deemer, 2000, p. 894). Further, Sparkes (1998) reported, "in moving toward more open-ended, fluid, list-like, and flexible criteria, such as authenticity, fidelity, and believability, researchers lose the security of foundations and methodological prescription that accompany positivist and postpositivist notions of criteria" (p. 379). In other words, fluid lists of legitimation criteria appear to cohere with postmodern interpretations of the complexities and fragmentations of social realities (e.g. Lyotard, 1984).

Denzin (1997) stated that the lists of criteria of judgement that exist in the various postmodern research communities can be regarded as forms of 'epistemological verisimilitude' or as valid exemplars of generally agreed-on postmodern research standards. However, he also argued that epistemological verisimilitude could be regarded as another type of 'mask' (other than the positivist mask) that a text can wear to help convince the reader that the text has followed the laws of its research genre. Denzin, therefore, suggested that epistemological verisimilitude is a postmodern research technique used to convince the reader that reality has been faithfully represented. In essence, he argued that open-ended lists of criteria, although useful, do not provide satisfying solutions to the crisis of legitimation. Denzin (1997), in recognition of this dilemma, suggested that postmodern researchers may simply need to live with limitations posed by the crisis of legitimation:

> Ethnographers can only produce messy texts that have some degree of verisimilitude; that is, texts that allow the readers to imaginatively feel their way into the experiences that are being described by the author. If these texts permit a version of ... naturalistic generalisation (the production of vicarious experience), then the writer has succeeded in bringing 'felt' news from one world to another. Little more can be sought. (pp. 12-13)

Schwandt (1996), with similar sentiment to Denzin (1997), reflected: "one of the principal lessons of postfoundational epistemology is that we must learn to live with uncertainty, with the absence of final vindications, without the hope of solutions in the form of epistemological guarantees" (p. 59).

In recognition of the varying viewpoints towards postmodern legitimation criteria, I accept that there is not one set of research criteria that can be used to judge the value of all research. I also believe that it is futile to search for a set of transcendent criteria (e.g. Garratt & Hodkinson, 1998), and that it is important to *accept* numerous approaches to postmodern textual legitimation (Bruce & Greendorfer, 1994). Further, I argue that in the processes of searching for new ways of knowing, which will offer possibilities for new insights, there is a need to welcome the risk of traversing where no criteria may exist (Eisner, 1997; Richardson, 1994; Rinehart, 1998; Sparkes, 1995). However, I do not accept the extreme relativist notion that 'anything goes' in postmodern research or the problematic assumption that all interpretations are as good or justified as any other (Sparkes, 1998). Hence, I recognise the value in formulating open-ended and list-like sets of criteria, even although these lists do not provide a solution to the crisis of legitimation.

To help guide the judging process of this doctoral research I provide a list of criteria. My criteria were developed through critical readings associated with the continuing dilemmas of how to judge postmodern research. In particular, I have drawn heavily from the criteria that Richardson (2000a) and Denzin (1989) detailed. Firstly, I suggest that a reader, regardless of his/her paradigmatic stance, should decide whether this research thesis coheres with my stated paradigmatic assumptions. I suggest that if the reader is aware of glaring contradictions between my paradigmatic assumptions and my research 'art', that this would weaken his/her appreciation of the value of my research. Richardson (2000a), more specifically, suggested that it is important to investigate whether a researcher appears cognizant of the epistemology of postmodernism and has, therefore, written and produced the research in a critically reflexive manner. Thus, a reader could question whether I have written in an open manner, as advocated by Wolcott (1994), and if I have revealed the research limitations and my known biases. Richardson also suggested that it is important to reflect on the following questions: "How has the author's

subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text? Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgements about the point of view?" (p. 15).

Further, the legitimacy of this research could be judged on the basis of what Richardson (2000a) termed its "impactfulness" (p. 15), or its ability to stir intellectual and emotional thoughts. Richardson, for example, suggested that it is important to ask whether a text generates new questions, inspires further research action and whether it provides a deepened and complex perspective but also a "thoroughly partial understanding" (p. 14) of a set topic. Denzin (1989), similarly, argued that a researcher should acknowledge that his/her work is always incomplete and unfinished. In other words, an acknowledgment that 'the truth' of the phenomena under examination has not been obtained.

Richardson (2000a) also argued that it is important to reflect on whether a text embodies a "fleshed out sense of lived experience? Does it seem true – a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the 'real'?" (p. 16). In this sense, I suggest that a reader should ask whether this thesis provides, in the words of Geertz (1973), *thick descriptions* of lived experiences. In other words, do the accounts of the men's rugby experiences that I represent, produce for the reader a feeling "that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described" (Denzin, 1989, pp. 83-84). Denzin (1989) argued that for thick description to occur the voices of the people studied, must be presented in a manner that reveals "detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships" (p. 83) that they are embedded within. Therefore, the voices of the men I interviewed should be prominent in an embodied manner within this thesis. Denzin also suggested that the voices of the respondents should be firmly linked to the cultural context in which they occur, as this can assist a reader to evaluate the researchers' interpretations and conclusions. Hence, a reader of this thesis should critically examine whether the voices of the men I interviewed were linked to specific times and places and to the men's own life histories.

A reader could ask, related to the manner in which I present the men's accounts of their lived rugby experiences, whether I have represented the men and their stories "fairly and with balance" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 180). In other words, do the men's subjectivities appear rounded, rather than one-dimensional, and have I presented a quality of balance? That is, are "all stakeholders views,

perspectives, claims, concerns, and voices" treated with apparent fairness? (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 180). This is, of course, another difficult task for a reader to judge. However, I suggest it is important for a reader to reflect on the ethical dynamics associated with how I have represented the men I interviewed. For the record, I value Weber's concept of *verstehen,* or empathetic understanding, and believe that this is an important concept to reflect on when researching under the conditions of postmodernism.

Lastly, Richardson (2000a) stated that it is important for a researcher to reflect on whether he/she has demonstrated "a deeply grounded (if embedded) social-scientific perspective" (p. 15). In other words, a reader of my research could ask whether this thesis sufficiently draws upon, interacts and perhaps challenges relevant theoretical ideas.

The world according to Michel Foucault

Having sketched details of my paradigmatic assumptions and their interlinked impact on how I view, conduct, write and evaluate postmodern research, I now detail how I view the complexities associated with people, power and social realities. To help do this I draw closely from the work of social theorist Michel Foucault. A social theory, according to Collins and Waddington (2000), can be thought of as being like a map as it "provides a guide to observation, signalling what to look out for and what to ignore and it assists the observer in attempting to make connections or links between observed facts" (p. 23). Foucault's (1967, 1972, 1973, 1977a, 1977b, 1978a, 1978b, 1980, 1986, 1988a, 1988b) ideas, indeed, have helped guide my observations and understandings of social realities, through providing a theoretical platform that illustrates assumed connections between the workings of discourse/power, the constitution of subjectivities, and the construction of social realities and power relations. Foucault's ideas, more specifically, underpinned the method I used within this thesis for analysing the interviewee's accounts of their rugby experiences.

Foucault (1988a) summarised that his prime research objective throughout twenty-five years of research had "been to sketch out a history of the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves" (p. 17-18). In essence, Foucault's writings were concerned with how the workings of discourse and power constitute subjects. Although Foucault refused to classify his own

research oeuvre he is often regarded as a post-structuralist (Andrews, 2000; Cole, 1994; Weedon 1987). Foucault, like Barthes and Derrida, developed his ideas in the context of France in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in part response to the political ferment of the times and to prevailing social theories, such as structuralism, existentialism, and Marxism (Andrews, 2000). Post-structuralism, although recognised as encompassing diverse sets of ideas, is typically characterised through its rejection of economic reductionism, essentialism, and the liberal humanist notion of the subject. More specifically, post-structuralism critiques the liberal humanist assumptions that position the 'individual' at the centre of research focus and as free, authentic, rational, unitary and fully coherent (Andrews, 2000; Burr, 1995; Cole, 1994; Gergen, 1985; Olssen, 1991). Post-structuralists, accordingly, advocate the need to "locate cultural practices within their social-historical specificity" (Cole, 1994, p. 7).

Post-structuralism built upon Sassure's (1959) structuralist understandings with respect to the influence of language on the constitution of meaning, reality and subjectivity (Andrews, 2000). However, "while structuralism's scientism initiated a search for rational, objectively researched and universal linguistic knowledge, post-structuralism's scepticism sought to unearth its irrational, subjectively constructed and localized character" (Andrews, 2000, p. 114). This scepticism towards the universal workings of language, in addition to the recognition of the social and political importance of language, underpinned Foucault's ideas on the workings of discourse and discursive practices. Foucault (1972) considered that discourses should be treated as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). Therefore, he did not conceptualise discourses as just linguistic phenomena but believed that discourses structured ways of thinking, formed power relations, and constructed subjectivities. Foucault (1978a) argued that "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (p. 100). Discourse, therefore, can be thought of as "the site where meanings are contested and power relations determined" (Rail, 1998, p. xiii); or, as 'ways of knowing' which can be "equated with ways of exercising power over individuals" (Sawicki, 1991, p. 22).

Feminist poststructuralists have used Foucault's ideas with respect to the constitutive abilities of discourse, to talk of 'subject positions' (e.g. Hollway, 1984; Walkerdine, 1987; Weedon, 1987). Hollway (1984), for example, argued that discourses act to position subjects in relation to other people, and the constitution

of these subject positions influence who can speak and with what authority. Discourses, therefore, allow people to *exercise* varying social influence or power. In this respect, Foucault (1978a) believed that the 'subject' is always intimately linked to his/her historical and social context, and is also subject to the discourses that circulate in that context. However, given that there are multiple and competing discourses, Foucault asserted that subjectivities are never stable, therefore, subjects will at times have to negotiate the associated inner tensions of competing discourses.

Discourse and power can be viewed as productive as they are constitutive. Foucault (1978a) rejected that power was primarily repressive in its exercise, as he doubted that people would continue to accept or obey a repressive or coercive form of power. Foucault, therefore, argued against the traditional model of power that represented power as *possessed* by an elite class or by a certain group of people, and as acting repressively in a top down manner on people without power. In contrast, Foucault asserted that power was omnipresent as it was produced through all actions and relations between people. He stated, "power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations" (Foucault, 1978a, p. 94). Yet he did not deny the potential existence of global forms of domination, such as sexism, but believed that to understand the workings of globalised relations of power, one needed to conduct an ascending analysis of power. An ascending analysis of power, for example, could examine how "power relations at the microlevel of society make possible certain global effects of domination, such as class power and patriarchy" (Sawicki, 1991, p. 23).

Foucault (1978a) argued that power comes from 'below' and worked in a capillary-like fashion. He rejected the idea of a large binary opposition between the ruling class (bourgeoisie) and the workers (proletariat), and the fundamental Marxist notion that economic modes of production reside at the base of all power relations. In contrast, Foucault contended that each discourse has a specific history and the power effects of each discourse remain influential through specific social mechanisms or complex strategies. Foucault (1977b), therefore, believed that understandings of discourse/power should be studied through specific historical or *genealogical* analyses and not through the use of generalised theories of power.

Although Foucault (1978a) rejected the humanist notions of self and asserted that humans are subject to the workings of discourse, he did not view

people deterministically as discursive dupes. In contrast, he aimed to show that people "are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have built up at a certain moment during history, and this so-called evidence can be criticised and destroyed" (Foucault, 1988, p. 10). His notion of the constructed self accepts that subjects are capable of critically reflecting on the workings of discourses and, therefore, they can act to change their subject positions or subjectivities through exercising "some choice with respect to the discourses and practices" they use or engage with (Burr, 1995, p. 90). In this sense, "discourse can be seen as a valid focus for forces of social and personal change" (Burr, 1995, p. 111). Thus, I argue that aiming to understand, reveal and possibly change discursive practices are important critical goals of research.

Foucault (1978a) asserted that social change occurred when marginalised and repressed discourses were revealed and these alternative ways of thinking, or cracks of resistance, were opened up. These acts of resistance can be thought of as "spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilising groups or individuals in a definitive way ... And it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible..." (Foucault, 1978a, p. 96). However, he suggested that these revolutions or radical ruptures tend to be rare. Further, Foucault warned that the social world is not simplistically divided between accepted or dominant, and excluded or resistant discourses as there are a "multiplicity of discursive elements that come into play in various strategies" (p. 100). Thus I accept, for example, that there are multiple discourses of masculinities and that they likely have varying, and at times contradictory, influence in differing social contexts.

Foucault (1978a) also contended that the intimate relationship between discourse and power is unstable, as discourse can similarly (re)produce power while also challenging and undermining its effect. In this sense, discourse can be "both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1978a, p. 101). Foucault, for example, illustrated that the growth of discourses of sexuality in the nineteenth-century not only helped construct males who enjoy homosexual sex as a 'specific species', but it also helped create a "reverse discourse" (p. 101) of homosexuality: "Homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged, often in the

same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified" (Foucault, 1978a, p. 101). A reverse discourse, therefore, is a discourse derived from a dominating discourse that produces an opposing strategy or social effect. Foucault, therefore, highlighted the complex relational character of power. Wherever there is power, Foucault (1988: 12) argued, "there is necessarily the possibility of resistance, for if there were no possibility of resistance ... there would be no relations of power". Hence, just as power is omnipresent, numerous points of resistance exist within the dense field of mobile power relations. In this respect, Foucault contended that the effects of domination are never stable.

Although discourse has a significant impact on social relations, Foucault (1978a) argued that we should not regard a discourse as inherently good or bad, as each discourse is open for different interpretations. In contrast, he emphasised that we should be concerned with how discourse/knowledge/power is *used,* as they can be used or abused to sustain regimes of truth that act to marginalise other ways of knowing and performing. Foucault, therefore, stated that discourses should be analysed in relation to their *tactical productivity*, that is, researchers should question "what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure" and, investigate their "strategical integration" (p. 102). For example, the dominating discourse that constitutes men (in general) as physically stronger than women is not inherently good or bad. However, if this discourse was used to justify men as social leaders and to coerce women into accepting passive social positions, then this discourse is problematic and concern should be expressed about its usage. Critical research could, therefore, investigate how this particular discourse of gender, employed in the service of sexism, legitimates particular ways of knowing and inequitable relations of power, and what power relations currently need to utilise this discourse.

Foucault's ideas on discourse/power have been influential in academia: he was defined, for example, by Miller (1993) as the "single most famous intellectual in the world" (p. 13). Foucault's work, however, has also triggered debate and conflict (Woodward, 1997). His writings, for example, have been critiqued by feminists for their displays of androcentrism. Yet, an important number of feminists have also appropriated a Foucauldian perspective for understanding the disciplining of the feminine body and the production of gender relations (e.g.

Bartky, 1988; Bordo, 1988; Butler, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1997; Cole, 1993; Markula, 1995, 2003; Rail & Harvey, 1995; Sawicki, 1991; Weedon, 1987).

Concern has also been expressed that Foucault overemphasised the workings of discourse and underestimated the importance of material social relations (e.g. Connell, 2001; Messner, 1996). Messner (1996), for example, argued that the "emphasis on discourse as *the* basis of social reality ... falls into a dangerous idealism that ignores material, structured relations of power that shape language and ideology" (pp. 226-227). With similar concern, Connell (2001) argued that "discursive analysis can hardly stand alone ... gender relations are also constituted in, and shape, non-discursive practices such as labour, violence, sexuality, child care, and so on" (p. 7). Such arguments position Foucault as an extreme idealist who ignored material social realities. Yet many others, including myself, regard Foucault as a materialist (e.g. Andrews, 2000; Davidson & Shogan, 1998; Markula, 2003; Olssen, 1999). Foucault argued, for example, that material realities stemmed from, and were changed by, the workings of discourse. In this sense, Foucault (1977a) believed that discourses were "embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behaviour, in forms for transmission and diffusion and in pedagogical forms" (p. 200). Hence, in contrast to Connell's view of the 'non-discursive', a Foucauldian stance would view labour, violence, sexuality, and child care as discursive practices embedded within a material social reality. Foucault (1997a) more categorically stated: "So it is not enough to say that the subject is constituted in a symbolic system. It is not just in the play of symbols that the subject is constituted. It is constituted in real practices – historically analyzable practices (p. 277). Andrews (2000), in critique of post-structuralism's apparent idealism, stated:

> Some critiques have misconstrued poststructuralism's linguistic focus as a denial of material existence itself. However ... post-structuralists in general are not advocates of a transcendental solipsism labouring under the 'absurd delusion' that nothing *exists* 'outside the play of textual inscription' ... Since the meaning of the world is constituted through language, it is not that there is *nothing* outside the text, rather post-structuralism is based on the assumption that there is nothing *meaningful* outside of the text. This is a crucial, if sometimes conveniently overlooked, distinction. (pp. 113-114)

In the following section, given that within this thesis I am concerned with examining the articulations between men's experiences of rugby and discourses of masculinities, I draw further on Foucauldian ideas to help illustrate my understandings of the social construction and performance of male subjectivities.

Foucault and subjectivities

Foucault's schema of three modes of objectification of the subject (scientific classification, dividing practices and subjectification) provides a useful framework for further introducing his ideas and helping understand the construction of gendered subjectivities. The first two modes of objectification (scientific classification and dividing practices) use 'technologies of domination' to help constitute, classify and objectify individuals. Technologies of domination act on the body from the outside, therefore, the body, is inactive throughout this process. In contrast, the main mechanism of constitution employed in the third mode, subjectification, is via 'technologies of self': these technologies are operated by the subjects themselves.

Scientific classification, the first mode of objectification, is concerned primarily with how the human sciences, such as psychology, pedagogy, criminology, psychiatry, penology and demography, construct knowledges so that people come to recognise themselves as objects and subjects of knowledge (Smart, 1985). Foucault (1973) argued that through scientific research individuals, for example, became 'speaking subjects' as the subjects of study in linguistics or 'productive subjects' as the subjects of study in economics. In these research studies, subjects are measured via a variety of procedures, such as intelligence or personality tests, and the results are statistically analysed so that the subjects can be classified, via norms and standard deviations, into select groups. Foucault (1973), therefore, argued that the human sciences help construct universal classifications of people and in the process people become objectified. Foucault, for example, illustrated how the body under the clinical gaze of doctors becomes an anatomical machine, that is, subjects become objects under the regime of medical truth.

The second mode of objectification is closely tied to the workings of science and has been called *dividing practices*. Foucault explained that the subject is both internally divided and divided from others. Rabinow (1984a) summarised

Foucault's concept: "Essentially 'dividing practices' are modes of manipulation that combine the mediation of a science (or pseudo-science) and the practice of exclusion – usually in a spatial sense, but always in a social one" (p. 8). Foucault (1967, 1973, 1977a) asserted, primarily within his earlier texts, that scientific knowledge was used to justify divisions between the mad and sane, the sick and well, the gay and straight, and the deviant and normal. These knowledges, therefore, helped produce particular and, at times, oppressive sets of power relations. Foucault was, therefore, concerned with how the various knowledges about people produce specific power relations (e.g. doctor-patient or husband-wife relationships), and how these knowledges were created, legitimised and protected.

Foucault (1988a) regarded dividing practices as a disciplinary technique. Smart (1985) summarised that Foucault's understanding of discipline as a technique of power, primarily exerted its dominance through the interlinking of (i) *hierarchical observation*, in which the gaze of authority is able to constantly observe (e.g. the metaphor of the panopticon), (ii) *normalising judgement*, and (iii) *the examination*, such as undertaken by doctors or teachers in which people become 'cases' and documents are recorded and circulated. Foucault (1977a) argued that disciplinary techniques helped create the disciplinary society, which indirectly encouraged "meticulous control of the operations of the body" (p. 137). Within this society, the workings of an omnipresent and disciplinary power were assumed by Foucault (1978a) to produce social bodies that were subject to a "political anatomy of detail" (p. 139). In this sense, Foucault regarded the body as the ultimate site of political control and surveillance (Sparkes, 1997). However, Foucault (1977a) asserted that the disciplinary society also helped produce the 'individual'; as the disciplinary practices "instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass, it separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units" (p. 170). Disciplinary power, therefore, helps discursively locate an individual in a social position that he/she tends to think is unique.

However, concern has been expressed that Foucault's first two modes of objectification portray a pessimistic image of people as over-determined and too disciplined and docile. Gruneau (1993), for example, stated that Foucault's "focus on discipline, surveillance, and discourses of normalization can too easily deflect attention from analyzing the creative possibilities, freedoms, ambiguities, and

contradictions also found in sport ..." (p. 104). Foucault, aware of similar criticisms, sought to rectify such concerns in his later works by highlighting his third mode of objectification; which was concerned with how people turn themselves into subjects. In contrast to his first two modes, which act to position people as primarily passive and constrained, his third mode was concerned with processes of self-formation in which the person is active through use of 'technologies of self' (Rabinow, 1984a). Foucault (1978b), for example, in his case study of Pierre Riviere, aimed to illustrate how Pierre actively used counter-discourses to help re-position himself in contrast to the dominating discourses that positioned him as a psychopathic criminal. This third mode is typically known as 'subjectification'.

Foucault (1986) suggested, in *The care of the self*, that people actively create themselves as a work of art through use of technologies of self. These technologies were presented as a series of techniques that allow subjects to create themselves by regulating their bodies, their thoughts and their conducts. Foucault (1988b) stated that the practices of self-formation of the subject can be thought of as an "exercise of self upon self by which one tries to work out, to transform one's self and to attain a certain mode of being" (p. 2). However, it is difficult to draw too sharp a line between technologies of domination and technologies of self. Technologies of self, for example, are not something an individual invents, but are "patterns that he (sic) finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group" (Foucault, 1988b, p. 11). Thus, subjects do not invent themselves in any way that they please, but are still 'subject' to the limitations imposed by the workings of discourse. In other words, the rugby player with shaved head or tattoos may think that he/she is a unique self-creation, but his/her appearance can also be thought of as shaped and constrained by prevailing discourses (e.g. technologies of domination) and his/her 'active' understandings and actions in relation to these discourses (e.g. technologies of self). Yet, Foucault (1997a) suggested that it is also possible to use technologies of self, in a *selective* manner to transform one's self in a *resistant* or empowering manner; that is, with a desire to help create social change through active and critical resistance of technologies of domination.

Researchers within the sociology of sport (e.g. Chapman, 1997; Johns & Johns, 2000; Markula, 2003) have interpreted Foucault's understanding of

'technologies of self' in different ways. Markula (2003), for example, critiqued Chapman (1997), Johns and Johns (2000) and Wesley's (2001) interpretations of technologies of the self, through arguing that they did not consider "the aspect of critical awareness directly in their discussions" (p. 103). Markula suggested that 'technologies of the self' were not just practices of self that individuals use to actively, but uncritically, change and know themselves, but that they were implicitly concerned with a subject's ability to actively resist dominant discourses. Markula, for instance, stated: "technologies of the self provided Foucault with a possibility to determine how individuals can, through resistant practices, reconstruct the dominant discourses that structure society" (p. 92). Yet, did Foucault intend for technologies of self to always refer to socially resistive and transformative practices?

This debate or confusion about 'technologies of the self' *possibly* stems, in part, from the fact that Foucault intended to write a book about the 'technologies of the self' but died, in 1984, before this occurred (Martin, Gutman & Hutton, 1988). In addition, Markula (2003) acknowledged that in some of Foucault's existing writings on the technologies of the self, he did not "explicitly mention critical awareness as a condition for self transformation" (p. 103). Given that this debate exists about this key term, and that I wish to use this term throughout this thesis, I now clarify my own interpretation.

Foucault (1988a) defined 'technologies of the self' in broad terms but with particular respect to "how an individual acts upon himself (sic)" (p. 19) and, in my view, not with specific respect to *critically* transformative practices of the self. Foucault (1997a) suggested that: "techniques of the self ... can be found in all cultures in different forms" (p. 277). In addition, Foucault (1988a) stated that technologies of domination and technologies of the self, in combination with technologies of sign systems and of production "hardly ever function separately" (p. 18). He, therefore, appeared to suggest that technologies of the self were relatively common practices associated with self-transformation. Foucault (1988a), for example, examined "technologies of the self in pagan and early Christian practice" (p. 17) and illustrated, in part, how Christian self-obedience constituted a 'new' technology of the self that was primarily concerned with knowing thyself, confessing sins, and accepting "institutional authority" (p. 40). Christian technologies of the self were, therefore, primarily concerned with a "renunciation

of self and a surrender of autonomy" (Olssen, 1999, p. 149). Hence, Christian technologies of the self, were transformative practices of the self, yet they did not help constitute critically aware subjects who had the desire to challenge and resist dominating discourses of Christianity. Moreover, Foucault was highly critical of these early Christian technologies of self. Foucault (1985, 1986, 1988a, 1988b, 1997a, 1997b), nevertheless, was interested in exploring technologies of self that could be used to help individuals learn to *care* for themselves in a critically aware and politically active manner and in opposition to technologies of domination. With these concerns in mind, he examined technologies of self used in ancient Greek and Roman societies and advocated that the practices of self formation used in these societies could be of some contemporary relevance, as they did not encourage a system of morality based on a universal code or rules, but encouraged self-reflexive *practices or exercises* that allowed individuals to create themselves as ethical works of art. These specific technologies of the self revolved around 'practices of the self' *(askesis)* which Foucault (1988a) defined as a "set of practices by which one can acquire, assimilate, and transform truth into a permanent principle of action .... It is a process of becoming more subjective" (p. 35). In this respect, Foucault advocated *particular* technologies of the self that were concerned, as Markula (2003) summarised, with "an engagement in self care to facilitate an ethical use of one's power through everyday practices in everyday relationships" (p. 99).

Regardless of the various interpretations of 'technologies of self', Foucault's assumptions about the objectification and subjectification of people have clear implications for understanding the 'self'. The Foucauldian notion that the self is produced via the constructed and contingent workings of discourse/power acts to reject the liberal humanist assumptions that position the self as stable, whole and unified. This rejection is reflected in the postmodern claim of the 'death of the subject' (Lovlie, 1992). In replacement of the humanist subject, Foucauldian ideas have been built upon to suggest that the self is "necessarily unstable, disunited and fragmented.... (and is) produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies" (Andrews, 2000, p. 115). Subjectivity can, therefore, be regarded as "an open process of becoming, rather than a movement toward an end point; it is a dynamic way of being..." (Drewery & Monk, 1994, p. 305). Further, I

recognise that in different social contexts different discourses dominate and, at times, these discourses will be in opposition and, in consequence, the individual will likely suffer some sort of internal conflict. In other words, the tensions created by competing discourses, in the words of Giddens (1991), can create ontological insecurities. Such moments not only produce tension but also allow the individual opportunities to conceptualise a different sense of self. These moments of tension, produced by conflicting discourses, can therefore induce personal epiphanies.

Giddens (1991) suggested that given the conditions of the postmodern era or late-capitalism, which is characterised by doubt, uncertainty and new forms of mediated experience, that the ability for individuals to maintain a coherent sense of self is troubled and "self-identity becomes a reflexively organised endeavour" (p. 5). However, Giddens also argued that a "person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor – important though this is - in the reactions of others, but in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*" (p. 54). More specifically, he asserted that this reflexive endeavour or project "consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives" and "takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems" (p. 5). He suggested that the "narrative of self-identity is inherently fragile" (Giddens, 1991, p. 185).

Hall (1992) argued that the narrative of self-identity is extremely important as it allows people to construct a coherent and unified image of self. Hall termed this narrative of self-identity as a 'comforting story of self': a phrase I employ throughout this thesis. Yet, Sparkes (1997), in echoing the sentiments of Foucault, illustrated that people do not have complete control over the narratives of self-identity that they can develop. Sparkes stated that the dominating 'body stories' or discursive resources, such as the ones related to age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, beauty and body shape, available in select locations influence the construction of an individual's narrative of self-identity. Hence, dominating discourses can act to privilege some people while disadvantaging others; the socially constructed world is, therefore, laden with inequitable power relations.

Gendered subjectivities

One specific area in which discursive resources have contributed to problematic power relations relates to the construction of narratives of self-identity

as related to gender. Discourses of gender are believed to play an important role in the constitution of narratives of self-identity and understandings and experiences of social realities (Bartky, 1988; Bordo, 1993; Connell, 1995; Sparkes, 1997). In light of post-structuralist theorising about the constitution of self I assume that males and females are primarily subject to the same discourses of 'humanity' (e.g. of being human) and, therefore, the behavioural acts or performances are often very similar. However, with respect to Derrida's (1981) conception of différance, I recognise that through processes of comparison and deferment, discourses of gender help constitute gendered narratives of self-identity that act to accentuate differences between males and females. Thus, the concept of masculinity can, in part, be regarded as existing in relation and contrast to the signifier of femininity and among males. In this respect, I accept that there is nothing inherent in the notion of masculinity as it is defined in contrast "to what it is understood to be *not*" (Paris, Worth & Allen, 2002, p. 12). Nevertheless, the multiple discourses of gender help produce very real sets of lived differences. In paraphrasing the early ideas of Foucault (1977a), I accept that male and female bodies are, at various times, invested, marked and tortured by discourses of gender in a manner that helps constitute a body's postures, thoughts, performances and subjectivities as typically male or female (e.g. Bartky, 1988; Bordo, 1993; Chapman, 1997, Markula, 1995; Middleton, 1998). Discourses of gender, therefore, help produce inequitable sets of power relations within and between the sexes.

Masculinity is typically considered to be the socially constructed gender attributed to the male or as "the way men assert what they believe to be their manhood" (Mosse, 1996, p. 3). "Like the notion of the 'feminine', it is saturated with attributed and associated meaning" (Paris, et al., 2002, pp. 12-13). It is the multiple and, at times, competing 'meanings' associated with masculinity that I explore within this interview-based study. In heed of post-structuralist theorising, I reject the notion that masculinity is universal and accept that the workings of multiple discourses of gender help produce a diversity and plethora of 'male' subjectivities. These embodied subjectivities are fragmented and multiple in themselves, and fluidly produced in specific cultural and historical moments (Paris, et al., 2002). In other words, the "conception of 'what it is to be a man' is culturally, historically and socially specific" (Paris, et al., 2002, p. 12).

A dominant understanding of what it means to be a man or woman relates to corporeal experiences and how people read the body as a text (Grosz, 1994). Therefore, with respect to theorising masculinities it is important to consider the relationships between the discursive constitution of gender and corporeality. Foucault's work on the body, although celebrated in some areas for helping highlight the importance of the body (e.g. Loy, Andrews & Rinehart, 1993), has also been critiqued for tending to ignore the influence of the fleshed and breathing body on the social. Woodward (1997), for example, critiqued Foucault's representation of the body by stating that the body as a material phenomenon virtually disappears within Foucauldian theorising. Connell (1995) also argued that Foucauldian theorising narrowly represented the body as simply a surface to be marked by the social.

I concur that much of Foucault's work, although focused on the body as the site for political workings, appears peculiarly disembodied. Foucault's (1977a, 1978a) genealogical examinations, for example, although often focused on pain and pleasure, rarely revealed the lived experiences of people. Foucault, however, provided valuable research tools that have since been used to reveal lived and embodied sporting experiences (e.g. Chapman, 1997; Hargreaves, 1986; Markula, 1995). Indeed, the concept of discourse when conceptualised as referring to 'ways of knowing' can be used to examine the influences of corporeality on social realities. Bodily sensations of pain and pleasure, for example, can be examined discursively (e.g. as discourses of pain and pleasure) in a manner that highlights the social significance of the fleshed and feeling body. In this respect, I view Foucauldian theorising as particularly important for this research project because it is concerned with understanding men's embodied experiences of rugby participation with specific respect to feelings of pain, pleasure and fear.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I detailed the postmodern ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that underpin this study. More specifically, I discussed my post-structurally influenced understandings of social realities, discourse/power and the constitution of gendered subjectivities. These assumptions frame my research paradigm and shape this thesis. I acknowledge that my paradigmatic beliefs help me view or understand some phenomena but may also act

to occlude my vision and interpretations: all research paradigms have strengths and weaknesses. I recognise that there needs to be coherence between paradigmatic views and how research is conducted, therefore, within this chapter I also 'listed' the legitimation criteria that I believed could be useful for helping evaluate the quality of this research.

In the following chapter, I provide a review of socio-historic literature concerned with masculinities and rugby, to examine and help understand how rugby, as a heavy-contact sport with a high risk of injury, came to be culturally significant within Aotearoa/New Zealand.

CHAPTER THREE

A socio-historical examination of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand

Introduction

My prime aim in this chapter is to provide a contextual overview of the place of rugby and its links with masculinities in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand in order to help situate and reveal the relevance of my doctoral project. More specifically, I aim to explore how rugby as a sport involving varying degrees of corporeal risk came to be culturally dominant. I begin by examining the workings of various discourses of rugby and masculinities in mid 19th century England, followed by an examination of their adoption and adaption into the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. I finish by paying particular attention to the multiple and competing discourses of rugby and masculinities that have developed since the 1970s, in order to help contextualise rugby's contemporary claims to truth.

Rugby and masculinities in 19th century English public schools

A dominant theme in literature examining the history of rugby union and other English sports, particularly from a figurational perspective, is that they developed from barbaric folk-games of medieval England and over time, as social values changed, they were 'civilised' into the activities now known as modern sport (e.g. Collins, 1998; Dunning, 1986; Dunning & Sheard, 1979). Reports suggest that the participants of these folk-games were predominately men from neighbouring towns and various social dispositions and that these unruly games often resulted in injury and even death (Collins, 1998; Dunning & Sheard, 1979). Nevertheless, these games persisted for several centuries. Dunning (1986) speculated that the longevity and legitimacy of these games were supported by "a fairly extreme form of patriarchy. As such, they embodied the expression of macho values in a relatively unbridled form" (p. 81). By the beginning of the 19th century, the folk-games were in decline and by the end of that century they were virtually extinct (Reid, 1988). The discourses of manliness and violence that had long supported the folk-games, however, continued to flourish within the boundaries of the male only contexts of the English public schools. Indeed, it is widely believed

that the game of rugby developed from the modified folk-games played within the English Public schools of the nineteenth century (e.g. Chandler, 1996; Collins, 1998; Crosset, 1990; Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Morford & McIntosh, 1993; Rowe & McKay, 1998; White & Vagi, 1990). Moreover, the institutionalisation and appropriation of these violent games by "bourgeois-aristocratic classes ... mean that the genesis and development of modern sport cannot be explained as simply an expression of a male predisposition to violence" (Rowe & McKay, 1998, p. 114).

From approximately the 1770s to 1830s, Dunning and Sheard (1979) suggested that the teaching fraternity who viewed the modified folk-games as ungentlemanly, increasingly frowned upon these games. Clashes between pupils and staff, often in reaction to the teachers' attempts to ban the games, led to numerous student protests and a small number of open rebellions (Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Morford & McIntosh, 1993). During the 1830s student numbers dropped and calls for radical school reforms became widespread (Morford & McIntosh, 1993). Dr. Thomas Arnold, headmaster at Rugby School (1828-42), was perhaps the first to achieve the balancing act of re-gaining staff authority yet allowing students a measure of independence so that parents felt that their sons were receiving a manly education that simultaneously trained them as gentleman (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). Arnold, among other reforms, infused the prefect-fag system with a moral/Christian tone (Morford & McIntosh, 1993). Specifically, he encouraged the boys to be physically tough but morally ethical, in other words, to be muscular Christians. Yet it would be overestimating Arnold's influence to assert that he alone changed the boys' prevailing notions of gentlemanliness. Nevertheless, the discourses associated with muscular Christianity are believed to have helped shape the Victorian notion of sportsmanship; which emphasised not only fair play, modesty, and following of rules but also encouraged males to participate in a "redblooded, aggressive and virile" manner (Morford & McIntosh, 1993, p. 61).

By the 1850-60s school masters began to believe in the educational value of sport, and a prevailing discourse emerged that helped constitute sport as an appropriate means for instilling manly character. In addition, sexuality became for the first time a pedagogical concern within the Victorian era (Foucault, 1978a), and sporting practices became closely tied with issues of morality and sexuality. Many Victorian educators, for example, believed that by encouraging school-boys to be

active in sport that little time or energy would be left for sexually immoral practices (Chandler, 1996). Sport was, therefore, believed to help build moral character by preventing immoral thoughts and actions: "Weak, intellectual boys were thought to suffer from perverse thoughts and actions" (Crosset, 1990, p. 52). In contrast, "strong, athletic boys were thought to be in control of their passions" (Crosset, 1990, p. 52). Thus, discourses of sport and sexualities helped constitute power relations between sporting and non-sporting boys. Crosset, for example, contended that within the Victorian context, males who did not participate in sport indirectly risked becoming known as effeminate and unhealthy. Relatedly, weaker and non-sporting boys were marginalised as 'wankers' or 'saps'. Crosset also argued that the institutionalisation of sport played a prime role in helping define "male sexuality as distinct from and superior to female sexuality" (p. 53). Sport, therefore, began to act inadvertently as a prime dividing practice.

The dominant and blurred discourses associated with manly character, sexuality, morality and health were prime factors that contributed to and legitimised the institutionalised growth of rugby from the 1860s onwards (Chandler, 1996). With the development and spread of sporting clubs during the 1860s, rugby football and other sports gained increased popularity, particularly among the middle classes (Collins, 1998). Moreover, in 1863, given the growth of various 'football' clubs and modes of playing, meetings were held to develop a *national* set of rules for football in England. Debate at these meetings centred on whether the game should be a running/handling or kicking/dribbling game, and whether hacking (e.g. kicking and foot-tripping of opponents) should be part of this game (Chandler, 1996). Chandler argued that because the Victorians were consumed by the moral imperative of health, and hacking was increasingly viewed as unhealthy, that the Football Association (FA) was formed with the ruling that football would be a kicking/dribbling game without hacking. However, this decision also helped create the discursive space for rugby football to become institutionalised as a *hard man's* sport.

The staunch supporters of the sport that originated at Rugby School, for example, would not agree to become part of the FA. Campbell, a supporter of 'Rugby' football, argued that banishing hacking supported "far more of the feelings of those who like their pipes and grog or schnapps more (sic) than the manly game of football" (as cited in Chandler, 1996, p. 22). Campbell further predicted that if

hacking was abolished "you will do away with all the courage and pluck of the game, and I will be bound to bring over a lot of Frenchmen, who would beat you with a week's practice" (as cited in Chandler, 1996, p. 23). In essence, Campbell argued that by banning hacking, the game would be less manly, less English and it would, therefore, emasculate the game (Chandler, 1996). Thus, the 'manly' supporters of Rugby football did not join the FA. Campbell's comments, according to Chandler were a "precursor to much of the rhetoric of manliness and masculinity which was to surround rugby football in the future" (p. 23).

Violent practices within rugby football remained widespread. Reverend Dykes from Durham school in the 1860s, for example, stated: "'Hack him over' was the cry when anyone was running with the ball, and it was the commonest thing to see fellows hacked off their feet" (in Collins, 1998, p. 5). This pride of roughness also infiltrated the middle class game of rugby football played in the clubs in the 1860s-70s. In fact, Collins (1998) stated that "the violence and gamesmanship of middle-class football of this period must cast doubt on the reality of the so-called gentleman's code of playing the game purely for the game" (p. 16).

Collins (1998) argued the importance of pain tolerance or 'hardening', specifically the practice of hacking, could not be underestimated in the development of rugby throughout the 1850s-60s. He stressed that "there was a wide spread view that great empires of the past had fallen because the ruling classes had grown luxurious and effeminate" (Collins, 1998, p. 4). Collins, therefore, argued that nationalist aspirations associated with the British Empire helped legitimise the practices of rugby violence. Nevertheless, although the practice of hacking was central to the game of rugby throughout the 1850s-60s it was often under pressure to be abandoned. Chandler (1996) argued that the prevailing Victorian belief of a healthy mind in a healthy body finally led to the 'official' abandonment of hacking in 1871, when standardised national rules for Rugby Football Union were developed.

By the 1870s, when the British Empire was at its largest, the sport of rugby football had become institutionalised. Sport, in general, now constituted a central element of school life, so much so, "the way of sport became an indelible part" for every English school-boy (Morford & McIntosh, 1993, p. 69). Parker (1996) also asserted that sport became so influentially tied to nationalism that it was "seen as a kind of nurturing ground for the attitudes and values imperative to the maintenance

of British imperialism" (p. 127). Indeed, it was at this time that graduates of public schools spread the sport of rugby to the English 'colonies'. Richardson (1995), for example, stated:

> The game reached New Zealand's shores as part of the cultural baggage of a generation of English public school old boys .... As the founding fathers of New Zealand's national game, these apostles of rugby were well versed in the litany of the games cult. To them, rugby was a game which inculcated 'manliness'. (p. 1)

In brief summary, I suggest that the development and institutionalisation of rugby as a heavy-contact or dangerous sport in 19th century England was legitimated, in part, by discourses that constituted the sport as a maker of moral, healthy, manly subjects. Moreover, I argue that it is not necessarily helpful to conceptualise rugby's historical development and institutionalisation as revolving specifically around an assumed and broadly operating 'civilising process' (e.g. Dunning & Sheard, 1979). In contrast, I suggest that although certain violent sporting practices and actions were eliminated throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, "the developing sport of rugby resisted 'civilising' trends and staunchly defended an essentially physical version of manliness" (Young et al., 1994, p. 177). In the following section, I illustrate how the discursive influence of late 19th century English rugby shaped the development of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Rugby in Aotearoa/New Zealand from 1840 to 1970

Following the colonisation of Aotearoa/New Zealand in the 1840s and 1850s by the British, folk-football games took place in a casual and impromptu manner with teams seldom of equal size and, at times, a blurring between spectators and players (Crawford, 1985). During the 1870s and early 1880s, these early versions of rugby struggled for legitimacy. Phillips (1996b) suggested that the violent image of the sport combined with its connections with elements of male pioneering culture – specifically excessive drinking, swearing and gambling - produced resistance to the game from the "more respectable middle class" (p. 77). Phillips reported, for example, that a Dunedin newspaper in 1875 described rugby

as an excuse for anarchy and violence. This newspaper report was apparently not unusual, for example, Crawford (1985) stated that in 1877: "A Wellington newspaper described the sport as 'rough-and-tumble hoodlum amusement'..." (p. 43). Concern about rugby's violent image was such that the Bank of New Zealand instructed staff members not to participate in the sport (Crawford, 1985).

To help pave the way for rugby's eventual cultural dominance, Phillips (1996a) suggested that attempts were made to make the game appear scientific and civilised. Regional rugby unions were formed in the 1880s and efforts were made to standardise the rules. In 1892 the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU) was formed and a constitution was developed with the aim, in part, to help "curb the violence and bad behaviour associated with the game" (Phillips, 1996b, p. 79). Hacking was banned and an endeavour was specifically made to curtail, or at least hide, the practices of excessive drinking of alcohol that surrounded the game (Phillips, 1996b). In addition, the protagonists of rugby drew on the discourses of muscular Christianity to help inculcate belief that rugby was a manly exercise necessary for the making of muscular gentlemen. The following extract from a letter to the editor, printed in the *Otago Daily Times* in 1878, reflects such sentiment:

> Was it to be held for a moment that on account of its danger football should be given up and young men should grow up effeminate? .... There was not the slightest doubt that football improved the stamina of Englishmen, Scotsmen and Irishmen. (as cited in Crawford, 1985, p. 43)

The efforts of the NZRFU and rugby supporters apparently succeeded because criticism of rugby declined and was replaced by growing acclamation. A by-product of the legitimation of rugby was that the game quickly grew in popularity. By the mid-1890s there were nearly 700 clubs throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand (Nauright, 1990) and over 50,000 players were affiliated with the NZRFU (Phillips, 1996b).

Phillips (1996a) suggested that the *initial* growth of rugby stemmed from the 'old boys' from English schools who had the financial means, leisure time, connections and desire, as disciplined by the discourses of muscular Christianity, to organise and promote inter-regional rugby games. However, Phillips' prime thesis

of why rugby so quickly became important to a broad range of New Zealand males, rested on the assumption that rugby reinforced and meshed with the values inherent with the rugged pioneering male culture. He argued that rugby was characterised by long periods of hard and rough scrummaging, demanding of great physical strength and tolerance of pain and, therefore, rugby reflected and resonated with values already instilled among the pioneering males.

The growing popularity of rugby amongst males was not restricted to the upper and middle classes as it was in England. An investigation of Manawatu rugby players from 1878 to 1910, for example, found that they "represented an almost exact cross-section of the male population" (Phillips, 1996b, p. 73). MacLean (1999) also stated that Maori males have been significant "actors in and users of rugby almost since its introduction in 1870" (p. 1). The first team from Aotearoa/New Zealand to tour the United Kingdom was the 'Maori' team of 1888, all but four of whom were Maori (Phillips, 1996b). As such, many believed that rugby was a prime producer of the 'egalitarian culture' of Aotearoa/New Zealand. MacLean argued, however, that this quixotic belief is long due critical examination because the "hegemonic image of the New Zealand man excludes Maori" (p. 2). He asserted that rugby participation for Maori men did not help constitute them as muscular gentlemen, as it did for the pakeha men, but instead helped reaffirm the discursive framing of Maori as savages and warriors. Phillips (1996b), for example, reported that in the 1870s the *Wairarapa Star* problematically reported that Maori rugby players were "warm blooded animals whose interest easily degenerated into pugilistic encounters" (p. 77).

Although by the end of the 19th century rugby was the prime participation sport of Aotearoa/New Zealand men, valued for its apparent ability to masculinise its men, a growing nationalism also helped fortify rugby's cultural dominance (Sinclair, 1986). The successful tour of England and Wales by the 1905 Aotearoa/New Zealand men's rugby team, nicknamed the All Blacks during this tour, was strategically seized by politicians to help forge a national identity and affirm the value of rugby (Nauright, 1990). The many victories of the 1905 All Blacks, when Britain was dominant in world politics, provided political fodder for Premier Richard Seddon to laud the benefits of the 'healthy' Aotearoa/New Zealand lifestyle (Phillips, 1996a). The media, well aware of Seddon's political manoeuvrings, nicknamed him the 'Minister of Football' (Nauright, 1990; Phillips,

1996a). Nevertheless, rugby was soon deemed in the media as 'our national game' and as a panacea for fears that urban males were becoming soft (Phillips, 1996a).

The success of the 1905 All Blacks entrenched discourses of rugby that positioned the game as a maker of tough but moral men. Phillips (1996b), for example, illustrated that rugby was praised for its abilities to teach young males the benefits of hard work, determination, team-work, and moral character. Rugby, more specifically, became viewed as a valuable tool for sublimating sexual deviance through providing "a suitable channel for (male) adolescent energies" (Gray, 1983, p. 29). Truby King, influential medical doctor and founder of the Plunket society, for example, warned in 1906 that "only strenuous exercise would enable boys to maintain supremacy over themselves and those innate tendencies which have to be fought with and mastered" (as cited in Phillips, 1996b, p. 82). Thus, at the beginning of the 20th century rugby was deemed an essential part of a boy's education (Richardson, 1995), and in boys' secondary schools, rugby participation became compulsory (Phillips, 1996b). The NZRFU, in 1908, worked to further entrench the dominance of rugby through freely distributing rugby balls to both primary and secondary schools (Richardson, 1995).

A potential threat to rugby's emerging cultural dominance, in the first decade of the 20th century, was fuelled by resentment from working class men to the amateur and elitist ideals that underpinned rugby (Richardson, 1995). Many of the 1905 All Blacks had witnessed the professionalism of the 'Northern Union' game (rugby league) in England and as rugby made the transition from pastime to mass spectator sport within Aotearoa/New Zealand, the expectation that working men should travel to inter-provincial games without payment came under scrutiny. Richardson, however, argued that the threat of a major split occurring in rugby between professional and amateur versions of the game was thwarted, in part, by "colonial pride" (p. 6). He suggested that many rugby officials knew that if Aotearoa/New Zealand rugby became divided, that this split would have consequences for playing standards at the international level. Hence, appeals to nationalism played a part in repelling the 'ungentlemanly' threat of professionalism. Richardson further argued that the outbreak of World War One helped dilute the tensions between the rival rugby codes. Indeed, war and rugby union, throughout much of the early 1900s, appear to have enjoyed a somewhat

symbiotic relationship in Aotearoa/New Zealand (e.g. Phillips, 1996a; Richardson, 1995).

From the 1920s to the late 1970s the dominating discourses that surrounded rugby in Aotearoa/New Zealand exerted their political influence with seemingly little resistance. Rugby within this period was discursively positioned as a hard man's game, a maker of moral and healthy men, 'our' national game and a unifying force for the good of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Rugby, as such, became a "hard reality of life for every schoolboy" (Phillips, 1996b, p. 88) and "an inescapable feature of life in New Zealand's small–scale communities" (Star, 1999a, p. 231). The discourses of rugby, I contend, also legitimated the corporeally damaging nature of the sport and helped shape dominant notions of masculinity. Specifically, the dominance of rugby helped circulate and promote the knowledge that *real men* are tough and ignore pain (Phillips, 1996a). Ability to withstand and inflict pain had long been lauded qualities for rugby participants, particularly the All Blacks. The following quote, about two 'heroic' All Blacks from the 1960s, helps reveal this sentiment:

> Fergie McCormick and Colin Meads were 'hard' men noted not only for their strength but also for their complete insensitivity to pain. McCormick was known as a man who never left the paddock and whose utter refusal to concede to his body was admitted by Veysey to be 'plain damned stupid'. Colin Meads played in South Africa with a broken arm. Pluck and refusal to admit to pain has always been part of the All Blacks' image. (Phillips, 1996a: 121-122)

Despite recognition that playing with injuries may be foolish, rugby's cultural dominance reigned well into 1970s. However, by the late 1970s the stage was set for many New Zealanders to finally question the cultural position and values associated with rugby.

Contextualising rugby in the era of 'high' modernity: 1970s to 2002

It was in the context of uncertainty, change and resistance of the 1970s and 1980s that the meta-narratives that had long supported rugby were finally questioned, and influential critiques of rugby were first published (e.g. McGee's

1981 iconoclastic play *Foreskin's lament*, Laidlaw's 1973 text *Mud in your eye* and Phillips' 1987 critical history *A man's country?*). Within this time period concern with racism, sexism and violence (e.g. anti-war protests) became major political issues and rugby was at the heart of some of these concerns. In 1973, for example, the newly elected Labour government cancelled the proposed South African Springbok rugby tour of Aotearoa/New Zealand, after a commissioned police report suggested that it would spark massive civil disturbance. This decision by the Labour government proved politically damaging and the stage was set for bitter conflict between rugby supporters and anti-apartheid protestors.

Richards (1999) claimed that dependent on one's viewpoint, the Springboks were either Aotearoa/New Zealand's greatest sporting rivals or "the embodiment of ... a society whose architects were among the most emotionally backward and spiritually bankrupt members of the human race" (p. 44). In 1975 the National party, long supported by the conservative rural 'backbone', made rugby relations with South Africa an election issue and swept to victory (Nauright & Black, 1996). The subsequent All Blacks' tour of South Africa, in 1976, occurred at the same time as the Soweto student uprisings and massacre (Nauright & Black, 1996). In protest of this tour and on an unprecedented scale, 22 African countries boycotted the 1976 Montreal Olympics. To help prevent a similar boycott of the 1978 Edmonton Commonwealth Games, the Commonwealth Heads of Government adopted the 'Gleneagles Declaration on Apartheid and Sport', which aimed to discourage sporting contacts with South Africa. Yet only three years later, the New Zealand government, again the National party, ignored the Gleneagles agreement and supported the NZRFU's invitation for the Springboks to play rugby in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Thompson, 1999a).

The 1981 tour polarised the nation and produced spirited anti-racist protests that "unleashed a depth of public feeling and civil unrest in New Zealand unmatched since the depression" (Fougere, 1989, p. 111): or, as Sinclair (1986) suggested, since the Anglo-Maori wars of the 1860s. The protests were on such a grand scale that the tour only proceeded because the government made the playing of the matches possible by providing police and army protection for the rugby players and spectators (Thompson, 1999a).

One remarkable feature of the protests was the influential role played by women (Star, 1992; Thompson, 1988). Feminists had long regarded rugby as a

prime site for the production and affirmation of values that helped legitimate men's abilities to exercise greater power than women (Star, 1994a; Thompson, 1988). Thompson (1988), for example, asserted that rugby had historically exploited women's domestic labour while acting to exclude them from a prominent role in public life. Therefore, although many of these female protestors of 1981 were clearly concerned with challenging South African apartheid, aspects of their protest were also likely directed toward the sexism and violence entrenched within rugby (Star, 1994a). A specific group, Women Against Rugby (WAR), for example, initiated protest actions to encourage women to refuse "to co-operate with their assigned rugby roles" (Star, 1992, p. 124) or, more specifically, to withdraw their domestic labour, which often supported rugby. The tour, accordingly, provided a legitimate forum for many women to finally pronounce, in a public context, their resentment toward the political dominance of rugby.

Although many men protested the tour, it was predominately men who supported the tour by attending the rugby matches and these men were, at times, emotionally concerned that rugby was the focus for widespread civil unrest. The police, for example, were required on several occasions to help protect the protestors from physical harm by violently upset male rugby supporters. Richards (1999) reported that for many New Zealanders the official policy of the anti-apartheid movement to stop or at least disrupt games of rugby was viewed as "sacrilege, blasphemy and defilement all rolled into one ... (and) unpatriotic" (p. 45). The notion that Aotearoa/New Zealand should not have sporting contacts with South Africa "was to many a denial of a fundamental cornerstone of New Zealand life" (Richards, 1999, p. 45).

Fougere (1989), more specifically, argued that because rugby played such a powerful role in the construction of many men's subjectivities and collective national identities, that these males likely perceived the anti-tour protests as a threat to their way of life. Fougere, therefore, asserted that the strong desire that many men felt for the tour to proceed was likely not due to pro-racist beliefs or even political ignorance, as reflected by the problematic slogan 'keep politics out of sport', but as a response to a perceived threat to their masculine subjectivities.

The 1981 Springbok tour and subsequent large-scale protests provide a good example of Foucault's (1978a) power-resistance notions. The scale of the rugby resistance can be regarded as reflective of rugby's influential socio-cultural

position: the protests would likely have been much smaller if a South African women's water polo team had toured, as opposed to the Springboks. The protests also helped many New Zealanders understand the politics or power associated with rugby's dominant socio-cultural position. Indeed, the dominating discourse that proclaimed that rugby was Aotearoa/New Zealand's 'national game', was now under threat with the recognition that rugby had, in effect, divided the country. In the early 1980s, for example, reverse discourses of rugby circulated to counter-position rugby players and fans as politically ignorant, sexist and violent. The workings of these reverse discourses helped enact significant changes. The aftermath of the tour resulted in rugby losing players, coaches, sponsorship, government funding, and support from teachers (Keane, 1999; Star, 1992). Nauright (1996) described this time period as "a moment of hegemonic crisis as threats to established order of a white, male rugby-dominated New Zealand came to the fore" (p. 229).

This resistance to rugby also articulated with an increased academic concern about the cultural influence of rugby. Phillips (1984; 1987; 1996a, 1996b), for example, warned that the stereotypic and narrow image of the Aotearoa/New Zealand male as influenced by rugby's cultural dominance, was costly. This image, according to Phillips, portrayed Kiwi 'blokes' as rugged, tough, strong, unemotional, hard drinking, scornful of women (yet compulsorily heterosexual) and also practical, loyal and honest. Phillips (1996a) argued that the constraining impact of this narrow image was specifically harmful to "women, gays, (and) intellectuals... In addition, the sheer ideological hegemony of the male mythology served to disguise conflicts and obscure diversity within society itself" (p. 284). Phillips also argued that the narrow image of masculinity inflicted a cost on the men who uncritically adopted the tough Kiwi bloke image for themselves.

By the mid-1980s the NZRFU, well aware of rugby's predicament, became active in attempting to re-construct the image of rugby. One strategy used the televising of the 1987 inaugural Rugby World Cup "to embark on an extensive public relations campaign to present rugby as non-violent, non-sexist, non-racist, safe and so on" (Star, 1994b, p. 39). The media image that rugby adopted used nostalgic representations of past rugby successes and heroes (Nauright, 1996). These reconstructions linked rugby and manly glories with an apparently more united and stable Aotearoa/New Zealand. Images of the 1956 rugby tour by South

Africa were also boldly used to gain benefit from the nostalgia associated with the 1950s: a time period when the economy was prosperous and there was little public discussion of political problems such as racism and sexism (Nauright, 1996). In addition, the rugby commentators of the 1987 World Cup made announcements that the referees would not hesitate to send players off the field who used illegal techniques of violence (Star, 1994b). However, the reality, according to Star, was that incidences of deliberate violence occurred throughout the tournament without players being sent off.

The mediated image of rugby and its male participants, throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, was also deliberately softened and marketed to appeal to a wider audience, particularly women and children. Glossy magazines and television advertisements provided coverage of another dimension of rugby men's lives - their family relationships and lifestyles. A television advertisement of the mid-1990s, for example, featured All Black captain Shaun Fitzpatrick hugging his mother, while she reported that she raised him on baked beans. Although this advert illustrated an All Black expressing love for his mum, Nauright (1996) stated that it still emphasised the importance of women's domestic labour for rugby. Nevertheless, the All Blacks were no longer solely depicted as narrow caricatures of traditional masculinity, but a more complex and rounded image emerged.

The commodification of rugby also resulted in marketing campaigns designed to attract non-traditional rugby supporters. Pre-game entertainment started to include rock music, cheerleaders, team mascots and even fireworks when games became staged at night. Rugby was, therefore, re-packaged as 'wholesome' family entertainment. The commodification of rugby was also linked to the end of shamateurism, when the International Rugby Board (IRB), in August 1995, announced that professionalisation was now officially sanctioned.

The symbiotic relationship that had long existed between rugby and the media strengthened throughout the 1990s (Star, 1999a). Indeed, rugby's ongoing reconstruction occurred in direct partnership with the media, particularly global television networks (Hutchins, 1998). Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation in 1995, for example, gained the global televising rights for the Tri-Nations Series for US$555 million over ten years (Hutchins, 1998). Moreover, the IRB, concerned with rugby's value as a global commodity, instituted rule changes to help de-brutalise aspects of the game and to make it 'pretty to watch'. These changes

stemmed, in part, from the media threat posed by the openly professional game of rugby league; whose successful re-imaging had resulted in its growing popularity (see Lynch, 1993). The IRB rule changes were, therefore, primarily concerned with increasing rugby's market share by aiming to make the game more exciting and accessible to non-traditional rugby viewers (Hutchins, 1998).

Changes to rugby union rules were also designed to make the game safer, or at least appear safer. The discursive repositioning of rugby, as related to the 1981 tour, had resulted in increased media concern with respect to the extent and severity of rugby injuries. The NZRFU, in part response, reformed the rules of the sport to help make the game less dangerous. The most radical rule changes targeted youth (i.e. boys) rugby, primarily in an attempt to ease the concerns of parents and teachers. The modified game for young players, aptly called 'new image rugby', banned the tackle and replaced it with a two-handed touch in 1987. Rule changes also occurred in the mainstream adult game primarily in an attempt to reduce the risk of spinal injury, which had been receiving bad press. The rule changes encouraged belief that rugby was safer to play (e.g. Calcinai, 1992), yet, rugby remained a relatively dangerous game. Results from an epidemiological study suggested that the frequency of rugby spinal injuries actually increased from 1976 to 1995, despite the rule changes (Armour, Clatworthy, Bean, Wells & Clarke, 1997). The study concluded that "contrary to widespread belief, there has not been a decrease in spinal cord injuries in rugby following rule changes in the mid-1990s" (Armour et al., 1997, p. 462).

Associated with the re-legitimisation of rugby in the mid-1990s and the blurring between rugby, entertainment and commodification, an increasing number of multi-national businesses used rugby and its link to nationalism to sell their products. An Adidas advertisement, for example, featured an array of ex-All Black captains changing their uniform while the background singer urged viewers through a patriotic song to 'bless them all'. Further, an advert for the Australian owned National Bank celebrated that although All Black Alama Ieremia had sustained a long list of damaging injuries he was heroically tough and did not think of 'packing it in'. In addition, an advert for American based fast-food chain McDonalds featured a giant size image of All Black Jonah Lomu fighting a computer generated monster to help sell and construct the 'Kiwi' burger as local. These advertisements, in their use of nationalism, celebration of pain, toughness

and rugby, helped reflect the security of position that rugby had regained since the early 1980s.

The re-imaging of rugby, in combination with the limited rule changes and the All Blacks victory in the 1987 World Cup, helped thwart rugby's moment of 'hegemonic crisis' (Nauright, 1996). McConnell (1996), for example, reported that in 1988 there were 137,000 registered rugby players but by 1993 this had grown to 205,000. Further, the deregulation of television in 1990, in accords with the growth of neo-liberalism and the new-right market philosophies, contributed to television sport coverage increasing by a remarkable 141% (McGregor, 1994). Leading this increase was rugby union followed by rugby league. These two rugby codes accounted for nearly half of all television news coverage of sport (McGregor, 1994).

By the end of the 1990s rugby was re-entrenched in a dominant cultural position in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Although rugby was more openly shaped by an array of multiple and competing discourses, the dominating discourses of rugby that emerged in 19th century English public schools and that had been politically shaped with nationalistic fervour at the beginning of the 20th century in Aotearoa/New Zealand, still circulated in a web-like manner and exerted influence. Rugby, therefore, was still viewed by many as our national game, a 'real man's' game and as ideal for instilling manly characteristics. The following quote from an influential sports journalist/author is reflective of these romanticised sentiments:

> From the time I saw the All Blacks run on to the park that first time, like a spill of black opals on green baize, I was hooked for life. They have never let me down. They have lost the occasional match, but it has never been because they gave up or because they did not play their hearts out to the last seconds. Because they have the guts to win, even when perhaps they should in theory lose, they represent, to me anyway, the best characteristics of the New Zealand male: resilience, courage, toughness, enterprise, innovation and perseverance. (Zavos, 1988, p. 119)

However, competing discourses and associated practices of rugby, also exert influence at the dawning of the 21st century. The growing number of females who enjoy participation in rugby, for example, help challenge the discourse that

constitute rugby as a man's game. More specifically, the Black Ferns' back-to-back victories in the recent Rugby World Cup gained the national women's team a degree of credence. The advent of openly gay men playing rugby has also challenged dominating discourses of rugby and masculinities. The Ponsonby Heroes Rugby Club in Auckland, for example, was set up in 1997 with the mission to provide gay and bisexual men a club to enjoy rugby participation within. Further, as media surveillance became a more prominent feature of rugby in the 1990s, the transgressions of professional rugby players were more readily exposed. Recent images of a drunken and aggressive Tana Umaga, for example, have gained media coverage, as have reports of Jonah Lomu's marital infidelities, Norm Hewitt's history of school bullying and drug dealing, and the occasional violent off-field exploits of professional players, such as Keith Robinson, Riki Flutey, Jerry Collins and Romi Ropati (see Pringle, 2001b). These media reports have helped challenge the functionalist discourse that positioned rugby as a maker of gentlemanly character.

The discourse that informed that 'real rugby men' should take pain in stoical fashion has also been under threat in recent years. For example, after it was revealed that Norm Hewitt played with a broken arm during the National Provincial Cup final in 1999, public debate raised the issue of whether Hewitt's actions constituted poor role modelling for boys. More pointedly, rugby has, at times, continued to be the direct target of public criticism in the media. For example, well known journalist Sandra Coney (1999) recently argued that "rugby is impossible to escape, and it's heading in a direction which is increasingly harmful to New Zealand, and men in particular" (p. C4).

Critical commentators concerned with the circulation of multiple discourses of rugby and masculinity have even raised the possibility that a contemporary *crisis* of masculinity in Aotearoa/New Zealand may be in progress. Thomson (2000), for example, argued that although rugby once helped provide men with a collective identity that "today, however, a strong collective identity is no longer prominent, and it might even be suggested that young New Zealand males face something of an identity crisis" (p. 34). International commentators have also suggested that males may face a more general crisis of masculinity (e.g. Næss, 2001; Whannel, 1999). Næss (2001), for example, reported that in Norway the gender order has been substantially challenged on many fronts and that narratives of the new man

and the caring father "have taken their place alongside, and compete with, the traditional narratives" (p. 129). Whannel (1999) concluded from his media analysis of the representation of sport stars, that the tensions from various masculinity narratives have resulted in a recomposed but tension filled form of masculinity that is "traditional but disciplined, respectable rather than rough, hard but controlled, (and) firm but fair..." (p. 263).

Last words

My socio-historic review of rugby and its links to masculinities within Aotearoa/New Zealand suggest that rugby is subject to an array of discourses that produce multiple and, at times, competing understandings. It is, therefore, difficult to understand with any precision how rugby articulates with masculinities. Nevertheless, I am concerned that the cultural dominance of rugby likely helps link and glorify an influential way of performing masculinity with sporting prowess, acceptance of some acts of violence, and tolerance of pain. Therefore, rugby may help reinforce dominating but problematic discourses of masculinities. Yet it would be questionable to believe that involvement in rugby exclusively produces male rugby players who are consistently uncritical about violence, pain and relations of power: rugby players are often disciplined to be disrespectful of bodies during competition but in other social contexts they are generally expected to be respectful. Rugby players, under the conditions of late modernity, can be regarded as influenced by multiple and competing discourses which come to the fore in a pastiche of different social contexts, and these discourses may produce difficulties for the maintenance of coherent senses of self. At the least, I expect that the competing discourses may make it difficult for some men to negotiate their relationships with rugby and masculinities.

I recognise that my socio-historic review of rugby, as represented in this chapter, feels rather disembodied or removed from the lived experiences of individuals. I am also aware that my review tends to paint grand views of the workings of discourse in its attempt to account for rugby's 'history of the present'. Relatedly, Foucault's genealogical approach has been critiqued for its tendency to overstate the ontological effects of select discourses. Gubrium and Holstein (2000), for example, stated that: "Foucault was inclined to overemphasize the predominance of discourses in constructing the horizons of meaning at particular

times of places, conveying the sense that discourse fully details the nuances of everyday life" (p. 501). In contrast they suggested that "a more interactionally sensitive analytics of discourse – one tied to discursive practice – resists this tendency" (p. 501). In following Gubrium and Holstein's advice, I recognise the importance to examine the discursive practices associated with rugby participation to help understand how lived experiences of rugby help shape masculinities. In other words, I believe it is important to understand how the multiple discourses that surround rugby and masculinities are lived into existence. However, little is known about how men make sense of the competing discourses of rugby, and how these discourses articulate with masculinities.

This lack of empirical knowledge about a dominant socio-cultural practice (e.g. rugby) that has been repeatedly critiqued in sociological literature, combined with my own tension-filled experiences of rugby, provided my prime motivations for undertaking this doctoral study. An additional source of inspiration was the pro-feminist literature that investigated the dynamic articulations between heavy-contact sports, masculinities and gender relations (e.g. Connell, 1987, 1990; Messner, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990). If it were not for this literature, to be blunt, my doctoral project would likely never have been initiated.

In the next chapter, I provide a critical review of this literature with particular emphasis on research that has examined how male sport participants make sense of sporting pain and injuries.

CHAPTER FOUR

Sport, pain and masculinities: A review of literature

Introduction

This review chapter follows on from the arguments developed in chapters one and three. In chapter one I drew on epidemiological literature to argue that rugby was a relatively dangerous game that inauspiciously involved and, at times, injured a disproportionate percentage of males under the age of twenty-five. In combination with critical concerns about sport and gender (e.g. White & Young, 1997; Messner, 1992), I used these results to suggest that it appears important to further investigate the gendering processes associated with rugby and pain. In chapter three, I provided a socio-historic review of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand and argued that the culturally significant position enjoyed by rugby is supported by discourses of nationalism and masculinities; as such rugby may help legitimate, produce and glorify an influential way of performing masculinity with sporting prowess, tolerance of pain, and acceptance of some acts of violence. However, I also suggested that under the conditions of late modernity males face multiple and competing discourses of rugby and masculinities, that may produce difficulties for the maintenance of a coherent sense of 'masculine' self.

In this chapter, to help understand what is currently known about the complexities of the sport/masculinities relationships, I critically review relevant literature. I divide my review into several inter-linked sections. Firstly, I introduce Gramsci's conceptualisation of hegemony and then detail how this concept was appropriated by pro-feminist researchers to study masculinities and sport. I follow this by a critical review of research that has investigated media images of dangerous sports. I then review more empirically based research that has predominantly used ethnographic and interview methods to examine links between sport and masculinities. Toward the end of this chapter, I suggest research areas in need of further examination and introduce the prime research question of this thesis.

Introducing the concepts of hegemony and masculine hegemony

The demise of sex-role theory in the mid-1980s paved the way for the concept of hegemonic masculinity to become the dominant theoretical framework for examining the complex relationships between sport, pain and gendering processes. In this section I introduce the concepts of hegemony and masculine hegemony.

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist imprisoned by Mussolini in the late 1920s, recognised the reductionist problem of traditional Marxism and developed his concept of hegemony in part response. It was, therefore, in the context of fascist Italy that Gramsci suggested that the ability for a class to rule or dominate another is not solely dependent on economic modes of production and structures, but on the ability of the rulers to convince the ruled on the legitimacy of their system of beliefs (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Gramsci used the term hegemony to describe how the domination of one class over others is achieved through processes of coercion and consent, or more specifically, via political and ideological means (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Political force, as exemplified by state punishment for acts of non-conformity, was deemed important in the process of coercion and the maintenance of hegemony (Donaldson, 1993). However, Gramsci believed that the "role of ideology in winning the consent of dominated classes may be even more significant" (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1988, p. 111). He therefore proposed that the ruling class gains ideological "consent to the social order it rules by making its power appear normal and natural" (Miller, 1998b, p. 432). Gramsci (1971) more specifically stated that the ruling class gains this consent through state manipulation, or subtle control of civil society, as exemplified by the state's access to fundamental ideological institutions such as the media, education and the church.

Hegemony is theorised as never complete, but as a dialectical and on-going process between the dominant and subordinate groups in which the ruling group must, at times, make concessions and forge new alliances in order to maintain dominance (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). The concept of hegemony, therefore, asserts that acts of power can lead to acts of resistance and/or incorporation or accommodation: the hegemonic 'bloc' must continually work at maintaining dominance (Andrews & Loy, 1993).

Contemporary understandings of hegemony have been shaped since Gramsci's (1971) prison books, particularly by the work of researchers within cultural studies, such as Stuart Hall, who combined Althusserian and Gramscian ideas to position the cultural realm as continually contested terrain (Andrews & Loy, 1993). In this respect, popular culture is viewed as a "site of ideological struggle where individual lives and experiences are involved in a process of interpretive negotiation with the surrounding social structures" (Andrews & Loy, 1993, p. 269).

Hegemony or cultural dominance can, therefore, be conceptualised as a complex social process that is anti-essentialist, anti-reductionist and influentially shaped by dominant groups. Moreover, meanings and identities are expressed, under the analytical framework of hegemony, in relation to hegemonic values as either dominant, subordinate and/or in opposition to the hegemony. Yet, in contrast to Marxism, hegemony theory does not position the so-called marginalised or subordinated people as dupes of dominant ideology or as living in a state of false consciousness.

By the early 1980s the concept of hegemony was gaining popularity as a useful framework for helping understand, in a critical manner, the social influence of sport (e.g. Hargreaves, 1982; Theberge, 1981; Willis, 1982). Gruneau (1982), as an example, argued that sport was an important site for the construction and maintenance of dominant ideologies that acted to serve the interests of powerful groups. Feminist sport writers, such as Hargreaves (1982) and Theberge (1981), were also using the concept of hegemony to explore the ideological impact of sport on gender relations. It was primarily Connell and associated colleagues, however, who helped popularise and consolidate the concept of hegemonic masculinity for studies of sport and masculinities.

Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987) rejected categorical theories that emphasised single overarching factors, such as biological determinism, Marxism, or sex-role theory, in favour of a more complex and dynamic theory that emphasised gender as a relational and multidimensional process. They used the terms 'masculinities' and 'femininities' to illustrate how gender is constructed through processes and relationships. In essence, they argued that masculinity and femininity are relational constructs produced in specific social contexts and subject to contestation and change.

Carrigan et al. (1987) recognised the interplay between factors such as gender, race and class, but did not *collapse* their relational analysis of men into different character typologies, such as black-straight or upper-class gay men. They argued that there are multiple masculinities and femininities. With particular respect to men, they stated that the "crucial division is between hegemonic masculinity and various subordinated masculinities" (p. 178); and that the hegemonic form of masculinity is specifically linked to "how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" (p. 179).

Connell (1995), more specifically, defined hegemonic masculinity as the culturally exalted form of masculinity that provides the current solution to maintain the legitimacy of patriarchy. Although he was reluctant to provide a definitive list of the traits or behaviours representative of hegemonic masculinity, he suggested that contemporary forms of hegemonic masculinity link dominant notions of manliness with toughness and competitiveness, and current exemplars of hegemonic masculinity are male participants in heavy-contact sport, such as "those who run out into the mud and the tackles themselves" (Connell, 1995, p. 79). Star (1993) also suggested that rugby players appear to embody the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. She stated that the All Blacks represent the epitome of a dominant way of being manly in Aotearoa/New Zealand: they appear to be tolerant of pain, strong, aggressive and tough, and they look commanding and assertive.

Carrigan et al. (1987) suggested that hegemonic masculinity "may only correspond to the actual characters of a small number of men" (p. 179). Few men, they claimed, act like the screen images of the fictional boxer 'Rocky'. Nevertheless, Connell (1995) argued that hegemonic masculinity should not be conceptualised as just an aspirational goal. He asserted that for hegemony to be established, there must be a convincing material link between men's behaviours in 'power positions' (e.g. the military, business world and Government) and hegemonic masculinities. More recently, Connell (2002) asserted that the corporate display of masculinity, which he termed "transnational business masculinity" (p. 39), by dominant groups of men, provide authority for their version of masculinity to be culturally dominant. In this respect, Connell portrays power as primarily stemming from a dominant group of males and as operating in a top-down manner.

In essence, Connell asserted that hegemonic forms of masculinity are closely linked to 'ruling groups' of men and that heavy-contact sports, such as rugby, have close links to these ruling groups. His arguments, therefore, problematise the cultural dominance of heavy-contact sports. The concept of hegemonic masculinity has subsequently provided the dominant framework to examine the dynamics between sport, pain, masculinities and power relations. In the next three sections of this chapter, I review research that has predominantly used the concept of masculine hegemony to examine these dynamics.

Media examinations of sport violence, gender relations and masculinities

Over the last twenty-five years, academic concern has examined how the sports/media shapes, reflects and challenges dominant notions of gender. These studies have typically "deconstructed images of active men and women in order to identify the preferred readings, recurrent themes, underlying meanings, emphases and omissions" (Lenskyj, 1998, p. 20). Although the sports/media research was initially concerned with the images of sportswomen, over the last decade an increasing number of researchers have critically examined how the media represent images of males and masculinities (e.g. Bryson, 1987, 1990; Hutchins & Mikosza, 1998; Jackson & McKenzie, 2000; Lynch, 1993; Messner & Soloman, 1993; Messner, Dunbar & Hunt, 2000; Miller, 1989; Sabo & Jansen, 1998; Smith, 1983; Trevelyan & Jackson, 1999; Trujillo, 1995, 2000; Whannel, 1999; White & Gillett, 1994; Yeates, 1995). This research has primarily argued that the media and consumer culture are intricately implicated in the promotion of masculine hegemony. A significant corpus of this research has argued, more specifically, that sports/media productions appear to celebrate male violence, pain, bodily sacrifice, strength and injury and that the media, therefore, play a pivotal role in helping construct and promote a problematic but dominant form of masculinity.

Within Aotearoa/New Zealand, Trevelyan and Jackson (1999) analysed rugby union and league telecasts with specific respect to examining how violence and masculinities were represented. They suggested that the rugby code broadcasts sanctioned violence "through trivialising, explaining, rationalising and simply ignoring violent behaviour" (p. 129), and at times blatantly glorifying violence. Trevelyan and Jackson further argued that the media approval of violence was "intimately linked with what is culturally considered to be admirable and

appropriate male behaviour" (p. 131). They suggested, for example, that the continual reference to players as strong, aggressive, tactical, determined and the like, helped identify the characteristics of a dominant form of masculinity. Pain and risk were represented as admirable and highly masculine.

In contrast, critical sports/media research has also illustrated how the commodification of heavy-contact sport may act not just to reproduce or define masculine hegemony but to modify, de-stabilise, soften or fracture dominant understandings associated with manliness (e.g. Lynch, 1993). Yeates (1995), for example, argued that commercialisation of Australian rugby league "is one significant aspect that has weakened the hegemonic masculine" (p. 44). She asserted that the commodification of league was linked to a re-imaging of the sport that has been associated with a greater media intrusion into the lives of the players. This has resulted, she argued, in increased player exposure in magazines, such as *Woman's Day*, calendars and advertisements; and therefore the subsequent illustration of players in rounder social contexts.

However, this increased media scrutiny is also related to violent incidents on the field of play and the increasingly common usage of video camera replays for disciplinary measures. Hutchins and Phillips (1997) suggested that professional league players now perform in a panoptic field and that this media surveillance has resulted in decreased player usage of illegal violence. Yeates (1995) argued that although there is now greater player self-surveillance this has not resulted in decreased screenings of rugby league violence. In fact, she asserted that the slow motion images of 'illegal' violence have become media highlights. Similarly, Trujillo (1995) reported that that the most violent sporting actions tended to be shown in multiple replays, including slow motion close-ups, and were "narrated in ceremonial detail" (p. 411). Jackson and McKenzie (2000) argued that these highlights tend to blame the individual for the violence but rarely act to challenge "the underlying value system of either the sport or the media" (p. 166). In this sense, although the symbiotic relationship between sport violence and the media may have acted to "undermine the privileged discourse of hegemonic masculinity" (Yeates, 1995, p. 44), researchers still assume that the media promotion of sport violence results in the propping up of a problematic but dominant form of masculinity.

Star (1994b), intrigued by the apparent legitimation of rugby violence within the sports/media complex, investigated how media representations of hyper-masculinities coexisted "with the promotion of New Zealand rugby's progressive 'new man', while allowing pleasurable readings of these seemingly antagonistic discourses by multiple and diverse audiences" (p. 33). Star suggested that the media deliberately used three main strategies to continue to be able to screen rugby 'violence' without undue public protest. Within the first strategy, she argued that the media primarily used a "comprehensive insider commentator code to gloss and euphemise violence while making it accessible to fans familiar with the jargon" (p. 43). These euphemisms included phrases such as 'over-vigorous play', 'playing the man off the ball', 'a bit of quid pro quo' and 'softening up the opposition', for dangerous, violent and illegal play. The second strategy involved the use of sporadic narratives about specific players to help provide a more rounded image of rugby players. For example, during the 1987 Rugby World Cup, Star suggested that All Blacks' captain, David Kirk, was heralded as smooth, articulate, sensitive and as a 'good catch' for any young woman. Michael Jones was presented as an educated Samoan of upstanding moral beliefs, and John Kirwin was the clean cut working-class boy who made good. If these players were involved in overt violence, the media deemed it as out of character for these players. In contrast, media attention was directed to a small number of 'bad boys', mainly drawn from non-New Zealand teams, and Star argued that these 'bad boys' provided the media with scapegoats for overt violence. Star concluded that rugby 'violence' was positioned under this strategy as the result of flawed characters and not as the result of a problematic sport. The third strategy, according to Star (1994b), involved commentators ignoring, denying or neutralising overt episodes of rugby violence. In this way the commentary could act to negate the impact of clear visual displays of violence, yet still allow for viewers to gain voyeuristic pleasure from these displays. Star concluded that these three strategies were ideological tools for ensuring the reconstitution and reassertion of hegemonic masculinity even in the face of a growing public awareness and acceptance of non-hegemonic sexual preferences, ethnic inheritances and changing notions of gender.

The broadened and increasingly commercialised images of participants in heavy-contact sports have also been associated with the (homo)eroticisation and objectification of the player's bodies; which permits a different gaze on

masculinity (Rowe, 1995; Miller, 1998a, 1998b). Star (1994a) asserted: "no other domain has enjoyed the broad, long-term and unquestioned encouragement of the male gaze on male bodies that sport allows" (p. 29). In this new era of the commoditisation of the male sporting star, Miller (1998a) stated:

> Men's bodies are for sale as never before, with straight women and gay men now crucial targets for capitalist consumption. At the same time, the gay uptake and reinterpretation of traditional body-shapes has altered their conventional meaning as signs of potential violence and domination of women .... The signs that could once perhaps be read as measures of hegemonic masculinity (forward-pack tackling, big muscles, and TV attention to rugby league) have been redesignated. No longer the province of straight-male domination, these signs are available to (and, in fact, frequently packaged for the gazing pleasure of) the very groups supposedly oppressed by them. (p. 201)

Miller (1998a) raised concerns about the tenability of the concept of masculine hegemony for understanding the complex links between masculinities and images associated with male sport violence. He argued, for example, that given there are multiple readings and images of heavy-contact male sports, the assumption that mediated displays of sport violence primarily produce and affirm a dominant form of masculinity that helps entrench sexism, could be too simplistic. Moreover, Miller thought it somewhat paradoxical that the mediated images that supposedly acted to oppress certain groups, such as gay men and women, could be specifically enjoyed by these groups. To help understand the apparent links between sport and gender relations Miller (1998c) suggested: "we may now need some new theoretical tools to travel even further" (p. 195). Within Aotearoa/New Zealand, Star (1992) similarly argued that labelling rugby as patriarchal and sexist was too simplistic, and therefore, there was a need to use theoretical tools that could better understand the multiple, complex and, at times, contradictory viewer responses. Star specifically advocated the use of Foucauldian theory.

Although there has been considerable academic attention concerned with the mediated images of sport violence, little is actually known about how media consumers make sense of these images and how this impacts on the construction of

masculinities and gender relations (Jackson & McKenzie, 2000). Davis (1997) reported, "although the media help to shape categories and frameworks through which audiences perceive reality, the media do not effect perspectives or behavior in a direct and overdetermining manner" (p. 3). In this sense it appears important to examine how audience members decode the texts of mediated male (and female) sport with respect to the construction of meanings associated with masculinities and gender.

Of the limited research that has attempted to investigate the tangible effects of media sport, there is concern that screenings of heavy-contact sport may be linked with collective patterns of violence in a community. Cobb (1993), for example, reported that levels of domestic violence, conducted by men against women, dramatically increase during the televised screening of the Super Bowl in the USA. Relatedly, findings from an interview-based study of 18 American women, who had all experienced domestic violence during or after televised sporting events, supported the "theoretical arguments that sports media can inform the social construction of violent masculinities" (Sabo et al., 2000, p. 144).

Within Aotearoa/New Zealand there is a paucity of research evidence concerned with the complex relationship between viewing high performance sport and off-field violence, yet growing concern *tentatively* lends support to the limited North American evidence. A recent newspaper article, for example, reported that Women's Refuges were markedly "busier" (Father's Day, 2001, p. A4) throughout New Zealand after the Wallabies recently defeated the All Blacks. Women's Refuge head spokeswoman is reported to have said that "Women's Refuge nationally had not studied links between rugby and domestic violence but there was considerable anecdotal evidence suggesting such a connection" (p. A4). In another newspaper article, Jessup (1999) reported that evidence indicates that the police are busier than usual "answering calls to domestic violence on test-match days" (p. A4). This anecdotal evidence concerning media representations of rugby and off-field violence helps indicate, at the least, areas deserving of further research.

Concluding comments about the critical sports/media analyses

The concept of masculine hegemony has dominated and helped shape many researchers' interpretations associated with media analyses of sport violence and gender. These reports have typically expressed concern with regard to how the

media tend to naturalise and celebrate male sporting violence, and help promote a dominant but problematic ideology of masculinity that acts to entrench male power in society. Some researchers have also suggested that the increased commodification of sportsmen has acted to soften or at least fragment notions associated with the hegemonic forms of masculinities (e.g. Lynch, 1993; Miller, 1998a; Rowe, 1995; Yeates, 1995). Issues addressed by Star (1992, 1994b) and Miller (1998a, 1998b, 1998c), about multiple and resistant readings of sports/media violence, have helped raise questions about the tenability of the concept of masculine hegemony for understanding the complex articulations between sport and masculinities. Nevertheless, concerns about sport violence and gender relations are tempered by the recognition that little is known about how consumers of sport actually decode (Davis, 1997) the mediated images, and how the sports/media 'ideologies' are lived into existence.

To help remedy this lack of understanding about the lived experiences related to dangerous sports, a growing number of researchers since the early 1990s have examined the social construction of masculinities within particular social locations. Connell (2002) called this turn to more empirically based research the "ethnographic moment in masculinity research" (p. 27). In the next section I review such literature.

Critical investigations of sport and masculinities within school settings

The ethnographic moment in masculinity research, according to Connell (2002) has "brought a much-needed gust of realism to debates on men and masculinities" (p. 28). The rich detail supplied by field studies have helped illustrate the complexities of the workings of power in specific contexts with respect to how individuals negotiate, resist, perform and construct masculine subjectivities. Studies have specifically examined the social construction of masculinites within various sporting contexts, such as: snowboarding (Anderson, 1999), windsurfing (Wheaton, 2000), bodybuilding (Klein, 1993), Mexican baseball (Klein, 1995), professional sailing (Crawley, 1998), soccer fans/hooligans (Hughson, 1998a, 1998b; King, 1997), school sport (e.g. Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Griffin, 1985; Hasbrook & Harris, 1999; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Parker, 1996; Skelton, 1996, 2000; Swain, 2000) and heavy-contact sports (e.g. de Garis, 2000; Messner, 1992; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Schacht,

1996; Sparkes & Smith, 1999, 2002; Young et al., 1994). I limit my review to investigations that have explored the power dynamics associated with masculinities in school based settings and participation in heavy-contact sports.

Schools are recognised as important social contexts to study gender construction due to the young age of the school's captive audience and the social importance of education and sport. Skelton (1996) argued that schools do not act in social vacuums, but exist in complex and dialectical relationships between the local community and the ideologies that circulate in the culture of that community. Hence, school practices with particular reference to sport, are expected to generally affirm and help (re)construct dominant ways of performing masculinity. A range of researchers has supported this contention. Parker (1996), for example, concluded that school sport and physical education are influential in shaping gendered notions of boys and girls, and in determining hierarchical peer group positions that favour boys who perform behaviours associated with hegemonic forms of masculinity. Similarly, Skelton (2000) stated that soccer was central to the gender regime of the UK school she examined and "defined relationships between males and females in the classroom and (even) took a central place in the classroom management strategies of the male teachers" (p. 5). More specifically, Edley and Wetherell (1997) reported that a consensus view of the staff and pupils at the UK school they examined was that the most powerful group in the sixth form was made up largely of the school's rugby players. They observed that a key aspect of the rugby players' domination was physical:

> During breaktime, for instance, they would literally take over the common room with their boisterous games, forcing everyone else out on to the peripheries. Moreover, these games, like rugby, served to underline the players' ability to give and take physical punishment; a core aspect of the traditional definition of masculinity and a constant reminder of the threat posed to anyone wishing to challenge their dominant position. (p. 207)

Light and Kirk's (2000) ethnographic examination of rugby practices at an elite Brisbane public school was underpinned by a theoretical approach that combined Foucault's notion of discursive regimes, Connell's concept of masculine hegemony, and Bourdieu's ideas on cultural capital and habitus. This theoretical

mixing reflects Olssen's (1999) observations that "it is commonplace today for authors to cite Foucault on one page and Gramsci on the next without mention of the fact that the work of these two authors belong to fundamentally different theoretical traditions" (p. 89). Nevertheless, an important aim of Light and Kirk's research was to highlight the importance of the body in constructions of sporting masculinities. Light and Kirk concluded that the discursive regimes associated with embodied rugby practices acted to produce, "a class specific form of masculinity connected to ideals of physical domination, competitiveness, toughness, teamwork and self-restraint" (p. 174), and that this form "clearly legitimises hegemonic ways of being male and contributes to the maintenance of existing relations of power between different forms of masculinity and between men and women" (p. 174).

The overriding and grave conclusion from this school based research is that schools – with particular respect to their sporting and physical education practices - are implicated in the construction of a gender regime that acts to empower the sporting boys but disempower the girls and other boys (Kenway, 1997). Schools are therefore believed to help promote the ideology of male superiority by aiding in the production of boys who resonate with the values inherent in hegemonic forms of masculinity. Also of prime concern is the assumption that violence can be understood as an expression of a particular type of masculinity and that schools play a role in helping construct violent or dangerous masculinities (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997).

> Male dominance/subordination relations are often worked out through legitimate (sport) and illegitimate (brawling, bashing) physical violence. Again, such violence is premised on beliefs about the importance of aggressive and violent acts for gaining and maintaining status, reputation and resources in the male group, to sustain a sense of masculine identity and as a form of 'self' protection. (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997, p. 122)

Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997) further argued that if schools "implicitly subscribe to and endorse hegemonic versions of masculinity, particularly in their more exaggerated forms, then they are complicit in the production of violence" (p. 125). This disturbing contention links school sporting systems with the social construction of males who have a propensity for violence. Empirical studies have

supported Kenway and Fitzclarence's contentions (e.g. Hasbrook & Harris, 1999; Parker, 1996). Parker (1996), for example, who conducted an ethnographic analysis of physical education practices within an English secondary school, concluded:

> Violence, it seemed, was just a taken-for-granted element of physical education and schooling; a compulsory component of everyday life, around which individual pupils had to negotiate and construct their own masculine identity. At the same time, it was something which the 'Hard Boys' utilised to structure their own educational agenda, particularly within the confines of physical education; a means by which they could implicitly and explicitly manipulate the ordering and routine of class activity, and generally dominate others with their physical presence. (p. 147)

The worrying conclusions drawn from these school-based investigations concerning sport and masculinities have been supported, in part, by recent studies within Aotearoa/New Zealand. Town (1999), for example, examined the school experiences of New Zealand teenage gay males and concluded that the dominance of rugby played a leading role in encouraging or forcing these young men to adopt 'outwardly' heteronormative practices. Town, more specifically, suggested that intimidation and abuse orchestrated, in part by rugby players, helped prop up a dominant form of masculinity that marginalized other forms. He concluded: "these hegemonic frameworks created a form of compulsory masculinity for these young men that ensured their adherence to male norms and effectively policed the range of gender and sexuality roles available to them..." (p. 144).

Park's (2000) masculinity research, although not specifically concerned with schooling experiences, resulted in similar conclusions to Town's (1999). Park conducted in-depth interviews with 80 Aotearoa/New Zealand males who suffered from haemophilia and found that "the single most pervasive idiom of distress" (p. 445) for these males was the inability to play rugby. This inability to play was distressful as participation in rugby was regarded as an important way that boys become normal or respected. Hence, given the dominance of rugby, haemophiliac males felt marginalized, as they were not able to 'prove' their manliness through rugby. Park concluded that the "sense of loss felt by some of those men who have not been able to play rugby becomes more explicable as rugby is shown to be part

of the social practice of a hegemonic masculinity and a medium of male sociality" (p. 451).

Although the social dominance of heavy-contact sports within schools have been implicated in the construction of the problematic forms of manliness and gender regimes, schools can also play an important role in the prevention of violence and, therefore, in the unmaking of problematic masculinities. A number of researchers, for example, have examined strategies to help challenge potentially sexist and problematic pedagogies (e.g. Jordan, 1995; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Reed, 1999; Robinson, 2000). These strategies are often similar to the premises that underpin narrative therapy (e.g. Drewery & Monk, 1994; Drewery & Winslade, 1997; White, 1994), and typically revolve around providing alternative narrative or discursive resources to help enable "individuals and groups a means for remaking the dominant story-lines which have governed their lives" (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997, p. 129). Fitzclarence and Hickey (1998), relatedly, suggested that coaches of boys' sport are also in a position of responsibility to help develop counternarratives to the dominant ones that surround sporting masculinities. They believe that there is a necessity "for those working with junior aged footballers to propagate self supervision and behaviour that is respectful of others" (p. 80), as current coaching practices appear to teach young males to rationalise abusive behaviour.

Concluding comments about schools, sport and masculinities

The ethnographic research concerned with schools, sport and masculinities indirectly supports and helps 'flesh-out' concerns raised by the critical sports/media analyses. School-based research, for example, has illustrated that the cultural dominance of heavy-contact sports can help affirm and reproduce dominant or hegemonic masculinities while acting to marginalise other masculinities and femininities. However, this research typically did not examine how the youth participants made sense of their own sporting experiences, particularly with respect to experiences of sporting pain and fear. Given that an accepted aspect of a dominant form of masculinity is related to one's ability to take pain without displays of fear, and that heavy-contact sport is as "much about dealing with fear and anxiety in oneself as it is about dominating an opponent" (Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001, p. 129), I suggest it is important to examine how

male athletes make sense of sport experiences of fear and pain. I recognise, for example, that it was primarily my fear of being hurt in rugby that led to my retirement and eventual rejection of the 'no pain-no gain' principle that underpins rugby.

In addition, Connell (1995) argued that the "constitution of masculinity through bodily performance means that gender is vulnerable when the performance cannot be sustained – for instance, as a result of physical disability" (p. 54). Connell's argument, therefore, has implications for how sport and masculinities articulate with each other. If male sport participants, for example, become fearful of pain or are disabled through sport participation, their continued performance of a dominant form of masculinity could be difficult to sustain. For these reasons I suggest that men's sporting experiences of fear and pain are important to examine. In the next section, I review research that has examined how male athletes make sense of sporting pain.

Sportsmen's understandings of pain and fear

Empirical studies of sport and masculinities have rarely examined participants' understandings of fear, pain and disability (Sparkes & Smith, 1999). Yet, these understandings likely play a significant role in shaping men's relationships with sport (e.g. Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001). In this section, I review this limited research; all of which stems from contexts outside of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Sabo and Panepinto (1990) conducted in-depth interviews with 25 former serious American football players. Their research focused on coach-player relationships, conformity and control, social isolation, male authority and pain. Accounts revealed how coaches pushed players to their physical limits and taught them how to inflict and deny pain. They reported, for example: "coaches encouraged boys to 'toughen up,' to 'learn to take the knocks,' and 'to sacrifice the body'" (p. 123). In this respect, the coaches' actions were positioned as highly problematic. Sabo and Panepinto theorised that pain "appears to cement hierarchical distinction between males, fuse the players' allegiance to one another, set men apart from and above women, and solidify the coach's authority within the intermale dominance hierarchy" (p. 124). They concluded that football as a male ritual revolves around hegemonically masculine themes and, therefore, can be

understood as reproducing a dominant form of masculinity. Nevertheless, the voices of the athletes, within their research, were rarely heard with respect to how they made sense of the pain of football.

A focus on pain and manliness also dominated Schacht's (1996) pro-feminist participant-observation study of two rugby clubs in North America. Rugby culture in North America appears to be somewhat different from that in Aotearoa/New Zealand; it is a minor sport with a cult-like following seemingly infused by relatively bizarre rituals of taboo breaking (Donnelly & Young, 1985; Thomson, 1977; Wheatley, 1994). Nevertheless, Schacht drew similar conclusions, in comparison to Sabo and Panepinto (1990), related to male dominance and violence. For example, he stated:

> Rugby players situationally do masculinity by reproducing rigid hierarchical images of what a 'real man' is in terms of who is strongest, who can withstand the most pain, and who relationally distances himself from all aspects of femininity through forms of misogynistic denigration .... Rugby, like other sporting events, is literally a practice field where the actors learn how to use force to ensure a dominant position relative to women, feminine men, and the planet itself. (p. 562)

Schacht (1996) connected male rugby participation to issues of power associated with the construction of a problematic form of masculinity. He, therefore, provided a strong critique of the culture of rugby and the larger culture that it is embedded within. However, the voices of the rugby players with respect to how they understood issues associated with sexism, pain and violence, were again relatively silent. After reading his research I wondered, for example, whether some of the players were critical of some of the aspects of the sexist and, at times, violent rugby culture? Perhaps some were fearful of getting hurt or were critical of the misogynist attitudes and if so, how did they negotiate their concerns? Further, did the players perform masculinity differently in different contexts or were they consistently sexist and violent? Did they perform violence towards the opposition after the game was over? If not, how did the players account for their changes in behaviours? More specifically, how did the players negotiate discourses concerned with feminism, gay rights and anti-violence? I also wondered how Schacht, as a

researcher with a pro-feminist agenda, lived out and negotiated his own rugby experiences. For example, were there any aspects of the rugby culture that he enjoyed? Did he feel complicit in the production of sexism? How did he feel, as a rugby participant, about inflicting pain and getting injured? Did he feel more or less of a man through his experiences, or was his masculine subjectivity somehow insulated from his rugby experiences? Even though I understand that these questions were not part of Schacht's research intentions, his research helped reveal to me the complexities associated between sport and masculinities and the need for further research.

Messner (1992), in contrast to Schacht (1996) and Sabo and Panepinto (1990), helped reveal more of the complexities and contradictions associated with being a male athlete. Messner (1990c) conducted in-depth interviews with 30 former American male athletes, who "at some time in their lives based their identities largely on their roles as athletes and could therefore be said to have had athletic careers" (p. 99). He reported that young boys enter the world of sport with an already gendered identity, and not as "blank slates onto which the values of masculinity are imprinted" (p. 99), but that sport provides an important context in which boys practice and affirm a masculine identity. His interviewees, more specifically, revealed that their early involvement in sport involved social contact almost exclusively with males and that these early experiences of sport were expressly enjoyable because they "held the promise of greater attachment with fathers, older males and peers" (Messner, 1992, p. 37). These social 'rewards' helped fuel a desire to work harder at being successful in sport, yet for some, this started to turn sport into work and served to decrease their subsequent enjoyment.

Messner (1990d) concluded that sport, as a prime gendering institution, played an important role in reproducing "masculine ambivalence" (p. 439) toward intimate unity with others. Sporting involvement is initially attractive to young successful boys, Messner speculated, because the "rule-bound, competitive, hierarchical world of sport" (p. 439) affords boys an opportunity to develop distant and, therefore, safe relationships with other boys. However, as their involvement in sport intensifies, Messner suggested, that boys needed to continue gaining success in sport to continue to get the masculine respect needed to affirm their athletic identities. Messner (1990d) concluded that the boys' close connections to sport "resulted in the construction of a masculine personality that is characterised by

instrumental rationality, goal-orientation, and difficulties with intimate connection and expression" (p. 439). Messner (1992) claimed that an "instrumental male is an alienated creature: He is usually very goal-oriented (in his work and in his personal relations), and he frequently views other people as objects to be manipulated and defeated in his quest to achieve his goals" (p. 62). His conclusion suggested that the competitive organisation of sport tends to produce problematic personalities for boys who are successful in sport.

Messner's examination, more specifically, revealed how successful sporting boys faced particular problems and dilemmas with respect to pain, injury and violence. Messner (1992) was concerned to try and understand how players who knew the risks of violent sport allowed themselves to be continually submitted to such "punishment" (p. 64). He theorised that sportsmen who desire to be successful in sport are encouraged to view their bodies as instruments or weapons to help achieve their competitive desires, and that these competitive desires are primarily fuelled by the hunger to be accepted by other males, and to help secure their identities as athletes. Messner concluded that the athletes viewed violent or aggressive sporting acts favourably, as the athletes who performed the 'big hits' or aggressive plays were the ones who gained "folkloric immortality in the male peer group" (p. 66). Hence, he argued that the male athletes were willing to expose themselves to the risk of sport violence, as violence and athletic strivings provided a context in which men could gain a respected masculine status. Thus, Messner argued that masculine status or masculinities, in general, was the prime factor for helping understand men's relationships with sport.

Messner (1992) also examined how male athletes view the morality of sporting violence. He concluded that athletes tend to view aggressive play, if it is within the rules of the game, as legitimate and, therefore, non-violent. However, if players caused injury through actions that were not legitimated by the rules, then these actions were generally deemed violent. The athletes, Messner concluded, had a contextual view of morality. This conclusion was similar to ones drawn from researchers who utilised moral reasoning theory (e.g. Bredemeier & Shields, 1986, 1994; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995; Shields, Bredemeier, Gardner & Bostrom, 1995; Stephens, 2000; Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996; Stephens & Kavanagh, 1997).

Messner's (1990c) research helped reveal distinctions between how males from different 'class' and 'racial' backgrounds made sense of their sporting experiences. Males from 'low-class' backgrounds tended to view sport participation as a viable means for achieving a "respected masculine status" (p. 106). In contrast, males from 'high-class' backgrounds tended to conclude, in their early adult years, that sport careers were not for them. Messner suggested that different axes of power, such as race and class, helped shape structures of opportunity available to different men and, therefore, the choices they make with respect to continued sport participation. He reported that by the time the males from relatively privileged backgrounds had entered early adult years, there were more pertinent resources available to these men, related to education and careers, to help produce a relatively 'secure masculine' identity. Yet, he left this important aspect of the gendering process relatively under-examined and, therefore, important questions remain unexamined. For example: how did these men negotiate their changes in masculine identity as adults? Did these men subsequently reject or resist aspects associated with hegemonic forms of masculinity? And how did these new masculine identities influence the problematic gender order?

Messner (1990c) was concerned with how to explain the apparent "contradiction between the feminist claim that sports link all men in the domination of women and the research findings that different men relate to sport in very different ways" (p. 107). To help answer this question, he turned to Connell's (1987) concepts of the gender order and masculine hegemony, and argued that sports of violence - specifically those that gain significant media attention - help 'prove' that men are tougher and superior to women, and this allows men to be linked together, but that men "share very unequally in the fruits of this domination" (p. 107). However, Messner (1990b) also argued that male athletes are not winners in the gender order, as they often "pay a heavy price in terms of health and relationships for their participation in violent sports" (p. 215). Moreover, he suggested that male athletes "are, in a very real sense, contemporary gladiators who are sacrificed in order that the elite may have a clear sense of where they stand in the pecking order of inter-male dominance" (p. 214). Messner, therefore, stated that successful male athletes, within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, can be conceptualised as marginalised men: "Their marginalization as men – signified

by their engaging in the very violence that makes them such attractive spectacles – contributes to the construction of hegemonic masculinity" (pp. 214-215). However, Messner did not indicate whom he believed "the elite" (p. 214) or ruling group(s) of men were.

In contrast to Messner (1990b), Light and Kirk (2000) concluded that the 'upper class' rugby players within their study were clearly expected "to use their bodies as weapons, to suffer physically and emotionally and to risk their well being, and the welfare of their opponents..." (p. 175). Yet Light and Kirk did not view the rugby-playing pupils as marginalised males but as privileged individuals whose embodied actions helped entrench a masculinity and class hierarchy that they themselves benefited from. Hence, questions arise as to whether male participants in heavy-contact sports should be considered as marginalised or privileged men, or whether this dualistic conception is too simplistic.

In summary, Messner painted a grim picture of the costs associated with male sport with respect to the athletes themselves and the gender order as a whole. Yet it was also apparent from his writings that many of the ex-athletes pined for the 'good old days' of elite sport participation, and believed that their involvement in sport helped produce valuable friendships, provided opportunities to learn social values, and was, perhaps rather simply, "an arena in which to have fun" (Messner, 1992, p. 143). Thus, although the 'voices' of the athletes were richly presented throughout Messner's writings, I would have liked to hear more about the pleasures the athletes believed they gained from their sport participation.

Young, White and McTeer (1994), drew heavily from the work of Messner and Connell to examine "what it is about dominant notions of masculinity that leads many men to ignore or deny the risk of physical harm" (p. 176) within various sporting contexts. Through in-depth interviews, they examined 16 male athletes' experiences of sporting injuries, pain and violence. All of the athletes, some former and some current, had experienced an injury or injuries serious enough to alter the course of their lives. Young et al. (1994) concluded that sport helps construct a range of masculinities and not just a hegemonic/subordinate dichotomy. Nevertheless, they concluded that many of the athletes "espoused values and ideas consistent with hegemonic forms of masculinity" (p. 181) as they talked of the necessity to take injuries like a 'man', and they used sexist terms such as 'pussy' to describe men who could not take pain. In addition, they concluded

that the 'pain-principle', which is related to players' abilities to play with pain and conceal the emotional effect of pain, was important for the male athletes as it separated the 'boys' from the 'real men'.

However, in the short term, when athletes were recovering from serious injuries, Young et al. (1994) illustrated how injury impacted adversely on the athletes' sense of manly self. Accordingly, they theorised that an injured body is akin to a weak body, which was deemed feminine. Moreover, they reported that during the athletes' rehabilitation the athletes missed the camaraderie and sense of belonging to a team or sport, therefore, their sense of manly self was threatened: injury was, therefore, positioned as demasculinising. Young et al. stated that the "fears of all of our subjects for further injury quickly took second place to their desire to return to competition" (p. 188). They concluded: "it appears that the hegemonic model of sport with its emphasis on forceful male performance and its promise of 'masculinity validation' ... is so meaningful in the lives of some men that injury becomes more constituting than threatening" (p. 188).

Young et al. (1994) concluded that the men were unreflexive toward their involvement in health threatening activities and uncritical "toward the dominant code of masculine sport" (p. 189). These male athletes held these problematic attitudes, the researchers suggested, because if they were to question their involvement in dangerous sports they would be forced to question their masculine identities. Thus, similar to Messner's (1992) conclusions, Young et al. asserted that the male athletes primarily used sport to help constitute and reaffirm their manly sense of self. Such a conclusion, I argue, positions issues of masculinity clearly at the forefront of male sport participation, while at the same time it positions male athletes as either relatively insecure in their identities or as unable to construct their manly identities around other discourses or practices.

On a theoretically grander scale, Young et al. (1994) suggested "that the social construction of sports injury is linked to the reproduction of male force, which in turn tends to be linked to the broader subjugation of alternative masculinities and femininity" (p. 192). However, their study did not clearly illustrate how the men's experiences of pain and injury were related to the subjugation of women or femininities. Moreover, they stated that the interviewees "were extremely reluctant to recognize sport as 'a primary masculinity-validating experience' ... although their accounts provided powerful evidence to the contrary"

(Young et al., 1994, p. 191). In this respect, I would have found it interesting to hear why the interviewees did not view sport as closely related to proving manliness, and how, in fact, they viewed their lived sport experiences. Indeed, as with previous sport and masculinity researchers (e.g. Schacht, 1996; Messner, 1992; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990), Young et al. did not appear to allow for the athletes' voices to be roundly heard: the theoretical voice in many respects dominated, and many questions were left unexamined.

Lather (1992) commented that a growing concern with researchers with liberatory intentions is that they are apt to impose "meanings on situations, rather than constructing meanings through negotiations with research participants..." (p. 95). In this respect, further research into male sport violence and gender issues could be advantaged by encouraging the researcher(s) and researched to work more closely together in drawing conclusions.

In contrast to Young et al. (1994), where all but two of their interviewees returned to active sport participation, Sparkes and Smith's (1999) examined the embodied experiences of four highly committed male athletes who became disabled with spinal cord injuries while playing rugby union. The interviewees, in Sparkes and Smith's English study, talked about how their bodies were often experienced in a state of "primary immediacy" (p. 79) prior to the injuries. In other words, in a state where the bodies' capabilities were taken for granted almost unconsciously, but at the same time there was an experienced unity between body and self. In this way, Sparkes and Smith described the athlete's body, prior to injury, as an "absent presence" (p. 80). However, following the spinal cord injuries the interviewees became acutely aware of their bodies, as the body became paradoxically "disharmonious from the self and inescapably embodied" (p. 81). For each athlete, this disrupted body-self led to devalued and troublesome notions of self.

In contrast to Messner (1992), Schacht (1996), and Sabo and Panepinto (1990); Sparkes and Smith (1999) clearly viewed 'identity' as multiple, and with respect to these multiple identities, they asserted that the athletic identity with its close ties to the masculine identity appeared to be placed close to the apex of an identity hierarchy for the ex-athletes with spinal injuries. As a result, the loss of this athletic/masculine identity was extremely difficult to cope with. Although the interviewees were physically disabled they still constructed their sense of self in

relation to hegemonic masculinity, and this had the unfortunate effect of making it difficult to "narratively reconstruct their sense of self" (p. 88). In conclusion, Sparkes and Smith were critical of the links between rugby and dominant conceptions of masculinity; as these links acted to marginalise alternative narrative resources of masculinity, and therefore, acted to entrench problematic identities for the men with sporting disabilities.

Questioning the salience of masculinities in sports of risk

The research by Messner (1992), Sabo and Panepinto (1990), Schacht (1996) and Sparkes and Smith (1999) concluded that a hegemonic form of masculinity was the prime social factor associated with the construction of the male athletes' identities in contexts of sport. In contrast, de Garis (2000) conducted a 10-month ethnography in a New York city boxing gym, in part, to question the "presumption of masculinity in boxing" (p. 87). de Garis was concerned that the concept of the gender order, as used by Messner (1992), was a bipolar system in which the behaviours of male athletes were viewed as either disrupting or contributing to the gender order. Specifically, he wondered how the notion of the gender order as an 'all or nothing' theoretical platform could accommodate ambiguous or contradictory male sporting experiences. He therefore raised the possibility that "men's and women's identities are not formed around an axis of gender, and that some discourses, logics, and practices are simply 'there', 'other, or 'different'..." (p. 91). With these concerns in mind de Garis conducted his ethnography.

De Garis (2000) reported that boxing is primarily a solitary practice with social contact occurring only during sparring and in the locker rooms. He therefore concentrated on these social interactions, as it was here that de Garis claimed that social identities were formed and expressed. Although the image of sparring is one of violence, he reported that mutual trust was the most important ingredient within sparring to help avoid injury. Further, he characterised the men's relationship within sparring as a partnership that, at times, even provided "opportunities for touching experiences of warmth and sharing" (p. 100). He concluded that sparring, although performed within a context of violence, was a co-operative and shared experience of "somatic intimacy" (p. 100). In addition, de Garis reported that although a diverse range of behaviours and talk, some problematic, existed in the

gym culture; that the 'older' adult men were a factor that encouraged intimate locker room conversations that rejected the objectification of women. De Garis speculated: "Perhaps as adult men develop intimate relationships with females and children, they also develop empathy for girls' and women's issues" (p. 105). He asserted that age, not gender, was the primary axis for verbal intimacy.

De Garis (2000) concluded: "the broad range of men's behaviours and ideologies exhibited in this study presents problems for the theorization of gender .... I suggest that the egalitarian discourses and practices in the Gym neither disrupt nor contribute to broad relations of male dominance" (pp. 105-106). In addition, he reported that there was "no evidence to suggest that the men in this study considered their practices and ideologies as either subversive or supportive of male dominance" (p. 104). In this respect, de Garis called into question the salience of 'masculinity' for understanding men's experiences in sports of violence.

De Garis was not the first to question this salience. Curry (1993), for example, concluded from his life history analysis of the epiphanic moments of a male wrestler (Sam) that "masculinity needs or issues" (p. 287) were only to the fore during Sam's early life. After twelve years of age, Curry contended that Sam entered an 'identity tunnel' and that "career concerns" (p. 287) became of more importance. At this stage, Curry reported that Sam actually appreciated wrestling pain as it helped reaffirm his 'wrestling' identity. However, although masculinity issues were no longer of prime importance, Curry reported that Sam, at times, still felt obligated to appear manly or tough.

The symbolic interactionist research of Albert (1999) on the subculture of serious cyclists and Hunt (1995) on the experiences of deep-sea divers, also questioned the salience of gender in understanding identity formation in sports of risk. Both researchers noted that male and female accounts of risk and injury tended to be indistinguishable. Hunt, for example, stated that "male and female divers travel along the same career path and normalize risk in similar ways" (p. 456). Hunt reported: "women are not passive victims who readily submit to 'male' definitions, but rather people who actively negotiate risk in cultural context. Like men, they expand their constructions of risk in order to achieve competency and status in deep diving subculture" (p. 456). Albert drew similar conclusions to Hunt and argued that risk-taking behaviour could be explained "as reinforcing hegemonic masculinity" (p. 169), but that it was more appropriate to "understand

risk in the ways it is formulated as a lived experience of sport" (p. 169). Albert concluded that risk should be understood as a central element that helps constitute participation and membership identification. He rejected the "trend to view such behaviours as merely the expression of a repressive hierarchy or hegemonic masculinity" (p. 169).

However, as a criticism of their conclusions, I suggest that Hunt (1995) and Albert (1999) appeared to neglect the 'macro' workings of discourses of gender. Firstly, they did not discuss the broader social forces that contributed to the clear male dominance in these sports of physical risk. Secondly, they did not address how the dominance of males in these sports of risk would likely act to circulate discourses of masculinities to the wider communities. Nevertheless, critical feminist studies of women's participation in sports of risk help indicate that female athletes enjoy many aspects of participation, despite potential conflict with dominating discourses of femininities, and that they often construct similar understandings to their male counterparts with regards to sporting pain and pleasure (e.g. Carle & Nauright 1999; Wheatley, 1994; Young & White, 1995).

The conclusions drawn by an array of researchers (e.g. Albert, 1999; Carle & Nauright 1999; Curry, 1993; de Garis, 2000; Hunt, 1995; Wheatley, 1994; Young & White, 1995) help illustrate that multiple discursive forces appear influential in the constitution of athletic subjectivities in sporting contexts of physical challenge and risk. This research, therefore, raises concerns of whether the importance of 'masculinity' has been overestimated by the researchers who have used the concept of hegemonic masculinity for exploring gender issues in sport (e.g. Connell, 1990; Messner, 1992; Young et al., 1994). Young and White (2000), for example, recently stated that in activities such as marathon running, dance and yoga, "the norms of the sport-specific culture itself may have relatively little to do with gender" (p. 115).

Recent writings have also raised the issue of whether masculinity and sport research has unduly focused on the *negative* aspects associated with sport, injuries and the production of masculinities. McKay, Messner and Sabo (2000), for example, stated that the critical feminist writings portrayed sport negatively "as a hostile cultural space for boys to grow up in and to develop relationships with one another and with women" (p. 6). In light of this apparent negativity they suggested further questions for researchers to reflect on:

> ...during the same decades that the critical work on the male sports experience were gathering scholarly mass and momentum, girls and women were entering sport in ever-increasing numbers .... In this context, scholars who critiqued men's sports were sometimes chided with the question, Why were so many girls and women flocking to enter an institutional setting that's so harmful to boys and men? The question is overly simplistic, but a more serious question deserves some attention. Have sport studies scholars overstated the extent to which sport is a conservative institution that largely reproduces existing inequalities, while ignoring or downplaying the range and diversity of existing sport activities? (pp. 6-7)

Given the questions of concern raised about the conclusions drawn from the hegemonic masculinity studies (e.g. Albert, 1999; Carle & Nauright 1999; Curry, 1993; de Garis, 2000; Hunt, 1995; McKay et al., 2000; Young & White, 1995) there appears to be rich areas in need of further research. One important area in need of further analysis relates specifically to the tenability of the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a tool for understanding sport and masculinities dynamics. Rowe (1998), for example, recognised the value of the critical investigations of sport violence and gender but suggested that for future studies of sport to avoid redundancy and repetition there is a need for a more reflexive and pluralistic research approach, and for a reappraisal of how power and resistance operates. In making these suggestions Rowe's aim was "not to play down manifest and persistent inequalities" as reflected in sport and gender issues, but to encourage researchers "to avoid the writing of the narrative in advance and following the script of inevitable defeat .... and to evade and confront ossified and highly ritualized protocols of classification and response" (p. 248).

More pointedly, Star (1999b) argued that Connell's "tentatively poststructuralist multiple masculinities" (p. 41) framework is hampered by the "rather moribund 'power-over/down' hegemony model" (p. 40) and that "Foucault's radical retheorising of power" (p. 40) has helped revitalise gender research concerned with femininities. Indeed, a growing number of poststructural feminists have found the ideas of Foucault useful for investigating issues of gender associated with female sports and exercise contexts (e.g. Bordo, 1993; Chapman,

1997; Cole, 1994; Duncan, 1994; Eskes, Duncan & Miller, 1998; Markula, 1995; Shogan, 1999; Star, 1999a, 1999b). Yet relatively few (e.g. Heikkala, 1993; Pringle, 2001a, 2002) have used an exclusive Foucauldian approach to investigate issues of manliness and sport. Andrews (2000), for example, reported:

> Strangely, in recent times Foucault has been largely neglected by the growing band of productive scholars interested in examining the relationship between sport and the male/masculine form. This oversight would appear destined to be rectified, as Foucauldian theorizing offers blatantly fruitful strategies for challenging the blithe, uncritical celebration of sport's status as a natural male domain, by problematizing the mutually constitutive discursive linkage between sport and masculinity. (p. 125)

Nevertheless, a small number of researchers have combined Foucauldian and Gramscian ideas, such as the master concepts of discourse and hegemony, to examine issues of sport and manliness (e.g. Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Næss, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Young et al., 1994). Yet this also raises the issue of whether the philosophical and pragmatic views of Foucault and Gramsci are compatible? Moreover, I suggest that the prime issue of concern is whether the Gramscian inspired concept of masculine hegemony is an effective tool for understanding gendered subjectivities and power relations under the conditions of late modernity or whether a turn to Foucauldian tools could offer advantages. In the following section, I compare and contrast the theoretical tools of Gramsci and Foucault.

Gramsci and Foucault: A comparison of theoretical 'tools'

Although some may view Gramsci's work as an extension of Marxism, and Foucault's as a rejection, in many respects both Gramsci and Foucault's ideas grew from dissatisfactions with Marxism. Therefore, the two bodies of thought share many concerns and ontological similarities. Cole (1993), for example, considered Foucault's work concerning the body and power as an elaboration, in part, of Althusser's "discussion of the reproduction of the state" (p. 85), and Althusser was influenced strongly by Gramsci. Not surprisingly, a small number of commentators have argued that with certain modifications there is a basis for convergence

between Foucault and Gramsci (e.g. Cocks, 1989; Holub, 1992; Kenway, 1990; Olssen, 1999; Smart, 1986). Kenway, for example, stated that for pragmatic reasons Foucault is usefully complemented by a "post-structuralist reading of Gramsci" (p. 172). Olssen (1999) suggested that Gramsci's more "unitarist approach" resulted in the use of terms like "cultural and moral leadership, cultural hegemony, and so on" but these could be adjusted "to echo Foucault's mode of expression, where he speaks in the plural of 'hegemonies', 'knowledges, ' regimes of truth' and so on" (p. 102). Olssen concluded "in the final analysis, Gramsci and Foucault present a more powerful perspective on social structure taken together than each does on his own" (p. 110). Yet for others, such as Geras (1990) and Gruneau (1993), Foucauldian and Gramscian ideas remain incompatible; the ontological foundations are believed to be too divergent. So what are the similarities and differences?

At heart both Foucault and Gramsci were materialists who recognised the importance of language and 'intellectuals' in helping form social realities (Olssen, 1999). They also had relatively similar ideas towards the workings of power. They rejected that power is a possession that could be held and instead viewed power as working relationally (Holub, 1992). Hence, they understood that power 'worked' through the actions of people. In this sense, they believed that power is omnipresent. Holub, for example, stated that Foucault and Gramsci shared a belief that power is "produced from within systems and subsystems of social relations, in the interactions, in the microstructures that inform the practices of everyday life" (p. 199). In addition, both Foucault and Gramsci viewed power as productive, as opposed to just repressive, as its workings were assumed to produce social meanings, relations and identities (Cocks, 1989; Olssen, 1999). They also believed that people do not have equal access in their ability to exercise power, hence, they assumed that power relations are often problematic (Holub, 1992). Finally, they asserted, in their own distinctive ways, that dominating groups' abilities to exercise power or maintain their privileged positions are always subject to change and resistance.

A prime difference between Foucault and Gramsci, however, is their beliefs about how the inequalities in power relations are formed (Cocks, 1989). Holub stated "it would seem that Gramsci's insistence on the ubiquity of power is of secondary importance when compared to his analysis of the hierarchical structure

of power" (p. 200). Gramsci believed that there is a "directedness of power in power relations" and that the "directedness of power originates somewhere, and proceeds with a certain purpose" (Holub, 1992, p. 200). Hence, Gramsci "maps some of the locations of the headquarters of power" (p. 201) with the notion that by identifying which group(s) exercise greater power, counterhegemonic strategies could be designed and implemented to help achieve a more egalitarian society. More specifically, Gramsci (1971) stated that political and cultural hegemony was always "based on the decisive function of the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity" (p. 161). Indeed, Gramsci's overriding concern with class, as Gruneau (1993) stated, has continued "to dominate Gramsci's legacy" (p. 100). Yet Gruneau also warned that he was not sure whether this concern with class could "be so easily wished away simply by piggybacking a consideration of nonclass struggles onto the analysis of hegemony" (p. 100). In summary, Gramsci appeared to accept the existence of a binary division between dominators and the dominated or between different *classes* of people (Olssen, 1999). This concern with different classes and the workings of power have subsequently influenced Connell (1983, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2002) and Messner's (1988, 1990c, 1992) work on masculinities.

In contrast, Foucault (1978a) did not reject the importance of the State but the idea that power was easily locatable and that a binary division existed between the ruled and rulers. He argued there is "no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body" (p. 94). He warned that the analyses of power "must not assume that the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the over-all unity of a domination are given at the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms power takes" (p. 92). In this manner, Foucault asserted that influential groups do not arrive at their position because they have power, but they become influential due to the workings of discourse. He was, therefore, interested in the material connections between discourse, power and truth.

Another prime difference between Gramsci and Foucault related to their focus or lack of focus on the body: Gramsci tended to omit reference to the body while Foucault highlighted the centrality of the body as a site for the workings of discourse/power. Gruneau (1993) asserted:

> A neo-Gramscian perspective can certainly accommodate discussion of the representation of the body as a bearer of social and political meanings, but it has much greater difficulty discussing how bodies are variously constituted .... For Gramsci, all people are intellectuals, and their capacity to act as conscious agents interests him far more than any unconscious choreography of authority that might be sedimented in the body. (p. 99)

In contrast, Foucault (1977a) asserted that the body was emersed in a political field, where the workings of discourse/power "invest it, mark it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (p. 25). Foucault was interested in the discursive processes that constituted a body's postures, thoughts, performances, social interactions and subjectivities. His theoretical focus on the body has been recognised as playing a leading part, in conjunction with feminist writings, in producing the recent increased interest in embodiment, sport and gender relations (Light & Kirk, 2000; Loy et al., 1993). The focus on the body has also informed research on the construction of masculinity (e.g. Connell, 1995; Light & Kirk, 2000).

In a simplistic contrasting summary: Gramsci traced the working of ideologies back to a ruling group(s), whereas Foucault connected the workings of power to omnipresent discourses but avoided fingering a set group as responsible for producing or controlling these discourses. Foucault perceived of regimes of truth without a Master, yet he asserted that each discourse had a specific history and that the power effect of each discourse remained influential through specific social mechanisms or tactics. Foucault recognised that there were dominating and subordinated groups, but the dominating groups were not the starting point of his analysis. Smart (1986) summarised the differences between Foucault and Gramsci:

> Analytically Foucault's work pries open the problem of hegemony in so far as it decentres the question of the state, introduces a non-reductionist conception of power, and displaces the concept of ideology, through which Gramsci sought to theorise questions of 'intellectual and moral leadership' central to the achievement of hegemony, with analyses of the relations of 'truth' and 'power' through which 'men (sic) govern (themselves and others)'. (p. 162)

In the following sections I raise questions of concern related to the research that has used the concept of masculine hegemony, as derived from Gramsci, to examine sport, violence and masculinities, and offer some suggestions of how a Foucauldian informed perspective might prove advantageous.

Power, sport and hegemonic masculinities

Although an advantage of Gramsci's concept of hegemony is that it can allow "for cultural experiences such as sports to be understood as both exploitative and worth while" (Hargreaves & McDonald, 2000, p. 50), the hegemonic masculinity research has concentrated on revealing the exploitative or negative. Male sport, therefore, has possibly been portrayed rather narrowly. In contrast, Foucault's (1978a) perspective of power could encourage a more rounded focus on sport and masculinity to help understand the complex and, at times, ambiguous workings of power. Foucault was highly critical of the notion that power stems, in essence, from one group. He was concerned that such a perspective acts to obscure a myriad of different ways that power can operate. Further, Foucault insisted on the fragmentation of multiple axes of power, with individuals implicated in power and resistance in a multiplicity of different ways at the same time. A Foucauldian influenced investigation of sport, masculinities and power could broaden the focus of sport and gender investigations to consider multiple forms of power that allows for 'multiple' and more fluid views of social structures and subjectivities. This perspective of power could inform that sport "cannot be understood purely as conformity or rebellion..." (Lenskyi, 1994, p. 358).

This broadened perspective of power informed Tomlinson's (1998) concerns with respect to Sage's (1990) influential text on hegemony and sport. Tomlinson argued that Sage represented sport as a prime cultural setting in which the hegemonic power structures in capitalist societies were continually fortified:

> ... the picture that is portrayed is of a monolithic power structure in sports against which some resistance might be possible, and such resistance is linked to transformation. It is an all-or-nothing model of resistance, which separates the process of resistance from the power dynamic itself. The Sage vision could be formulated syllogistically: You are powerful; I/we resist;

> things change. For all its sociological subtlety, and its acknowledgement of the importance of hegemony theory in which is recognized the interactive and reflexive dimensions of the power relation, Sage's model is not an adequate portrayal of the dynamics of power within sport cultures and practices. (p. 237)

Tomlinson was concerned that the dualistic-like model of hegemonic power (e.g. consent-resistance) did not allow for readings of power that could accommodate the ambiguities and contradictions of sporting experiences.

Messner and Sabo (1990) also recognised the problem of unitarist or monolithic perspectives of power. In consequence they modified Gramsci's analytical framework in an attempt to utilise a "nonhierarchical theory" (p. 10) that recognised multiple and dynamically interdependent axes of power. Through doing so they aimed to not privilege one form of power "at the expense of distorting or ignoring the others" (p. 10). Nevertheless the multiple axes of power were still considered by Messner and Sabo to "represent various forms of oppression: class, race, gender, age, and sexual preference..." (p. 11). In this manner, they viewed power as existing in multiple ways but as working in a manner that either privileged or harmed certain groups of people. Messner's (1992) research, therefore, tended to draw relatively bold conclusions that gave hint to 'monolithic' power configurations. More specifically, his conclusions had a propensity to be framed with respect to whether sport *affirmed* or *resisted* masculine hegemony. Yet, such a perspective makes it difficult to understand, for example, how sport may work in seemingly contradictory ways with respect to the construction of gendered subjectivities that are multiple and fragmented.

A turn to Foucauldian tools could be helpful as it could encourage researchers to be wary of drawing categorical conclusions with respect to the diffuse workings of power. Moreover, such a turn could help with recognising how the workings of competing discourses can create seemingly contradictory experiences and subjectivities. Davies (1989), for example, stated that Foucauldian theorising "allows me to focus on the contradictions in my experience, not as failures of rational thought but as the creative source of new understandings, new discourses" (p. 139). In similar manner, Foucauldian ideas have also helped me understand my own complex and contradictory relationship with rugby. For

example, I acknowledge that I have been relatively privileged as a 'masculine', pakeha (i.e. a white New Zealander), heterosexual, able-bodied ex-rugby player, yet I also recognise how I have been adversely disciplined by the same discourses that helped constitute my socially privileged position. More specifically, because I was constituted as a masculine, able-bodied, heterosexual pakeha, I was disciplined to participate in rugby, hence these 'privileging' discourses also subjected me to the risks of rugby. In this respect, Foucauldian tools have helped me understand my seemingly contradictory relationship with rugby, the on-going tensions that I have with the sport, and rugby's influence on the constitution of my complex and fragmented subjectivity.

Although some of the critical studies of sportsmen (e.g. Messner, 1992; Connell, 1990; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990) illustrated that masculine subjectivities were constructed through processes that were often discontinuous and contradictory and that some male athletes even experienced sport as such, the general conclusions drawn by the hegemonic masculinity researchers tended to paint the sportsmen as a relatively homogeneous group. The sportsmen, for example, were typically represented as exemplars and embodiments of hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, heavy-contact sports were presented as producers of sportsmen with problematic attitudes, personalities and lifestyles. Yet I wonder if these conclusions unfairly caricature male athletes? De Garis (2000) questioned that if specific sport practices are delineated "as hegemonic or resistant to dominant ideologies" (p. 90), then how can we recognise the existence of egalitarian or admirable practices within problematic male cultures? Indeed, although I am critical of particular aspects of heavy-contact sports I accept they are not wholly problematic, but are complex arenas of social interaction in which multiple and contradictory discourses circulate.

For example, although elite sport is a highly competitive environment, it is also highly co-operative: participants work within teams and even opposing teams co-operate in order to participate against each other. Sports played in 'violent' contexts' often celebrate strength and power, but they are also arenas that can reveal fears, weaknesses and embodied limitations, and although players are typically prepared to inflict pain on others and be injured, sporting environments are also ones in which males can legitimately care for and support each other, and show seemingly contradictory concern for keeping their own bodies healthy.

Sporting contexts also allow males legitimate opportunities to openly celebrate, commiserate and, at times, cry. In addition, although particular male sport environments have been repeatedly shown to support homophobia (e.g. Rowe, 1995) they are also environments where men openly hug, share emotions and develop close friendships. Overall though the hegemonic masculinity research (e.g. Messner, 1992; Sabo and Panepinto, 1990; Schacht, 1996; Young et al., 1994) has tended to downplay the caring and even altruistic behaviours that may occur in sports of danger through focusing on negative outcomes.

Male participants in sporting contexts of violence do not just exist in these 'problematic environments' but are subject to a broader range of social forces, including discourses of ethical behaviour. Yet the research conclusions drawn by the hegemony theorists tend not to reveal the players' subjectivities as divergent, fragmented or contradictory. In this manner I am concerned that these studies, perhaps through *narrowly focusing on the men's sporting experiences*, may not have represented the rich dynamics of the male athlete's subjectivities. At the least there is a further need to understand how sportsmen construct meanings from their complex experiences of pain, fear and embodied sporting enjoyment, and how these meanings meld, intersect, disrupt, or support discourses of gender. Markula et al. (2001) reported that the "critical paradigm has been critiqued for ignoring the diversity of subjective experiences in society. In other words, the critical theorists have been accused of imposing their theoretical notions ... without enough consultation with the people concerned" (p. 254). Relatedly, de Garis (2000) suggested that there is further need to examine and reveal how the athletes *themselves* attribute meanings to their diverse behaviours.

Connell's (1995) theoretical framework clearly warned of the danger of oversimplification through collapsing multiple masculinities into typologies. In addition, his utilisation of the life history approach for understanding the construction of masculine identities has helped reveal the complexities and tensions of the identity construction processes for a variety of men. Yet I am concerned that Connell's theorisation of four broad categories of masculinities (e.g. hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised) may have *indirectly* acted to make it difficult for researchers to account for 'fluid' subjectivities. Given the internal logic of the multiple masculinities paradigm, for example, it is difficult to understand how one could represent an individual whose bodily performances could be

interpreted as hegemonic and marginal at the same time. Miller (1998a), for example, concluded that "it is doubtful that the concept of hegemonic masculinity" (p. 201) could help us understand the complexities associated with Ian Roberts' subjectivities – a gay, heavily muscled, ex-professional rugby league player with a reputation for brawling. It would be problematic, for example, to try and categorise Roberts as *either* an embodiment or exemplar of hegemonic or marginalized masculinity. Miller argued that Roberts' subjectivity is possibly more complex than the multiple masculinities framework allows us to understand.

Others have also expressed concern with the concept of masculine hegemony and the framework of multiple masculinities (e.g. Donaldson, 1993; Kraack, 1999; Miller, 1998a; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Donaldson (1993), for example, has raised questions about the multiple masculinities paradigm, particularly with respect to the viability of using elite male sport participants as consistent exemplars of hegemonic masculinity. He stated:

> A football star is a model of hegemonic masculinity. But is he a model? When the handsome Australian Rules football player, Warwick 'the tightest shorts in sports' Caper, combined football with modelling, does this confirm or decrease his exemplary status? When Wally ('the King') Lewis explained that the price he will pay for another five years playing in the professional Rugby League is the surgical replacement of both his knees, this is undoubtedly the stuff of good, old, tried and true, tough and stoic, masculinity. But how powerful is a man who mutilates his body, almost as a matter of course, merely because of a job? When Lewis announced that he was quitting the very prestigious 'State of Origin' football series because his year-old daughter had been diagnosed as hearing-impaired, is this hegemonic? (p. 647)

Donaldson (1993) concluded that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is "as slippery and difficult as the idea of masculinity itself" (p. 644).

I argue that the 'slipperiness' of hegemonic masculinity is partially because the concept is attempting to represent an unstable or contextually bound amalgam of multiple and independent discourses. Hegemonic masculinity, for example, is typically defined in relation to discourses of sexualities (e.g. heterosexual and

homosexual), affects (e.g. emotional toughness, resilience and work ethics), appearances (e.g. muscular and staunch) and behaviours (e.g. aggressive, sexist, homophobic and violent). Yet these multiple discourses are not mutually dependent. Hegemonic masculinity as a culturally exalted term is a term of generalisation. And generalisations, although useful for helping understand 'big picture' accounts, can be problematic. Wetherell and Edley (1999), for example, asserted that "...hegemonic masculinity is not sufficient for understanding the nitty gritty of negotiating masculine identities and men's identities strategies" (p. 336). The generalised notion of hegemonic masculinity, therefore, may lack ability to account for specifics and contradictory nuances at the micro-levels of society.

Miller (1998b) was also concerned by the relative rigidity of how the theory of hegemonic masculinity constructs subjectivities. He asked rhetorically:

> ...can hegemonic masculinity allow for theoretical diversity and historical change, and for those times when men are not being men, when their activities might be understood as discontinuous, conflicted, and ordinary, rather than interconnected, functional, and dominant – when nothing they do relates to the overall domination of women or their own self formation as a gendered group? (p. 433)

Miller (1998b) suggested that although individuals are always gendered, it is not useful to think that gender can 'explain' all behaviours. In this sense, Miller questions whether the concept of hegemonic masculinity directs too much attention to the place of gender in the construction of subjectivities, while tending to overlook or underestimate the constituting influence of a range of other discourses. A turn to Foucault's 'poststructuralist' ideas that are not framed with the ready-made or structuralist assumption that a hegemonic form of masculinity *structures* the gender order could, therefore, be helpful for analysing sport and masculinities.

Power, intentional rule and resistance

Gramsci's legacy concerning the centrality of class has manifested itself in the hegemonic masculinity research concerning masculinities and sport. The hegemonic masculinity theorists, for example, have typically portrayed sport as closely influenced by "upper- and middle-class, white, heterosexual men"

(Messner, 1992, p. 18) and as an institution that provides ideological support for the same group. Burstyn (1999), more pointedly, has vividly mapped links between sport culture, mass media, consumerism, big business, men's bodies and the pervasion of hegemonic masculinity. The hegemonic masculinity literature, therefore, has strongly intimated connective links between ruling group(s) of men, male sport and the gender order. Hegemony theory, more generally, has a tendency to hold the ruling group(s) as *intentionally* or *unconsciously* responsible for inequitable power relations (e.g. Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Yet is it appropriate to intimate that ruling groups of men, such as perhaps Connell's (2002) notion of the 'transnational businessmen', are intentionally or unconsciously involved in structuring sport to help maintain cultural dominance?

The notion of "intentional rule" can be problematic (Cocks, 1989, p. 33). Cocks, as a poststructural feminist, for example, vigorously critiqued radical feminism by stating that it is far too simplistic to represent males as holders of power "who wield power self-consciously and with malignant intent" (p. 123), and the oppressed sex as "powerless, innocent, and blind..." (p. 123). In contrast, she drew on Foucault's notion of power as omnipresent, to argue that we all play a role in the regime of truth she labels 'masculine/feminine'. Cocks, therefore, argued that both males and females help structure gender relations. In this manner, we should not necessarily think that a ruling group of men devise and orchestrate select discourses of masculinity in order to gain patriarchal benefit from them. Yet such sentiment does not imply that privileged men "do not consciously pursue goals that in fact advance their own position" (Bordo, 1993, p. 174): so "we must ask whether those enjoying the prerogatives of social power are by the same token the self-conscious authors and masters of socio-cultural life" (Cocks, 1989, p. 183).

The Foucauldian critique of 'intentional rule' casts concern on the assertion that to understand how a particular definition of masculinity becomes dominant, it is pertinent to examine "how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" (Carrigan, et al., 1987, p. 179). In addition, it problematises Messner's (1990b) contention that successful male athletes in heavy-contact sports are, in effect, marginalised men "who are sacrificed in order that the elite may have a clear sense of where they stand in the pecking order of inter-male dominance" (p. 214): as Messner's conclusion intimates the existence of an 'elite'

group of men who are able to critically reflect on and help shape masculinity relations for their own advantages. Although a Foucauldian examination would likely be concerned with examining the tactical productivity of discourses that help support dominant groups, and how they help sustain regimes of truth that act to marginalise other ways of knowing, such an examination would not begin with the assumption that a 'top' group is able to consciously direct "the overall movement of power relations" (Bordo, 1993, p. 144). A Foucauldian examination of the workings of power in male sport would not specifically aim to identify 'ruling' groups but would likely aim to examine the power effects of discourses of gender and the "strategical integration" of these discourses within sporting contexts (Foucault, 1978a, p. 102). Relatedly, a Foucauldian conceptualisation of power could help examine the apparent dilemma raised by Miller (1998a): "that everywhere that one turns, men seem to be *in* power, but everywhere one listens, they seem to feel power*less*..." (p. 195).

Foucault and Gramsci also differ with respect to employing counter-hegemonic strategies or to engineering acts of resistance. A Gramscian approach theorises about hegemonic origins and allows for the identification of select counter-hegemonic strategies for the purposes of emancipation. With respect to examinations of sport violence, some researchers have suggested counter-hegemonic strategies that could be used to challenge the ill effects stemming from the heavy-contact male sport (e.g. Birrell & Richter, 1987; Burstyn, 1999; Kidd, 1990). Over a decade ago Birrell and Richter (1987), for example, asserted that male sports promote patriarchal ideology through emphasising competition, elitism, and a rigid hierarchy of authority. They suggested that a counter-hegemonic strategy would promote an alternative model of sport that "is process oriented, collective, inclusive, supportive, and infused with an ethic of care" (p. 395).

Birrell and Richter's (1987) recommendations sound helpful and promising yet I have two reservations with respect to their well-intended counter-hegemonic strategies. Firstly, they tend to assume there are ethical and unethical ways of playing sport, while overlooking that different people view the world differently, and each may react differently, even contradictorily, in similar situations. Secondly, I am concerned that the counter-hegemonic strategies could result in the dominance of 'hypermasculine' sports simply being replaced with a new hegemony

or dominance that similarly disciplines and divides people internally and externally. In this respect, I feel uneasy with Burstyn's (1999) call to shift the emphasis from aggressive and competitive to co-operative and expressive sports of "mutual benefit" (p. 276). In essence, my concern with counter-hegemonic movements is that they do not lead to real emancipation but may replace one form of domination with another. Foucault (1988a), for example, asserted that he did not believe that there could be a society without "relations of power" (p. 18).

This seemingly pessimistic view does not appear helpful for devising pragmatic tactics to challenge the dominance of heavy-contact male-dominated sports. In contrast, Rojek (2001) offered a more tolerant view of counter-hegemonic strategies. He stated "although emancipatory politics has not succeeded in eliminating exploitation, inequality, and oppression, it has substantially freed social life from the fetters of tradition and custom, thus creating the conditions in which life politics flourishes" (p. 116). Rojek accepted that people are never autonomous from the workings of power but that counter-hegemonic tactics have helped achieve certain positive ends. Yet how could Foucauldian ideas be useful for challenging the dominance of 'male' sports played in contexts of violence? In the next section I attempt to answer this question by investigating Foucault's prime political research tool - genealogy.

Resistance as genealogy

Although Foucault is often criticised for apparently side-stepping issues of how to transform society, Olssen (1999) asserted that Foucault was primarily concerned with changing the social world. However, Foucault's strategies of resistance did not centre on revolutionary tactics for changing social structures, but related to more localised and less co-ordinated approaches focused on the connections between discourse and subjectivity. More specifically, in his later works, Foucault (1986) directed his attention to the techniques or ethics of self-management that focused on the care of the self as a process related to social politics. He stressed that ethical work is inherently political, as caring for the self implies caring for others also. Yet Foucault stressed that the ability to care for the self, as opposed to 'knowing thy self', revolved around a critical awareness of the various effects of regimes of truth.

Foucault's (1977b) prime research tool for aiming to help raise critical consciousness of the workings of discourse/power was genealogy. A specific aspect of genealogical analysis - the analysis of emergence - is concerned with examining the historical workings, shifts and junctures of relations of power between people. Through undertaking various genealogical studies, Foucault (1977b) asserted that current power relations are not secure but are subject to change, and people can be active in attempting to change the workings of power. However, he warned that this political task is fraught with problems: primarily due to the complexity of attempting to understand the workings of discourse/power in conjunction with the workings of contingency. Thus, it is possible that individuals or groups with specific political intentions can enact social change in a way that eventually acts *against* their desires. The luxury of historical hindsight has revealed many such political backfires (e.g. the New Zealand Rugby Football Union's promotion of the South African rugby tour of 1981). Further, Foucault asserted that specific discourses can be used for alternative, even opposing, political endeavours. Hence, he was reluctant to offer 'universal' strategies for political problems.

Nevertheless, accusations that Foucault is a nihilist or apolitical can be refuted. His genealogical approach, for example, can be regarded as a political tool of resistance (Sawicki, 1991). Although Foucault was pessimistic about controlling the workings of power he was not resigned to accepting social practices or beliefs that he believed were unjust or unsound. His genealogy of discipline and punishment, for example, can be read as a protest against the dominant beliefs that informed penal practices (Foucault, 1977a). More generally his genealogical examinations of psychiatry, medicine and sexuality aimed to promote subjugated knowledges and marginalised voices as acts of resistance against oppressive social practices.

Thus in contrast to Gramsci, Foucault's political intentions were not driven by the modernist desire of universal emancipation or progress, but by the belief that people are never completely free from the workings of discourse and their associated relations of power. In this manner, a genealogical analysis of rugby in New Zealand could be employed as a tool to help problematise the dominance of this sport. Such a project could help individuals, particularly rugby players, reflect on how they have been constituted through the workings of discourse, and could be used to provide alternative ways of thinking, through promoting reverse discourses

of rugby and manliness that could help open up cracks of resistance. Yet there would be no guarantees that such a project would lead to a challenge of the dominance of rugby.

In addition, there have already been critical socio-historical studies of rugby development (e.g. Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Phillips, 1996a) that have, without using Foucauldian tools, helped illustrate and problematise the relationships between rugby and masculinities. Although, it can be argued that such texts have helped raise a critical consciousness with regard to rugby participation, it is difficult to ascertain their impact in helping challenge the dominance of rugby. Nevertheless, although Foucault was reluctant to promote specific tactics or strategies for social transformation, he provided a framework of ideas that he suggested could be used like 'tools' for research. He suggested that his books can be treated as tool boxes: "If people want to open them, to use a particular sentence, a particular idea, particular analysis like a screwdriver or a spanner ... so much the better!" (cited in Prior, 1998, p. 77).

Many politically inspired researchers, particularly feminist poststructuralists, have used his tools to help promote social change related to gender issues (e.g. Davies, 1997; Reed, 1999; Weedon, 1987). Their prime research strategy has revolved around the belief that discourses or narratives constitute identities and power relations and, therefore, there is benefit in promoting discursive resources that can be used to reconstruct or promote alternative, and hopefully less problematic, masculine subjectivities. Hence, although Foucault has been critiqued for being apolitical, his toolkit, under various guises, is now proving useful for helping devise strategies to help promote social change, but without the expectation that people will one day be emancipated from the problems of gender relations.

Summarising differences between Foucauldian and Gramscian tools

In the previous sections, I have highlighted some of the similarities and differences between Foucauldian and Gramscian thought. Although I primarily discussed the advantages of Foucauldian ideas, my suggestions are not a dogmatic treatise claiming that Foucauldian tools offer the best or only way to analyse sport and masculinities. Moreover, I take heed of Apple's (1998) comments about post-structural and neo-Marxist theoretical approaches:

> I suggest that there has been an overly defensive dismissal of "post' approaches by many leftist scholars and a much too rejectionist and essentializing dismissal of the many gains made by more "structural" traditions by postmodern and poststructural theorists. Instead of treating each other as something like enemies, I urge a different approach. I argue that we must let neo-marxist and postmodern and poststrucutral theories "rub up against each other." Neither is to be ignored. Each has something of crucial importance to teach us (pp. ix-x).

My comparison between Gramsci and Foucault revealed many similarities with regards to the workings of power and, as Apple (1998) urged, it would not be wise to dismiss the conceptual strengths that both offer. Nevertheless, I also suggest that the prime differences between Foucauldian and Gramscian thought are important and deserve critical attention. In essence, Gramsci's framework encourages researchers to view the workings of power through a somewhat structuralist lens, whereas the Foucauldian framework does not: this key difference underpins my reservations about how the concept of masculine hegemony has been used to investigate the links between masculinities and sport.

My reservations, in summary, relate to how some hegemony theorists have tended to focus on a presumed division between 'dominators' and the 'dominated', the notion of intentional or unconscious rule and its assumed links to a ruling group(s) and oppression of the marginalised, and the promotion of non-pluralist emancipatory counter-hegemonic strategies. Primarily, I am concerned that the concept of masculine hegemony does not simply refer to a dominant form of masculinity but that the concept, in itself, carries questionable ontological baggage, with particular respect to its underpinning assumptions of different classes of people and the workings of power. Moreover, given that Foucauldian tools have rarely been used to examine articulations between sport and masculinities, I suggest that a turn to Foucault could be advantageous for investigating these articulations and for representing the diversities and richness of male athletes' subjectivities.

In the following section I summarise my findings from my critical review of literature and introduce the prime research question that underpins this project.

Chapter Summary

Researchers who have critically examined male participants' understandings of sport, pain and masculinities have overwhelmingly used the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and have tended to portray elite sport as a prime producer of a problematic gender order and of *hard* unreflexive men imbued with sexist and homophobic values. However, a number of researchers have recently raised issues about the tenability of this grand conclusion and it appears that there are areas in need of further research (e.g. Albert, 1999; de Garis, 2000; McKay, et al., 2000; Miller, 1998a; Star, 1999a). For example, some researchers have questioned whether the critical masculinity researchers have overemphasised the salience of masculinity in drawing their conclusions (e.g. Albert, 1999; Carle & Nauright 1999; Curry, 1993; de Garis, 2000; Hunt, 1995; Wheatley, 1994; Young & White, 1995). Other social commentators have also raised the issue of whether the existing research has unduly focused on negative aspects associated with sport and masculinities (de Garis, 2000; McKay et al., 2000). In addition, other researchers, typically poststructuralists and/or postmodernists, have argued that new theoretical approaches are now needed to help guide future sport and masculinities research to help avoid redundancy and repetition (Rowe, 1998), and to avoid select theoretical issues associated with the structuralist concept of hegemonic masculinity (Miller, 1998a; Star, 1992, 1994b, 1999a). More specifically, Andrews (2000) and Star (1999a) advocated that Foucauldian tools would be particularly useful for future examinations of sport and masculinities.

Within my review of literature I also argued that the 'voices' of the male athletes, as represented in the existing literature on sport, pain and masculinities, were relatively silent on a number of important issues. Little is known, for example, about how male athletes' believe that their sporting experiences influence their understandings about masculinities and gender relations. In addition, little is known about how the athletes construct gendered understandings about the embodied *pleasures* and *fears* associated with participating in sports of corporeal risk. Thus, many questions remain unanswered or under examined about the relationships between sport and masculinities. More generally, I suggest that future research into sport and gender issues could be advantaged by encouraging the

researcher(s) and researched to work more closely together in drawing understandings and conclusions.

Within my review I also questioned whether the sport and masculinities research focused too tightly on the men's *sporting* experiences, and therefore underestimated many social forces, such as feminism and gay rights, that appear to have had pervasive influence on all men's lives. I suggested, for example, that there are now multiple and competing discourses that surround rugby and masculinities in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand. Yet the sport and masculinities research has rarely examined how sportsmen negotiate an understanding of self in relation to these multiple discourses or with respect to living under the condition of high modernity (for exceptions see Næss, 2001). Further research is, therefore, needed to help shed light on these issues.

Finally, the hegemonic masculinity research has overwhelmingly examined the experiences of elite level or serious athletes. Research, for example, has examined the understandings of a champion wrestler (Curry, 1993), highly committed players of rugby union (Sparkes & Smith, 1999), 'serious' American footballers (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990) and men who have retired from 'athletic careers' (Messner, 1992). Little is known, however, about how non-elite or non-serious sportsmen construct meanings about their sporting experiences. Yet this knowledge would be important for further understanding the gendering processes associated with sport. Hickey and Fitzclarence (1999), for example, stated:

> ...we want to argue that while the sporting spotlight is overwhelmingly filled with the glorification of celebrated maleness, those illuminated represent an infinitesimal sample of the numbers that loiter in its shadow .... We are concerned about the contradictions that emerge for young males between learning to be a 'real man' (in the parlance of sporting excellence) and learning to exist harmoniously in the 'real world' (amid altered work, social and gender relations). Somewhere between the mythology of 'sporting' maleness and post-modern regard for difference and ambivalence, young males must negotiate deeply contradictory directives as to the make up of acceptable masculinity. (p. 54)

To further understand articulations between sport and performances of masculinities it is, therefore, pertinent to examine how men who do not participate seriously in sports, and perhaps never have, negotiate an understanding of self in the face of the cultural dominance of sport. Such an examination would be particularly warranted within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Indeed, I am somewhat surprised that despite the recognised cultural influence of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand (e.g. MacLean, 1999; Nauright, 1996; Phillips, 1996a; Star, 1999b; Thompson, 1988) and its high corporeal and financial costs (e.g. Hume & Marshall, 1994; Quarrie et al., 2001), there has been very little research that has attempted to examine how the socio-cultural impact of rugby influences understandings of what it means to be 'manly'.

The purpose of this doctoral research can, in part, be viewed as an attempt to examine issues associated with heavy-contact sports and masculinities, within the context of rugby in Aotearoa/New Zealand, that address the problems or omissions as detailed above in this summary section. In the following section I introduce the prime research question of this thesis.

The research question

Through reflecting on my own rugby experiences (e.g. prologue), contextualising the place of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand (e.g. chapter three), and critically examining relevant literature concerned with sport and masculinities (e.g. chapter four) I became eager to explore select issues related to masculinities and rugby. More specifically I was keen to examine how a range of men, who had diverse experiences of rugby participation, constructed narratives and meanings about rugby, and how these understandings were linked with discourses of masculinities. To help focus my explorations I developed the following prime research question:

How do men's rugby experiences of fear, pain and/or pleasure articulate with discourses of masculinities?

Through asking this question I was interested to explore how discourses of rugby circulate in a manner to help produce subject positions, gender relations, and the place of importance of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand. More generally, I

wanted to understand how a diverse group of men believed that their rugby experiences of fear, pain and pleasure influenced their views of self as men and understandings of masculinities.

CHAPTER FIVE

The research process

Introduction

To help examine the prime research question of this thesis (*how do men's rugby experiences of fear, pain and/or pleasure articulate with discourses of masculinities*?) I collected data through conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with a purposefully selected group of fourteen men. My decision to conduct interviews was based, primarily, on the recognition that interviewing, as one of the most common interpretive research tools, is widely considered effective for examining how people experience and make meanings about complex social phenomena (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Kvale, 1996a, 1996b). More specifically, I considered that the interviewing process would allow the men to tell their stories about rugby in a manner that would reveal the complexities of their lived experiences, their understandings about masculinities and rugby, and the discursive resources that they used in constructing these understandings. Accordingly, I regarded interviewing as effective for disclosure of the workings of discourse/knowledge/power in relation to the men's lived experiences of rugby.

Selecting interview participants

The interview participants were selected in relation to the prime purpose of my research, which was to examine how men, with a diverse range of experiences in playing rugby, understood their experiences and how these understandings articulated with discourses of masculinities. To help select men for the study I used *purposeful sampling techniques* (e.g. Kvale, 1996b; MacDougall & Fudge, 2001; Patton, 1990). Patton (1990) stated that the "logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth" (p. 169). He further suggested that the overall success of a qualitative interview study is linked, in part, to the "information richness of the cases selected" (p. 185). The selection strategy I used was similar to what Patton called "maximum variation sampling" (p. 172), which aims to describe the meanings or understandings held by a range of

people who have been selected on the basis of specific yet diverse characteristics or experiences. Patton, for example, stated:

> When selecting a small sample of great diversity, the data collection and analysis will yield two kinds of findings: (1) high-quality, detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniqueness, and (2) important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity. (p. 172)

These "two kinds of findings" (Patton, 1990, p. 172) were important given the purpose of my study. Specifically, I wished to understand the uniqueness of how the interviewees made sense of their rugby experiences, but I also wanted to examine the broader influence of rugby with respect to how rugby was discursively linked to particular relations of power between men, and how experiences of rugby articulated with understandings of masculinities and stories of self. In this respect, and in following Sparkes' (1994) arguments about critical life-history research, I aimed to help connect the unique stories of a range of men with wider socio-political issues, in order to provide an academic text that had the potential to promote social change.

To help select the participants I identified several specific criteria. The prime criteria were that all interviewees had to be male, aged over twenty years and have had diverse experience of playing rugby. To help identify participants with a diverse range of rugby experiences I developed and utilised an imaginary rugby participation-commitment continuum. At one end of this continuum I envisaged men who had been highly committed rugby participants who at the very extreme, had played rugby professionally and with great passion. At the other end of this continuum, I envisaged men who had had little enthusiasm for, or experience of, rugby playing. I reflected that the 'middle' of my participation-commitment continuum would not necessarily be smooth or linear. I thought, for example, that there would likely be men who had quit participation in rugby while young but who were now highly committed televisual fans of elite rugby; and that there would also likely be other men, who perhaps like me, played rugby passionately into early adulthood, but were now relatively critical of aspects of the sport.

This participation-commitment continuum was helpful for locating men with diverse experiences of rugby. Yet this identification strategy only operated as an initial selection guideline, as the purposeful sampling process was flexible and evolved in relation to the interviewing process and my emerging understandings (e.g. Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; MacDougall & Fudge, 2001).

The men that I initially invited to be involved in the interview process were personal contacts. Over the past several years, given my interests in sport and masculinities, I had taken many opportunities to informally converse with a range of men about the place of rugby in their lives. From these conversations and use of the participation-commitment continuum, I invited several of these men to be the first interview participants. I contacted each of these men in person to outline my research intentions and to gauge their interest in participating in the project. All of the men I contacted responded favourably to my initial interview request. In accord, I sent each man, via the post, a formal introductory letter (Appendix A) and an information sheet (Appendix B) that provided further details about myself, the aims of my project, the research process, and the ethical rights of the research participants. Also included was a consent form (Appendix C): approved by the University of Waikato School of Education Ethics Committee. A few days after the research information had been posted I contacted each of these men to help clarify any points of concern and to ascertain if they would like to be involved in the research. All of the men agreed to be interview participants. At the beginning of each interview I reminded the men of their ethical rights and asked them if they would like to sign the consent forms: all did so.

Through undertaking and analysing these initial interviews I became aware of how a broad range of factors, such as family backgrounds, health conditions and body sizes, influenced different men's understandings about rugby. My emerging awareness of this range of factors subsequently aided in the selection of further men to interview: in this manner, my purposeful sample evolved. With respect to this evolving research process, I followed similar procedures with respect to contacting, informing and inviting additional men to be participants in the study.

Introducing the interview participants

In this section, I introduce the men who participated in the interviews, named with pseudonyms to protect their identities, and reveal my relationships

with these men. Summarised information about each man's age, occupation, rugby experience, and educational background is provided in Appendix D. The ages of the fourteen men ranged from 21 to 50 years, ten were born in Aotearoa/New Zealand, while four immigrated as children with their families. Of these four men, George was born in a colonial African country and identified himself as a Kiwi, Seamus self identified as an English-New Zealander, Derek as a North American, and Sebastian, who reported to be quarter Ethiopian, quarter Italian and half English, thought of himself as a citizen of the world. Of the men born in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Kahu, Willy and Darryl self-identified as Maori and the remaining seven considered themselves as Pakeha or as white/European New Zealanders.

Six of the men had completed under-graduate degrees, in subject areas as diverse as religious studies, computer science, physical education, biology, Maori, and biochemistry. Morris had a Doctorate in political science, and three of the men were in their last year of study for a Bachelor's degree in sport and leisure studies. Ten of the fourteen men had, therefore, attended or completed university studies. In addition, George held a one-year diploma in photography studies, Finn had a three-year diploma in primary teaching and James held qualifications in bookkeeping. Seamus was the only man who had no formal experiences of tertiary education.

The employment and income range of the group was relatively diverse. Four worked in educational contexts: Finn and Darryl were primary teachers (Darryl within a Kura Kaupapa or Maori emersion school), Edgar was a tutor in health sciences at a small Polytechnic, and Morris was a university lecturer. Kahu, Colin and Willy were all university students: Kahu had previous work experience in forestry, Colin as a butcher and professional rugby player and Willy, who had started university studies straight from secondary school, had no fulltime work employment experience. Derek was a builder, George was a self-employed photographer, Lionel worked in the computer industry, James was an accounts clerk and Sebastian had just finished drama school and was looking for suitable acting work. Tom was currently a sickness beneficiary but had previously worked in a variety of 'white-collar' jobs. Seamus, the only interview participant without experience of tertiary studies, was a relatively successful entrepreneur.

The men's family lifestyles or personal relationships were relatively diverse, although all indicated that they were heterosexual. Seven were fathers and

seven were not. Of the seven who were fathers, Morris, Darryl, Seamus and Finn were married, George and Colin lived in de-facto relationships with their families and Kahu was separated from the mother of his three children. Of the seven who were not fathers, Tom, Willy, and Derek were single, Sebastian was divorced, Edgar and James were in de facto relationships and Lionel was married.

Seven of the fourteen men I knew: Derek was a brother–in-law, Edgar, George, Finn and Sebastian were friends, Tom was an ex-work colleague and Darryl was a team-mate from my old secondary school First XV rugby team. Although the other seven interviewees were contacted through personal invitations, I did not know them closely. James and Lionel, for example, were contacted on the advice of friends, Seamus was the father of my son's kindergarten friend, and I had met Morris, briefly, at an academic conference. Kahu, Colin and Willy were tertiary students that I had taught.

Conducting the interviews

Interview times and places of convenience and privacy were arranged with each man; they typically took place in each man's house and were conducted over coffee or juice and muffins. The majority of the men participated in only one formal interview and these took place between September 2001 and April 2002. However, I undertook two formal interviews with Edgar, Kahu, and Darryl as they were particularly informative and/or verbal. The time length of each interview varied between two and five hours. The interviews were recorded via audiotape and transcribed verbatim.

A few days after each interview I contacted all of the men, by phone or in person, to help clarify points raised, to ask further questions and to thank them for their involvement. Some of these conversations were lengthy and although not audiotaped I made notes, either during or immediately after the conversations, to help with my analysis. In addition, while I was analysing and writing up the results/discussion chapters, primarily between July 2002 and March 2003, I continued to talk with several of the men to seek further information about their rugby experiences and understandings.

My interview approach was underpinned by the belief that knowledge construction is a subjective process and that the interview is an inter-play between two people "conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (Kvale, 1996b, p. 2). In

conducting the interviews, I used a semi-structured approach. A semi-structured interview typically has a sequence of conversation themes to be explored as well as suggested questions, but "there is an openness to changes in sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told by subjects" (Kvale, 1996b, p. 124).

More generally, I viewed the interviews as a two-way rather than one-way exchange of information. Denzin (1989) warned, for example, that if an interviewer only listens without sharing this could create distrust and stunt the depth of the conversation. Accordingly, I did not remain neutral or passive throughout the interviews but attempted to construct an environment where the interview participant's interpretive capabilities were "activated, stimulated, and cultivated" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 17). In this respect, I was not particularly concerned with asking *leading questions* or with the issue that my questions might unfairly bias the participant's responses. In contrast, I was primarily concerned with developing a conversation that could help produce "new, trustworthy, and interesting knowledge" (Kvale, 1996b, p. 159).

My semi-structured interview approach was conducted with the help of an interview guide (see Appendix E). The interview guide was developed in relation to my review of literature and prime research purpose, and consisted of four key, but overlapping, topic areas: participation histories/experiences in rugby; rugby experiences of fear, pain and pleasure; understandings of masculinities, rugby, gender relations and associated links; and men's health. Given the overlap between these topic areas, the interviews did not progress in linear fashion and each interview developed its own distinctive shape. However, I typically initiated the interviews by asking the men to talk about their earliest memories of rugby participation. Moreover, I encouraged the men to structure their stories of rugby experiences in a chronological manner. This chronological format helped reveal how the men's relationships with rugby changed as they aged from boyhood to adulthood. Moreover, it allowed me to investigate how the men understood their changing relationships with rugby and masculinities.

My awareness that language is not an objective or stable medium of communication posed issues that I needed to negotiate before and during the interview processes. More specifically, I was aware that:

> What a question or answer means to the researcher can easily mean something different to the interviewee. What a question or answer means to the researcher may change over time or situations. What a question or answer means to the interviewee similarly may change. Meaning and understanding shift, in large and small ways, across people, across time, and across situations. (Scheurich, 1997, p. 62)

Reinharz (1992) also reported that the issue of whether to believe the interview participant could sometimes arise as social interaction "involves a certain amount of deception" (p. 28). My awareness of the complexities of language and truth, with respect to interviewing and analysing interview data, encouraged me to approach the interview interactions with great care. Moreover, I directed critical attention, as influenced by Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) arguments, not just to the social issues surrounding rugby and masculinities but also to the knowledge construction processes. Holstein and Gubrium, for example, stated:

> ... we think that understanding *how* the meaning-making process unfolds in the interview is as critical as apprehending *what* is substantively asked and conveyed. The *hows*, of course, refer to the interactional, narrative procedures of knowledge production, not merely to interview techniques. The *whats* pertain to the issues guiding the interviews, the content of the questions, and the substantive information communicated by the respondent. (p. 4)

With respect to the 'hows', or knowledge construction processes, I attempted to clarify the men's understandings about their rugby experiences as the interviews progressed. This allowed me to negotiate meaning and reprocess previous description and analysis back to the men for comment and re-examination. In addition, I was conscious of the need to be aware of the 'give and take' in interview situations, the potential shifts that could occur in subject positions, and how these interview *movements* could produce different contexts and diverse, sometimes contradictory meanings. Yet instead of viewing such interview movements as problematic or the men as irrational, I was encouraged by Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) argument to actively foster such shifts to help "provide an

environment conducive to the production of the range and complexity of meanings" (p. 17). I would sometimes ask the participants to examine, for example, their experiences of rugby from different subject positions or to reflect on how a change of context or time could have influenced their understandings of specific incidents. Although such questioning techniques resulted, at times, in signs of interviewee confusion, inconsistencies and ambiguities, I considered such responses as valuable, as they represented the difficulties associated with negotiating meanings in response to the workings of multiple yet competing discourses.

In conducting the interviews, I was aware that the participants could not always use language to fully represent the multitude of bodily experiences and emotions associated with their experiences of fear, pain and pleasure when playing rugby. Adjectives such as 'fear' and 'excitement', for example, are useful for helping explain how it may feel to sprint at full flight and be tackled from behind, yet these adjectives do not fully capture the dynamics of such experiences. In response to this representational limitation I deliberately asked questions to encourage the participants to respond in a narrative format or by telling the 'stories' associated with particular events (Kvale, 1996b). The usefulness of questions that encourage responses in a narrative format is reflective of the recognition that stories are a primary way that people come to understand and communicate the complexity of their lived experiences (Bruner, 1987; Clandinin & Connelly, 1998; Sparkes, 1999). Denzin (1989) argued that through listening to individuals' stories, human experiences can be examined and shared, and hopefully made sense of. More specifically, I found that through encouraging the participants to tell their stories of particular rugby experiences, that this allowed them to re-live complex events so that their responses became framed via a timeframe and a discursive plot unfolded. The story-tellers (i.e. the participants) also often became animated in the storying process and provided thick-descriptive responses. However, I did not view this 'narrative' questioning technique as an answer to the crisis of representation, but simply as a useful interview strategy.

Interview analysis

After the interviews had been conducted I was left with approximately 42 hours of audiotaped recordings. To help transcribe these recordings I employed two

experienced dictaphone word-processors. Upon receiving the transcripts I carefully listened to the audio-tapes of the interviews to help fill transcription gaps - where the transcribers could not understand or hear what was being said - and to correct obvious errors. Although I believed it important to do this, I worked from the philosophy that "transcriptions are not copies or representations of some original reality, they are interpretive constructions that are useful tools for given purposes" (Kvale, 1996b, p. 165). The given purpose of the transcripts was to provide accessible accounts of the interview conversations to aid my task of analysis.

Qualitative analysis is intuitive but also systematic (Kvale, 1996b; McKee, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990; Wolcott, 1994). The technique of analysis that I used could be described as "ad hoc meaning generation" (Kvale, 1996b, p. 203). Kvale described this form of analysis by stating:

> The most frequent form of interview analysis is probably an ad hoc use of different approaches and techniques for meaning generation ... in this case no standard method is used for analysing the whole of the interview material. There is instead a free interplay of techniques during the analysis. (p. 203)

The 'free interplay' of analytical techniques that I used drew on elements associated with narrative analysis (Kvale, 1996b), within-case and cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), Foucauldian discourse analysis and, more simply, multiple re-readings of the interview transcripts. In part, I treated the interview transcripts as narratives and this encouraged focus on the temporal sequencing of the participant's stories, the different contexts, the specific plots and the fact that my overall task was to weave the participant's stories into one particular narrative – this thesis. Moreover, I was interested in how the different men's accounts were both similar and different and in this respect I used forms of within-case and cross-case analysis (see Miles & Huberman, 1994). I actively compared, for example, different participants' understandings, situations, accounts and experiences, but I also compared "data from the same individuals with themselves at different points in time" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 515). Through this comparison process I was interested to try and understand the broad *contextual* factors that were of significance in helping shape the discursive articulations

between rugby experiences and masculinities. McKee (2001), for example, laboured the point that it is important to consider the "*context, context, context*" (p. 145) that surrounds a text (i.e. interview transcript) before making analytical interpretations.

My approach to treating the participant's accounts as narratives encouraged me to re-present their stories, in the results chapters, in a temporal sequence and this decision also aided my analysis. Patton (1990), for example, stated that a useful strategy for initiating analysis of interview data is to have clarity about how the data is likely to be presented. Indeed, by deciding to present the men's accounts via a chronology of their experiences of rugby, this helped provide a broad structure (e.g. childhood, teenage and adult experiences of rugby) for analysing the data. More generally, I began my analysis task by making numerous descriptive notes in the margins of the transcripts in an attempt to explain happenings that were not clearly reflected in the transcribed words. For example, I made notes explaining the contexts of why there was laughter on the tapes or lengthy conversation pauses. I then carefully re-read the transcripts and noted in the margins the topics of conversation, such as 'women and rugby', 'early rugby experiences' or 'the All Blacks'. When doing this I noticed that many of these topics overlapped within short passages of conversation, and that the topics often changed quickly within the general flow of the conversation. I then re-read the transcripts further and grouped the interview conversations, in an ideographic manner, into broader discussion themes. The themes or analytical categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994) selected were related to my prime research question and were therefore concerned with rugby injuries, masculinities, the pleasures and fears of playing rugby and as related to the participants childhood, teenage and adult experiences of rugby.

Once these broad themes were selected, my key analytical task was to identify and analyse the discursive resources that the men used in conversing about their rugby experiences and understandings. My process of analysing the discourses was guided by Foucault's "tools" (e.g. Prior, 1998, p. 77). Of prime importance was Foucault's (1972) definition of discourse that referred to contextually specific systems of meanings that form the *identities* of subjects, practices, and objects. I used this definition to help identify the discourses that the interview participants talked of in referring to social practices (e.g. 'doing the damage' or 'on the turps'), subjects (e.g. the 'boys' or the 'poofs') or objects (e.g.

the 'pill' or 'opposition half'). I described these discourses as discursive resources. My focus of analysis, therefore, was not specifically on the men as 'knowing subjects', but on the inter-play of discourses through which specific knowledges came to be displayed, produced, forbidden and resisted. Foucault (1978a), more specifically, warned that one could not identify discourses purely on the basis of their strategic outcomes, yet suggested the following techniques for discourse identification:

> It is this distribution (of discourses) that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it comprises; with the variants and different effects - according to who is speaking, his (sic) position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated – that it implies; and with the shifts and reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes. (pp. 100-101)

In taking heed of Foucault's discourse identification strategy I carefully analysed what the interview participants reported, and also attempted to understand what was *not* being said, and what discourses likely underpinned these silences. In addition, I paid careful attention to the multiple and changeable subject positions of the speakers and how the interview participants tactically used discursive resources to position themselves and others. Further, I examined whether different discourses dominated conversations when the interview participants talked in reference to different social contexts, such as school or professional or national rugby teams.

My 'ad hoc' analysis strategies could, in part, be regarded as akin to paradigmatic analysis (see Sparkes, 1999), as I primarily searched for central themes within the narratives told by the different men. Yet my interpretations of the men's narratives were further analysed in relation to the workings of discourse/power. In this respect I regard my analysis as a fusion of paradigmatic/discourse analysis.

Textual representation of interview findings

Deciding how to 'write up' my results was initially daunting. For example, I was unsure whether to write a realist tale, a modified realist tale or some form of

"experimental writing" (Sparkes, 1995, p. 168) such as a confessional tale, impressionist tale or ethnographic fiction. This dilemma was caused, in part, by my awareness that interview conversations are open for multiple interpretations (Kvale, 1996b) and that the dual crises of representation and legitimation provide challenges and opportunities for how researchers can textually represent lived experiences (Sparkes, 1995). I was also aware that the realist tale, as the dominant mode of representation in qualitative research, had been the subject of critique (e.g. Cole, 1991; Richardson, 1994; Sparkes, 1995; Van Mannen, 1988). Cole (1991), for example, argued that the realist tale corresponds to conventions associated with the scientific tale by having the qualitative writer's voice set apart from the results and discussion sections in a manner that constructs "authority and objectivity through passive voice" (p. 39). Moreover, Sparkes (1995) suggested that realist tales were linked to the problem of *interpretive omnipotence*, as "it is common to find extensive, closely edited quotations in the text that suggest the views put forward are not those of author but are the authentic and representative remarks of those people in the culture under study" (p. 163).

Sparkes (1995) suggested that the prime questions a researcher should reflect on before 'writing up' relates to deciding "who speaks in the text and whose story is being told, who maintains control over the narrative and, by implication, over the purposes to which the story is put" (p. 166). In reflecting on these key questions, I decided to re-present my research findings as a somewhat *modified realist tale*. The prime modification revolved around a desire for my research to not reflect some form of interpretive omnipotence. More specifically, I accepted that I had the responsibility of authorship over the academic text, but I did not have authority over the views of the interview participants. Yet, I also concurred with Reinharz (1992) who argued that it is important to help reveal the interview participants' stories and understandings in their own words. Given these considerations, I decided to use quotes from the interview transcripts to help reveal the voices, actions, embodied experiences and subjective meanings of the interview participants, but I attempted to do so in a manner that reminded readers that I, as the writer, was intimately involved in the process of re-presenting the interviewee's words. In the results chapters, for example, I often prefaced a quote from an interview participant by stating that *"Lionel told me..."* or *"Sebastian reported during the interview..."* or I used phrases like *"time after time I heard accounts*

about..." In this manner, I endeavoured to remind the reader that the quotes re-presented in the results chapters had been gained through a collaborative interviewing process.

In re-presenting aspects from the interview participant's conversations I aimed to write in a manner that Geertz (1973) termed as thick description. Thick descriptions are deep, rich and detailed accounts of experiences, that allow the reader to gain greater insight into the events or understandings described. I, therefore, aimed to provide thick descriptions to richly illustrate the interview participant's rugby experiences and how they made sense of them. Through providing thick descriptions I aimed to make possible, what Denzin (1989) termed, *thick interpretations*, which attempt to connect individual's stories to public issues. To help achieve thick description I took the liberty to re-phrase or 'tidy-up' the men's accounts to make them more readable. The following quote, for example, was taken directly from an interview transcript: "Yeah, I think I was, umm, I was actually a bit afraid, a bit afraid of the game umm, and, yeah I wasn't quite sure, you know, that I understood, umm, everything, you know, to do with it." In order to make Finn's account more reader friendly I re-presented it in the results chapter as: "I was actually a bit afraid of the game. And I wasn't quite sure that I understood everything to do with the game." In this respect I did not aim to change the meanings of the quotes, but simply made them more accessible.

In writing my research results I was also cognisant of Denzin's (1997) argument that there is a need to write in a manner that challenges a research text's external claims for authority, reveals research values and is reflexive. Accordingly, I recognised that my subjective experiences and interpretations associated with rugby were important to explore and reveal within this thesis. Before I undertook this doctoral project I wrote about and analysed my rugby experiences (see Pringle, 2001a; Pringle, 2002). These self-analyses allowed me to better understand the complexities, tensions and privileges that I faced growing up as a 'rugby boy'. They also helped formulate specific issues that I explored within this doctoral thesis. Therefore, I thought it important to write myself into, and not out of, the results/discussion chapters. I did this through using first person and, at times, I revealed some of my own rugby participation experiences. Although my self-revelations only constitute a small part of the results/discussion chapters they serve to inform readers of my authorial presence and are reflective of the fact that I was

the prime research instrument. They also indicate that I was writing from a specific historical and cultural location, and with specific privileges (e.g. as a white, male, able-bodied, successful youth rugby player). In this respect, I hoped that my self-revelations would add a degree of 'accountability' (see Dupuis, 1999; Fraser & Nicholson, 1990; Gill, 1995; Tierney, 2000) to my research interpretations through allowing the reader to better understand my values and, therefore, be in a position to critically reflect on my findings and conclusions. Through being transparent about my research process, philosophies and interpretations the reader would be better positioned to make his/her judgments on the benefits and 'trustworthiness' of my research process and writings.

Concluding comments on the research method

All research methods have recognised strengths and weaknesses, yet the strengths and weaknesses of select research methods are, in part, dependent on an individual's paradigmatic beliefs about research. In this section, I reflect on the strengths and limitations associated with my research method from my postmodern paradigmatic position as detailed in chapter two.

My transcription technique illuminated certain features of the men's conversations but also undoubtedly obscured other aspects (e.g. Coates & Thornborrow, 1999). Yet, more importantly, I recognise that the interview transcripts – as a research tool (Kvale, 1996b) – are primarily reflective of what the men decided to reveal during the specific constraints of the interview conversations. Accordingly, questions could and should be asked about the relationships between the stories told by the men, the men's lived experiences, my written interpretations and "the scale of truthfulness" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 136). This dilemma is related to issues posed by the crises of representation and legitimation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a), yet I have already discussed the implications of these crises, and my research response to them, in chapter two. However, the issue of the 'scale of truthfulness' can also relate to my choice of research method. It is possible, for example, that if I had used a different research method, such as participant-observation, ethnographic study, focus group interviews, or if I had have also interviewed women and boys, that this could have produced different, perhaps deeper, understandings about the discursive relationships between rugby experiences and masculinities. In this respect, I am

suggesting that my choice of research method can be viewed as both a strength and limitation. Nevertheless, I decided that one-on-one interviews with a diverse but small group of men was the most effective method, relative to specific time and financial limitations, for helping examine my prime research question. Moreover, the recognition that there are other methods for examining the masculinity/rugby relationship, each with their own sets of strengths and weaknesses, can be regarded as offering opportunities for further research.

The interview participants were clearly not selected as a representative sample of the general population and, for some, this could suggest that my research findings are not generalisable and, therefore, the value of my research is limited. Morse (1999), for example, stated: "If qualitative research is considered not generalizable, then it is of little use, insignificant, and hardly worth doing" (p. 5). Yet Morse, as a supporter of the value of purposively selected samples and qualitative research, argued that qualitative research is generalisable, but that the criteria for determining generalisability are significantly different from the positivist paradigm. Ellis and Bochner (2000), for example, argued that the generalisability of qualitative research is "constantly being tested by readers as they determine if it speaks to them about their experiences or about the lives of others they know" (p. 751). Drawing on the arguments of Morse (1999) and Ellis and Bochner I suggest that the test of the usefulness of my research lies, in part, with the reader's abilities to resonate with my re-presentations of the men's accounts of their rugby experiences and understandings. Moreover, if the reader's understandings or knowledge of the discursive articulations between rugby and masculinities are challenged, changed or reinforced then the value of my research method is, in part, warranted.

An additional concern about my research method relates to the depth of the relationships I had with the men that I interviewed. Reinharz (1992) in reporting on the issue of whether interviewers should be a 'stranger or a friend' to the people she/he is studying, suggested that there are both advantages and disadvantages dependent, in part, on the research topic. In cases where the topic is potentially controversial, such as the issue of sexualities, Reinharz suggested that the interview process might elicit richer information if the interviewer is a stranger. By contrast, if the topic is non-controversial, Reinharz suggested there could be considerable advantages if a close relationship exists before the research takes place as it can

result in deeper and more focused interviews. Johnson (2002) similarly reported that "to be effective and useful, in-depth interviews develop and build on intimacy; in this respect, they resemble the forms of talking one finds among close friends" (p. 104). However, Johnson also warned that in-depth interviews are different from the conversations between close friends, as the information gained is used for select purposes: in my case the writing of this thesis.

Nevertheless, Reinharz (1992) also asserted that the friend-stranger dichotomy is perhaps too simplistic, as one can act as a knowledgeable or even friendly stranger. In addition, at times when a research topic is controversial, a close and trustworthy friend could also be highly appropriate as an interviewer. In light of Reinharz and Johnson's arguments, I decided before undertaking the interviews, that there were no set strengths or weaknesses associated with interviewing personal contacts, but that the success of the interviewing process would primarily be dependent on how each individual interview situation was managed. In this respect and as already detailed in this chapter, I was careful in how I managed the interview situations.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion of the findings: Primary school rugby experiences

'Compulsory' rugby: The men's reflections of growing up with rugby

In this chapter I begin the chronological analysis of the men's accounts of their rugby experiences by re-presenting their primary school stories (5-12 years of age). I invited each of the men to begin the interviews by asking them to talk about their earliest memories of rugby and rugby participation. In response to this invitation and other on-going questions, the men told diverse, complex and, at times, evocative stories of their rugby experiences. Particularly striking were their accounts of how rugby dominated formal sports at primary school. All of the men, regardless of whether they held supportive, critical or mixed feelings about rugby, told accounts of how as young males growing up in Aotearoa/New Zealand, rugby was a pervasive and, in many respects, unavoidable influence in their lives. This 'pervasiveness' existed to the extent that the majority of the men believed that they were expected to participate in rugby, and most did: thirteen of the fourteen men participated in rugby matches or competitions by the time that they were eleven years old. And at this relatively young age, five of the men had already experienced five or six seasons of rugby.

The encouragement that the men faced, as boys, to participate in rugby was somewhat omnipresent. They reported, for example, that a variety of different people encouraged and, at times, demanded them to play rugby, including their brothers, fathers, uncles, peers, male teachers and school principals but also, at times, their mothers, sisters, and female teachers. Thus, although rugby was a 'male only' participation sport and male dominated, it was not an exclusive male domain. Darryl, for example, reported that his female teacher was his first rugby coach, and Colin and Willy both informed me that their mums were prime fans and supporters of their early involvement. Yet, the men's interview accounts revealed that their male classmates and primary school teachers were the most influential in encouraging their early participation. In this respect, the school environment was particularly influential in shaping their youthful understandings of rugby. This finding resonates with Connell's (1983) assertion that sport "is the central experience of the school years for many boys" (p. 18). Indeed, the men's accounts

suggested that rugby was not just the 'country's national' sport, but at the primary schools that they attended, it was also the 'school's sport' and, at times, compulsory for all males.

Lionel, for example, who attended a small rural primary school set in the midst of a wealthy dairying region, talked of how rugby was compulsory for the boys in his school during the 1970s:

> Rugby was part of the curriculum – the boys would play rugby as part of their school-work and the girls would play netball. That was how it was: you milked cows, you went to school, you played rugby, you went home ... Not quite like that, but there was that kind of thinking. Rugby was a normal thing that happened; it was integrated with maths and other stuff ... Physical education classes in the winter became rugby practices and we'd do scrummaging and line-out drills and practice back moves in preparation for Saturday matches. It was just the way things were, there were no other options. You couldn't join the girls to play netball and there wasn't another group of boys off somewhere else doing tennis or something. All the boys did rugby.

Lionel's account of 'compulsory' rugby for the boys was similar to Tom, Morris and George's experiences. Morris, for example, reflected: "I don't think anybody did anything else, all boys went to rugby." And Tom reported: "I started playing when I was six, but by the time I was in Standard four (age 10), rugby was a requirement: every single boy had to play." However, playing rugby was not compulsory at all of the men's primary schools, but as Edgar suggested, "it damn near was". Darryl and Finn, for example, stated that the boys were required to play a winter sport, and that they could *decide* between the limited choices of soccer and rugby. However, as Darryl pointed out: "rugby was held in much higher regard. Some did play soccer, but it wasn't a big thing. It was pretty much a rugby, rugby, rugby school." In this respect, many of the men who had a choice of sport still opted to play rugby. Finn, for example, reported that the clear majority of the boys choose rugby over soccer. Yet, he could not remember whether the girls also *had* to play a sport, but he knew that "they didn't play rugby or soccer." Time after

time I heard accounts that told of the gendered divisions of school sport, where the girls were discouraged or not allowed to play contact sport.

Rugby was clearly the dominant male sport in all of the primary schools and for some of the men they played because it "was the thing to do" (George) or "it was fun" (Willy) or to simply "fit in" (Sebastian) and be "normal" (Colin). Colin, who eventually played professional rugby, for example, revealed that as a boy he felt different and rugby was attractive as it offered a possible means to feel normal:

> I was a kid that had no confidence ... I was quite a fat kid and I didn't like being singled out, but on the same token I was very social and liked having friends ... I was playing rugby, you know, as I was trying to fit into that group of kids. I didn't want to be a superstar or anything like that, all I wanted to do was be like the other kids, the other little group that we used to hang around with, I wanted to be like them.

In a similar manner, Derek reported that although he was not attracted to the sport he felt compelled to experience rugby: "I was strongly encouraged by my classmates to try rugby, and I did try it. Although I was somewhat reluctant to play it, it was better to give it a go than not try it at all." Seamus also remembered that he was encouraged to play rugby by the boys at his intermediate:

> I came out from England when I was eleven (years old) in 1972 and I had never played rugby before in my life. In fact, I don't know that I had even heard of the game before. On my first day I was vigorously encouraged by the other boys in my class to play it. They were very proud of their rugby games and the games were quite a big thing. And so by the end of my first day at school I had played a game of rugby.

Of the fourteen men that I interviewed, Edgar was the only one who did not experience any form of rugby participation at primary school. He suggested, in a somewhat defensive manner, that this was primarily due to his severe childhood asthma:

> I was always the smallest kid in class: all the way through. And there wasn't a strong rugby influence in my family. My father was much older, he must have been approaching 50, so he never took me to rugby games or enrolled me at the local rugby club or anything like that .... But the prime reason why I didn't play was because I was so sick as a child. I was sick a lot with asthma and was advised by doctors not to do a lot of running around.

Nevertheless, Edgar revealed: "Rugby was a prime way of being socially accepted, but I was too unwell. Obviously I would have liked to have been good at rugby." Such is the impact of the disciplinary effect of a masculinity discourse that suggests if you are a boy and you do not play rugby, you are different. Rugby participation, in this respect, was a prime normalising practice for males, as it helped constitute normal masculine subjectivities and, therefore, marked boys' bodies as masculine.

The men's interview accounts reflected and (re)produced the discourse that rugby was a *participation* sport specifically for males. Indeed, all of the men reported on their early experiences of rugby as if it was unequivocally known that rugby was a 'male-only' sport: they did not feel it was necessary to explain that they had only participated in rugby with other males. Foucault (1972) asserted that discourses produce the objects of which they speak, but that they can also produce *silences*. Discourses can, therefore, prevent people from thinking, expressing and acting on certain thoughts. In this respect, the discourse that produced the 'truth' that rugby was a sport specifically for males appeared to silence the men's understandings that some females enjoy participating in rugby. Talk of female participation in rugby, for example, only occurred within the interviews if I initiated the topic of conversation, such as when I asked the men, towards the end of their interviews, how they felt about females playing rugby. Although the men's responses to my inquiry varied, many of the men expressed reservations about this relatively recent participation phenomenon. These reservations were primarily reflective of their beliefs that rugby was a sport for males and not that they felt threatened by females entering a 'male' domain.

Some of the men even suggested that male participation in rugby was somewhat 'natural'. Willy, for example, stated: "Rugby is a an ideal sport for boys

and men ... it is natural for boys to want to play physical contact games like rugby." In a similar manner, Colin reported that he first started playing rugby because "it was a *natural* progression ... my older brothers played when we were kids and just as soon as we turned five it was down to the rugby field." James also reported: "I started playing as far back as I can remember ... I think I was around five or six. I got into it because my older brother was playing it at the time, and it was just a natural thing for me to do." The ex-athletes that Messner (1992) interviewed also believed that it was *natural* for boys to play sport. One of his interview participants reported: "...you went to school, you played athletics .... It was just like brushing your teeth: it's just what you did. It's part of your existence" (p. 25). However, within this study the men did not stress that it was natural for them to play *any* sport, but that it was *natural* to play rugby.

Participating in rugby also felt natural or normal for me as a child. When I attended primary school in the 1970s my view of sport was simple: in the winter boys played rugby and girls did not. This 'fact of life' was something that I was happy about: I was good at rugby and I was rewarded in numerous ways. Six of the men that I interviewed were also happy about the normality of rugby for males. Indeed, playing rugby became a prime passion in their lives and winter Saturdays, for the next ten to fifteen years, became structured around rugby. However, in the process of interviewing the men it was apparent that some felt uneasy about their youthful rugby experiences. In the following section, I discuss how these men made sense of their primary school rugby experiences.

Fear and loathing on the primary school rugby fields

The dominating discourses of rugby provided the prime resources for how the men understood their formative experiences of rugby. Yet these understandings were also produced in relation to an array of contingency factors, such as the men's body shapes, sizes and abilities. The men, therefore, made sense of their rugby participation experiences in a multitude of different ways: the dominating discourses of rugby did not bend all of the boys into a single uniform masculinity type. Foucault (1977a), for example, asserted that disciplinary practices do not shape "all its subjects into a single uniform mass, it separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures to the point of necessary and sufficient units (p. 170)." Nevertheless, all of the men had to contend with the discursive

knowledge that rugby was a rough sport with a potential for injury and pain, and with the associated discourse that positioned and *required* rugby players to appear fearless in the face of pain. This knowledge was learnt at a young age and it subsequently disciplined how many of the men participated in rugby. Darryl, for example, told me: "Even at primary school I knew if I got hurt or got knocked down that I had to get back up and play on."

The complex articulations between taking pain, participating in heavy-contact sports and dominant forms of masculinities have been well acknowledged in international research (e.g. Messner, 1992; Hickey & Fitzclarence, 2001; Young et al., 1994). The ability to not give into pain, for example, is typically regarded in the sport and masculinity literature as "appropriate male behaviour" (Young et al., 1994, p. 182). Within this study, the articulations between masculinities, rugby and toughness, were also influential in shaping the men's early participation experiences: for some of the men these articulations helped make rugby a more exciting and meaningful sport to play, yet for others they caused considerable tension. This tension was primarily grounded in fears of getting hurt, yet these men also desired to be normal boys and rugby offered a prime means for this purpose: rugby, therefore, presented a 'catch-22' situation for these men.

Lionel provided this vivid account about his fears of being hurt and his knowledge that he was required to participate:

> I knew that as soon as I got on the field there was going to be some occasional moments of terror, but I also knew that it was just the way things were. I've got this distinct memory of a guy from Waitoa School – from the wrong side of the railway tracks, so to speak - he got the ball and he knew that I was an easy target. He set his eyes straight on me and charged at me and just ran over me, you know, bowled me completely over. I just didn't have a show of tackling him. There was the occasional incident like that, that kept up my fear. And most of my fear, I think, was fear of getting hurt ... I simply didn't like rugby because it hurt ... I just had these big beliefs that I'm gonna get hurt eventually, something's going to hurt, you fall over, somebody hits you, your head hurts, you receive a ball too fast – all of that hurts. In fact everything about rugby hurt.

Lionel defined rugby as a sport of pain and he was, therefore, fearful of participating, yet he also believed that he was required to play. Derek was also fearful of getting hurt in rugby, yet he explained that his fears were induced, in part, by his lack of knowledge of the game. At ten years of age, having just arrived in the country from North America, he knew little about rugby but, nevertheless, was soon participating due to the encouragement of his fellow classmates:

> Rugby was a difficult game to understand, you know, the rucks and mauls, and who goes where and what position are you supposed to play, and what you are supposed to do in that position? .... But it wasn't just that - I really knew that this wasn't going to be a game that I was going to enjoy playing ... the idea of diving into somebody to tackle them in rugby didn't actually appeal very much. In fact, I felt *very* unsafe in playing rugby; I felt very prone to being stepped on and you had people landing on top of you. I don't remember actually being hurt – but I was concerned that this would happen.

Derek, who "did not feel like a New Zealander", did not feel compelled to play a sport he considered potentially dangerous and he soon took up soccer: even though he knew that "soccer was considered a second class sport ... (and) was a game for the English and the European, not for Kiwis". He further told me: "I did try a few things to fit in, and I suppose playing rugby was part of that, but I soon learned that it wasn't going to work ... I already was different, so I didn't worry about what other people thought of me." Yet Finn, as a fourth generation New Zealander, believed that he had to play rugby at primary school, in spite of his fears of injury and his lack of understanding the rules and tactics:

> I was afraid of the game. And I wasn't quite sure that I understood everything to do with the game. I also knew that there were other people around me who were very good and who were really keen to actually tackle someone and that's what they loved and I didn't want to be one of those people that they tackled ... simply because it hurt. Some of the boys wouldn't just tackle you; they would grab your arm or shirt and spin you around to see how far they could throw you.

In spite of his fears of pain, Finn reported that he could not remember any specific incident where he actually got injured. The men's accounts, in general, suggested that primary and intermediate school rugby was remarkably injury free, despite rugby's discursive reputation as a rough sport. Yet Sebastian, as an exception, told me of a particular incident that led to an injury that spurred his fears of rugby and his desire to avoid future participation. He detailed his epiphanic moment by stating:

> My memory is very vivid: it is playtime and we are just passing around the ball and kicking it. And I remember being passed the ball and getting rammed into by this idiot who came charging over and he knocked me down. I banged my head really hard on the ground and then got a bad headache. And I remember thinking - I don't ever want to play this game again ... I just remember the jolt of being hit. Knocked my head really quickly and just having a headache and thought, fuck this is stupid, I don't want to do this again.

Although Sebastian was "very fearful of rugby" he reported that he did not share knowledge of his fears with anybody, not even his closet friends or family: "No – I didn't tell a soul, it was not the sort of thing that I even thought about talking about." This was typical - all of the men who were fearful of rugby pain reported that they did not talk about their fears; the topic was taboo. Some of these men even found it difficult to explain why they did not talk about their fears. Lionel, for example, tried to remember: "I really don't know why I didn't talk about it, I look back on my primary school years and I'm a little bewildered by a lot of the aspects of it." Sebastian also reported: "It just wasn't the done thing. I'm not sure why, it was just something you didn't talk about." However, Finn offered an explanation:

> Well kids can be quite cruel at times, and although I was friends with the guys in my team, I didn't want to tell them that I was a bit scared as I didn't want to single myself out ... Admitting you were scared was not cool. You didn't want to be ribbed for being a cry-baby or a sissy boy or something.

Finn suggested that he was silenced by his desire to be accepted as a normal boy, as by revealing his fears of pain he might "single" himself out. More specifically, Finn's fears were silenced because he was concerned about appearing feminine ('sissy-boy') or juvenile ('cry-baby'), and he believed that this subject positioning would have constituted him as a target for "ribbing" or ridicule. Fine's (1987) interactionist research on American boys' experiences of Little League baseball, similarly revealed that the boys in his study were primarily concerned about being socially accepted by their peers and that a prime way of achieving this desire was to appear manly, which they attempted to achieve, in part, by distancing themselves from younger boys and activities deemed feminine, such as crying. Some of the men's accounts in my study also illustrated how demonstration of inability to tolerate pain led to sexist abuse. Lionel, for example, told me:

> We were practicing dive tackling and most of the guys just dived through the air for all that they were worth. Yet that was very, very hard for me to do, because diving on the ground hurts. Yet through the course of quarter of an hour of doing this, I slowly built up a little bit of a willingness to dive at above knee height above the ground. So I slowly got rid of some of my fear of getting hurt and I was thinking, "Hey – this isn't too bad". But then I stopped and scratched my head and my coach said, "Oh you wussy, you can't take any pain can you" – or something like that – because I had an itch and I scratched it. And that destroyed all of my confidence in an instant.

The discourse that constituted and required male rugby players to be tough and manly in the face of pain would have also helped produce the taboo on talk of rugby fears: to admit to being fearful of rugby would have been akin to admitting that you were not masculine and not a real rugby player. Therefore, talk of their fears of rugby pain would have been counterproductive to the men's desires to 'fit in' through playing rugby. This silencing process would also have helped rugby maintain its cultural dominance: silence, as Foucault (1978a) asserted, is "a shelter for power" (p. 101).

Multiple fears and 'early' retirements

It was not uncommon for the men who were fearful of rugby pain to also express fear about not performing on the field and fear of not fitting in. These fears were often interlinked with a sense of physical or embodied inferiority. As such, the men often explained their rugby fears in relation to their body sizes, shapes and abilities. These explanations helped reveal the importance of the body/sport relationship and the unfortunate contingencies associated with growing up in a small, slow or weak male body in a country where rugby - a sport that revolves around strength, speed and power - is discursively known as the 'national' sport and as a man's game. Lionel's vivid account helps reveal the interplay of these multiple fears and the importance of bodily self-perceptions:

> I played rugby with a good amount of fear and sort of feelings of inadequacy, as I was the weakest link in the team. I was always the tallest in the class but I always felt weak and weedy, I was very thin and I couldn't run fast. I don't know if I was more afraid of getting hurt or doing the wrong thing. I couldn't really tackle to stop somebody. The best I could do was delay people until somebody else got there. And if somebody wanted to run around me, they could – not a problem – I certainly didn't have the speed. It was embarrassing at times.

Finn also revealed that his fears of pain were linked with feelings of incompetency and perceptions of his thin body:

> I was a bit afraid if I got the ball and someone came along that I would not do the right thing. At that age I hadn't had a lot of experience of playing in formal situations and I wasn't very competitive. I wasn't really experienced and I could see other people that were, and I was afraid or worried about not being able to do what was expected... So I didn't like to run with the ball. Most of the boys were a lot larger than me - I was quite thin - so if I got the ball I knew I'd likely get nailed so I aimed to get rid of it quick.

Finn illustrated how his concerns with not performing on the field articulated with a desire to meet others' expectations and to be normal. George was also playing "because all the others were doing it"; and he had been primarily doing this since he was six years of age, but by the time he got to form one (age 11/12) the pressures to perform on the rugby field had intensified and this concerned him:

> I started not to like the game when I got to form one. To be honest my coach was an arsehole and put me off because he was really demanding. I was very sensitive and quite shy back then and he really criticised me when I played. I remember one incident when I jumped over someone rather than rucking him to get the ball. And he told me that I was a girl for not getting in there, so after that I thought, "nah, I'm not going to do this any more." It was a practice and we were pushing over a flanker and instead of rucking the ball, which the guy was holding on to, I just stepped over him. It wasn't even a serious thing, but this coach made me feel really stupid in front of everyone ... I suppose I didn't want to ruck the guy because I didn't want to hurt him – you know the idea of actually stepping on someone and racking your boots on their back or head, I couldn't do it, wasn't interested in that.

George's account suggested that he viewed rugby as akin to participating in a panopticon where his every move was surveyed, and he did not like how his performances were judged. A prime difference of rugby participation, in comparison with many classroom-based activities, is the sheer visibility of one's bodily performances: it is difficult to disguise inability on the panoptic rugby field where the eyes of the referee, spectators, coaches, parents and players constantly gaze and survey the play.

George's account of how he chose *not* to ruck – "because I didn't want to hurt him" – also helped illustrate how rugby can position participants in ethical dilemmas. For most of his life, for example, he remembered how he had been encouraged to "not fight", yet on the rugby field he found himself ridiculed by his "demanding" coach for not wanting to inflict pain through rucking. George's account helps illustrate that in order to participate in rugby one not only has to be

disciplined to into 'taking pain' but also into 'giving pain'. And with five years of rugby experience George was not fearful of the occasional knock yet he was not prepared to inflict pain on others.

Lionel was also concerned about performing on the field of play and meeting the expectations of others, particularly his headmaster/coach:

> He was a grumpy bastard – who would be grumpy all week if you made a few mistakes. It was scary but not participating wasn't an option, and I think that was something a lot of people gave our headmaster a lot of credit for: that everybody participated ... My fear of rugby was only overweighed by my fear of the rugby coach and that was why I was playing rugby.

Lionel believed that if he quit rugby that he would most likely be ostracised or ridiculed by his coach and these fears underpinned why he continued to participate. Yet he also accepted that he had to participate in rugby: it was "just the way things were." In spite of the requirement to participate in a sport that he feared in multiple ways, Lionel did not resent his coach or rugby:

> Our headmaster encouraged the best out of us, we played in spite of our fears, and he made everybody participate and even though that was hard for some people they gained out of that participation. Consciously it might have been awful, but actually it was character building ... And it was good to be part of that group, because our team was good and it was a winning team. It was good to feel like you were part of a winning team.

Lionel explained that a prime benefit of feeling that he was a part of the team was associated with the feelings of acceptance. Seamus, as a recent emigrant from England, was also acutely aware of how playing rugby could help get him accepted:

> Coming to New Zealand from England I was a "pommie bastard", that was what I was called. And so it was a little bit difficult for me to come to terms with it. So being in any team, playing any sport gave me the opportunity to actually fit in and I actually quite enjoyed it. It gave me the chance to

conform to a New Zealand standard by participating in a game that Kiwi's did and it just happened to be the sport of rugby.

Given that rugby was discursively constituted as 'our national sport', participation in rugby would have helped mark Seamus as a normal Kiwi male. He reported that this was one of his prime aims in playing rugby: he desired to be marked as normal because he felt different. In this sense, Seamus used rugby participation as a technology of self to help transform himself and to attain a certain mode of being and state of happiness. Yet, he did not use this technology as a critical practice to 'free' himself from the technologies of domination associated with rugby and masculinities. Nevertheless, involvement with rugby clearly transformed Seamus' understanding of self. The socio-cultural dominance of rugby in the men's primary schools appeared to significantly influence all of the men's understandings of self; yet not all of the men liked the sense of self that was produced in rugby settings.

The panoptic field that the boys played rugby within, for example, revealed strengths and weaknesses, and for the boys who played rugby "with a good amount of fear and ... feelings of inadequacy" (Lionel) rugby performances typically revealed deficiencies and failings. These boys, therefore, were more subject to technologies of domination/power that stemmed from rugby and were less able to actively transform themselves into a mode of being that they were happy with. The men's accounts, for example, revealed that these men typically used a mixture of the following adjectives to describe themselves within rugby contexts: timid, shy, sensitive, weak, non-aggressive, scared, inadequate, bewildered, uncoordinated, small, thin, worried, uncompetitive, slow, and nervous. These self-descriptive adjectives, or self-confessions, are typically thought of, given the dominant but problematic narratives about gender, as representative of feminine characteristics. Therefore, I argue that rugby participation for these men likely produced a sense of self that caused tension with respect to how they knew their masculine selves. More specifically, repeat performances in rugby would have helped congeal a knowledge of self, for these men, that they were not rugby players and not highly masculine: rugby discursively produced these men's subjectivities, consciously or unconsciously, as feminine. Moreover, several of the men's accounts suggested that their coaches would sometimes cruelly confirm their 'feminine' or 'juvenile'

subjectivities by describing them as "wussy" (e.g. Lionel) or as "girls" (e.g. Edgar, George, Seamus and Colin) or as "cry-babies" (e.g. Tom).

The gendered identity tensions produced in rugby contexts helped fuel, in combination with the realities and threats of corporeal pain, these men's desires to quit or avoid continued rugby participation. In this respect, the multiple fears that some of the men experienced in playing rugby were directly linked with their decisions to quit rugby: they were highly reflexive about their rugby experiences and the threat of pain.

George summarised the epiphanic moment, after being abused by his coach for not rucking, in which he decided to quit rugby:

> I guess I just didn't like being criticised and I guess I had this *fear* of failing and not doing so good - so I'd rather not do it than do it wrong. I thought I can do without this: which was a shame in some respects, but I just couldn't be bothered after that. I couldn't be bothered and I didn't like getting embarrassed – it made me feel stupid. I suppose I didn't have the confidence. Can't say I was big on rugby anyhow; I mean I enjoyed running around and playing with the ball but I never really took it seriously. I wasn't that competitive.

For Sebastian the incident of "getting rammed into and falling down and then getting a head ache" was also epiphanic; he subsequently became an avid avoider of rugby:

> After that I was scared of participating in rugby, it became something I never ever wanted to do ... I avoided contact very much right throughout school ... I didn't like the *aggression* in rugby, it was the 'aggression' that was the big turn off, it was just very, very aggressive. I was just not an aggressive child, I avoided fights like the plague, you know, I remember being hit a few times and not even fighting back. I was very afraid of physicality and I was very fearful of fights and rugby terrified me. Here was a game full of physical contact, fights, and a game that is purely nothing but someone running into you and knocking you over.

Finn's decision to quit rugby was not the product of a specific incident but was the cumulative result of two fearful season's of primary school rugby. He summarised his cumulative epiphany by stating: "By the time I got to intermediate my perceptions were that things had multiplied and there was a greater number of people who were faster, more skilled, more committed, and bigger, so I didn't even try out for a team." Finn's rugby fears had, therefore, multiplied in knowing that he was slower, less skilled, less committed and smaller, so he did not attempt to play rugby again. And by the time Lionel got to high school, in spite of knowing that rugby was "character building" he also chose to quit. Lionel explained: "because there was no compulsion from the headmaster, like there was at primary school, and because it hurt and I was fearful of getting hurt. I didn't play any more." Similarly, Derek reported that after feeling "very unsafe" during his limited primary school rugby experiences that: "I certainly didn't go looking for opportunities to play it ... I may have played a few games at intermediate but I never played at high school." In this fearful manner, George, Sebastian, Derek, Finn and Lionel became rugby retirees and avoiders before their teenage years. For these men, their decisions to quit Aotearoa/New Zealand's 'national' sport at a young age were not difficult, yet by the time that they attended secondary school their 'non-participation status' helped constitute subject positions that created some tensions.

Previous researchers (e.g. Messner, 1992: Young et al., 1994) who have examined the role that elite male sport participation plays in the constitution of masculinities have suggested that masculine insecurities underpin continued participation in potentially dangerous male sports at an elite level. Yet given the accounts offered by George, Sebastian, Derek, Finn and Lionel it also appears that a similar argument could be used to explain why these men quit. However, I wonder about the usefulness of the 'masculine insecurity argument' if it can be used to explain why some men start participation, why some quit and for why others continue to participate in sport. Indeed, if all facets of men's sport involvement can be explained as related to manly insecurities then such explanations start to lose their sociological usefulness. I suggest that masculinity issues, therefore, are likely related to all facets of male sport participation but that there is a risk in *overemphasising* the salience of 'masculinity' for explaining male relationships with sport, because other factors of importance become marginalised

in the process. In this respect, I emphasise that George, Sebastian, Derek, Finn and Lionel's embodied sensations of pain, the fear of further pain, and their concerns about their abilities to perform on panoptic fields, were all factors of significance that should not be under-emphasised in understanding their decisions to quit.

'No fear': The body, rugby pleasures and disciplinary processes

For James, Darryl, Morris, Colin, Tom, Willy and Kahu, primary school rugby was not primarily a source of fear but a source of pleasure. James reflected on his primary school experiences, for example, by stating: "It was very exciting in those days, in the barefoot days, you'd really look forward to your Saturday morning game. You used to get upset if it rained and if you couldn't play." James' comment reminded me of my own childhood. I was also upset if it rained on Saturday as my 'build-up' started on Friday night: where I would often lay in bed *imagining* how I would weave through the opposition with the ball under one arm on the half-field pitch. I loved the exhilaration of running with the ball and I was not a fearful player at primary school. Morris also fondly remembered his primary school rugby days and the positive attention he gained from his father through rugby:

> On the whole they were great times. The games were exciting and rugby suited me, I was big for my age and it was fun, it was good. I'd come from a family that was keen on rugby. My older brother was quite a good player and my Dad used to always knock off work on a Saturday afternoon to listen to the commentary from Lancaster Park. He would always take me to my games and talk to me afterwards about how the game went.

Morris suggested that rugby was not only a source of fun but that it also provided a valued connection with his father and brother. Willy and James also talked of how their fathers were influential in helping instigate their love of rugby. Willy, for example, stated: "Dad got me into rugby as far back as I can remember: Age five, I think." And James reported that his father helped set up the local rugby club and that he subsequently "spent childhood Saturdays at the club".

Previous research has recognised the important influence that male family members can have in encouraging boys to participate in sport. Messner (1992), for

example, informed that the fathers, brothers and uncles, of the men that he interviewed, typically "served as teachers and athletic role models" (p. 26) that helped forge the men's masculine/athletic identities. More specifically, Messner suggested that "it is in boys' relationships with fathers that we find many of the keys to the emotional salience of sport in the development of masculine identity" (p. 27). Young et al. (1994) also reported that "male-to-male influence" (p. 180), particularly father-to-son influence, was significant in helping develop linkages between boys' early sport experiences and the gendering process. Yet within this study, Willy, James and Morris's experiences of how their fathers were supportive in encouraging their early rugby involvement were unique.

In contrast, most of the men told stories of the 'absent Dad' or the 'busy Dad' or the 'working Dad'. Tom, for example, told me that he knew that his Dad had played rugby when he was younger, but that he "very rarely watched me play ... he was always sort of busy, working up some land or building a cowshed or something like that." Kahu reported more bluntly, and with a tinge of disappointment: "He never watched one game when I was young, he was so busy working all those years." Darryl even struggled to recollect the influence of his Dad on his formative rugby experiences:

> I have absolutely no idea what he did. No, well I do know he played rugby when he was a kid, apart from that he never really talked a lot about sport, but that's all I know about Dad and sport. Oh and he'd always watch rugby test matches with the All Blacks but that's about all he'd watch on TV.

The men typically knew that their fathers' had played rugby and were often interested in watching the All Blacks and this knowledge was perhaps influential in encouraging some of the boys to play rugby. Yet their male school friends, older brothers and teachers were substantially more influential in encouraging their *direct* involvement in rugby. The men's accounts even suggested that their relationships with their fathers were not only often limited, but in some cases highly problematic. Colin, as an example, reported:

> The old man bailed (separated from his mother) when I was three ... So he didn't really play that much of a part in getting me interested in rugby. Ben,

my older brother, he did it - he was a big inspiration when I was little. Then Gary, my younger brother, did it when I got older ... Things weren't that flash with the old man ... like the time I was sent up to Christchurch to see him and getting up there and he'd put me on a bus ten minutes later to come home.

In contrast and relatively uniquely, Colin reported that his mother was very supportive of his early rugby involvement: "My Mum's a real big fan of rugby. Yeah, she was there all the time. Yelling and screaming. Oh yeah, she's a shocker! She's pretty much chilled out now. But she's my biggest fan." Willy also reported that his Mum and Dad "split" when he was young and that his Mum, who often took him to rugby, became a somewhat reluctant supporter: "She enjoys a lot of the game - loves it when I score a try - but she is always a little worried about me getting hurt."

The men's accounts overwhelmingly revealed that it was their mums who took the men, when young, to their games of rugby. George, for example, reported "My mum always used to go and cheer but my dad didn't really do anything with us. Actually he was quite distant from us." And Lionel reported that his father never watched him play rugby: "I do recall mum watching, but that was kind of only because someone had to drive the car ... it was always mum that went." Thompson (1999b), in a study of Australian tennis and women's labour, concluded: "Not only is it difficult to imagine children being able to continue competitive participation in tennis in Australia without the support provided by mothers, but the sport in its current form could not exist without the mothers' continued service" (p. 67). In this study, the men's accounts suggested that their early involvement in rugby was also dependent, in numerous ways, on their mothers' labour. In this respect, I suggest that the capillary-like flow of rugby discourses were also channelled through the boy's mothers.

It was not uncommon for the men who enjoyed their early participation in rugby to talk of the exhilaration of playing but also of the social rewards gained. And most of the time these rewards were about fitting in and feeling normal. Yet Tom also told me that rugby provided him with the *respect* he desired while at primary school:

> Well rugby was really my saving; it gave me something to be proud of. I was scared stiff of my headmaster. Mum tended to think he picked on me in particular, because I cried all day on my first day of school, actually I spent a lot of time crying at school ... In my senior class I wasn't really accepted in the 'cool' group in our year so I tended to hang out with the younger boys from the previous year. And intellectually, I was just sort of average. But my saving grace at school and with my headmaster was that I was a very good rugby player and so I would get respect by performing in the sport arena. And so I just loved, totally loved rugby.

Tom's outstanding performances in rugby helped provide discursive resources so that he could re-construct, in a fortuitous manner, his sense of self: from the 'cry-baby' to the 'rugby playing boy'. Rugby, therefore, helped provide Tom with a respectful subject position. In contrast, Colin reported that his participation in rugby caused him stress:

> Because I was a little fat kid I had to play two years above my age - junior rugby was done on weight grades - so when I was only ten I was playing with my twelve year-old brother. I was shorter than the older boys, but I was wider. Playing two years up sort of destroyed me: physically I could match the older boys but socially I couldn't sort of deal with all the shit that used to get thrown at me. Even the coach used to single me out at training because I was never running and I was always last, and because I was last I had to go again. So I was singled out and it made me feel like I wasn't quite good enough, I felt *soft*. Looking back now, I can remember it well, it's quite clear, it made me feel soft, so I actually chucked it away when I was eleven. I didn't play again until after I left secondary school.

Colin vividly explained that he initially quit rugby because his performances made him feel not "good enough" and "soft". In other words, rugby discursively helped constitute Colin's sense of self as *feminine*. Colin's account of why he quit was, therefore, similar to the other men who quit at a young age. Yet Colin's account was also markedly different as he reported that he was never fearful of being hurt in rugby: "Physically I could always handle playing rugby, the

hard physicality of the game never worried me." Colin's abilities to manage his fears of pain and injury were perhaps a factor that enabled him, after he had left secondary school, to once again play rugby.

Colin's statement about fear was typical of the men who continued to play rugby as teenagers and as adults. Time after time, I heard these men tell me that they were not concerned about injuries or pain. Willy, for example, denied that he feared pain by rhetorically asking: "How could I play if I was ever fearful of the game?" Relatedly, Darryl reported: "To be honest, I have never worried about getting hurt." Whereas Morris suggested that "there were probably moments of trepidation, but I was so excited about playing, that I don't think I ever really worried about getting hurt." Tom reported that he did not fear getting hurt "because I was still invincible at that stage." And Kahu was not afraid of the potential for pain as he simply viewed pain as a normal aspect of rugby:

> If you're gonna get hurt, you're gonna get hurt. I mean what are you playing the game for if you are scared of getting hurt? If you're scared, well you should go and play bowls or something, where the only thing you are gonna hurt is your back when you're bending down.

Yet Kahu also suggested that his ability to not fear pain was, in part, the result of a conscious desire when he was young. In other words, he initially had to work at not being fearful:

> My parents were sort of like Christians and they always used to say to me: "No pain in the world can ever take away the pain of Jesus Christ." You know, because he died for all of us. And I remember thinking as a boy – "well if he could go through all that, then what's a few knocks, a few bruises in the game?" I suppose that type of thinking about Jesus and pain, gave me some strength when I was young.

Darryl, more specifically, suggested that his ability to 'take pain' had developed because he had been exposed to rough games throughout his childhood:

> I had grown up with older brothers and a sister and quite a few cousins who played quite a lot of rough and tumble games. So that was part of my upbringing and I was quite happy to play those sort of games, the wrestlings, bullrush, scrag and those sort of things, so the physical contact in rugby did not worry me at all.

Relatedly, Colin informed that through growing up in "a family of five brothers and playing back yard rugby and cricket from a young age, you just sort of get used to that physical sort of stuff." Colin and Darryl's accounts suggest that through repeat exposure to potentially hurtful games, they became *disciplined*, in a Foucaultian sense, to accept that pain or the threat of pain was a normal aspect of rugby and boyhood.

Willy's account suggested that the threat of being "hassled" accompanied this disciplining process: "We felt good about playing rugby at lunchtime and because we took the hits, scratches, grazes and stuff we got annoyed if someone didn't. If someone cried about getting hurt - then they'd get a bit of teasing about being a girl." Willy revealed that the surveillance associated with 'taking pain' was significant as it encouraged him to police his own emotions: "If I got hurt playing rugby or bull-rush I tried not to show that I was in pain ... I suppose I wanted to appear tough." The men's accounts, in general, informed that the inability to take pain was typically regarded as feminine and as highly inappropriate for 'rugby boys'. However, Willy remembered that if an injury was severe, such as when his older brother had "his lip split and lost his front tooth" that "you could then get away with crying." Yet by all accounts participation in primary school rugby did not result in many injuries – the boys had, as yet, not been sufficiently disciplined to play with their 'bodies on the line'.

Although most of the men's accounts suggested that their abilities to take pain developed over a period of time, Tom told me that a specific event occurred that triggered his desire to not be fearful of rugby pain:

> I remember one cold wet day we played this team and these Maori kids seemed bigger than us and for once I was actually scared ... I let a kid run past me and I don't think I even attempted to tackle him. And we lost the game and afterwards I cried my little eyes out because I was so upset. That

> incident, I think, helped make me become big on tackling as I decided to not let myself get scared again because it was a big embarrassment for me ... So from then on I concentrated on tackling and my coach told me if I go into the tackle with my shoulder and hit them in the stomach you can't get hurt. I totally took his advice on board and believed it, and after that I just loved nailing kids. So I ended up totally loving tackling.

Tom revealed that he was embarrassed by his 'missed tackle' not because it contributed to his team's loss, but because he was exposed as fearful:

> After the game my coach put me on the spot by asking me why I didn't tackle that guy and I couldn't tell him that I was scared. That was when I started crying ... I can imagine that my coach told me not to be such a cry-baby or something. I just know that I cried and I was scared and I didn't tackle the person that day, but then I can never really remember being scared of tackling after that, in fact, I loved it after that.

Tom knew that as a male rugby player he was required to perform tackles without a display of fear. Yet through not meeting this discursive expectation, Tom's sense of masculine self was threatened. Relatedly, Young et al. (1994) asserted: "An athlete's masculinity comes into question when he does not conform to the pain principle" (p. 190): "which includes a set of cultural or ideological conceptions that prioritize pain over pleasure" (p. 182). In this respect Tom's missed tackle had, in part, exposed him as not being 'manly' and this revelation underpinned his embarrassment. Yet this embarrassing moment produced an epiphany: it encouraged Tom to subsequently conform to the 'pain-principle' and to discipline himself to be tough and emotionally restrained on the field. The disciplining process produced Tom's "political anatomy of detail" (Foucault, 1978a, p. 139); and helped produce the pleasure that Tom subsequently got from tackling. Therefore, Tom's pleasure in tackling developed, *in part*, because it represented his masculine ability to not give into fear.

Tom's love of the tackle, the aspect of the game that epidemiological studies recognise as the most dangerous (e.g. Dixon, 1993; Pringle et al., 1998), was not unique. Many of the men who enjoyed primary school rugby, for example,

explained that they specifically enjoyed the hard physicality of rugby. Willy, for example, told me: "Primary school rugby was exciting and I think that the physical contact side made it more exciting; you know, the tackling, the fending, trying to rip the ball off of someone if they had it." Similarly, Darryl reported: "I've always enjoyed tackling. I think it's the physical challenge that I enjoyed." In contrast, James told me that in the transition from primary to intermediate school, he deliberately shifted his playing position from the forwards to the backs, to help avoid the more dangerous aspects of rugby:

> I decided I'd be in the backs because I was a fairly slight character and I thought it would be a little bit easier and safer out there. And I liked the sort of the glory side of the position - racing down the sideline and scoring tries. It always felt good scoring a try. And I just liked the romantic notion of getting out there and playing the game. Those sort of things really appealed rather than the heavier grunty stuff of the forwards. So I pretty much stayed on the wing until I was 22.

However, James reported that he did enjoy tackling when he could "run someone down" and that he liked the "personal challenge of marking his opposite winger." So although James did not necessarily enjoy the "heavier grunty stuff" that he associated with the forwards, he still enjoyed some of the physical challenges of rugby.

Tom, Kahu, Morris, James and Darryl's accounts of their primary school rugby experiences revealed that they enjoyed numerous aspects of rugby participation, but that the physical nature of the game, such as the tackling, was often specifically meaningful and central to their rugby experiences. In this respect, the dominating discourses surrounding rugby - that constituted rugby as a rough game with a potential for injury and that required rugby players to appear fearless in the face of physical danger - helped produce prime aspects of the pleasures that these men gained from rugby. Moreover, I argue that the knowledge that they played a corporeally dangerous sport and could 'take the pain', was primarily meaningful as it articulated with dominant discourses of masculinity. These rugby pleasures were clearly in contrast to the men who feared getting hurt in primary school rugby.

Foucault (1978a) asserted that "power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (p. 86). Indeed, the discourses of masculinity that *helped* produce the dangers of rugby as pleasurable were not at the forefront of the men's understandings about what they enjoyed about tackling or rucking or mauling. Yet the men's accounts, of their formative rugby experiences, suggested that rugby's constitutive abilities to help produce masculine subjectivities were a prime aspect of the pleasure these men gained from their involvement in a potentially dangerous sport.

Rugby, subjectivities and dividing practices

Many of the men who enjoyed the roughness of primary school rugby reported that they developed pride in their ability to play rugby. For some of these men, this sense of pride was associated with the development of a comforting story of self. Tom, for example, told me:

> By the time I was in Standard six (age 12) I was being selected for representative teams and playing lots of rugby. I was practicing probably three times a week in school or rep teams and playing rugby most lunchtimes. And I was getting lots of recognition for it, so I started to see myself as a rugby player. That was who I was.

However, the ability for rugby to subjectify and 'normalise' boys conversely implied that if you were a boy and did not play rugby you were somehow not normal. Colin, for example, remembered that non-participation in rugby helped mark the boys differently and problematically at his primary school:

> There were a few kids who played soccer and they weren't looked upon very highly at all. Most people played rugby and if they didn't they were pansies ... they were never around when rugby was on, they never wanted to play. They were away doing their own thing ... and they got a bit of stick in class from not playing rugby.

Willy similarly suggested that the boys at his primary school who played soccer were teased as "poofs". However, most of the men did not suggest that rugby acted as a dividing practice between the boys at their primary schools. Some of the men, for example, reported that all of the boys played rugby at primary school, therefore, differing sport codes could not act as dividing practices. Whereas others suggested that at primary school all the boys were basically friendly with each other. James' comment was typical: "At primary school all the boys got on fairly well ... I don't remember any big divisions between different groups of boys." And several described that it was not until they were about thirteen years of age that they became aware of how allegiances to different sporting codes helped produce divisions between 'groups or types' of males. Darryl, for example, told me:

> I don't think it was really an issue whether you played soccer or rugby at primary school – well it wasn't for me. I think that that started sort of emerging once people got to their teens and then the whole image of rugby players being tough and hard, and soccer players being a bunch of poofs, started happening.

At primary school, therefore, rugby principally acted as a divider between males and females; thus rugby helped produce and sustain dominant beliefs about the differences between masculinities and femininities. More specifically, given the distinct recreational and sporting activities of the playgrounds, the men learned at a young age to associate boys with physical contact, toughness and competition, and girls with more passive recreations. Edgar's comments were typical:

> The boys generally played contact sports at lunchtime, such as rugby or bullrush or sometimes soccer. Whereas the girls played on the jungle gym, or did hop-scotch, or skipping or just sat around talking. So there was a clear difference in roles. And they tended not to play together ... there were clear differences between males and females because they were different.

Rugby was important in producing understandings of gender differences as it was discursively constructed as a rough sport, as a male only sport and as the

school's prime sport. Boys were, therefore, encouraged to perform feats of bravery and toughness on the rugby field, whereas girls were typically discouraged from playing any contact sport. The repeat rugby performances, by the boys, would have contributed, *in part*, to their understandings that males were tougher than females. In addition, the belief that playing rugby was somehow 'natural' for boys would have helped position the males as *naturally* tougher and rougher than females. Næss (2001) suggested that this positioning through segregated sport experiences helps produce females as "the weaker sex" (p. 132) and contributes to various power relations amongst males and females. Previous ethnographic research within primary schools, for example, has illustrated how the older, bigger boys typically dominate playground space through playing sport (e.g. Epstein, Kehily, Mac an Ghaill & Redman, 2001; Skelton, 1996; Swain, 2000). Thus, rugby participation likely provided the boys with greater opportunities to exercise power at primary school.

Yet some of the men were reluctant to suggest that rugby was the prime producer of their understandings about males or females. George, for example, told me:

> By the time I started primary school I already knew that males were stronger and tougher than girls ... My father and grandfather had been in the army and from a young age I had an expectation that I too would be in the army. And I'd grown up on war movies and westerns ... So we (boys) often played war games and everyone wanted to be the good guys or the heroes ... and if girls, like my little sister, played, then she was always relegated to being a nurse and what have you. So I guess I had stereotypical understandings about males and females long before I played rugby.

George's comments help illustrate that "a young boy brings an already-gendered identity to his first sports experiences..." (Messner, 1990c, pp. 99-100). Nevertheless, the men's accounts revealed that the pervasive dominance of rugby provided an influential context for the boys to negotiate understandings about gender and stories of self.

Chapter Summary

Rugby provided an influential and unavoidable context within which the men, as primary school children, gained formative understandings of masculinities, gender differences and of self. For the men who prided themselves on their rugby playing abilities and who had been suitably disciplined to accept pain and the threat of pain as a normal aspect of rugby, the dominating discourses of rugby provided narrative resources that allowed these men to negotiate comforting stories of self. Although none of these men stated that they enjoyed being hurt, the knowledge that they played a corporeally dangerous sport and could 'take the pain', was primarily meaningful as it articulated with dominant discourses of masculinity. Therefore, part of the pleasure these men gained through rugby was the knowledge that they were manly for participating, without displays of fear, in the hard physicality of rugby. Yet participation within rugby, for the men who were fearful of pain or of performing poorly, produced a sense of self that caused tension with respect to how they knew their masculine selves. These masculinity tensions helped fuel, in combination with the realities and threats of corporeal pain, these men's desires to quit or avoid continued rugby participation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Rugby stories from the men's secondary school years

Introduction

In the transition from primary school, where few injuries occurred in rugby and all males were encouraged to participate, to secondary school (ages 13-18) where rugby participation was no longer expected and the intensity of the game increased, rugby was discursively transformed from a sport 'for all males' to a '*man's* sport'. This discursive re-positioning had important implications for all of the men who participated in this study. In this chapter, I analyse the men's secondary school experiences of rugby.

The discursive positioning of rugby and rugby players

By the time that the men attended secondary school it was typically no longer expected that all males would play competitive rugby. Yet in some of the schools, particularly the single-sex 'traditional' schools, the pervasive dominance of rugby was still high and many boys chose to play rugby. Light and Kirk (2000) revealed, for example, that 40% of the boys at the elite independent school that they observed chose to play rugby. At Seamus's boarding school, in the 1970s, the percentage may have been higher as he uniquely reported:

> There was only one team sport there and it was rugby – we did do basketball once or twice in our PE classes but there was no sport of actually doing that and making a team after school. It was only rugby. There was *no* choice, you did rugby ... you would go off to school and there would be eight or nine rugby fields and every one of them was utilised. There were different teams from all different classes all practicing. Rugby was it.

Seamus's account of the seemingly compulsory nature of Saturday rugby was unique. Yet Willy, Edgar, and Kahu also reported that rugby played a significant role in their physical education (PE) classes. Willy, for example, reported: "we (the boys) spent most of the winter term in PE just playing rugby." Kahu and Willy, as rugby players, enjoyed the prevalence of rugby within their PE

classes. However Edgar, who had had very little sporting experience, dreaded PE, particularly when he was required to play rugby. Edgar was fearful of playing rugby, as he was the smallest in the class, poorly coordinated, and concerned about getting hurt. His account of his rugby fears was, therefore, similar to the men who had already quit participation in rugby: "When I was forced to do rugby, I generally decided it was an hour to survive. I would strategically place myself on the field where I would estimate that the ball had the least likelihood of arriving at." Yet Edgar also wanted to appear normal by doing what was expected of him on the rugby field:

> I always made sure I was getting close to the tackle, but only close enough so that somebody else got there first ... I didn't want to get hurt. And I hated running with the ball and hearing people running behind you and knowing that they were going to catch you and push you to the ground as hard as they could. It was very much like running away from a predator; it was terrifying ... If you said: "I don't want to play", the PE teachers, who were pretty big guys, would ridicule you: "Oh, you just want to sit on the side-lines like a girl." Seriously, they would make comments like that and not just one on one, but in front of everybody, so your best option was to get on the field and determine a survival technique.

Edgar's PE teachers inappropriately used sexist abuse to help motivate Edgar to play rugby. Through this abuse, rugby was discursively positioned as a *tough man's game* and males who did not want to play rugby were positioned as feminine. These positionings caused Edgar tension: if he announced that he did not want to play because he was fearful of being hurt, he risked being positioned as feminine. Edgar, therefore, felt trapped in a no-win situation; so he kept his fears of rugby secret and played in a reserved manner in an attempt to avoid getting hurt. Yet by the fifth form he had developed an additional strategy for avoiding rugby pain: "I would just not to turn up to those classes, I would wag PE."

The men's accounts in general, however, suggested that rugby did not typically dominate the curriculum in school PE. Yet the social influence of rugby was still pervasive. All of the men, for example, reported that rugby was the most

popular sport in the school and that the rugby boys gained considerable kudos. Edgar even defined his co-educational school as a *rugby* school:

> Rugby was the major sport at the school. We had an ex-All Black as the headmaster and we had Murray Deaker as deputy, who is now the sports commentator on the radio. They were rugby nuts ... If there was a big game where another school visited to play rugby, classes were cancelled and you had to go to the main field and watch these guys play rugby and clap and so forth. And stand there for the presentations at the end and listen to the rugby boys congratulate each other on how they all played a great game ... It was very much a rugby school.

Edgar's account illustrated how the educational leaders of his school held rugby and the rugby boys in high regard: this was not unusual. Time after time, I heard reports of how secondary school rugby players were treated reverently by teachers, particularly the boys in the First XV. Morris reported: "My school was a private boys school which had taken on a lot of the kind of British public school traditions and so rugby was highly regarded." And Kahu told me: "The last college I went to was St. Stephens and rugby was everything. It was a big thing for the Maori boys to represent the school, but you also represented your hapu and iwi, it was all about mana." Even Finn, who suggested that his school was "quite liberal", reported the dominance of rugby:

> Rugby was certainly a big deal at secondary school, there were always two or three teams in each form and there was the ethos of the First XV and that was pretty big and pretty powerful as I remember it ... The achievements of the rugby players were always well recognised by the school, whereas achievement in other areas often slid by unnoticed.

In some of the schools, given the status associated with playing rugby, it became increasingly difficult for some of the boys to even get selected for secondary school teams. The school team that was regarded with the most status and was the most difficult to get selected for, was the school's First XV. Morris told me:

> It was a disappointment for me that I didn't make the First XV in my sixth form (year 12) year, which was my goal. So I spent two years in the Second XV. Clearly the First XV held quite a status. And it was a big deal for me when I finally made the team in my last year of school.

With the increased status associated with making a school team, rugby was played by a more select group of males; typically these were the boys who were more skilled, confident, faster, stronger, and bigger. In the process rugby became discursively known as a 'man's game' and the pupils who played rugby, particularly in the First XV, became positioned as 'rugby men'. Associated with this prized masculine subject position, the First XV players gained significant status and were able to exercise greater power in comparison to many of the other pupils.

The prestige and privileges of being a First XV man

From the men's accounts, it was clear that their schools helped construct the identifiable and gendered subjectivities of the First XV rugby players. A typical way that the schools helped mark the First XV rugby players as manly was through providing them with a distinctive and respected uniform.

> The First XV had a different uniform – different to all the other students – we had ties and a blazer and special long pants. You'd get dressed up and walk about the school and people would notice you. It was a sort of special thing, and you felt good about being in the team. It gave you status (Tom).

Similarly, Morris reported that after playing four games for the First XV: "We got to wear a blue blazer which marks you out and very much puts you at the top of the status system – prefects and First XV members were pretty much the top of the heap." In this manner, the schools typically helped reinforce the rugby playing boys' subject positions as men, by providing them with the exemplary uniform of *business-men*: ties, blazers and long pants.

Being a 'man' is also often associated with being a leader (Connell, 1995), and many schools appeared to help solidify this discursive link through

disproportionately selecting rugby players as official student leaders or prefects. Edley and Wetherell (1997), for example, in a study of the construction of masculine identities at a single-sex school in England, found a disproportionate correlation between school prefects and rugby players. The participants in my study also reported a disproportionate link. Morris, for example, stated:

> If you were in the First XV the schoolmasters would be friendlier to you; treat you in a somewhat more collegial manner – without a doubt that was very clear. And if you were a good rugby player and you were kind of a team player, you were seen in some ill-defined way as a *good kind* of person and as a person of leadership ... I was a prefect and I think that the First XV players had a lot more chance of being a prefect.

Tom, as a *valued* member of his First XV, was also selected as a prefect, but he attempted to underplay the significance of the later: "basically it was just something to have on your testimonial when you left school, which I suppose helped, but we didn't have any real job ... it was just a status thing at school." Further, James reported: "there were certainly a fair few First XV players that were prefects, but there were some academics as well." In this manner, James appeared to differentiate rugby players from "academics": this dualistic view was not unique. Seamus, Sebastian, Edgar and Colin also reported that the prefects tended to be either 'academics' or 'sportsmen', but that the sportsmen gained greater respect.

The men further suggested that the teachers not only typically provided the rugby players with official status and special uniforms, but that they also treated them in a privileged, more respectful, manner. Willy reported:

> I was quite a loud student and a bit cheeky but I never got into trouble for what I did. The teachers always seemed to like me and I could get away with quite a bit ... I was often late to class after lunch but I never got in trouble for this, it was just like "take a seat Willy, we are up to page 120" or something like that. I think the teachers assumed I'd been training for rugby or at rugby meetings or something.

Darryl even suggested that he might have gained an academic advantage through being a First XV member:

> I was told by my chemistry teacher that I had been accredited U.E. (university entrance) and he asked if I was surprised.[5] And I was, because at that stage I wasn't doing the work, so I said back to him: "Well, I thought it might be touch and go." He said: "Yes it was, there were three of us who said yes and two said no – you were bloody lucky that you actually got it." And I'm pretty sure that if I hadn't been in the First XV and hadn't been a sought after player, a high profile player, that the teachers wouldn't have known me and I think that helped. As I think they knew I could do the work, but that wasn't the point, I hadn't been doing the work.

Regardless of whether Darryl was actually unfairly accredited U.E., I suggest it is significant that he believed that his rugby playing exploits were of influence.

The rugby players' subject positions, as men, also allowed them greater opportunity to drink beer - the "man's drink" (Campbell, Law & Honeyfield, 1999, p. 166). Morris remembered an incident that illustrated how the teachers treated the First XV players with particular leniency with respect to a beer-drinking incident:

> A group of the First XV boys were taken out to an after school match function by one of the boys' parents and got supplied with beer, lots of beer. And then they got delivered back to school – basically pissed. It was a very conservative school and it was all hushed up because you could not afford to suspend your entire First XV – so their status saved their bacon.

Morris' story revealed that the educational leaders of his school did not support rugby players drinking beer, but at the same time they did not follow typical school rules: the players got away with being "pissed" at school. And as

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[5] U.E. or 'University Entrance' was a qualification gained at the end of the sixth form (year 12) through two processes. If a student had provided evidence throughout the year that they were of a suitable standard they could be accredited with UE - as Darryl was. Otherwise students were required to sit exams at the end of the year to prove their eligibility for potential university study – a more stressful process.

Morris suggested, this likely occurred because of the rugby players' status. Moreover, Light and Kirk (2000) asserted that "rugby has long been valued ... as a vehicle for, and a symbolic measure of, social education in which turning boys into particular types of men forms a central element of the curriculum" (p. 174). I suggest, in drawing on Light and Kirk's assertion, that Morris' school's public reputation, in part, was likely judged on the quality of the rugby players' characters both on and off the field. The rugby players were, therefore, objectified as assets for advertising the ability of the school to produce disciplined young men; but as liabilities if news leaked out that the First XV rugby players had been ill-disciplined. Nevertheless, some teachers *discretely* encouraged some of the First XV players to drink beer. Darryl, for example, remembered:

> Our coach was a PE teacher and he was quite young ... There was a group of the older players (senior pupils) that he invited back on occasions to his place to have drinks. He would supply some beers, flagons and crates in those days, and he didn't mind if we smoked cigarettes ... Some of the other younger teachers would also be there. At the time I felt honoured to be drinking beer with the teachers ... I suppose it made me feel quite mature, like a man. But I also thought that this wasn't the sort of thing teachers should be doing.

Drinking beer has long been recognised for its role in the production of a dominant form of masculinity within Aotearoa/New Zealand and with its special links to sport and rugby (see Campbell, et al. 1999; Hall, 2002; Phillips, 1987). In this respect, the discursive links between a dominant form of masculinity, playing rugby and beer consumption likely underpinned some of the teachers' actions of leniency (e.g. in Morris' case) or support (e.g. Darryl) towards First XV players drinking of beer.

The men's accounts revealed that the educational leaders of the schools, through various practices, officially and unofficially supported the discursive positioning of the First XV rugby players as 'up-standing moral young gentlemen'. As a consequence of this privileged treatment, the celebrated qualities of being a rugby player would have influenced the dominant teenage narratives about successful or appropriate masculinities. Hickey and Fitzclarence (1999), for

example, asserted that the cultural messages that emerge from boys' sporting cultures "typically valorize versions of masculinity forged on strength, aggression, mateship (solidarity), courage, independence and commitment" (p. 55). Further, given that the rugby players were symbolically and, at times, literally representative of these respected masculine qualities, they were typically able to exercise more power in comparison to the other students. The secondary school's promotion of rugby and rugby players, therefore, directly and indirectly contributed to the establishment of certain power relations amongst the pupils. More specifically, rugby became a chief dividing practice between the male pupils at secondary schools: rugby was no longer primarily just a dividing practice between male and female pupils.

Previous research has acknowledged that sports, like rugby, produce a hierarchy of power relations within schools (e.g. Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001; Light & Kirk, 2000). Yet Fitzclarence and Hickey (2001) warned that as a consequence of these inequitable power relations the 'non-sporting boys' typically have fewer narrative resources that they can use for constructing a respected masculine subjectivity and, therefore, they have "to seek alternative avenues to social power" (p. 130). Grieve (1994) even suggested that the social consequences for the males who do not conform to dominant masculine standards, such as those who do not play rugby, can be "pretty terrifying" (p. 158). In the next section, I examine how the men who opted to not play rugby negotiated an understanding of self.

The performance of 'alternative' masculinities

"When young boys choose football, they are entering a community of practice that demarcates particular forms of masculinity" (Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001, p. 130). Conversely, it can be argued that when young men choose not to play rugby, or are excluded from entering such sporting fraternities, they are also entering particular social communities that demarcate forms of masculinities. Within this section, I examine how the men who did not play competitive rugby at secondary school were positioned into, or entered, particular social communities; and what discursive resources were available to these men, within these communities for producing and negotiating masculine subjectivities.

The men's accounts revealed that although rugby was a prime dividing practice among boys, the power relations that existed among the male pupils were not neatly or simply divided between rugby players and non-players but were dense and entangled: multiple and competing discursive forces were at work at the boys' secondary schools. These forces typically revolved around axes of power related to abilities to perform academic work, body size and appearance, age, social and cultural background, ethnicity, sexuality and, importantly, ability to play sports, particularly rugby. Thus, those who chose not to play rugby at secondary school were not all positioned in one particular social group or as one type of masculinity. Similarly, not all of the rugby players gained equal social advantage through participating in rugby. Tom, for example, told me that although he was a provincial age-group representative rugby player, that: "... at secondary school, when I was a third former (year 9), I was a bit afraid of the school playground and being bullied."

In addition, although the rugby players, in general, had greater ability to use narrative resources in the production of comforting stories of self, these players were also constrained by the dominating discourses of masculinity. Darryl, for example, reported that he enjoyed playing the piano, writing poetry and the academic side of secondary school life but he kept these pleasures secret:

> I must admit that I hid my academic nature from my team-mates as best I could when I first started high school. I remember I had piano lessons after rugby practice and I definitely didn't tell them that I liked playing piano, but the trouble was that I'd have to take my piano satchel with all my music in it, down to training, as I had piano lessons after rugby practice. And it wasn't long before the boys found out and there was some teasing. And of course I didn't like it. As I said, I initially took great pains to fit in.

In this respect, given Darryl and Tom's accounts, it was clear that the power relations among the boys were not evenly divided between rugby and non-rugby playing boys. Nevertheless, the men who did not play rugby were well aware of the attention and status that the boys who played rugby received, and many reported that they were somewhat envious of this attention. Edgar, for example, told me that the "rugby boys were a very high status group, and I

wouldn't have minded being in that social group; they often got very pretty girlfriends." Similarly, Finn reported:

> The rugby players were bigger, more powerful people and I suppose there was a girl factor in there too. I thought, "Hey, if I was big and powerful and ran fast and got the ball through the sticks then maybe I'd have a girl following as well" ... And I remember that when I was in the sixth form, for example, the First XV had a school trip to Australia. And it was a very big thing, in those days, to travel overseas ... So of course there was some envy there.

With similar degree of envy, George told me that he periodically reconsidered his decision to not play rugby:

> By the time I was in the senior school a few of my friends were in the First XV and if there was a school game we all cheered the First XV when they played and it was cool, we all went along. And there was part of me that would have liked to be playing rugby again and getting some of that attention.

In fact, George still regretted that he never played rugby at secondary school, as he believed that the advantages of being known as a rugby player paid long-lasting social dividends:

> Looking back, I wish that in some ways I had been made to play rugby because I do regret that I missed out on certain things. I would have developed a few social skills that I needed earlier, such as confidence and experience with being a team player. And I would have enjoyed being part of that group, the camaraderie and the status, that would have been nice. But also I have found since that it would have been good from a job perspective – putting on your CV that you were a First XV player certainly would have helped.

The men who did not play rugby were typically envious of the rugby players as they recognised that the players could often exercise more power than they could. More specifically, the men were aware that they did not have the same ability to use specific narrative resources to construct respectful masculine subjectivities. These men, for example, found it more difficult to construct a sense of self around the well-worn masculine traits of competitiveness, strength, independence and toughness: the qualities that rugby players often appeared to exemplify on the field. At times, the men who did not play rugby were also positioned problematically through their 'alternative' activities. Derek, for example, was aware that as a soccer and chess player he was positioned as "less of a man"; in fact, he knew that soccer and chess were regarded as "poof's games". Similarly, George reported that as a non-sporting boy who won academic prizes he was "definitely looked upon as different." He told me: "In the sixth form I hung out in a group with a lot of girls, which was unusual. And we were the nerds of the school, there was no doubt about that; kids used to call us that."

With less access to the resources needed to construct a respected masculine subjectivity, these men's stories of self were not overly comforting. Finn, for example, reported: "I was never an outgoing person at school or even interested in putting myself forward. I tended to be a background person." And Sebastian, more sadly, defined his school self by stating:

> I was just one of the small, weak, skinny kids that hung around with the loser crowd. There were a few of us that weren't really even in any particular group. I was just a bit of a loner at that time. Spent most of my time between 13 and 15 under a hat that I used to wear so I didn't see anyone.

In a similar self-derogatory manner, Lionel defined himself as a "nob" who existed in a "social outcast little sub-grouping." He reported that he avoided the lunchtime games of scrag and rugby that was played by the "bullies" and he "hung out in the library":

> I didn't know what else to do at lunchtimes, but there was enough of us so it didn't really matter. There were four or five of us as a close group that

frequented the library and that number was enough to have validation that you weren't entirely screwed up.

In comparison to the secondary school stories of self offered by Lionel, Sebastian, Finn, George and Derek, it was clear that the rugby players typically felt good about their rugby playing abilities and this appeared to positively impact on their teenage senses of self. Willy, Darryl, Morris, Tom and Kahu, for example, all suggested that they gained degrees of respect and acceptance from their rugby performances. As such they did not talk of themselves as "nobs", "background" people, "poofs" or "nerds". Their stories of self, in this respect, were at the least not discomforting. Darryl even suggested that he was at risk of suffering "bigheadedness": "I knew that I could do the academic work, was good at sport and had a lot of friends, so by the time I was I the sixth form I was becoming arrogant, which wasn't necessarily a likeable trait." Yet, the rugby players still had to negotiate the complexities of teenage social life and their accounts revealed times of tension and sorrow. Darryl, for example, who was adopted by a pakeha family, talked of the difficulties of being Maori in a pakeha world. Nevertheless, the men who played rugby for their secondary schools typically reported that their rugby playing abilities afforded them a degree of status that made their school years generally favourable.

The men who did not participate in institutionalised rugby told accounts of their secondary school experiences that revealed that they drew on various strategies for developing what Edley and Wetherell (1997) defined as "alternative, counter-hegemonic identities" (p. 208). Yet some of the men who chose not to play rugby struggled to find the narrative resources necessary for feeling good about themselves. Sebastian, who perhaps struggled the most, reported: "I hated my physical state because I was chronically skinny and I was very angry. I wasn't eating and I developed a complex about myself." In an attempt to manage his "chronic weight problem" he was sent to live with his father:

> He was a doctor and he made me study and he got me into weight training. He also got me eating a healthy diet and I started putting on weight. And I developed a love of weight training and getting bigger and it started feeding my ego and it gave me confidence. And then I started doing some sports as

> well – not rugby of course, I was still very afraid of aggression. But I had always been good at track and with weight training I got better and I was really good at high jump and shot put. And I started winning at certain things and I got favourable comments from my PE teachers. And I thought "Oh wow this is great." It became addictive.

Sebastian reported further: "I just wanted to get bigger and bigger because it gave me respect, and I got respect from the rugby players – the people that I had always been intimidated by. I admit that that was important for me." He explained why gaining this respect was significant:

> Because growing up in New Zealand you cannot help but feel a failure if you are not accepted into that rugby culture. And I guess my initial strategy was to think "Oh I don't care, I don't want to be like them." But *secretly* I was weight training to get as big as I could. And I guess I had a desire to be admired by them and I guess that is what I achieved in the end, because I ended up being pretty strong and big. And those guys, in the end, did admire me. Hell, I could bench-press more than all of them anyway.

Sebastian re-shaped his body as a technology of self to gain masculine respect. His use of this technology was successful as his increased strength and body size provided him with the necessary narrative resources to help produce a comforting story of self: he transformed himself into an exemplar of celebrated masculinity. His new sense of self was clearly produced through drawing upon dominant discourses of masculinity, such as strength and power. Therefore, in an indirect manner, Sebastian's account helped reveal that alternative masculine resources for producing comforting stories of self were limited. Lionel also found that narrative resources for transforming his sense of self were limited; as such he believed that one of his only options was to actually play rugby again:

> By the time I was in the seventh form (year 13) I was pissed off with who I was, I'd allowed myself to be this weedy, shallow, background sort of person that only had an academic side and I wanted to develop other sides, to show that I could do more than just get good grades in maths and

> science. At that time I wanted to impress some girls as well ... So after not playing rugby for five years I decided to play in the school inter-house rugby competition. And although it was only two games, it proved something to me, it proved I could do it. I played lock and took some line out ball and I really enjoyed it. I felt good about playing those games.

Lionel "felt good" through playing rugby as it helped him *prove* that he could perform "the male 'virtues' of strength and domination" (Hickey & Fitzclarence, 1999, p. 52), and in this way, he also believed he would be more attractive to "girls". His story, which was not unusual, helps indicate the articulations between rugby, masculinity and heterosexuality. Nevertheless, Lionel was "still somewhat fearful" of rugby pain and was "not interested in playing rugby on a regular basis". Yet, not all of the men wanted to or were capable of transforming their senses of self through facing their rugby 'fears' or through weight training. In this respect, they resorted to other strategies to help feel good about their masculine selves.

Edgar, Finn and Sebastian, for example, drew on resistant readings of rugby and rugby players as a means to help negotiate their understandings of self. In this manner, they could see themselves as different from the rugby players, yet not as inferior and, perhaps, even as superior. Finn, for example, stated that he believed that the rugby players "were uncritical thinkers and the followers of the crowd ... I saw the rugby players as clones who didn't have the confidence to act independently. They were always in a group and rugby was their security blanket to keep them accepted." Similarly, Edgar reported: "I knew a couple of the First XV players and they were good guys, but the rugby guys were dicks when they were in a group: being cool just for the sake of being cool was very shallow." Edgar, Finn and Sebastian, therefore, positioned the rugby players as weak in character and this allowed them to celebrate their own independent thinking and mental strength. Further, they thought that the rugby players were somewhat foolish for risking serious injury and putting up with the pain of rugby. Finn, with mixed emotions, reported:

> By the time I was in the sixth form I understood the game well. And at that stage I knew that players had to defend their territory and defend hard. And

> I could see that people were committed to that, I could even admire that. But there were players at school that I knew had had serious injuries, one had had a series of concussions and carried on playing. I felt that was a bit reckless, a bit cavalier and a bit foolish. To be honest I thought that that whole 'go hard and ignore the pain' attitude was rather stupid. I never respected that.

Edgar, more bluntly, reported: "My image of the rugby players, and I knew some of the players and they weren't dumb, but as a whole I thought the rugby players were generally thick, the school drop-out types." Similarly, Sebastian stated: "I could never relate to the mentality of the rugby players, that kind of aggressive talk and the language they used, the whole culture seemed very primitive, and how they associated with each other, it was a bit like cavemen."

Through developing counter-narratives about the rugby players, Edgar, Finn and Sebastian were able to position themselves as somewhat courageous, independent and intelligent. In this respect, Edgar, Finn and Sebastian used their resistant readings of rugby as technologies of the self to help "transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness..." (Foucault, 1988a, p. 4). These men were self-reflexive and critically aware of the discourses associated with rugby and masculinities and, therefore, they avoided being disciplined by the technologies of domination associated with rugby. However, it is difficult to know the extent to which their actions were socially transformative. For example, in this process of differentiating themselves from the rugby players, they still clearly drew on dominating discourses of masculinity (e.g. courage and independence) to help constitute their senses of self, which, in a somewhat ironic manner, helps illustrate the dominance of these discursive resources for constituting masculinities. In addition, Edgar, Sebastian and Finn reported that they did not publicly talk of their critical understandings of rugby. The dominance of rugby and its links to masculinities, therefore, acted to silence their critical concerns about rugby. Nevertheless, the dominance of rugby at secondary schools can be regarded from a Foucaultian perspective, as providing "a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1978a, p. 101).

Edgar, Sebastian and Finn were also critical of the kudos bestowed upon rugby players. Edgar told me: "I ended up resenting all the attention that the rugby

players got, I think the school had its values around the wrong way – they gave little respect or attention to those who did well academically." Similarly, Finn told me:

> There were a lot of people that deserved attention from the school and they never got it. I'm thinking of people who played different sport codes, like the hockey players, and girls' teams. I mean I wasn't even really aware of girls' teams until I had a girlfriend playing netball. But there were other people as well, good artists, musicians, people involved in dance and drama. Looking back, and I hope it has changed, it was a mistake to give so much attention to rugby.

Similarly, Sebastian, who came from a family that highly regarded fine art, was resentful that his school provided artists with little respect: "My brother won a coveted international scholarship to go to an art school in Italy, perhaps the best in the world, yet my school still didn't recognise or seem to care about his talents." In this manner, Sebastian, Edgar and Finn were resentful that their schools did not provide equal status to alternative ways of performing masculinities. Their accounts helped reveal the social dominance of rugby yet they also illustrated that rugby was pivotal in the *initial* production of 'resistant' or critical thinking about masculinities. Rugby, therefore, did not just help produce hard unreflexive men imbued with problematic ideas of gender, as previous sport and masculinity research has intimated (e.g. Messner, 1992; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Schacht, 1996; Young et al., 1994). In contrast, the men's accounts revealed that sports like rugby can be understood in multiple ways, and that rugby can help produce, reaffirm but also de-stabilise and potentially challenge dominating discourses of masculinity.

Although the First XV players were socially privileged while at secondary school, they were still subject to the limited discursive resources for constituting respected masculine subjectivities. Therefore, the rugby players did not automatically gain their coveted masculine subject positions but they had to *earn* them through select performances: which typically, but not exclusively, took place on the rugby field. In the following section, I analyse the joys and pain associated with the requisite training to become a respected First XV rugby man.

Getting hard: disciplining the body through training regimes

The subject positioning of First XV rugby players as 'men' and as 'representatives of the school' not only provided the players with certain privileges but also with certain responsibilities. The knowledge that the players were representatives of the school, for example, produced expectations about how they had to perform on and off the rugby field. These expectations, as a reflection of the omnipresent workings of discourses of rugby, filtered from different sources including the school leaders, teachers, old-boys, parents, and other pupils (male and female). Yet, these expectations were more directly produced by the coach and from the players themselves. In other words the players were subject to a "relation of surveillance": a panoptic gaze of expectations (Foucault, 1977a, p. 141). Kahu told me:

> You represented the school, we were often told that, and you would want to do anything you could to get your school's name up there. And you've got all the students behind you, they would all come and watch the school games and cheer and things. Yet if you didn't perform then you might as well go and play with the other side. They all put you on a pedestal but if you dropped below that pedestal, then you had problems.

These panoptic expectations influenced how the First XV members trained and participated in rugby. More specifically, the players understood that, at times, they were required to risk pain in the pursuit of victory. These are the times, such as, when a player *must* dive on a ball with the knowledge that opposition boots or knees are not far behind, or when a player *has* to jump into the air in front of charging players in an attempt to secure the ball. In these times, rugby players, like soldiers in war, are expected to perform their jobs with little thought for their own physical well-being: the players must respond in a docile but disciplined manner. To help achieve this seemingly ambiguous blend of traits, athletes have typically been subject to the disciplinary rigours of specific and extensive training regimes (Shogan, 1999). Foucault (1977a) stated that discipline increases the force or productivity of the body but at the same time it produces a politically obedient

body: "Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies" (p. 138).

The men who played First XV rugby could all remember, sometimes in exquisite detail, the embodied requirements of their rugby training regimes. More generally, they reflected that their practice sessions were challenging and hard. Yet this hardness had not been suddenly imposed on them once they were in the First XV, but it had been progressively increased over time. The men's accounts of the gradual intensifications of practices was similar to how Foucault (1977a) described the ways in which discipline proceeds with respect to exercise: "Exercise is that technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated ... and which would involve from year to year, month to month, exercise of increasing complexity..." (p. 161). Yet, although the intensity of rugby trainings were gradually intensified, some of the men reported that they did not look forward to First XV training sessions. Willy, who started playing for his First XV while only a fourth former, bluntly told me:

> I hated the training. It was just hard work and you knew your body was going to get thrashed. I got pushed to the end, and I didn't really know how to handle that. It would have been good if someone had warned me, you know, "Ok this is what's going to happen, you're going to get pushed to your utmost limits, but if you can guts it out, this is the reward at the end of it." I didn't get any of that. I had to work it out for myself.

Morris also reported about the intensity of the training sessions: "I can remember getting so fatigued in some of the fitness classes that my lungs felt like they were going to burst, and my muscles turned to jelly." Yet, Morris was not resentful about being pushed to his limits. In fact, he learned to appreciate the hard training sessions and was soon augmenting these practices with his own fitness regime: "One of the long lasting benefits of rugby was that I developed my love of running .... For added fitness I would run in the hills at the back of my school and that love has stayed with me till today." Darryl also reported that he enjoyed aspects of the physically intense rugby practices:

> The practices themselves were hard but I looked forward to them, we always started with fitness drills. We had a steep bank next to the rugby field that we had to run up and down .... It was always competitive and in each drill we were pushed, you didn't want to be last. If you were last you were often made to do it again. Or you were given a 'rev up' about your fitness or attitude. But if you pushed it hard, the team and coach would really support you ... although it was serious there was also lots of joking around. They were special times and I had some good mates in that team.

Darryl's account reveals contradictions revolving around his nostalgic memories of the good times with his friends, and of the pain and potential embarrassment associated with intensity and competitiveness of the physical training sessions.

The men's accounts of their First XV training regimes were similar to how Foucault (1977a) suggested that disciplinary power operated to regulate existence in modern institutions, such as in hospitals, prisons and schools. Foucault asserted that the modality of disciplinary power was "exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement" (p. 137). This regulation of time, space and movements was clearly apparent from the men's accounts of their rugby practices. They typically talked of two practices after school each week of approximately 90 minutes duration; early morning fitness classes in the school gymnasium, that were divided into select time units of work and rest; and of practising in groups in enclosed areas or in long lines with the coach in a position to survey all. They also talked of themselves with respect to their rugby positions: as backs or forwards or more specifically as, locks, flankers, or half-backs. And with respect to these team positions, they also talked of their specific duties. Darryl, as an example, told me: "My job as second-five was to flick the ball on quickly ... or to run straight to help set up second phase play ... I was also *expected* to be strong in defence." Darryl, stated further, "I remember being told categorically not to kick the ball, but to leave that to the first-five or the fullback as that was their jobs." Thus, each individual's role on the field was linked with other players' roles, with the overall goal to help create the productive and well-disciplined machine: the winning team.

Foucault (1977a) detailed how "discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" (p. 141) and how it employed technologies related to *enclosure* (e.g. fitness work in the gymnasium and within select areas), *partitioning* (e.g. team positions), *function* (e.g. the specific role of each position) and *rank* (e.g. coach, captain, forward leader, reserve). Yet, the disciplining of the players also related to the "control of activity" (p. 149) through the establishment of routines, rigid schedules and the "exhaustive use" (p. 154) of time. Discipline, claimed Foucault, intensifies the use of time "as if time, in its very fragmentation, were inexhaustible or as if, at least by an ever more detailed internal arrangement, one could tend towards an ideal point at which one maintained maximum efficiency" (p. 154). Most of the First XV members, for example, talked of how practices were serious and there was definitely no time for frivolous behaviours; that time was earned after a successful game or practice. Darryl, more specifically, remembered: "My coach had a sense of urgency about him, he was always yelling stuff like 'come on, dig it in, faster' - that sort of thing."

The men held multiple understandings about the significance of the physically demanding training sessions and, in this respect, a definitive statement as to the significance of these training sessions is not appropriate. However, the rugby training regimes can be regarded as disciplinary projects to help produce rugby bodies with select "movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 137). The rugby training sessions, for example, helped produce First XV members as 'rugby men', yet I stress that the men were not all consumed by rugby. Darryl and Willy, for example, highlighted how listening to reggae music and dating girls became passions in their teenage years. In addition, Foucault asserted that the end product of disciplinary techniques was "to produce individually characterized, but collectively useful aptitudes" (p. 162). In this sense, the rugby players thought of themselves as individuals and unique creations, although they had developed similar rugby aptitudes, of which, one of the prime aptitudes gained was 'toughness'. A productive body in rugby is competitive, skilled and obedient or docile; yet such a body is only useful if it is also tough: if it can work in the face of pain and challenge. Thus, the disciplinary techniques employed in training rugby players, *in part*, produced well-drilled, fit and *tough 'men'* to help produce victory on Saturdays.

Light and Kirk (2000) concluded, from an ethnographic examination of a high school's First XV, that the training sessions revolved around the "drilling and disciplining of the body to make it an efficient weapon for the exercise of force and the domination of other young men" (pp. 169-170). Messner (1992) also suggested that training in combat sports, such as American football, produces athletes' bodies as weapons of violence. Yet most of the men who I interviewed did not accept that they were being produced as efficient weapons of violence. Tom, in typical fashion, reported: "Well, I didn't really think of rugby as violent, and I certainly didn't think of myself as a weapon. It was just great fun: I felt it was a safe environment". Darryl made similar comments:

> Although training was serious and on the whole we took it seriously, it's not a fair summary to suggest we were turned into weapons or whatever – it wasn't that serious, it wasn't a kill or be killed scenario. It wasn't war. Although we wanted to win, I was never that competitive, that wasn't the focus: not for me anyhow .... We had a couple of guys in the team who were 'over the top'. One would head-butt the changing room walls in the lead-up to games and the other would ask people to punch him in the stomach, but most people thought they were dickheads. And I personally never liked that side of rugby.

Darryl rejected the idea that he was methodically produced as a weapon of destruction. In contrast, he even suggested that aspects of his training were specifically designed to help minimise injury:

> Before my First XV I had never been taught how to tackle properly, you know - where to put your head and shoulders, how to keep your back straight. And I had been knocked out twice while playing as a schoolboy and both of them were in the tackle. But after being taught how to tackle I felt much safer and more confident.

Darryl clearly acknowledged the potential for injury in rugby. Yet he stressed that some aspects of his rugby training were designed to help minimise the

risks of injury. Willy, in contrast, accepted, and he was unique in his opinion, that he thought of himself as a rugby weapon:

> When I played at centre I was a battering ram, I loved running straight into people and dropping my shoulder down or pumping my knees if they were tackling low and then trying to off-load the ball. And that's what my job was, you had to hit them hard, to smash into them, you had to knock'em back, to soften them up.

The majority of the men, however, rejected the idea that the training sessions were primarily designed to produce them as weapons to inflict damage and pain, but they also accepted that the practices did 'toughen them up', and that this was needed to help make them more competitive players. Relatedly, it was not just the coach who pushed the players' bodies in practices, but the players also expected to be disciplined in a hard manner. As such they surveyed each other's fitness levels, bodies and capabilities.

Injury and pain: When the going gets tough some get going

Throughout secondary school the intensity and competitiveness of rugby increased in conjunction with the size, strength, speed and skill of the rugby players and the frequency and severity of injuries. Although the men reported that they sustained few serious injuries in their early teens, by the time that they were sixteen years of age, all of the rugby players had sustained at least one painful injury that required medical attention or prevented them from participating for a week or more. And Willy, Darryl and Tom had all incurred multiple injuries by that age; including broken bones, head and neck injuries and dislocations.

The men's accounts revealed that they constructed multiple and, at times, seemingly contradictory understandings about rugby injuries; yet they also revealed some relatively consistent similarities. The men, for example, had all been disciplined at a young age to not show fear on the rugby field, to not talk about their fears, even if they existed, and to appear tough in the face of physical risk. Further, as the intensity and competitiveness of the game increased from childhood to teenage years, the players also accepted that it was *normal* to complete a game of rugby and to experience some general body pain. In this manner, particular

rugby injuries or feelings of pain were often normalised. This normalisation process can be regarded as the result of the men being disciplined by the rigours of rugby training, or as Curry (1993) asserted, the result of being thoroughly "socialized into the informal expectations regarding pain and injury" (p. 284).

This disciplining process was typically *thorough* as many of the men talked nonchalantly about the injuries that they had received. Seamus, for example, reported: "Yes, I got roughed in rucks and tackles and sometimes I got sprig marks down my back, but no injuries resulted from it." Similarly Kahu told me: "No I didn't get injured at secondary school .... Oh I did dislocate my finger and I remember I got a cork thigh, but nothing major." In this manner, general bruising and abrasions, even dislocated fingers, were not necessarily considered as significant or as abnormal. Moreover, the men appeared to have held expectations that at some stage they would likely sustain a *serious* injury. In this respect, many reflected on their teenage rugby injury histories as if they had been lucky: they knew that rugby was a potentially dangerous sport but they were lucky, as they had not suffered permanent disabilities from rugby injuries. James, for example, reported:

> I actually had a pretty good run with injuries. You know I got winded and bruised at times, and the odd groin strain - those types of things, but nothing really major ... oh yes I did get concussed once. I ended up banging my head into someone's knee in the tackle. A knee came up and just got me in the side of the head. I don't think I went completely out, just a bit dazed, and didn't know where I was for a bit and I needed some help to get off the field ... My Dad took me to the hospital after the game and I stayed overnight just for observation. But I was fine ... so I guess I was quite lucky on the injury front.

Darryl also reported, even though he was concussed two times in playing secondary school rugby, that he was lucky not to have sustained 'serious' injuries: "I was very, very lucky that I never lost a tooth or teeth, as I never wore a mouth guard, and that I didn't get some long-lasting injury." Although the men typically reported that they felt lucky about not being severely injured, they also reported

that it was normal to come off the field sore and exhausted. Morris, who was a forward for his school First XV, told me:

> Yes, there was a general soreness after the games, there would be cuts and scapes and bruises from sprigs and things. And typically on Saturday evenings I would be in some discomfort, because I would have been exhausted, shivering, stiff, sore, all those kind of things, and I accepted that as normal.

Through talking and reflecting upon his injury experiences, Morris was surprised as to the extent that he once accepted certain levels of pain as normal: "Yes, I am laughing at myself now, in terms of the realisation of just how accepting I was of those injuries – the normal bruising and pain." However, some of the men not only accepted this after-match pain as normal, they even suggested that they enjoyed what the pain or discomfort signified.

> Well, I certainly would feel soreness the next morning and sometimes you would still be sore by the time of your next practice and even the game. But that soreness didn't really bother me .... In a way I liked that soreness, I remember someone telling me "that if you come off the field and you ain't sore you ain't played hard enough." So I think that soreness indicated that I had had a good game and played hard, put a lot of tackles in. (Willy)

However, later in the interview Willy also suggested that he got "sick of playing eighty minutes and then having four days ... (of) pain." Hence, he had multiple understandings of rugby pain. Morris also reported:

> I think there was something in the total exhaustion at the end of the game that I enjoyed, I wouldn't have necessarily talked about it in terms of enjoying the pain, but the sense of being physically exhausted was associated with a satisfaction that I played well.

Thus, like bodybuilders and runners who learn to appreciate muscular pain or exhaustion because it means that the body is getting fitter or stronger (Ewald &

Jiobu, 1985), Morris and Darryl learned to appreciate their after-match soreness or exhaustion: the pain signified that they had played a hard game of rugby and this discomfort served to remind them that they were 'good rugby players' and likely reaffirmed their comforting stories of self. Messner (1992) argued that elite male athletes continue to play in pain and risk permanent damage as "the internal structure of masculine identity results in men's (sic) becoming alienated from their feelings, thus making them more prone to view their bodies instrumentally" (p. 72). Yet, I suggest that the rugby players were not alienated from their feelings – they were well aware that they were sore, but that they read their body's pain through particular discursive lenses: lenses shaped by the dominating discourses of competitive rugby and masculinities. Hence, the rugby players read their body's feelings differently from how many people interpret pain and the risk of pain, yet probably not to dissimilar from most highly competitive sportsmen and sportswomen (e.g. Carle & Nauright, 1999; White & Young, 1997; Young & White, 1995).

Morris also suggested that his experiences of rugby pain were, in a specific manner, character building. Yet he was careful to highlight that he was not uncritically celebrating the merits of pain:

> The quality of denying pain is crazy. But I think it is also complex, because there is a place for being able to put to one side discomfort, pain, anxiety, whatever for some bigger cause. I still run competitively and there are many times when running hurts, when your leg muscles and lungs ache, but I think there is an ethic in terms of determination and grit and being able to put one's immediate needs on hold. On a different level, a lot of academic study is boring or just plain hard. I mean it's not physical pain but (laughs) it's still pain and we just push past that because there's something worthy (Morris had recently completed his PhD) ... because that's how I'm gonna get stronger or learn or improve.

Morris rationalised that a particular reward he gained through enduring the 'general' pain of rugby was that it helped him to learn to cope with pain, in its many different guises, and that this coping skill was transferable to different contexts, such as in the 'painful' rigours of academia. Yet at the same time he

acknowledged that denying *significant* pain, such as when he broke his collarbone, "was crazy". In this respect he differentiated his understandings of pain on the basis of different types of injuries: general soreness and exhaustion was, in specific ways, tolerable and even character building, whereas playing with a serious injury and denying pain was simply crazy. Darryl, Seamus and James also reported that they thought it was stupid to play with a serious injury, such as a broken bone, yet they also understood how in the "heat of the moment" (Seamus) one could play on with a serious injury. Thus, to a certain extent the players did learn, as Sabo and Panepinto (1990) asserted, "to take the knocks" (p. 123), although at this level of competition the players were typically not disciplined to "sacrifice their body(s)" (p. 123). Yet three of the men - Tom, Willy and Kahu - admitted that they had played with serious injuries, and that they even felt good about doing so. I analyse these men's experiences in the following section.

The moral imperative of playing in pain

Previous researchers (e.g. Messner, 1992; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Young et al., 1994) have suggested that a basic axiom of elite male sport is to prioritise pain over pleasure: the pain principle. This fundamental rule is believed to encourage sportsmen to tolerate pain – 'to suck it up' - and to play in significant pain. Young et al. (1994) argued that it is deemed manly to play in pain and, therefore, issues pertaining to masculinities lay at the heart of the pain principle. More specifically, playing in pain is believed to help construct the athlete's identity as masculine. Yet this previous research typically did not detail how the players themselves make sense of sporting pain. In this section I, therefore, examine how Tom, Willy and Kahu, who uniquely reported that as teenagers they continued to compete with significant injuries and pain, understood playing in pain and whether they felt manly through doing so.

Tom who played flanker, reported: "If I was hurt, I would generally stay on the field. I think I did come off once or twice, but I certainly didn't feel good about it." Tom told of several incidents of playing in pain, such as the time when he was "kicked in the head" in a maul and sustained a concussion:

> I remember being not completely there and lying on the ground for a moment and then looking around and thought, "Oh, I'm playing rugby" and

the game was now down the field. So I ran after the game and when I got there – "Oh, the game is over there" – and so I'd run over there. And the school principal asked from the sideline whether I was ok and by that time I'd started sort of coming together again. My coach said I should come off but I was "no, no, I'm fine sort of thing," I very much wanted to keep playing, so I did. At the end I admit that I thought we had won by a long margin but I found out we had been thrashed, so I guess I played in this confused state.

Tom explained that he kept playing in pain because "when the adrenaline is pumping, you don't sort of notice the pain." Yet Tom, Willy and Kahu also referred to several incidences when they were in pain even before games had started, and yet they decided to play. Thus, they acknowledged that the surging of bodily chemicals (adrenaline) could not adequately explain the phenomenon of playing in pain; other factors of complexity were at work. Willy's account of how he tore cartilage in his knee from a mid-week basketball game - "school house finals" - but chose to play rugby in the weekend, helped reveal some of these factors:

On the Saturday morning I was in the changing room just absolutely dying of pain. I'd got the physio to strap it and it was strapped from my ankle to hip and I could hardly bend it, hardly run and I walked out to the warm ups. And Richie (his coach) came up to me and said, "I'm sorry I just can't do it, you're going to have to unstrip." But I said at least I'm sitting on the bench, and he gave me my number 13 jersey; which was cool. And then a stroke of good luck, just before half-time our fill in centre hurt his shoulder and he was off and I was like, "let me out there." "No, I'm sorry, I just can't let you out there." So he put our flanker out in centre and he had a terrible game. So with 20 minutes to go, Richie goes, "Willy, do you really think you can go out there?" And I was like: "Let me get out there." At the end of the game I just collapsed and was carried off, it was just too sore. But it was worth it - we won.

Willy's torn cartilage was "trimmed" in an operation two months after the game, and he acknowledged that he likely aggravated his injury through playing with it, but he did not regret the incident. He reported: "Some people viewed me as a bit of an idiot because I played. Like: 'what's this guy doing out there?' You couldn't even see my leg 'cause it was just covered in tape." Yet he explained why he "wanted to run onto the field":

> We were playing in the weight final in Te Aroha. And our school had brought buses of students to come and watch, the parents were there, and my mum was there, my grandfather was there and I wanted more than anything to be out there. It was finals day, it was rugby, I loved playing and I hadn't missed a game all season. I just wanted to be out there. It was the first time in 22 years that our High school had won the cup and being part of it was just great. I'd been in the team since the fourth form and I thought that this was our best chance to win, and I just wanted to be with my mates and be part of it. I loved the game.

Willy suggested that he knew that it was not necessarily sensible or logical to play in pain and risk further damage, yet he had an *emotional affair* with rugby: "I'm sure other people have things they love and that they would do these things at almost any cost. And if they were told not to do it, they'd probably do it anyhow." He clearly reported that he was not forced to play in pain – he basically had to nag his coach before he was allowed to play. Thus, in Willy's case, and most of the men's experiences of First XV rugby, the players did not experience overt biased social support (e.g. Nixon, 1992, 1994a) and, therefore, they were not encouraged to play with injuries.

Even though Willy played with a torn cartilage and in considerable pain I suggest that he did not prioritise pain over pleasure. In contrast, he prioritised the more immediate pleasures of playing rugby over pain. His account illustrated that it was more meaningful for him to play rugby in pain than to rest and 'recover' his body: the multiple pleasures of playing rugby outweighed the costs of pain. So what were these *seemingly* irrational pleasures that constituted the players' dictum: pain is sane?

Willy, Kahu and Tom typically found it difficult to fluently verbalise the pleasures of playing rugby in pain. Willy, for example, initially reported "I don't know why I play with injuries. Anyhow, the pain doesn't hurt until after the game." And Tom told me: "It's sometimes hard to know why you acted in certain ways, but if I was injured I definitely wanted to stay on the field." These admissions of the difficulty of explaining their desires to play in pain help reveal that the crisis of representation is clearly not just an academic issue but is entrenched in the difficulties and complexities of understanding many embodied experiences. Nevertheless, Willy, Kahu and Tom highlighted several factors related to their general enjoyment of rugby and I suggest that these factors were related to why the men played in pain. These factors, which were similar to how the other rugby players detailed their rugby pleasures, related to the excitement and intensity of the game (e.g. Willy: "I just find it very exhilarating"), demonstrating ability (e.g. Willy: "my mum was there, my grandfather was there"), of being tough (e.g. Willy: "I like the hardness, the physicality"), of being part of a team (e.g. Willy: "I just wanted to be with my mates, and be part of it") and of the joys of being competitive. Yet as Prain (1998) argued, it should also be remembered: "bodies of flesh can never be separated from their cultural stories" (p. 61). In other words, although not highlighted by the men, the body was intimately related and active in the production of the men's understandings of their rugby pleasures.

Female rugby players have also described similar embodied pleasures to other researchers (e.g. Carle & Nauright, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994; Thing, 2001; Wheatley, 1994), and in this manner, these rugby pleasures should not necessarily be interpreted as specifically related to the performance or construction of a masculine subjectivity. For example, the pre-game excitement that the men reported, related primarily to the anticipation associated with playing an intense, competitive and physical sport that they enjoyed, and not to issues pertaining directly to the ensuing performance of manliness. Thus, in contrast to Young et al. (1994), who suggested that the "rewards of hegemonic masculinity" (p. 192) provided the prime reason as to why some men continued to expose their bodies to physical risk and damage, I suggest that other factors were of more *direct* relevance. Nevertheless, as Messner (1992), Sabo and Panepinto (1990), Schacht, 1996 and Young et al. (1994) highlighted, issues of masculinity were clearly of some significance. Indeed, discourses of masculinity articulated with some of the

pleasures that Tom, Willy and Kahu described: particularly when they talked about the pleasures of being 'tough'.

Although the men suggested that there were multiple pleasures in playing rugby, they primarily highlighted the joys of being competitive. They also rationalised participating in pain, in part, through defining themselves as competitive. Kahu, for example, told of the pleasures of *competing* with a broken and bloodied nose:

> I can remember someone saying I was a mad prick for going back on the field to play, but it's about that desire to win. Well to me it is, no matter what I'm playing, you know, touch rugby or even indoor netball, if you really want to win you keep going. It's that competitive drive that is what does it. This is my philosophy when I play sport: I play from the heart, if you've got a lot of heart that is good, if you've got no heart and lots of skills, that's no good. You've got to have heart, that desire, that will to win – that is how I play sport.

Kahu's personal philosophy on the importance of competitive desires helps position himself as a player with 'heart', and he was particularly proud of *being* a player with heart. Willy also emphasised how winning was of importance to him:

> I just get fired up in whatever sport I'm playing, I just don't like to lose. Even playing against my little nephew in basketball the other night – I should have let him win to make him feel good - but I didn't, I can't let myself. I can't stand losing ... I'm just very competitive. When I play I must win. Put me in a sport competition and I push myself .... And it's not just rugby, I'm like that in other sports; soccer, basketball, league and touch – even cards with my girlfriend – I'm just competitive.

Willy revealed that victory makes him feel "good" yet at the same time so did the processes associated with competing for victory. Tom revealed similar sentiments:

> A few years ago I played touch (non-contact rugby) in this mixed male and female league ... I was the only guy who came off and had blood coming out of my knees; because I was the only one diving around the field to touch people and stop them from scoring. I wasn't trying to prove anything it's just the way I am - I go for it ... I am ultra-competitive; it's a good thing.

The self-revelations that Tom, Willy and Kahu were highly competitive and that they enjoyed being competitive, regardless of the sport or pain, begs the question about what underpinned the significance of being competitive for these athletes? Heikkala (1993), in drawing on Foucaultian ideas, suggested that the logic of sport is underpinned by competition, and that conforming to or being disciplined by the discourses of competitive sport can be understood as a *moral quest*. Heikkala, for example, asserted that it is typically believed that "sport teaches teamwork and cooperation" or that "the essence of competing is fair play" (p. 81). Through playing sport, therefore, participants become emersed in a 'moral' environment that helps provide sporting enjoyment. This moral quest is also constitutive; the athlete's subjectivity becomes tied to the morality of competitive desires and abilities; therefore, the logic of competitive sport can help constitute athletes' senses of self, in part, as moral. Playing in pain can, therefore, be understood as a moral imperative, because it can help confirm a worthy sense of self, such as the 'team player', the 'competitive player', the 'player with heart' and the player with a 'work ethic'. And at times this moral quest can help produce the 'worthy champion'. Tom, for example, did not want to come off the field of play when injured because he "didn't want to let the team down." In other words, he felt like he was *supporting* the team through continuing to play and this helped make him feel virtuous.

My suggestion that Tom, Willy and Kahu gained certain *moral* pleasures from playing competitive rugby in pain, can perhaps be more readily understood when one recognises that within Aotearoa/New Zealand rugby is often positioned as a secular religion and elite players become prized citizens and revered as moral

disciples.[6] Yet at the same time I warn against reading my suggestion, about the moral pleasures, reductively: the men's accounts clearly revealed that they enjoyed multiple factors about participating in rugby. Further, I suggest that the sporting discourses that helped constitute these moral pleasures related to, but were not subsumed by, discourses of masculinities. The men's accounts, for example, suggested that they also gained specific pleasure from being known as tough or heroic. Tom, for example, reported that when he was concussed and continued to play, despite encouragement from his coach and principal to leave the field, that he felt heroic:

> I didn't want to be weak and come off the field; there was probably that aspect as well. I was like "no I'm tough I can handle it." I suppose it made me feel a bit of a hero, well hero in my own mind, but I suppose some thought I was crazy. It's hard to understand.

Similarly, when I asked Willy if it felt 'manly' to play with his torn knee cartilage he replied: "Well, actually it did. Yeah, I felt pretty manly and some people were like: 'Oh I can't believe you played with that knee.' So I did feel a bit like a hero." In this sense, discourses of masculinity augmented the men's pleasures from playing in pain. Yet Kahu, Tom and Willy denied that they were primarily playing to prove that they were manly or that they were tough. Tom reported: "I admit that I liked showing that I was tough but that wasn't the prime reason why I played on after an injury. You just get wrapped up in the game. I had a passion for the game." Willy more simply reported: "I just love playing rugby." And in circular fashion this links back to the multiple factors of pleasure that the men cited about participating in rugby and to Heikkala's (1993) arguments about competition, sport, morality, normality and the disciplining processes. Thus, Willy, Kahu and Tom suggested that they did not play rugby in pain to prove that they were men. Similarly, Young et al. (1994) concluded that the athletes that they interviewed "were extremely reluctant to recognize sport as a primary masculinity-validating experience" (p. 191). Yet discourses of masculinities can still be

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[6] A revealing example of how rugby players can be revered as moral citizens is the case of recent ex-All Black captain Todd Blackadder. For a period of time when the All Blacks were successful under his captaincy, he was referred to in the media as 'Todd is God' and his home-town, Rangiora, erected a sign on the town's outskirts that reported "Welcome to Blackadderville."

regarded to be of significance in understanding the men's experiences of rugby pleasures and pains.

So how is it that discourses of masculinity were likely of significance but the men denied that they were playing to be manly? In attempting to answer this question I suggest that Tom, Willy and Kahu's accounts of how they played with serious injuries can be viewed as extensions of the disciplinary processes associated with rugby training and masculinity that began on the playing fields of primary schools where, for example, the boys trained themselves not to cry if they were hurt. More specifically, I suggest that over time, as the inter-connected discourses of masculinities, rugby and taking pain became thoroughly ingrained within the men's stories of self, the performance of toughness would have felt natural for the rugby playing men. The performance of toughness as linked with masculinity, therefore, would have congealed "to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Butler, 1990, p. 33). In this respect, the mechanisms of power associated with masculinities and toughness would have been, in a Foucaultian sense, substantially masked. Just as the "body disappears from conscious awareness when it functions in ... (a) non-problematic state" (Sparkes & Smith, 2002, p. 266), the awareness of issues of gender appear to partly dissolve in the consciousness of male athletes when they are involved in masculine and, therefore, non-problematic or gender appropriate pursuits. Discourses of masculinities, therefore, articulated with the pleasures that the men gained from rugby, but not in a manner that was at the forefront of the men's decisions and desires to participate in rugby.

Negotiating rugby relationships

Although many of the rugby players 'loved the game' and gained a satisfying, even moral, sense of self through competing, they nevertheless, continued to negotiate their relationships with rugby; and injuries and pain were of significance with these negotiation processes. Willy's cartilage injury, for example, encouraged him to critically reflect, albeit briefly, upon his relationship with rugby:

> After my last year in the First XV I thought to myself that I was not going to play rugby any more, as I was sick of being injured. I was too sore. I was

> sick of playing eighty minutes and then having four days of where I couldn't do too much because I was in pain.

Yet Willy reported that after a summer of recuperation, reflection and some strong encouragement by male friends ("they nagged me") he was soon actively participating on the rugby field again. Relatedly, Young et al. (1994) asserted, with respect to the elite male athletes who they interviewed, that "while concern for future health tended to be correlated with the type and severity of injury, the fears of all our subjects for further injury quickly took second place to their desire to return to competition" (p. 188). In this respect, they concluded that the male athletes perceived injury as "more constitutive than threatening" (p. 188). However, two of the men who I interviewed told of specific injury incidences that encouraged them to retire from rugby as teenagers. Tom, for example, who admitted that for a period of time he revelled in playing in pain, was scared away from rugby participation by a particular neck injury:

> I came close to breaking my neck once in a maul. I had the ball and I was pushed over and fell on my head and the rest of the team came crashing down on top of me. There was all sorts of popping and cracking and I thought I was going to be paralysed as my legs went all numb. And that was the first time I was really scared. The game was stopped for quite awhile and I was stretchered off. As it turns out I was fine. But it scared the hell out of me and knocked my confidence... after that I really didn't want to play any more. Although I completed the season, I felt like I was letting the team down; I wasn't putting my most into the games. I was just trying to get out of it.

A serious injury, therefore, forced Tom to rethink his relationship with rugby and once that season was over, Tom did not play rugby again. He reported, however, that it was not just the fear of *serious* injury that lead to his retirement but he was also tired of the arduous training sessions and the time committed to rugby: "especially when I was in rep-teams and you had practices every night and you just blew your whole weekend playing rugby." Although Tom retired somewhat fearful of rugby injuries, he was not specifically critical of rugby: he still believed it was a

good game. In fact, he reported that after retiring at age eighteen, he missed many aspects of the game and was nearly enticed back into playing, but that a "niggling back injury" and a "lack of time" prevented his return. These factors, however, did not stop his growing passion for tennis.

In contrast to Tom's relatively uncritical retirement, Seamus became highly critical of rugby after he broke a wrist bone in a tackle:

> I was running along the sideline and someone tackled me and I went flying onto the ground. The pain wasn't great immediately, I think in the fun and excitement and the enjoyment of playing I carried on for a brief period. But then the arm started to really throb – quite sharp bursts of pain – and I knew that I'd done something serious to it and I had to leave the field.

At the time of his injury, Seamus's subjectivity was not closely connected to rugby: "I played because it was the expected thing at my school and it was a good way to fit in or to conform." However, soon after he broke his wrist he decided to quit rugby: "it took quite a long time for my arm to heal and I wasn't so keen to risk further injuries." His decision to quit was also produced in relation to rugby-talk that celebrated infliction of pain:

> After the games, some of the pupils (boys) would be quite proud of the fact that they had done an injury to the other team. And if they had broken a bone or something, there was that much more pride in talking about it. And I think that put a little bit of worry into me - made me fearful of continuing to play. So that combined with my injury really took the enjoyment out of the game and I didn't want to play any more.

Seamus reported that once he had quit rugby he "became a bit of an outcast from choosing not to play." Nevertheless, "I was also fortunate as there were a small group of other like-minded students and I became very friendly with them." And through this process of quitting rugby and feeling like an "outcast", Seamus's understandings about rugby injuries and players were transformed:

> I realised that a lot of people were getting injured from the game and it was at that time that I also started to get health conscious and I thought that they would pay for it in later life. I realised that if you had broken a bone that you were more prone to get rheumatism or arthritis in later life. I actually reached the conclusion that from a health perspective the game wasn't worth it.

Seamus positioned rugby as a sport that had detrimental impact on the long-term health of its players. In other words, discourses of health provided him with the narrative resources necessary to consciously critique rugby. His discursive re-positioning of rugby was also linked with how he started to view rugby players: "amongst my new friends we would make fun of the rugby players ... we would say that they were completely brainless to be able to put up with the injuries and that they had nothing between their ears." In this respect, Seamus' broken wrist was epiphanic; it encouraged him to stop playing rugby and to start viewing the game from a critical perspective.

Seamus and Tom's accounts of rugby retirement had some similarities to my own experiences of rugby pain and fear. I had broken a wrist bone in a game of rugby at age thirteen, but had decided that it was just an accident and not the result of playing a potentially dangerous game. However, in my last two years of high school I had grown quietly fearful of rugby, yet my sense of self was still closely tied to the game. So I had a somewhat tense relationship with rugby, and two significant injuries in the last five weeks of my First XV season did not help ease these tensions. In one incident I sustained a severe ankle sprain. I had chipped the ball over the opposition fullback and was sprinting to get the ball, when an 'elbow' put me off balance and my ankle gave way: the pain was excruciating and the internal bleeding shaded my ankle purple-black in the weeks to come. Yet again I did not blame rugby: a sprained ankle, I thought, was typical of many sports. Several weeks later I reluctantly agreed to play in the last game of the season. My coach told me that he knew how to strap an ankle so that it would be safe. The strapping gave support but I was tentative in playing on my still swollen ankle. Late in the first half I went too low in attempting a tackle and was knocked unconscious by a pumping knee. My coach saw the incident and ran onto the field to help. By the time that I was removed from the field of play, I was feeling

strangely proud of my game performance, yet I was more pleased that I was off the field and it was the end of the season, as it meant that I could defer worrying about my relationship with rugby.

The pain of specific injuries combined with the fear of enduring further rugby injuries encouraged Tom, Seamus and myself to retire from competitive rugby. Our rugby fears also revealed our masculine weaknesses; our rugby experiences did not dupe us into believing that we were all 'hard men'. As such we were forced to recognise our embodied limitations. The pain also encouraged Seamus, whose sense of self was not closely linked with rugby, to critically reflect on rugby's cultural importance and to develop an alternative body-self relationship. Yet for Tom and I, we lived a prime contradiction for a period of time, as our senses of self were still tied, in part, to rugby even though we were now quietly fearful of rugby pain.

Chapter Summary

The men's accounts of rugby, whether they were participants or not, revealed that rugby remained a pervasive social force in their teenage years. More specifically, the rugby players were positioned, with help from the school's teachers and leaders, as up-standing moral young gentlemen. This prestigious subject positioning afforded the rugby players greater opportunity to exercise power and to constitute comforting stories of self. In contrast, the men who did not play rugby typically did not have the same ability to use specific narrative resources to construct respectful masculine subjectivities. These men, therefore, used a variety of techniques, with varying degrees of success, to help negotiate their understandings of self. A specific technique employed by Sebastian, Finn and Edgar revolved around resistant readings of rugby that positioned the rugby players as uncritical thinkers and foolish for risking serious injury. In this manner, they questioned the articulation between being tough and being manly. The dominance of rugby, therefore, provided starting points for cultural resistance against dominant understandings of what it means to be manly. Yet such micro-level resistance did little to dampen the social dominance of rugby within the men's secondary schools.

The rugby players accounts of their experiences of pain, fear and embodied pleasures illustrated that they held multiple and, at times, contradictory

understandings about rugby participation. Although they were typically disciplined to enjoy their hard rugby training sessions, the majority did not feel that they were being produced as weapons of destruction; yet at the same time, the players accepted that the training was necessary to toughen them up. Further, they all uncritically accepted, for a period of time, that their bodies would typically be sore after competitive participation or training sessions; some even reported that they enjoyed what this pain signified, yet only three of the players believed that it was appropriate to play in 'serious' pain, the others thought it crazy. Injury scares encouraged Tom, Seamus and myself to re-think our relationships with rugby and Seamus, who drew on a discourse of health, became highly critical of rugby's punishing nature and of rugby players.

Finally, although the players suggested that being tough was a factor of enjoyment in participating in rugby, they stated that they were not primarily playing to prove their manliness but that other pleasures were of more significance. Indeed, the men held emotional relationships with rugby and the discourses of competitive rugby helped constitute their 'moral' senses of self: a sense of self that augmented but did not totally consume the manner in which these players thought of themselves as men.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The adult years: growing up and growing out of rugby?

Introduction

In the transition from the teenage years, where the rugby players were typically respected and revered as exemplars of a dominant type of masculinity, to the cultural pastiche of the 'adult world', a variety of other masculinities gained in status. In this process, the interview participants found, as adult men, that physical involvement in rugby was no longer, necessarily, culturally exalted. In this respect, the adult men were typically less subject to the technologies of domination associated with rugby and masculinities. Yet, rugby still held an important place in the lives of many of the men and its discursive influence was difficult to escape from. In this chapter, I analyse the men's adult experiences of rugby.

Multiple and competing discourses of rugby

The men's accounts revealed that participation in rugby, as adults, was no longer a prime means of gaining masculine status. Relatedly, the social importance of participating in rugby decreased as the men aged and fewer men continued to play rugby as adults. Finn, for example, who after leaving secondary school trained to be a primary school teacher, reported:

> In my year group at Teachers College I think only two of the guys played rugby and it was no longer a big deal that they played rugby. One of the guys played for Canterbury, which was great for him, but it was a bit like: "Oh, ok, you play rugby for so and so on the weekends, well that's good." Rugby was just another thing that some people did and I was certainly no longer envious of the rugby players.

In a similar manner, Lionel reported that in shifting from a small rural community to the cosmopolitan lifestyle of inner-city Auckland - where he studied computer science at university – that rugby lost some of its cultural dominance: "It was a lot less important whether you played rugby or not. In fact I don't think it made any difference at all. Walking around the campus you couldn't tell by

looking at people who played rugby or not." Nevertheless, the men's accounts typically highlighted how the media representation of rugby was still influential in shaping a range of social interactions and understandings. Lionel for example, reported:

> Rugby was a big thing when there was a test match on or an important game on TV. The TV room at my hostel (at university) would be crowded and there would be lots of noise and excitement ... I've always loved to watch test matches and do things like organise sweepstakes or get a group together to watch a game.

Kahu, who from age 16 worked in the forestry, also reported about the social influence of rugby:

> In the forestry I was the youngest in my group and we worked in these quite isolated locations and it was very physical work, so I gave up playing rugby .... Although at smoko time rugby was often something we talked about - we'd talk about who should be in the next All Blacks or who will win the Ranfurly Shield ... and we would often get together in the weekends if there was a big game on TV.

Kahu reported, as similar to many of the other men, that it was important in his work environment to have knowledge of contemporary rugby news as it provided a valuable topic of conversation. In this manner and albeit from a safer distance, rugby still provided an important medium for 'doing masculinity'. Relatedly, Fitzclarence and Hickey (2001) asserted that the construction of a gendered identity in relation to dangerous sports is a "complicated and cybernetic process whereby the local and global, specific and cultural combine in multiple ways" (p. 119).

By the time that the men were in their early twenties, rugby participation was no longer a prime dividing practice between males. A few of the men even held disrespectful attitudes toward rugby and rugby players. Edgar, for example, in talking about his early years of university study defined the rugby players in a derogatory manner as "rugby boys":

> Well the rugby boys, I actually found them to be quite disgusting. They would often come into the evening meals, in our hostel, late and dirty after their rugby practices and they were very noisy, and I didn't like their arrogance. One guy with ginger hair would do things like burp as loud as he could in the middle of dinner-time and all the rugby boys would laugh. He had a nickname like Burp or Spew. And another would get on the microphone in the dinner hall and make stupid noises. It all seemed pointless and I thought they were immature. The student president of the hostel was also one of the rugby boys and he was a real arrogant jerk. I remember seeing him vomit in a bucket one night and then throw it over someone in the showers and all the rugby boys thought it was the funniest thing ever.

Edgar's account of this particular group of rugby players and their offensive behaviours had some similarities to how Schacht (1996), Thomson (1976), and Sheard and Dunning (1973) described the taboo breaking activities of the male rugby players that they studied. However, Edgar admitted that his university days were also "quite boozy" and he "did stupid things and had lots of fun" but he specifically pointed out that he did not "try to gain social acceptance through being vulgar or horrible to other people, like what the rugby players did." George also reported, while reflecting on what he called his time of "high idealism" in the wake of the 1981 Springbok protests, that he was critical of rugby players:

> I was definitely influenced by the Springbok tour and for a period of time I considered that rugby players were thugs, basically macho violent types, and that they had a really poor attitude towards women. You know, they would treat women as something derogatory to talk about. And I'd discovered feminism by that time and I hung out with the 'thinkers' ... people who liked to talk about stuff, and I was interested in politics .... Whereas the rugby 'heads' just seemed to be into drinking alcohol, getting comatose and having very little thought about anything. I remember being

pissed off and feeling anti towards them because they were apolitical and, you know, I thought that they were wrong. Red neck types.

George's account illustrated how he linked issues of masculinity to the rugby protests and the importance of the discursive context in shaping understandings of rugby. The context surrounding rugby during the 1981 Springbok tour positioned the game, for many people, in an unfavourable light (e.g. de Jong, 1991, Richards, 1999). Morris, for instance, summarised his views of the tour: "At that time I resented that rugby was our national game as I saw it as being a divider and as something that you should be ashamed of because of its brutish culture." Morris, therefore, drew on the discourse of rugby as 'our national sport' in a reverse manner to suggest that rugby's dominance was harmful for Aotearoa/New Zealand. His account helped illustrate how discourses can "circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1978a, p. 102). Lionel also used the nationalistic discourse of rugby as an opposing strategy. He recognised rugby as Aotearoa/New Zealand's national sport but he was concerned that the majority of New Zealanders regarded the sport too seriously:

> I think its pretty much a national disgrace, not that the All Blacks lost the World Cup (in 1999), but that everybody is so hung up about it. You know, the weeks of mourning that followed the loss - good God, get a life New Zealand, get a life. It's just a game. Hell, if people are so insecure about themselves that if somebody else loses in sport and it brings them down – good lord: It's a sad indictment of New Zealand – what a pathetic bunch we are.[7]

However, Lionel also reported that he enjoyed watching the 1999 Rugby World Cup and that he was looking forward to the next All Black tour. In this

[7] I find it interesting to note that the All Blacks did not lose the 1999 World Cup, as Lionel suggested, but that they simply did not make the final. In other words, the All Blacks were successful in making it to the semi-finals; but for many New Zealanders, including Lionel, this performance was akin to losing. Lionel, therefore, also appeared to judge the performance of the All Blacks rather seriously: which in an ironic manner helps indicate the difficulty of resisting dominant discourses of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand.

manner, it was not uncommon for the men to talk about their rugby experiences and understandings from seemingly contradictory positions. Morris, for example, recognised that: "there's something worthy about rugby as it can help build positive character", yet he shortly after suggested:

> Rugby is all about denying pain ... a female friend of mine holds the view that she would ban rugby unless it was held in private. I don't think that's a goer in the current climate, I'm not even sure I'd nail that one to my masthead as a position I want to take but I agree to her analysis wholeheartedly, I think it is a major socialiser for a certain model of masculinity that is unhealthy and problematic in terms of violence.

The seemingly contradictory positions held by some of the men were fuelled by competing discourses of rugby, and these discourses caused, at times, certain tensions for these men. Nevertheless, the men's accounts revealed that they all firmly regarded rugby as Aotearoa/New Zealand's national game and even if they were critical of aspects of rugby, the clear majority were supporters of the All Blacks.

Although, in general, the men's accounts suggested that the status associated with being an adult participant in rugby had decreased from the glory days of secondary school rugby, this was not of concern for the five men who played rugby as adults. These men typically reported that they were not playing rugby with any conscious desire to gain masculine status, but that they simply enjoyed playing rugby and its associated social life. Yet these men also reported that they did gain specific social benefits through rugby. Willy, for example, who was in his final year of studying for a degree in sport and leisure studies, suggested that he gained a certain amount of kudos amongst his fellow students from being a rugby player, and that it provided a ready topic of conversation with a variety of people, including some of his lecturers. Further, Darryl reported that his rugby club provided a range of valued social connections and that his position as the captain of his club team could have even helped him secure his first teaching position:

> Mid-way through the job interview the principal asked whether I would be keen to be involved in coaching a sport. So I told him that until recently I

had been captain for Old Boys and that I would love to take a school rugby team. And he said he used to play for Stoke - our old rivals - and the interview got sidetracked for a little bit about rugby .... And even now, the boss will often come and sit next to me in the staffroom and we'll talk about sport. So rugby connections, you know, are definitely not bad things.

Colin, who was the most 'successful' adult rugby player of the interview participants - he had played in the national provincial championship (NPC) for many years - reported that he gained considerable status and social advantage from his rugby playing abilities. He stated that before rugby was openly professional, he was offered "all sorts of jobs: At one stage I worked for the breweries doing not much getting paid $25,000 a year to do nothing really, just doing promotions." And once rugby was openly professional Colin started earning an income that enabled him to "live a reasonable lifestyle" and provided the opportunity for him to plan a career change and gain a university education. Yet besides the monetary rewards, Colin remarked that he has been provided with other social opportunities: "not many people get to shake hands and chat with an ex-Prime Minister or travel internationally and get special treatment." Colin was also impressed by "die-hard rugby fans who always have a kind word of support on the street" and the sense of belonging to the community that rugby provided. Colin, therefore, felt respected as a rugby player.

The players' accounts of the social benefits of rugby suggested that notwithstanding the circulation of multiple and competing discourses of rugby, that the adult rugby players were still provided with notable opportunities to exercise power. Participation in rugby, therefore, still helped locate these men in respected subject positions. However, the men also detailed that the actual playing of adult rugby involved a commitment to performing or tolerating specific acts of 'violence'. In the following section, I discuss their accounts of the violence of adult rugby.

The corporeal punishment of adult rugby: Violence in action

Although there were fewer men playing rugby as adults, the men who participated typically still did so with a passion, and with a recognition that the physical and competitive intensity of the game had, once again, increased.

Associated with this increased intensity was the recognition that there was a greater likelihood of sustaining significant injuries: the discursive knowledge that rugby was a dangerous game was therefore strengthened. James reported: "At the senior level you were suddenly playing with guys who were a lot older and a lot bigger and I was more aware of the possibility that I could get seriously hurt." Similarly, Morris revealed: "When I played at university it was definitely more competitive, everyone knew what the game was about and they were committed to it ... I played with a belief, in the back of my mind, that I could get seriously injured."

The players' beliefs about the corporeal risks of rugby were justified; in addition to the usual after-game bruises and aches, all of the players, at specific times, required medical treatment for rugby injuries. Morris, for example, broke his collar-bone, Darryl fractured his "cheek and eye-socket" and in the same injury sustained a serious concussion that required hospitalisation: "all the capillaries in my eye burst and I had fluid trickling out of my eye, which wasn't a good sign." In addition, James suffered compound fractures to his tibia and fibula that necessitated a metal pin to be surgically implanted. Willy sustained two concussions and underwent separate operations on his lower back and wrist due to rugby related injuries. However, Colin, who had experienced ten seasons of highly competitive adult rugby, with eighteen months off due to a neck injury, sustained the most bodily damage. His injury accounts of five concussion incidents, five broken bones (e.g. thumb, cervical vertebrae, spiral fracture of ulna and two nose breaks) and seven operations (e.g. two ankle, two knee, thigh associated with cellulitis, nose "straightened" and "ear rebuilt") were particularly sobering given the somewhat nonchalant manner in which he talked about his body and pain: "I've had that many bloody injuries it's hard to remember them all." Colin, at twenty-eight years of age was now "accustomed" to the threats and realities of bodily pain and was *relatively* uncritical of the corporeal dangers of rugby. In this manner, his attitudes towards pain and injury were similar to the elite athletes that Young et al. (1994) and Messner (1992) interviewed.

Colin, however, admitted that when he first started playing rugby as a sixteen-year old, in an under-nineteen competition, that he did so with some fear: "Initially, it was easy for me to be intimidated, I was scared. Obviously, you know, I was only a kid still. These guys had been out of school for a couple of years and

were working and were hardened." James and Morris also reported that the possibility of being hurt caused some anxiety. Morris told me: "I played throughout with a little bit of trepidation, but I wouldn't call it fear. There were moments of concern like when I was about to tackle somebody who was really big, but you just got on and did it." In a more overt manner, James stated that by the time he was playing in the seniors that "it was a bit nerve racking" particularly "when we played teams like Rangiruru, as they had a lot of the local gang members in their team and they were quite big stocky guys and with a reputation for dirty play."

Yet even as adults the men still did not talk of their anxieties of being hurt. The topic was as taboo as ever. Colin even thought it was a joke when I asked him if he talked to anyone about being "scared" of getting hurt. He laughed and shook his head: "Hell no. There was no one to talk to about it. And it wasn't the done thing. If I talked about it, when I first started, I would have gone from being on the fringe of acceptance to being out." Colin revealed that ability to manage fears was still an important part of being a rugby man. He believed that his initial social acceptance into his under-19 rugby team was based, in part, by his ability to not show fear - to demonstrate toughness.

However, the prime difference between secondary school and adult rugby was not the increased competitiveness of the games or the increased severity of injuries, as the trend for these increases had been occurring in a disciplined fashion for many years, but the increased occurrence and acceptance of specific acts of violence. The rugby men defined 'violence', and I use their definition throughout this section, *as actions that were specifically designed to inflict pain, such as punching, elbowing or kicking*. Although incidences of violence occurred in secondary school rugby these incidences were reported by the men to be very rare. Yet at the senior level, actions of violence were normal game occurrences. Morris who played in the forwards remembered that "there wouldn't have been a game where I wouldn't have been kicked or punched, it was very much part of the game." In similar manner, James told me: "Yes, there were always some fights, very rarely if ever big brawls, more just some punches being thrown in the forwards where things got a bit heated at times." And Darryl stated: "In some of my senior games there was out and out thuggery ... you know I have had my balls

grabbed in the middle of rucks and squeezed very tightly and you're thinking "Oh Jesus, what's this?"

The moral imperative of being 'competitive' not only normalised general rugby pain but also helped legitimise particular acts of violence. In adult rugby, for example, where winning is the pinnacle and culmination of many moral endeavours such as team-play, hard work and competitiveness (Heikkala, 1993), a kick in the head or an elbow in the eye can become euphemised and legitimised as "*good* vigorous play." Morris, for example, reported:

> If you were retaliating to being punched, then that kind of violence would not just be condoned, they would say: 'Good on you, he was getting a bit uppity.' And in the clubrooms afterwards it would sometimes be a subject of post-game discussion, like somebody would say something like: "He tried to pull me back when I didn't have the ball but I planted him one." And the response would be "good on ya mate he deserved it." Or if you were contesting for the ball, like in the lineout, and you elbowed somebody in the eye and won the ball, then that was viewed as 'good vigorous play' as it was part of the context of full on combat for the ball.

In this manner, specific acts of violence associated with hard competitive play and retaliation were celebrated by some of the adult rugby players: the ethics that typically problematised the performance of violence, in other social contexts, were dissolved in senior rugby's competitive and manly regime of truth. Relatedly, Fitzclarence and Hickey (2001) reported: "In a win-at-all-costs environment, from the elite level down, finding ways to take advantage in the body-contact stakes is part of the game ... 'when winning is everything violence is never far away'" (p. 129). James supported this observation: "When everyone is desperate to win then they don't always go by the rules. And although I don't agree with it, if someone was punching me then I'd want to do something there and then - retaliate." Yet within this rugby regime of truth, or what Morris called the "unwritten rules", not all acts of violence were acceptable or celebrated. Morris tried to explain the complexities of the 'contextual moralities' (e.g. Bredemeier & Shields, 1986) associated with rugby violence, yet he was also aware that his explanation of the unwritten rules sounded "bizarre":

> Kicking somebody in the head was marked as non-acceptable violence. And if you were the initiator of violence without good cause, then you would be seen as a dirty player and that was frowned upon at certain levels. That would be where somebody was seen as initiating the unacceptable violence, like kicking someone in the head. But if the guy on the ball had previously punched you then maybe a kick in the head would be justified, I'm not sure, certainly a kick in the kidneys.

The disciplining process that the players underwent, in learning to adhere to the unwritten rules of rugby union, were not specifically institutionalised. Colin reported that he was never encouraged by a coach to throw a punch and Morris suggested that although his coaches typically "colluded" with the illegal violence, they were also concerned about "giving away penalties" so they cautioned about the usage of such tactics. Nevertheless the disciplining process associated with rugby violence can be regarded as proceeding from the "distribution of individuals in space" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 141) and time, as the adult players typically progressed from under 19s, to under 21s, to senior reserves and, for some, to seniors and even professional 'honours' (e.g. Colin). Moreover, the men's accounts intimated that at each successive level of competition there was increased acceptance of the unwritten rules. The men further reported that within this hierarchy of grades, they were primarily disciplined by the team cultures and the more senior players. Within these different enclosures of space and time *some* of the men, therefore, learnt about how to 'dish it out'. Morris, for example, reported:

> When you are in that rugby context, you learn to respond in certain ways, and I suppose you just get accustomed to it over time .... So I regret to admit that by the time I was playing senior reserves if someone put me in a headlock in a tackle, or punched me in a maul, I would feel that I needed to retaliate, otherwise I would be deemed dominated or that I wasn't, in some way, playing the game.

A good rugby player, in Morris' view, was one that did not "back-down" or accept being dominated. Morris, however, had accepted the importance of not

being physically dominated long before he played adult rugby. Relatedly, Light and Kirk (2000) asserted that 'domination training', where players are drilled to not accept physical domination, is clearly evident in the manner that secondary school rugby players are trained. The disciplinary process associated with the normalisation of violence in adult rugby can, therefore, be indirectly traced to the discursive workings in secondary school rugby. Thus, although First XV rugby was typically played in 'good spirits', the normalisation of adult rugby violence can be regarded as having its roots in the school celebrations of tough rugby players and *good* hard play. Fitzclarence and Hickey (1998), for example, asserted that much of the behaviours "which become manifest in the world of adult football are learned at an earlier age. In particular, many of the issues that present themselves as serious concerns in adult sport are rehearsed in the world of junior sport" (p. 75).

Some of the men, however, reported that they found the use of violence within rugby problematic. Colin, for example, who jumped rugby grades from playing under 19s to seniors, initially found it difficult to negotiate an understanding of the dominion of violence in the seniors. Yet his accounts also help illustrate how players can be disciplined to accept the unwritten rules of rugby:

> I was 18 when I played my first game at the senior level and I played against an All Black and he gave me a hiding – punched me, elbowed me. He talked to me afterwards and just said: "What I did to you today is how it's going to be every week for you because you're young, people are going to try to intimidate you." I think that he thought he was giving me a good lesson. But I was shocked by it all ... he would punch me when I was bound in the scrum, I was locking and he'd bring his arm out and just go BANG and catch me under the chin ... I shat myself when it first happened, I was just like what the fuck was that and then I'd look up because he cracked me a beauty and I was actually quite stunned. I thought god, you know, I haven't done anything to him. And that was how it was. People would punch you and they would kick you in rucks and mauls, it was just every ruck you'd be watching your back as someone would come flying in with a fist, or dropping their elbows or with the boot.

Colin reported several such incidents that suggested he found the violence initially difficult to manage: "I was just like, "Why did he do that? It's not a war." Looking back that was how I felt, bewildered and annoyed." Yet Colin also soon learnt about "paybacks":

> One time after I got kicked in the head and had stitches put in I came back on the field and the captain said to me: "It's payback time. If any of those Tech guys are on our side and you're the first one there I want you to dish it out!" And I was like I don't know if I can do that because I didn't really know how to and I was a bit scared of jumping on some guy's head or laying my knee into his back. It wasn't about that for me I was purely trying to do the best that I could .... It made me feel very uneasy.

Colin was positioned in an ethical dilemma: he wanted to play and be competitive and be accepted into the team, but he did not want to perform specific acts of violence. He reported that this situation made him "scared". Yet, within time he was suitably disciplined by the players' culture to accept the contextual morality of specific acts of violence in senior rugby: "It took time, the technical stuff - like tackling or rucking - I never had a problem with, it was the actual confrontation of having to lay one on someone." The initial difficulty for Colin was not that he had to hurt someone, as a hard tackle or vigorous rucking resulted in players being hurt, but that he was required to perform an action where the prime intent was to inflict pain. The *intent* of actions, as in law and ethics, was of key significance for Colin. However, at the time of our research conversation, when Colin was 28 years of age and captain of his senior club team and still playing NPC rugby, he revealed that he was now well-disciplined by the 'unwritten rules':

> I've got no qualms about dusting someone now. Like last weekend, there was this one kid from this club who just couldn't keep his hands off the ball and I said to him in the bottom of the ruck: "Look, get your hands off the ball." And I went and spoke to the ref I said, "Look, watch number seven, he's playing the ball in the ruck with his hands all the time, is it ok if we

> ruck?" And he said, "Yes, if it's legitimate." So we clean this young guy out, clean him out, clean him out. He still keeps doing it. So one of the props drops his knee into his back, but he still didn't get it, so I just came into the ruck and laid one on him. Broke his nose and he was off ... I didn't have a problem with it, he asked for it, and he was warned. He needed a lesson.

Colin rationalised his performance of violence as he had taken all the 'correct steps' in following the unwritten rules. Through examining several cases of violence in Australian Rules Football, Fitzclarence and Hickey (1998) concluded that a wide array of behaviour rationalisations exist amongst the players that act to establish the athlete's impunity and to "dissolve individuals of their self-responsibility" (p. 71). In a similar respect, Colin did not feel responsible for breaking the "kid's" nose, as it was the kid's fault because he did not know the rules and "he needed a lesson". Colin, however, did not enjoy his disciplinarian role: "I don't gain satisfaction from doing that shit, but at the same time I've sort of become accustomed to it, and I don't mind doing it. But I'm not trying to be a fucking hard man through doing it." Indeed, he was somewhat hesitant to tell me of his violent rugby actions: "I mean it makes me sound like a thug and I don't think I am, I don't do it because it's there to be done, in fact I prefer not to do it." Competing discourses surrounded the performance of violence on the rugby field and these discourses clearly caused Colin some tension.

In contrast to Colin's somewhat reluctant acceptance of his enforcer role, Willy at 21 years of age was excited to talk of his accounts of rugby violence on and off the field. In fact, he appeared to enjoy the reputation he had as a 'hard man':

> In my last team, we had this real scrappy hooker and he'd always start a fight and I'd come running in from the backs to join in. I don't know why, maybe I'd just had my 'he-man' pills or something. It was me and this other guy, he was 'Jake' and I was 'The Muss' and together whenever there was a fight we would always jump in, we would run in from the backs and keep punching 'til someone's down.

Willy linked his violent actions with hyper-masculinity ('he-man' pills) and the violent character from the movie/book *Once Were Warriors*: 'Jake the Muss'. Yet although he was somewhat proud of his brawling reputation he also revealed that his actions caused him a degree of tension: "I got sent off recently for knocking a guy down with a punch. I felt pretty stink about that. The coach wasn't too happy that I was off the field." Willy, however, felt "stink" not because he knocked a guy down but because he could not fulfil his moral rugby duty from the sideline: he could no longer be a competitive and supportive team player. Willy suggested that he joined in the fights because: "I suppose it is to back up my teammates, you know, to help them out, if they are in trouble. If I've seen someone hitting one of my teammates then hitting them is the right thing to do." Willy, therefore, rationalised and moralised his violent actions through positioning himself as a *supportive*, even caring, team player. In similar respect he legitimated the several incidences of off-field 'rugby' violence that he had been involved in, through suggesting that he was also being "loyal" to his teammates:

> When we go out after the matches we go out in our Marist shirts and jackets - I admit it's a bit arrogant wearing them out - yet people will come up to you and talk to you in bars or nightclubs. And most are supportive, but sometimes you get drunk people saying things like 'Marist players are a bunch of poofters'. Like earlier this year, one drunk guy started a fight and punched one of our players. I think he did it to try and be a tough guy, you know, show his mates that he can take out a rugby player. Anyhow, it was then all on, everyone scrapping. I joined in just to try and help out ... and at the end of the day if they're on the ground and we're still standing then its some sort of respect.

Willy's account of the bar-room violence suggests that the discursive context associated with the unwritten rules of rugby violence - where teammates are required to 'physically' support each other in times of violence – can at specific times extend beyond the space and time perimeters of the rugby field. The discourses that legitimise specific acts of violence on the rugby field can, therefore, encourage violence off the field: at least in Willy's case. Curry (1998) illustrated how the problematic locker room talk of violence and sexual abuse

appears connected to sexist and violent actions by male athletes in campus bars. Yet at the same time that Willy felt compelled to partake in off-field violence he also knew that such violent behaviours were problematic: "It's stupid really, you know, it hurts if you get punched in the eye-socket or in the ear. The sensible thing would be to walk away but if your mate is being kicked then you don't really have much choice." Willy, therefore, had some difficulty negotiating the competing discourses that surrounded violence in the broadened contexts of rugby. Moreover, Willy's story adds a degree of credence to Ritchie's (1981) correlation study that concluded that men who have played rugby union as adults are more likely to endorse the use of violence in various social situations, in comparison to men who have not played rugby.

In contrast, Colin, Darryl, Morris and James emphatically suggested that fighting in bars or clubrooms was, besides being rare, always problematic. Although Colin and James reported that they had witnessed fights in clubrooms (Morris and James had not), and Colin said that when he was younger he participated "in a couple of drunken bar-room brawls"; they were quick to criticise the players who were involved in such incidences. Colin told me: "It's just not the done thing and I don't support it at all. You've got to be a moron to be involved in fighting after the games." And James said: "It's just a real shame that that sort of thing happens, it brings a bad name to the club. And it's very rare anyhow. I've only seen two fights in the clubrooms and they were very quickly sorted out." The men suggested off-field fighting was typically highly frowned upon, especially by "older members of the clubs who had very little tolerance for that sort of thing" (James). This helps affirm that age, as de Garis (2000) suggested, may well be a salient factor to consider when examining men's relationships with sport and violence.

The rugby players' understandings of rugby 'violence'

Although all the men who played rugby as adults reported that specific incidents of on-field violence, such as punching, was a normal game occurrence, not all of the players participated in or celebrated this facet of the game. James and Darryl, for example, were careful to not get involved in any of the "fights". James, who had played on the wing since intermediate to help avoid the "rough stuff", reported: "I kept well away from any fights, it was quite good being out on the

wing, as it was mainly the forwards who did the fighting. To me I thought it was all a bit ridiculous anyhow." James was not only fearful of being hurt in fights but reported that on occasions he even tried to break up or prevent fights: "I'd sometimes go over to a fight and try and be a peacemaker, not in an overzealous way, you know I'd just say stuff like 'come on boys let's play the game'. I'm a non-violent person really."

Darryl reported that he was also critical of the violence in the games: "An unfortunate thing about rugby is that some people viewed it as a legitimate venue to hurt people and it usually happened. I've known players who have been like that and I've played against players who have been like that." Yet he told of several times, in his last season of senior rugby as a 26 year-old, that he resisted rugby violence, for example:

> I made an after match speech at a country rugby club after a very, very dirty game where there was a couple of serious injuries and I said that we just had to look at out ourselves and question what we did out there. And that we've got to think about whether we want mums and dads and kids to see that sort of disgrace. I told them that the best thing I saw on the field was a guy who has been playing most of his adult life in rugby, who walked away when somebody slipped him one – he just looked at this guy shook his head and ran off after the ball.

Darryl could be "outspoken" about the unwritten rules of rugby violence as his subject position as team captain allowed him to exercise greater power than the predominantly younger players in his team. In contrast, Morris did not protest against rugby violence while he played, but admitted that he felt uneasy about it all:

> When I played I didn't have a very sophisticated analysis of the violence, I just sort of had this vague feeling that this wasn't right, but I didn't have a way of talking about it. I mean I think it would have been pretty scary to protest the violence in the clubrooms, it would not have been a smart thing to start challenging beliefs, they were very entrenched, I would have felt unmanly if I had done so.

In this manner, Morris intimated that rugby's articulations with dominant discourses of masculinity helped limit his ability to develop a critique of rugby. Yet he reported that ten years after he had retired from the game, he became aware of a range of social issues, related to discourses of violence and gender, that provided him with the narrative resources to help develop a critique of rugby:

> In my thirties I became aware of gender issues. I suppose it all stemmed from Robyn's, my wife's, feminism and I was always very mindful of a contrast between the very rich relationships that she had with her friends and what was lacking in my male relationships. So I became interested in men's issues and I helped set up what was known as men's support groups, and a lot of the men talked about the constraints of being a man and rugby was a topic of interest .... And in the early 1980s there was increasing media coverage about the violence in the game and I was interested in violence as a general issue. And then with the Springbok tour of '81 it just confirmed it for me that the rugby culture was a dinosaur.

Given this combination of social occurrences Morris developed a "workable critique" of rugby, he believed that: "Rugby was a prime socialiser of violence in our community (as) players accepted and participated in deliberate violence on the field, and after the game people would brag about their stories of warfare." Morris, therefore, classified rugby as a game of violence and he became highly critical of the game he once loved: "For about ten years I stopped watching rugby, the combination of concern about violence in rugby and the aftermath of the Springbok tour meant that I had very little interest in rugby." Although Morris still thinks of rugby as a producer of male violence, he reported that over the last several years he has started enjoying watching rugby again: "At first I felt like an alcoholic who had fallen off the wagon, but the game has some redeeming features that are worthy of celebration."

In contrast, although all of the other rugby players were well aware that acts of violence occurred on the field and at rare times off the field, they did not think of rugby as a game of violence. James reported: "No, I don't think of rugby as violent, I mean it's a contact sport, it's a hard contact sport and you've got to be

aggressive on the field, but it's not violent." He also suggested that: "you do get some idiots who play the game who have anger problems, and these people can give the game a bad name." In this manner, problem individuals were blamed for incidences of rugby violence, whereas the rugby culture was not critiqued. Darryl also drew on individualism to 'explain' rugby violence: "Well there are some violent people who play rugby, but most of the people I've played with have been clean players and I don't think that the game itself is violent." Yet Darryl was critical of *aspects* of rugby:

> I am critical of the stupidity that leads to the thuggery and of people who use the game as an inappropriate outlet for their problems or their violent nature. And I'm highly critical of the win at all costs side of the game, but I wouldn't play the game if I thought it was simply violent. I'm not critical of the game, you know, you play sport for enjoyment and if you are in there for any other reasons you are doing the game a disservice.

Rugby, for Darryl, was still a noble sport. Colin also believed that despite incidences of violence in the game that rugby was primarily an ethical sport. And although Colin accepted that violence was a "part of the game", and at times he was actively involved in performing acts of violence, he was also paradoxically critical of it:

> No young fella should be told to go and lay one on someone, like how I was told. Like now, we have a young kid in our team, a 19-year old or something, and I would never go and tell him to take this guy out. That sort of thing is crap you know. I would never say any thing like that. And thankfully the game is changing especially with the red card, sending off stuff now. Like you get sent off - three send offs or three sin bins - and you're out, so that's definitely had a change. Its not the hard grind it used to be.

Colin was, therefore, critical of the unwritten rules and was pleased that the game was becoming cleaner, yet he was not critical enough to stop contributing to the violence on the field. In fact, Colin was more concerned about viewpoints that

critiqued rugby as violent. He stated bluntly: "I'm pissed off with people who pull the game apart and call it violent, as far as I'm concerned if they've never been on the field and experienced that intensity, they don't have the right to be critical."

Moreover, the men did not define rugby as violent, in part, because they knew that participating in or doing 'violence' was problematic; and if they defined rugby as violent then by association, as participants, they could be defined as violent. Colin, for example, was somewhat reluctant to talk about his acts of violence on the field as it made him sound like a "thug"; an image of self he felt uncomfortable with. In addition, the men did not think of rugby as violent as they had multiple understandings about rugby: rugby, they believed, was primarily a sport of tactics, teamwork, physical and mental skills; it was also about endurance, fitness, commitment, passion, competition, managing fears and emotions, and being tough. Rugby was a man's game, a potentially dangerous game, New Zealand's national sport and a hard sport, but fundamentally they believed that rugby was an 'ethical' game that revolved around following rules and being disciplined; as such they did not define rugby as violent. In this way, the players typically thought it reductive and problematic to define rugby as violent.

Yet regardless of whether these men defined rugby as violent or aggressive or as simply physical, all of the men knew that rugby was a corporeally dangerous game: a sport where players risked and suffered bodily injury. And the threat or realities of injury and pain typically played a prime role in influencing these men to retire from rugby or to think seriously about retiring.

Retirement from rugby: No pain is sane after all

Although rugby is discursively known as a man's sport, it is somewhat ironic that the game is predominantly played by boys and teenagers and, to a lesser extent, young men but rarely by men in their thirties or older (e.g. Hillary Commission, 2000). In this section, I examine the adult rugby players' accounts of rugby retirement and how the processes of retiring articulated with discourses of masculinities.

For James, who had played rugby since he was five, a "dirty tackle" that produced a "compound fracture of the tibia and fibula" helped end his rugby playing days at 22 years of age. Yet he had been thinking about quitting for a period of time:

> My interest was starting to wane and I was getting fairly busy into work and other activities, like my tennis ... and at the senior level there was always the possibility of getting seriously hurt and back then, I was skinny, so I was concerned about it. So I was already thinking that it would be my last season before I broke my leg.

Although James regretted the injury he was not overly resentful towards rugby. In contrast, he reported: "There were times afterwards that I thought it would be nice to just play rugby in a more social type grade as opposed to the full on serious stuff, as I missed the team practices and the beer afterwards." For James, the social side to rugby had always provided the most pleasure, yet he was ready to quit as participation in rugby was causing him tension:

> I'm not the real aggressive type, you know, I'm quite gentle and soft-spoken. And you needed to be aggressive when you played ... I could tackle people but I never had that desire to knock someone over to hurt them in the tackle. Or to fend somebody in the face when I was running. I always thought of that side of rugby, that sort of aggressive side, to be a problem.

James associated rugby, in part, with being tough and aggressive, but as a male who viewed himself as "gentle" he thought that this aspect of rugby was problematic: rugby, for James, had lost some of its moral appeal. Discourses of health also impacted on his decision to retire after his leg injury:

> I do at times think it is impressive how some of the All Blacks can play with such physical commitment, they're tough guys, but I wonder what their bodies are like when they age with all their aches and pains and things like arthritis. And you start to wonder about the sense in continuing to do that – of course, you can understand it with the money they now earn. But the game just wasn't for me any more.

Darryl retired from rugby at age 26, but in contrast to James he reported that he had always enjoyed the physical challenge of rugby and that he still missed some of the hard contact. Yet he also stated:

> You know at 26 you feel a lot more pain than when you are 18, 19, or 20. People are getting bigger, people are getting faster, you're getting older. I first noticed it when I was a barman and after rugby I had to go and stand all night and I could feel my body aching and it would be sore all the next day. By the time I got to bed I'd say, "Jesus, I feel like an old man".

In this manner, participating in rugby at 26 years of age did not help Darryl feel strong, youthful and tough, hence, it possibly caused 'masculinity' tensions. He was also concerned about his long-term health: "In the season before I retired I had to spend time in hospital with a fractured eye socket and serious concussion and you do worry about knocks to the brain and how they affect you in the long term." Yet in combination with concerns about pain and health he reported, in similar fashion to James, that other life interests also became more relevant:

> Family became more a focus and work took over. I had a young family and I was trying to study extramurally. Time was at a premium. I was sick of working casual jobs that didn't pay much and I wanted to get a career so I was studying part-time to get a degree. Plus, my wife was saying, "Look, if you play rugby again that's a whole Tuesday night and a whole Thursday night gone and a big part of Saturday." And it would have been unfair on her; basically I was happy to spend more time with my family and do my part.

The traditional performance of being an adult man has been associated, in part, with heterosexual relationships and providing for a family (Connell, 1995). Relatedly, Darryl prioritised having a career and supporting his young family over further rugby participation. In this manner he became subject to adult discourses of masculinity. His account also suggested that he was influenced, in part, by discourses of feminism as he recognised that it would be unfair on his wife to continue to play rugby. The moralities associated with being a tough, skilled and

courageous rugby player were not as important for Darryl as being a 'good' and responsible adult father and marriage partner. Darryl had also been re-thinking his understanding of what it meant to be a man:

> In New Zealand, rugby culture is definitely linked with proving manliness. But as far as I'm concerned you can prove your manliness, or womanliness for that matter, in a variety of ways. You can scale cliff walls or by kayaking down rivers. But when I talk about manliness I mean that ability to challenge yourself. And they can be mental challenges as well, such as studying for a degree. And rugby for me had been about meeting those challenges that were put in front of you. But I'm quite willing to now walk away from a challenge like that, but I wasn't when I was a kid or a young man. Now I'm quite happy to say look, you know, that's beyond me, or that's not worth it. I'm no longer interested in trying to prove myself in that manner.

Darryl had used rugby, in part, as a technology of self to meet various challenges to help transform and prove his manliness, but those challenges were no longer specifically relevant. Although he suggested that manliness still needed to be proved, he accepted that he could prove it in a variety of alternative ways: being a 'real man', for Darryl at 40 years of age, was no longer primarily about physical toughness. In similar manner, James suggested that rugby was not specifically relevant for turning boys into men: "It's a hard contact sport yet that does not mean that it helps prepare boys for manhood. I mean you might get hurt and learn to take the knocks but I don't think that's actually important to learn." Darryl and James clearly believed that rugby and manliness were connected and although they had enjoyed participating in rugby, they were also somewhat critical with the dominant image of Kiwi men and its links with rugby. Darryl, for example, theorised:

> One of the problems with rugby in New Zealand is not the game itself, it's a good game, but how New Zealanders perceive themselves, especially men, in relation to rugby. I have absolutely no doubt that there has been a great deal of damage done through rugby with men trying to turn their sons into young men. And that's pretty much related with the whole New

> Zealand mentality about males, about valuing men when they are tough and strong. And only now are we starting to shed that idea that men should be strong, silent, tough, you know, the attitude: "She's right, my legs been chopped off, but ah no complaints about it mate."

James similarly asserted: "the rugby, racing and beer stereotype of New Zealand men was definitely on the way out and the image of men being tough and strong and aggressive can even cause problems." The valorised teenage discourses of masculinity (e.g. toughness, strength, courage) that had once helped make rugby attractive to play were, therefore, no longer specifically important for Darryl or James. Indeed, they were critically reflective, in a reserved manner, of the social influence of rugby on masculinities. Yet, Darryl and James also remained armchair fans of rugby. They both still enjoyed watching the All Blacks and talking about rugby: rugby was still significantly meaningful and, therefore, performances of toughness, strength and aggression had not completely lost their cultural relevance.

In contrast to James and Darryl's retirement accounts, Morris reported that when he retired from rugby, at 22 years of age, injuries and pain had little to do with his decision, but it was due to a change of direction in his life, a commitment to his wife and a growing awareness of feminism:

> I played my fourth year at university with recognition that I wasn't enjoying it as much any more. By that stage I was married – married quite young – so I guess there were things in my personal life that helped me decide to quit .... And I remember this clearly – a feeling of not enjoying the social stuff that's associated with rugby. I found the guys that I was playing with incredibly misogynist and I was dissatisfied with the relationships that I had with them, which I could only describe as stereotypically male. It was a young man's culture. You know they would talk about cars, and drinking and scoring with women. They appeared to only value women for their sexuality. And my ideas about feminism had been sharpened by my wife and I began to understand why she felt very uncomfortable in the clubrooms. And when it came down to it, it got to a point that I would rather spend time with her than the boozy, smokey, environment of the after match thing.

Thus, similar in some respects to Darryl and James's retirement accounts, Morris revealed that the "young man's culture" associated with rugby was no longer culturally relevant for him as he gained other life interests and directions. Moreover, his account suggested that although rugby can encourage, as Schacht (1996) asserted, men to distance themselves "from all aspects of femininity through forms of misogynistic denigration" (p. 562), it does not mean that all players uncritically accept or adopt such sexist practices and beliefs. In this respect Morris became less subject to the technologies of domination associated with rugby and masculinities, as he more actively helped constitute his sense of self in combination with discourses of feminism. Nevertheless, Morris still currently enjoys the spectacle of professional rugby and believes that there are many redeeming features to rugby:

> It's a naïve position, I know, but my naïve position is that if rugby is played in a good spirit it can be a good game, it can be exciting, it can be free flowing and there is a bit of me that enjoys the hard contact of rugby ... and although I am a little cynical about the character building myths of rugby, I do buy into it to an extent. I mean the idea of working in a team and learning about teamwork can be a good thing. Of course, there are other healthier ways of teaching teamwork .... I suppose, part of what I enjoy is connected to something about reclaiming something from my past; rugby was a big part of my life for many years.

Morris's account suggested that it is problematic to dismiss rugby as totally violent or sexist or as a producer of only one type of masculinity. More specifically, Morris suggested that although he considered aspects of the game to be violent, and that rugby could help socialise men to accept violence, that there were also many positive aspects to still enjoy about the game.

At the time of the interviews Willy (21 years old) and Colin (28 years old) were still participating in rugby and although they both loved rugby they also reported that they had been thinking about retiring due to the injury costs. Willy, for example, reported: "Every season since my last year in high school I have thought about quitting, I get sick of putting up with the pain. But I like the game

too much to quit." Willy, who played senior reserves, reported that two hours before participating in each game he takes digesic (a strong pain-killer) and immediately after the game he takes further pain killers. The pain killers were primarily for his lower back; which had previously required a complicated operation: "An MRI scan revealed that two of my discs were not functional – L4 and L5 – they were somehow not receiving blood and were pinching a nerve constantly, so they took bone off my hip to make a new bone...". He was unsure whether participation in rugby had caused his back 'problem' but he stated that it was probably related to rugby as he first noticed the back pain after games. Further, he knew that given his injury and surgical history that it was "crazy" for him to keep playing rugby, yet he was somewhat proud that he continued to play in the face of pain:

> The surgeon who did my back operations told me that I had to give up rugby .... I am pretty crazy, everyone just says it, they can't believe I continue to play. When I play I've got my knee strapped, both shoulders strapped, I wear a back brace, a wrist brace, ankle brace, headgear, shoulder pads, it's like a suit of armour. And they think why do you bother, why do you put yourself through this? And it's because I like the game so much.

Colin also loved the game and was still making money through participating in the NPC, but at twenty-eight years of age he was talking seriously about retiring:

> I probably won't play next year because I'm sick of dealing with all this shit, I'm sick of icing my legs and wondering if I'm going to wake up today and be able to walk okay or if it's going to give me a bit of stick. I mean you're always going to have problems with joints and muscles if you've damaged them. I'm sort of getting to the end of my rugby career, but I also very, very much enjoy rugby and I think it's going to be a hard transition, like rugby's going to be a part of my life for a long, long time and I want it to be. I'm thinking about coaching next year, get into it straight away. Yet at the same time I'll still have to live with "Oh man I wonder if I could

> have ever made it further". So retirement's going to be hard for me to deal with.

Colin had already experienced the emotional difficulties of retirement, when in his early twenties, he was told by doctors that he could no longer participate in rugby after sustaining three concussions in one season while also fracturing a cervical vertebrae. He was subsequently forced to retire but found it very difficult:

> I don't know whether you call it depression or whatever but I had a very, very low time, you know, like drinking constantly and firing up on the piss, which is not like me. But I had no other way of dealing with it, I had no other source of coping and I was angry about the way I got dealt to. I turned up to practice because the coach called me to training and he stood up and said: "Listen up everybody, Col's fucked. His neck's no good, he's basically retired. Thanks very much for all you've contributed to this team – right let's go lads." And off they went and I just sat there and I was looking around and I was feeling pretty upset and I just stood and watched those guys train and then I just went "what the fuck am I doing here?"

Colin's sense of self was so closely tied to rugby participation that the eighteen months enforced 'retirement' caused him stress: "It broke me, it destroyed me, I went off the rails for those eighteen months." He admitted that in his early twenties he had been using rugby as a means of gaining acceptance of himself and others. As such, rugby participation provided Colin with the narrative resources to help produce a respected masculine subjectivity as a hard competitive sportsman. Yet when he was forced to stop playing rugby he could not find alternative masculine resources to help construct a new sense of self; thus, his narrative identity crumbled and he went "off the rails." Relatedly, Sparkes and Smith (2002) in a study of permanently disabled rugby players argued that the dominant narratives that have been made available to rugby players "are extremely problematic in terms of enabling them to construct different body-self relationships and different identities in the future" (p. 281).

Yet Colin who was now twenty-eight years old and in the last year of training to be a PE teacher, felt that he could now cope with retirement: he had alternative narrative resources to draw upon and as a prospective PE teacher he was becoming more concerned with his long-term health and body functioning. More specifically, he admitted that he was no longer using rugby to "prove that I'm not the green kid that I used to be" but that he simply loved playing the game: "I'm now very accepting of myself ... it's now just about playing the game, that's enough in itself. I love the intensity of the game, the tactics, the team-work and thinking about how to beat particular teams." Yet given the cumulative injury costs, which Colin spent over an hour detailing in his interview, he is likely to soon retire from rugby.

Willy, however, reported that he still enjoyed performing feats of toughness on the rugby field, even inflicting pain, as these performances made him feel "good" and like a man:

> I just like running, running with the ball, running into people, trying to knock them over, trying to tackle people as hard as I can, just everything about rugby. And of course, scoring tries. At the end of a game if I've played well I feel like I've achieved something, I feel good when I come off the field. Like last season when I was playing against Putaruru and we did this big back move where I cut back inside from centre and I ran right into the halfback. And he went really low to tackle me and I kneed him in the head and he got knocked out and the ambulance had to come and take him off the field. And I scored a try from that move and when I was running back from the try line, he was on the ground knocked out and I pointed at him and raised a fist in the air to our Marist sideline. And they were just like "yeah!" and clapped like they thought I was *the man*. And the other side were going "boo" and the whole thing just made me feel good.

Willy was still excited when he told me of this injury account and part of his excitement was because his story of being tough, inflicting pain and competitive success helped constitute his manly sense of self (e.g. "I was *the man*"). Willy, therefore, linked participation in rugby, in part, with the performance of a respected and, paradoxically, moral form of masculinity and this

appeared to be a prime factor of pleasure that he gained through adult participation in rugby. Willy's account suggested, in similar manner to the conclusions drawn by Young et al. (1994), that disregard for personal well-being within the sporting arena (and disregard for others' wellbeing) was valued for being masculinising. Willy's sense of masculine self was, therefore, still closely tied to rugby.

The men's accounts illustrated that multiple discourses influenced James, Morris and Darryl's decision to retire from rugby and why Colin was beginning to think seriously about retiring. These discourses were primarily related to concern with rugby injuries, pain and long-term health, desire to devote more time and energy to careers, education, family and other less time demanding or less potentially damaging sporting activities (e.g. tennis, touch rugby and jogging) and importantly, less interest in performing or demonstrating toughness. In contrast to Young et al. (1994) who found that elite male athletes were "generally *unreflexive* ... to past disablement" and held "a relatively unquestioning posture toward the possibility of future injury" (p. 191) the accounts of the men that I interviewed, with the exception of Willy, suggested that concern with bodily well-being and the threat of future injury were influential factors associated with the desire to withdraw or think about withdrawing from rugby participation.

Connected to the men's accounts of retiring from rugby was the discursive knowledge that rugby was a *young man's game*. Colin, for example, reported: "I'm starting to get a bit too old for rugby." Similarly, Darryl suggested that: "As you age your body doesn't handle the knocks as well as it once did." And James reported that: "It is a good sport for boys and teenagers, but as men get bigger and stronger and faster the risk of injury increases and some serious damage can be done." The men's life history accounts of rugby, therefore, typically revealed that they believed that it was appropriate, even highly desirable for young men, male teenagers and boys to be actively involved in rugby because, in part, rugby required tolerance of pain and displays of strength and toughness. Yet their accounts also suggested that they believed that once men were aged in their late twenties and older, that participation in rugby was no longer necessarily important or perhaps even appropriate.

Associated with the men's understandings that rugby was less suitable for men in their late twenties and older, was the knowledge that appropriate ways of being manly had changed from the teenage years to adulthood. The men's accounts

of their teenage years, for example, suggested that the cultural dominance of rugby helped support versions of masculinity that respected strength, independence, aggression, physical skilfulness and tolerance of pain. However, the men's retirement accounts suggested that as adults their *personal performances* of force and violence, and their ability to tolerate pain, were no longer highly valued or necessarily thought of as masculinising. Moreover, cavalier attitudes towards bodily health were typically viewed as problematic. James and Darryl even believed that abilities to tolerate pain and risk, and to inflict pain or be violent were clearly dubious. Even Colin, who as a twenty-eight year-old, still performed deliberate acts of violence on the rugby field, reported that he was concerned about that aspect of the game and that he was pleased that the violence was diminishing with new rules. The adult men, in general, therefore became subject to dominating discourses of adult masculinities and these discourses contributed, *in part*, to the men's decreased desires to participate in rugby. The complex social processes associated with aging, as de Garis (2000) suggested, were significant factors that influenced the men's relationships with rugby, and their understandings of what it means to be manly.

In summary, the men's retirement accounts revealed that they were subject to multiple and competing discourses, including discourses of rugby, health, masculinities, ethics and feminism, and that each man negotiated understandings about their rugby involvement in complex ways. In this manner, a range of different masculine subjectivities were negotiated within the 'violent context' of adult rugby: the discourses of rugby, therefore, did not produce a single monolithic rugby masculinity. In comparison to previous sport and masculinity research (e.g. Messner, 1992; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Young et al., 1994) that has tended to portray sports of violence as producers of a problematic and dominant form of masculinity, the men's accounts indicated that the discursive impact of rugby was more complex and convoluted in contributing to the production of a variety of fragmented and fluid masculinities. Nevertheless, for Willy and Colin, their senses of self, as rugby players, still appeared to remain at the apex of their identity hierarchies.

'Ex-rugby players' speak talk adult rugby, masculinities and violence

The change in the dominating discourses of masculinities as associated, in part, with aging, also impacted on the men who had quit playing rugby as boys or teenagers. These men, for example, also typically suggested that the rugby culture was the culture of *young* men or boys. Sebastian, for example, reported: "I've had friends that have told me about what they got up to on tour in rugby teams and they're pretty horrendous stories, you know, lots of drinking, having fights and stuff, it's pretty boyish." In a similar manner Edgar reported: "The rugby players at university acted in an immature way, it seemed a bit like a boy's club, a boy's thing. And they tended not to have girls in their group, which I thought was strange." In a more liberal manner George asserted: "I believe it's a man's game personally. Actually it's a young man's game, but if you want to play it when you are older then that is cool."

Yet some of the men suggested that rugby culture was not just the culture of young males but also the culture of an older and more problematic time: a more sexist and gender segregated time. Seamus, for example, reported:

> The old rugby culture of hard men and hard drinking is going; it's a dinosaur in its last throes. And I think we have a more open society, we've got lots more sports, lots more pride in other people who do other things, we have women sports stars, we value fashion and the arts. And I think the things I went through as a teenager - my children won't have to put up with those attitudes. I think New Zealand has finally come of age, we're diversified and the emphasis has gone off rugby.

Derek made similar comments and was pleased that dominant understandings of masculinities had changed within Aotearoa/New Zealand over the last forty years:

> The culture that helped fuel the rugby of the 1950s and the 1960s has softened. They were times where men were impressed with the 'physical' and the toughness, although I'm not sure that we're completely out of it yet, but it has definitely changed. The old idea of "she'll be right" and ignoring pain, that's the old macho stupid image which was much more typical of

> the Kiwi male twenty years ago than it is today. The Kiwi image of men being non-emotional, humble, big, strong, tough that's all changed. Now the rugby players when they score they not only celebrate but they're down right excited and so they should be .... It's a broader culture now and New Zealand is not the insular society that it once was.

The discursive changes to Aotearoa/New Zealand masculinities, that the men discussed, were also discussed in relation to the second wave of feminism. Finn, for example, applauded the advent of 1970s feminism:

> The rise of feminism in the 1970s was a necessity. The New Zealand female needed and deserved more respect and had to fight for it, the 'rugby, racing and beer' culture where the women's place was in the home and barefoot and pregnant had to change. And why women put up with it for so long is beyond me.

In this manner, the men typically recognised that a dominant cultural story of Aotearoa/New Zealand masculinities, linked men to a pioneering image and positioned them as tough, hard working, hard drinking, sexist and passionate about 'rugby, racing and beer'. Yet this image of the 'typical Kiwi male' was not romanticised, but was talked of as a dated stereotype that was, in part, representative of a problematic time and as a constraining factor for Kiwi males and gender relations. The recognition that discursive changes had taken place, concerning gender relations and dominant ways of being manly, therefore, was typically welcomed by these men. Their accounts, for example, suggested that the greater cultural diversity, combined with the decreased importance for men to be tough and display feats of physical bravery, made it easier to feel good about themselves as men who recognised that they did not necessarily represent the stereotypical image of the hard 'kiwi bloke'. Edgar, for example, stated: "It is much easier now to be a man because men's roles are much broader. It's now okay, perhaps even expected, for a man to change nappies, kiss their sons and to show appreciation, not disdain, for the arts." And Finn reported:

> I think there are probably people around me, probably some of the boys I teach, who don't see me as a hard man and don't respect me because I'm not a hard man. But I don't want to be a hard man, in fact, I'm proud of being gentle and a caring supportive family man and a caring teacher. I regard all that as being far more valuable than being able to knock someone down ... I look at the hard man image as being fairly negative. I also know, given my life experiences, you know, of living in a remote village in Bhutan doing VSA (volunteer service abroad), that although I'm not a hard man, I am hard mentally.

Finn thought it important to add that he was "hard mentally", which helped illustrate that he was still subject to discourses of masculinity, such as courage, independence, and toughness. Yet, Finn was proud to be critical of 'hard men' and this, indirectly, helped provide his comforting story of self as an adult. Relatedly, the men typically found that as adults they had greater access to a wider range of discursive resources that they could use to help construct comforting stories of self. These discursive resources, for example, related to alternative masculinities (e.g. the often cited, but also parodied, 'sensitive new age guy' or renaissance man), educational achievements, careers, heterosexual relationships, and specific recreational and cultural activities, such as outdoor pursuits, overseas travel, wine tasting, and sports like tennis and squash. In this manner, the men generally told stories of how they felt comfortable about themselves as adult men. Sebastian, for example, was excited about his recent shift into acting and low-budget movie making. Derek was very involved in politics and the church, and Lionel reported that his "computer project" was progressing smoothly. These men's adult accounts of self were, therefore, noticeably more up-beat in comparison to how they talked, in a somewhat derogatory manner, about their teenage senses of self.

Moreover, the men, in general, were pleased to report that tolerance of risk and pain and displays of physical aggression were no longer necessarily highly valued or thought of as masculinizing. These men were also typically critical about incidences of specific acts of violence, such as punching, that occasionally occurred within televised rugby. Seamus, for example, reported: "The only rugby I watch is when the All Blacks are playing, and I generally enjoy watching them, but I don't like it when I see them fighting." Edgar echoed similar sentiments: "I don't

like it when I see the fighting in rugby, or players leaving the field with blood on them. Or you see in the background that someone's struggling to get to their feet, and the game's going on." Lionel, in similar manner asserted: "Punching on the field is never warranted. The mongrel stuff in rugby, where someone can charge into you in a maul and knock you out, that sort of stuff needs to be removed from the game – it's never acceptable." Tom added: "I don't like the idea of people going and rucking the crap out of someone, because I've experienced that and it hurts, it's stupid."

However, George and Tom held mixed emotions about incidences of violence in professional rugby. George, suggested: "Of course I wouldn't like to be on the field getting dealt to, and I wouldn't like to see other people that I know getting punched, but I admit that I don't mind seeing the fights in rugby." He reported further: "Yes, it is gladiatorial stuff, seeing these big men slug it out, of course there's a problem with it, but it's also strangely entertaining." Similarly, Tom reported: "I don't think the violence should be in the game, but if those guys choose to play, then I'm not too worried by it – actually the fights can be entertaining, but they're also stupid." In this respect, the men's concerns about rugby violence, injuries and pain were partially diffused by the knowledge that rugby, at the elite level, was a professional sport played by men who were well renumerated and aware of the corporeal risks. Yet, the men typically reported that they thought that aspects of the game that encouraged players to deny pain were problematic. Finn, for example, reported:

> I've heard about players playing with broken bones and I can understand how that happens, but I don't like it that young boys, like the ones I teach, regard that sort of thing as heroic. Yet there will always be people doing downright foolish things and some regarding it as heroic.

And Lionel, with reference to All Black Norm Hewitt, who had recently played with a broken arm, asserted: "What the hell's Hewitt doing on the field injured anyhow? I mean they've got all those reserves ... he's a bloody idiot." Similarly, Edgar asserted that Hewitt was: "irresponsible and ... he's stupid." Relatedly, some of the men were concerned that the professional rugby players provided poor images of masculinity. Edgar, for example, reported:

> I don't feel they're good role models for young boys or for anyone as they're not achieving anything. Ok, they do have goals and they work as a team and they are determined, which is good, but they present a bad image as the way they achieve those goals is through violence .... If they chose to have their bodies bashed around by guys who weigh eighteen stone and who run at them at full speed, that's not smart, and it's a shame that they end up encouraging others to take risks. So it's a very bad image.

Finn also raised concerns about the potential social influence of rugby on males: "I think men learn early on not to look after themselves - to knock themselves around a lot. And rugby could well be a part of that ethos." Similarly, Seamus reported:

> There are heaps of good All Blacks and I have a lot of respect for some of them, but the culture of the game, you know, the glorification of roughness and of taking pain and the glorification of the aggressiveness, that is the part I distinctly am critical of – that's why I don't let my boys watch rugby.

The men, therefore, typically believed that playing in pain or disregarding health were problematic behaviours; they were not celebrated as masculinising. However, despite the men's specific concerns about rugby pain and incidences of violence, the majority did not define rugby as a game of violence. Lionel, for example, who retired fearful of rugby pain after primary school, stated: "Rugby is played violently by a few players but on the whole I think that rugby adheres to the spirit of the game, which is playing the ball not the other players." In a similar manner, Derek also supported a game that he had once been fearful of playing: "If the game is played within the rules, then the game can be a good game; in fact, it can be a moral game." Thus, similar to the men who played rugby as adults, the incidences of violence that occur on rugby were not blamed on the culture surrounding rugby. In contrast, Edgar and Seamus argued that rugby was a sport of violence. Edgar reported:

> I view the game as violent – of course it is – it's gladiators, what's the difference? .... It's one team of big men against another team. It's war; it's a replacement for war. It's one team against another team and they're all fighting to get this ball and the team who reaches the territory ... wins the game.

Similarly, Seamus reported: "It is a violent game, I mean you can't have two teams running at each other and attack each other for a ball without invoking violence. And unfortunately, that aspect tends to be glorified in the media." Yet the beliefs expressed by Edgar and Seamus, that positioned rugby as violent, were in the clear minority.

Although the men who quit rugby when young were often critical about specific aspects of rugby, they did not typically discuss their concerns with other people. Finn, for example, reported: "I keep my critical ideas about rugby to myself ... at work there are some guys - men and women - who are big fans and I don't see the point in suggesting that I have problems with the sport." In similar manner, Edgar stated: "I've discussed my concerns about rugby with my partner and close friends, but I wouldn't tell Dad or suggest at work that I view rugby as violent – you'd set yourself up for trouble if you go around criticising the *sanctity* of rugby." And Seamus pragmatically reported: "I run my own business and from a business perspective it would not be wise for me to put down rugby with my clients or the people I employ." He, more specifically, stated that it was useful for him to know the scores of recent rugby games to help initiate and maintain cordial business relationships. Seamus, in this sense, was still using rugby to help mark himself as normal.

The men's reluctance to publicly voice their rugby concerns related, in part, to their recognition of the social dominance of rugby. Seamus, for example, stated: "rugby is very much in our culture, New Zealanders are still very involved with it. It's almost bred into us. And it's hard to ignore or rebel against." In this manner, the dominating discourses that celebrated rugby as 'our national sport' and as a 'man's sport', and that positioned particular All Blacks as manly heroes, helped silence the men's concerns about rugby violence and pain. Rugby's articulations with discourses of nationalism and masculinism, therefore, made resistance against rugby a formidable task: the male critic of rugby, given the workings of these

rugby discourses, risks being positioned as unpatriotic and feminine. Hence, although these adult men, in comparison to their boyhood and teenage years, appeared considerably less subject to the technologies of domination/power associated with rugby, they could not 'escape' rugby's socio-cultural dominance.

Nevertheless, the dominating discourses of rugby also helped constitute, in a seemingly contradictory manner, some of the men's enjoyment of televised rugby. George, Tom, and Lionel, for example, reported that they particularly enjoyed following the performances of the All Blacks. George, who at the time of the 1981 Springbok tour had regarded rugby players as "thugs", now drew on functionalist discourses of nationalism to help support his enjoyment of televised rugby:

> I don't imagine there are many people that don't get a tear in their eye when they see the All Blacks do the haka in an international - it gives you a sense of pride. I think that's cool; we *need* that you know. I think the thing with the All Blacks is that they're a focus for national pride and I think that's what's good about them.

And Sebastian, who was currently living in Australia, reported that "rugby was a representative symbol of New Zealand" and in this respect he enjoyed viewing the All Blacks. In a more reserved manner, Seamus reported that he admired the skills of the All Blacks and that he often enjoyed watching them play. Yet he was also careful that his two young boys did not watch rugby on television, just as he did not let them watch "inappropriate cartoons or violent shows." Whereas, Finn and Edgar reported that they did not purposefully follow rugby, and most times did not even know when the All Blacks were playing, but that on occasions they would watch and enjoy aspects of a televised game. Edgar, for example, even reported that he actively used rugby as a means to help develop an adult relationship with his father:

> I remember, at about 25 years of age, thinking that I should do something with Dad because he didn't do anything with me. And I can remember socially sitting with Dad, watching the All Blacks – cause Dad's really into the All Blacks – and thinking I don't understand why there was a scrum, or

> what the rucking rules were. So I thought I can't really talk about rugby with Dad as I don't understand the game. So I got a book out of the library and studied up the rules and found out things like what this five-yard scrum was. And then I made it a point of watching the games with Dad. And I found that I enjoyed watching the game much better after.

In this manner, although Edgar defined rugby as a sport of violence, he found that he could still 'use' knowledge of rugby for select social advantages. Moreover, the men's accounts of how they were typically critical of select rugby performances, but also of how they tended to enjoy watching the All Blacks, illustrated how they were subject to competing discourses of rugby and how the dominating discourses of rugby could be difficult to resist. Trevor Richards (1999), a leading activist in campaigns to stop the 1981 Springbok tour, also reported that the "pull of... (rugby) rituals and celebrations is very strong" (p. 42) and is hard to ignore. He admitted, for example, that while he was protesting the 'racist tour' in 1981 that he was still "as keen as any of ... (his) detractors to know the result of any All Black-Springbok game" (p. 42).

Nevertheless, some of the men did exercise power against rugby's dominance. Seamus, for example, stated that he actively attempts to dissuade his two young sons from playing rugby:

> We deliberately located our home in this particular area as we thought that the secondary school was better - more liberal minded and less traditional - and that our boys would be under less pressure to play rugby ... we don't want our boys playing rugby in their youth, in the pub at 18 years, potbellies at 25 and heart disease at forty.

Discourses of health underpinned Seamus's rugby concerns. Edgar and Sebastian also reported that, if they had children, they would actively encourage them *not* to play rugby, as they believed that the sport involved too much corporeal risk. In similar manner, George reported that he encouraged his son to participate in a sport with less risk of physical injury, such as soccer. And Finn was pleased to report that at the primary school that his six year-old son attended, tackle rugby was not supported by the teachers; so that if pupils wanted to play rugby they had

to join a club outside of the school. However, Lionel believed that participation in rugby for male youth was such a significant marker of normality that it would be preferable for boys to play rugby and risk injury, than to risk being marginalised through not participating. Nevertheless, the men, who had quit rugby participation at early ages primarily due to their concerns about pain and injury, typically did not want to let their own, or other, children have similar negative experiences. Such micro-level forms of resistance against rugby, if repeated on a grander scale in many other families, could be a factor associated with rugby's gradual decline in participation rates (see Romanos, 2002, for discussion of recent participation rate declines).

Chapter summary

In this chapter I have represented the men's accounts of their adult rugby involvement and understandings. These accounts revealed that although a minority played rugby as adults, rugby was still a pervasive influence in the men's lives. The majority of the men, for example, had a keen interest in viewing televised professional rugby and rugby knowledge, particularly of recent All Black matches, provided a topic of conversation that helped mark the men as 'normal'. Moreover, some of the men who were critical of rugby's dominance still actively used rugby knowledge, at times, to help develop relationships with other men and to affect their constitution as subjects. In this manner, the men's accounts revealed that they were subject to competing discourses of rugby but that the dominating discourses of rugby were hard to resist. These discourses of rugby, for example, made it a formidable task for the men who were critical of rugby's rough and potentially injurious nature to publicly disclose their concerns: men who critiqued rugby risked being positioned as feminine and unpatriotic. The dominating discourses of rugby, therefore, helped silence rugby concerns.

Although the cultural dominance of rugby was still pervasive and the All Blacks were typically respected, participation in adult rugby was not necessarily regarded as a prime means of gaining masculine status. The men in general, for example, reported that tolerance of risk and pain, and displays of physical aggression or violence were not always highly valued or thought of as masculinising. Moreover, rugby players who had participated with serious injuries, such as broken bones, were not generally positioned as manly heroes but, at times,

as fools or dupes. In this manner, the men's accounts revealed that dominating discourses of masculinity had changed from the teenage years to adulthood. In a related manner, rugby became discursively known as a young man's sport.

However, the five men who continued to participate in rugby as adults, typically did so with a passion. Indeed, the knowledge that they were, or had been, good rugby players was clearly at the apex of some of the their identity hierarchies. Yet these men's accounts also suggested that the increased physical intensity of the adult game in combination with the severity of injuries and the 'unwritten rules' - that helped legitimate specific incidences of violence - provided opportunities for points of resistance to develop against rugby and rugby's articulations with dominating discourses of masculinities. The threat or realities of rugby injury and pain, for example, played a prime role in influencing some of the men to retire, or think about retiring from rugby and to critically reflect upon, in a reserved manner, the belief that 'real men' should ignore pain in stoical fashion.

The men's accounts of rugby, in general, revealed that they negotiated their understandings of rugby and self in a complex manner with respect to multiple and competing discourses, particularly with respect to discourses of rugby, health, masculinities, ethics, feminism and violence. Therefore, the discourses of rugby did not simply produce a problematic and dominant form of masculinity, but a variety of fragmented and fluid masculinities. In this manner, a variety of masculine subjectivities were negotiated with respect to the pervasive influence of adult rugby.

CHAPTER NINE

Concluding Discussion

Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I summarise the prime research findings and discuss their implications with respect to previous literature, the relationships between rugby and masculinities, and the use of Foucauldian theorising.

The purpose for undertaking this research was to explore the influence of rugby in the lives of men, with particular respect to examining rugby's influence on understandings of masculinities. My motivation for examining this topic stemmed from several, some seemingly contradictory, sources. Firstly, I was aware of how my youthful involvement with rugby had influenced my comforting story of self, and how this impacted my decision to study physical education at university and subsequent career pathway. Secondly, although a growing corpus of research had helped reveal the social significance of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand (e.g. Crawford, 1985; Fougere, 1989; Gray, 1983; MacLean, 1999; McConnell, 1996; McGregor, 1994; Nauright, 1996; Phillips, 1996a, 1996b; Richards, 1999; Richardson, 1995; Sinclair, 1986; Star, 1992, 1999a; Thompson, 1988, 1999a), I was conscious that a paucity of research had empirically examined rugby's linkages with masculinities. In addition, I was concerned, given the international research findings relating to sport and masculinities (e.g. Messner, 1992; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Young, et al., 1994), that the dominance of rugby could adversely influence how males negotiate and understand masculinities. However, as a once successful rugby player, I also felt uneasy about how this research had primarily represented heavy-contact sports as a problematic cultural space for "boys to grow up in and develop relationships with one another and with women" (McKay, et al., 2000, p. 6).

To help narrow the focus of examination I formulated my prime research question, which asked: how do men's rugby experiences of fear, pain and/or pleasure articulate with discourses of masculinities? I addressed this question through in-depth interviews with a purposeful sample of fourteen men, who were selected primarily on the basis of their diverse experiences of rugby. The interviews were analysed in relation to Foucault's (1972, 1978a) assertion that discourses, as

contextually specific systems of meanings, are both constituting and constitutive of social realities, subjectivities and power relations. My analysis did not assume from the outset that rugby, as a heavy-contact sport, was inherently good or bad. In contrast, I followed Foucault's premise that my aim as a researcher was not to discover the 'truth', but to understand how discursive formations bring forth various 'truths' in particular ways. In this manner, I explored how the "games of power" (Foucault, 1988b, p. 18) associated with rugby and masculinities were played out.

An overview of research findings

The men's interview accounts revealed that the pervasive influence of rugby was primarily supported by discourses that positioned rugby as Aotearoa/New Zealand's national sport and as a sport for males. These productive discourses were omnipresent, invested in everyday practices and circulated at the microlevels through networks of people, particularly male peer groups, families and school populations. The discourse that positioned rugby as a sport for males was grounded in sexist beliefs. The men's accounts, for example, revealed that rugby typically articulated with dominating discourses of masculinities, through promoting belief that males should be, or appear to be, tough, relatively unemotional, tolerant of pain, competitive and, at times, aggressive.

These articulations were particularly influential for the men when they were in their senior years at primary school (ages 9-12 years). At this time, they believed that they were required to play rugby, and nearly all did. Rugby, accordingly, acted as a normalising practice for males, a dividing practice between males and females and as a producer of pleasure but also, at times, tension, fear and pain. More generally, rugby provided an influential and somewhat unavoidable discursive space within which the men gained formative understandings of masculinities and self. Yet, these understandings were also produced in relation to a variety of non-sporting discourses, an array of contingency factors - such as the men's body shapes, sizes, movement abilities and family backgrounds - and importantly, by their abilities to manage fears of embodied pain on the panoptic field of rugby. The discourses of rugby did not bend all of the men into one uniform masculinity type.

Rugby's pervasive influence continued at secondary school. First XV rugby was played with greater intensity, with more risk and reality of injury, and by a more select group of males, those who appeared to be more skilled, courageous,

aggressive and powerful. In the process, rugby became discursively known as a man's game and the rugby players were positioned, with particular help from the school's teachers and leaders, as honourable young men. This prestigious subject positioning afforded the rugby players in this study greater opportunities to exercise power and to constitute comforting stories of self. Rugby, as a result, acted as a dividing practice between teenage males; yet, the power relations between rugby players and non-players were not neatly or simply divided.

The participants in this study who did not play rugby at secondary school were characteristically envious of the attention and status granted to the teenage rugby players. In addition, they did not necessarily have the same ability, as those who played rugby, to use discursive resources to construct particular masculine subjectivities. Discursive resources for producing comforting stories of masculine self were limited. In response to this limitation, these men used a variety of techniques with varying degrees of success, to help negotiate comforting stories of self. These negotiation processes were often undertaken in silence and caused degrees of tension. A specific technology of self, employed by several of the men, revolved around use of a "reverse discourse" (Foucault, 1978a, p. 101) of rugby, to position rugby players as uncritical thinkers, weak in character and foolish for risking injury. The use of this technology allowed these men to position themselves as somewhat courageous, independent and intelligent for not playing rugby.

The dominance of rugby, therefore, provided "a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1978a, p. 101). This opposing strategy toward rugby and its links with dominant discourses of masculinities developed as the men aged into their adult years. The discourses of masculinity that dominated in the teenage years and celebrated aggression, toughness and pain tolerance, lost their exalted status. Rugby was discursively re-positioned from a man's game to a young man's sport or in a somewhat critical and/or affectionate manner as a boy's sport. Accordingly, adult rugby players were sometimes referred to as 'the boys'.

The men's accounts revealed that they were subject to multiple and competing discourses of rugby, and as such they knew of adult rugby in multiple ways. The discourse that positioned rugby as Aotearoa/New Zealand's 'national sport' typically encouraged the men in this study to be patriotically proud of the national men's rugby team. Accordingly, the men revealed that despite concerns

about acts of violence and the high injury costs of professional rugby, they still typically enjoyed the televisual spectacle of the All Blacks' matches. The men's relationships with rugby were not only complex and divergent but also, at times, paradoxical: many of the men performed an inconsistent range of practices in relation to rugby that simultaneously disturbed and supported dominating discourses of masculinities.

The smaller number of men, in this study, who continued to play rugby as adults were aware of the criticisms directed towards rugby, yet they characteristically participated with a passion and typically denied that they were playing to prove their manliness. These men acknowledged that as the intensity and competitiveness of rugby increased so did the risk and actuality of sustaining serious injuries. The adult rugby players also recognised that deliberate incidences of violence, designed to hurt opposition players, had become a regular feature of adult rugby. However, the adult players' understandings of rugby, masculinities and self were not just dependent on the discourses that underpinned rugby, but were actively negotiated in relation with multiple and, at times, competing discourses; including discourses of ethics, health, violence, feminism and multiple masculinities. A variety of fragmented masculinities were negotiated and performed in relation to the discursive influence of adult rugby participation.

Multiple factors contributed to the adult men's decisions to retire from rugby, including the discursive knowledge of rugby as a young man/boy's sport, the threat or realities of rugby injury and pain, concern about the circulation of cavalier attitudes towards bodily health and violence within rugby contexts, and the desire to devote more time to partners, families, careers, and education. In essence, as the men aged they became increasingly subject to dominating discourses of adult masculinities; and these discourses contributed, *in part*, to the men's decreased desires to participate in rugby. In this respect, the discursive processes associated with aging and masculinities were significant in shaping the men's relationships with rugby.

Despite nearly all of the participants in this study expressing *some* concern about aspects of rugby with respect to violence, risk of injury and/or its problematic links to masculinities, the men reported that they rarely disclosed their concerns in public. The dominating discourses of rugby, that positioned rugby as 'our national sport' and as a 'man's/young man's game', made it a formidable task to publicly

critique rugby. These discourses helped silence concerns about rugby and its articulations with potentially problematic ways of performing masculinities. The technologies of domination/power associated with rugby and masculinities still exerted considerable influence over the adult men.

However, many of the men, including some who had been passionate adult rugby players, did exercise some power against rugby's socio-cultural dominance. This resistance was exercised primarily through discouraging their sons to participate in rugby and/or through actively encouraging them to participate in sports that presented less risk of injury. These micro-level forms of resistance, although clearly not revolutionary or tactically organised, have possibly contributed to the decreased male participation rates in rugby in recent years. More speculatively, this resistance may signal that the transformations that have occurred in dominating masculinities over the last three or four decades are now impacting on the cultural dominance of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In the following sections, I discuss the implications of my findings with respect to three contemporary research issues: (a) male sport and the performance of masculinities, (b) the salience of masculinities in relation to understanding men's relationships with sport, and (c) the emphasis on negative outcomes in sport and masculinities research.

Male sport and the performance of masculinities

My research findings offered relatively different readings of the relationships between sport and masculinities in comparison to previous research that has investigated sportsmen's experiences in culturally dominant and highly institutionalised team sports (e.g. Light & Kirk, 2000; Messner, 1992; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Schacht, 1996; Young et al., 1994). This previous research, which has typically examined sport through a lens filtered by hegemony theory, has predominantly concluded that participation in heavy-contact sports encourage males to relationally distance themselves from practices deemed feminine and to believe in the values of toughness, competition, pain tolerance and physical dominance. Institutionalised male team sports have, therefore, been previously represented as prime and problematic producers of a hegemonic form of masculinity. Messner (1992), however, argued that although sport "clearly helps to produce culturally

dominant conceptions of masculinities" (p. 151) that the sport/hegemonic masculinity relationship is not produced simplistically or without tension.

Researchers who have examined individual and less culturally dominant sports, such as bodybuilding (Klein, 1993), swimming (Pronger, 1990), and windsurfing (Wheaton, 2000), have found more overt 'strains' in the so-called sport/masculinity relationship, and have illustrated that a range of masculinities are negotiated and performed in these less institutionalised sporting contexts. Recent evidence also suggests that even in highly institutionalised, violent and overwhelmingly male sporting contexts, such as boxing (De Garis, 2000), a range of masculinities can be produced. The results from my research support these recent findings but also highlight the difficulties that non-elite athletes, or so-called 'normal' males, have with respect to negotiating masculinities in the face of the "mythology of 'sporting' maleness" (Hickey & Fitzclarence, 1999, p. 54).

The men's accounts of their rugby experiences, for example, revealed strains and, at times, deliberate ruptures in the sport/masculinity relationship. They revealed, more specifically, that although rugby provided an influential context in which the men negotiated understandings of masculinities, these negotiations did not result in the simple affirmation and reproduction of dominating discourses of masculinity. In contrast, these negotiation processes were often undertaken with varying degrees of tension. The dominance of rugby in the men's schools, for example, resulted in many of the men experiencing tensions between fears of pain, skill limitations and the knowledge that participation in rugby was normal, and expected, for all boys. These tensions often encouraged these men to quit participation in rugby at a young age and for some, when older, to develop and use reverse discourses of rugby and masculinities. The dominance of rugby, therefore, encouraged some of the men to be critical of discourses of masculinity that encourage males to be aggressive, tolerant of pain, hyper-competitive, and unemotional. The cultural dominance of rugby provided a discursive space that produced, challenged and resisted, dominating discourses of masculinities.

My research findings support the recognition that sport does not simply or unambiguously produce culturally dominant conceptions of masculinities, but "acts as a contradictory and complex medium for masculinity making" (Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001, p. 118). My findings also help highlight how relationships between discourse, power and subjectivities are unstable. Foucault (1978a), for example,

stated: "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (p. 101). These results, therefore, resonate with Foucault's (1988b) understanding of the complex relational character of power: within "relations of power, there is necessarily the possibility of resistance, for if there were no possibilities of resistance – of violent resistance, of escape, of ruse, of strategies that reverse the situation - there would be no relations of power" (p. 12).

In contrast to researchers who have examined institutionalised heavy-contact team sports, through a lens filtered by hegemony theory (e.g. Messner, 1992; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Schacht, 1996; Young et al., 1994), my results question the extent to which sports, like rugby, can be *primarily* regarded as producers of dominant and problematic masculinities. Although this finding could be regarded as a more optimistic reading of sport/masculinity relationships, my results reveal that concern about rugby's position of social significance within Aotearoa/New Zealand is still clearly warranted. The men's accounts of their schooling experiences, for example, helped illustrate that the pervasiveness of rugby and its links to dominant masculinities made it difficult for those who were fearful of getting hurt or concerned about their sporting abilities to negotiate their relationships with rugby and masculinities. These negotiation difficulties primarily stemmed from the manner in which the prime articulations between discourses of rugby and masculinities acted to limit the range of discursive resources available for constructing respected masculine subjectivities. Accordingly, the dominance of rugby was linked to some of the men's difficulties with developing, particularly in their teenage years, comforting stories of self. More generally, the dominance of rugby helped silence overt resistance against rugby and its allied forms of masculinities. In other words, many of the men, even as adults, were unable to publicly talk about their rugby and masculinity concerns without fear of feeling abnormal. These men, therefore, typically negotiated their relationships with rugby and masculinities in some degree of tension and isolation. In addition, the accounts from the men who revealed that they enjoyed playing rugby, illustrated that rugby contexts could induce, amongst various pleasures, tensions, pain and a significant range of injuries.

In contrast to previous sport and masculinity research (e.g. Messner, 1992), which has tended to conclude that sports like rugby are associated with certain costs

but primarily provide considerable social advantage for males, my research has helped illustrate the difficulties that the dominance of heavy-contact sport poses, more broadly, for males. My findings suggest that the state of dominance of rugby within Aotearoa/New Zealand, despite the undoubted pleasures that rugby produces, contributes to the development and proliferation of a range of social problems. Yet, I suggest that the sport of rugby should not be considered as 'the social problem', but concern be directed toward the discursive articulations that help constitute rugby's current state of dominance. I argue, therefore, that the social problems associated with rugby stem from the dominating discourses that position rugby as Aotearoa/New Zealand's national sport and as a sport specifically for males. These dominating discourses help rugby to act as a technology of power that subjects males into a set of normalising practices: rugby, under the current discursive context contributes to the broad disciplining of male bodies.

Although many of the men in this study became critical of these normalising practices, their acts of resistance towards rugby and dominating discourses of masculinities were primarily performed 'quietly'. This resistance, for example, was typically not manifested through overt public criticisms of aggressive, hard and competitively tough masculinities, or of rugby itself. The state of domination of rugby limited the men's margins of liberty to express discontent towards rugby and dominant masculinities. Hence, although the dominance of rugby resulted in numerous points of resistance, this resistance should not be considered revolutionary. The men's resistance to dominating discourses of masculinities, in using the words of Foucault (1988b), can be regarded as "a certain number of tricks" (p. 12) that are unlikely to bring a reversal, within the near future, to the current state of dominance. Yet, the men's resistance also suggests that the dominance of rugby and its links with prevailing masculinities are under some degree of threat.

Rugby, collective stories and social transformation

Foucault (1988b) argued that to help encourage social transformation within "cases of domination – economic, social, institutional or sexual – the problem is in fact to find out where resistance is going to organise" (p. 12). In this respect, I suggest that an issue to explore is how the resistance that exists against rugby and prevailing masculinities could be organised. Foucault's (1988b) strategies on how

to organise resistance with respect to social transformation was not concerned with attempting to develop a society free from relations of power; in fact, he thought that such a mission was a Utopian dream:

> The problem is not trying to dissolve them (i.e. relations of power) in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give one's self the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the ethics, *the ethos*, the practice of self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination. (p. 18)

Foucault was concerned, therefore, with questions of *ethics* associated with how to minimise problematical aspects associated with the social 'inevitability' of relations of power. He did not reject large-scale forms of protest, such as associated with general strikes and street protests, as illegitimate strategies. Yet, he was concerned that such forms of resistance had the potential to create new sets of problematic relations of power: the large-scale rugby protests, against the 1981 Springbok tour, are *perhaps* a pertinent example. Foucault (1985, 1986, 1988a, 1988b, 1997a, 1997b), more specifically, explored and advocated localised strategies of resistance, as connected to the manner in which individuals negotiate understandings of self and social relations, in an approach designed to enhance critical awareness and ethical practices of self. Foucault (1978a) also asserted that social transformation could occur when marginalised discourses are revealed and alternative ways of thinking are opened up. Markula (2003), for example, in paraphrasing Foucault stated: "To be able to think differently creates an opportunity to question the limitations of one's freedom instead of merely coping with one's situation" (p. 101). The exposition of reverse or marginalised discourses can, therefore, provide important discursive resources for helping constitute new senses of self and social change.

My research findings suggested that rugby's state of dominance limited the discursive resources available for helping constitute a variety of respected masculinities. This dominance also acted to silence concerns about rugby and dominant masculinities, and this 'silencing' contributed to some of the men's difficulties in negotiating understandings of self. To help counter these problems, I suggest there could be an advantage in publicising the men's stories of their diverse

rugby experiences, to help illustrate some of the difficulties associated with the dominance of rugby. These rugby stories could act as an educational forum for revealing marginalised discourses of rugby and masculinities. These 'collective stories' (Richardson, 1997), therefore, could sit in contrast to the dominant and publicly celebrated ways of knowing rugby, through revealing how rugby can, at times, problematically constrain the shape of some men's lives.

The aim in publishing such stories would not be to demonise rugby, but to raise critical awareness of the multiple ways that rugby can influence men and allow for circulation of alternative discursive resources. In similar respect, Hickey and Fitzclarence (2001) argued that given many young males continue to be attracted to participate in sports like rugby, that: "Rather than viewing this phenomenon as some sort of social disease that we need to immunize against, we see it as an opportunity to develop a counternarrative to the dominant ones of these times" (p. 133).

It is increasingly accepted that if males wish to re-story their lives they need to have suitable discursive resources available to help in this process (Hickey & Fitzclarence, 1999; Næss, 2001; Sparkes & Smith, 2002). Yet, there is little evidence that "traditional stereotypes about masculinity are being challenged within sport" (Næss, 2001, p. 139). For example, although "young women are increasingly taking up the various codes of football – soccer, rugby union and rugby league ... there has been no similar rapid increase in the number of young men in netball, gymnastics and dance" (Wright, Macdonald & Groom, 2003, p. 20). I suggest, therefore, that the re-presentation of my research participant's accounts as a 'collective story' of their rugby experiences, with particular focus on their difficulties associated with negotiating rugby and masculinities, could be useful for helping males and females deconstruct and reconstruct dominant ways of knowing rugby and masculinities.

Richardson (1997) argued that collective stories could have transformative possibilities for individuals through helping bind people together who have had similar experiences and through allowing these individuals to develop a sense of community or collective identity. Once this sense of identity is formed, Richardson suggested that this allows for the possibilities of wider societal transformation through providing individuals with the strength to challenge the silence and isolation associated with their marginalized subject positions. Collective stories,

therefore, could help allow the games of power associated with rugby and masculinities "to be played with a minimum of domination" (Foucault, 1988b, p. 18). Sparkes (1994) argued the following benefits of publicising previously marginalised stories:

> Stories, then, can provide powerful insights into the lived experiences of others in ways that can inform, awaken, and disturb readers by illustrating their involvement in social processes about which they may not be consciously aware. Once aware, individuals may find the consequences of their involvement unacceptable and seek to change the situation. In such circumstances, the potential for individual and collective restorying is enhanced. (p. 178)

For the collective rugby stories to have some chance of achieving their political goals, they would need to be strategically disseminated and presented in a manner designed to encourage self-reflection and critical analysis. To help achieve this aim, I suggest that the school environment - with the aid of teachers, coaches and counsellors - could offer a potentially valuable context. Indeed, given that my research findings illustrated that the technologies of domination associated with rugby were particularly influential during the men's school years, the school appears a potentially relevant context for critical, but also caring and empathetic, discussion of rugby's influence on power relations and masculinities.

The salience of masculinities

Previous researchers have typically suggested that elite male athletes participate in sport in a critically unreflexive manner, primarily to help develop and/or reaffirm a manly sense of self (e.g. Messner, 1992; Young et al., 1994). Messner (1992), for example, concluded:

> My interviews reveal that within a social context stratified by class and race, the choice to pursue – or not to pursue – an athletic career is determined by the individual's rational assessment of the available means to construct a respected masculine identity. (p. 153)

Previous researchers have also argued that playing sport whilst in pain is a significant factor that helps construct male athlete's identities, so that they can reap the rewards associated with hegemonic masculinity (e.g. Messner, 1992, Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Schacht, 1996; Young et al., 1994). These conclusions position issues of masculinity clearly at the forefront of male sport participation. However, some researchers have recently questioned whether the importance of gender had been over-emphasised in critical studies of masculinities and sport (e.g. Albert, 1999; Carle & Nauright 1999; Curry, 1993; de Garis, 2000; Hunt, 1995; McKay et al., 2000; Wheatley, 1994; Young & White, 1995), and even whether an emphasis on masculinities could "obscure, rather than illuminate, a social or cultural context" (McKay et al., 2000, p. 9). My findings support concern that there is risk in overemphasising the salience of masculinities.

The men's interview accounts suggested that the importance of discourses of masculinities, with respect to understanding the men's relationships with rugby, varied over time, within different discursive contexts and for different men, but that other factors were also of significance. The rugby player's accounts revealed, for example, that as they aged from childhood to adulthood, the discursive salience of masculinities decreased in importance while other factors, such as the desire to be a competitive rugby player, increased. Their accounts also suggested that as they aged, they were increasingly disciplined by the interrelated discourses of competitive sport and rugby; and these disciplinary processes helped normalise their understandings of sporting pain and masculinities. The men's accounts of their rugby training regimes were similar to how Foucault (1997a) asserted that disciplinary power operated through regulation of time, space and movements to regulate existence and construct productive but docile bodies. These training regimes helped produce well-drilled, fit, skilled, tough, competitive but "individually characterized" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 162) rugby bodies with the will to strive for victory. Yet, the rugby players were only willing to subject themselves to these disciplinary practices because they also produced various rugby pleasures.

These rugby pleasures were partly formed in relation to the discourses of competitive sport, which acted to position participation in rugby as a virtuous endeavour through promoting belief that sport teaches teamwork, cooperation, fair play, courage, strength, robustness, competitiveness, and commitment to rules and hard work. In this respect, victory was regarded as a moral pinnacle worthy of

desire, effort and, at times, pain. These sporting discourses also articulated with dominating discourses of masculinities. Some of the men, for example, reported that they gained specific pleasure through performing feats of toughness and aggression on the rugby field, as these performances made them feel manly. Accordingly, the players were subject to the multiple and, at times, competing discourses and this helped constitute their fragmented subjectivities as moral, sporty and manly. The dominating discourses of competitive sport, rugby and masculinities, in conjunction with the technologies of power employed in rugby settings, were all influential in shaping the men's relationships with rugby, pain and senses of self.

My research findings broadly support the conclusions drawn by Curry (1993), de Garis (2000), and Albert (1999) in illustrating that the processes in which male athletes normalise pain and participate in sport are not exclusively associated with gender. A risk associated with arguing that male athletes participate in pain primarily to help reap the rewards of hegemonic masculinity, as previously argued (e.g. Young et al., 1994), is that other important factors that could help illuminate understandings of male sporting pain become obscured and escape critical analysis. An overemphasis on masculinities, for example, could encourage researchers to repeatedly blame problems associated with male sport, such as acceptance of pain and performances of violence, unfairly on dominant masculinities. The implications of these findings suggest that if researchers wish to help understand and possibly change relationships between sport, pain and masculinities, then it is important to more broadly examine men's relationships with sport without *overemphasising* or *neglecting* the salience of masculinities.

Foucault's insistence that individuals are implicated in power and resistance in a multiplicity of different ways encouraged me to recognise the complex, yet fragmented, manner in which the rugby players' subjectivities were constituted. In this respect, I was careful to not focus exclusively on the influence of discourses of masculinities, in attempting to understand the construction of the men's subjectivities. An additional advantage of Foucauldian theorising, with respect to the constitutive influence of multiple and *competing* discourses, was that it allowed me to understand the men's relationships with rugby as complex and, at times, *contradictory*, without thinking that the men were somehow irrational. Many of the rugby players appeared to hold contradictory relationships with rugby. These

players, for example, knew that it was foolish to play in pain, but they also believed that playing in pain, to a certain degree, was a moral imperative. Yet, I did not regard these men as uncritical, unreflexive or irrational for continuing to play a 'dangerous' sport, but assumed that they were positioned problematically due to the workings of competing discourses. These competing discourses caused varying degrees of tension and these tensions often encouraged the men to critically evaluate and re-negotiate their understandings of rugby and, at times, masculinities. In this respect, the competing discourses often encouraged the men to develop new relationships with rugby. In a similar manner, Davies (1989) asserted that Foucauldian ideas allowed her to focus on the contradictions of social life "not as failures of rational thought but as the creative source of new understandings, new discourses" (p. 139).

The emphasis on negative outcomes

Concern has recently been raised with respect to how critical research of men's experiences in sport has tended to portray institutionalised team sports as harmful to boys and men, and male athletes as uncritical and unreflexive of the various costs of sport (De Garis, 2000; McKay et al., 2000). In response to such negative conclusions, McKay et al. (2000) questioned: "How can scholars reckon with the tendency in critical sport sociology to overemphasise negative outcomes for men within dominant sport institutions?" (p. 3). In attempting to answer this query, I suggest that overt focus on negative outcomes has possibly stemmed, in part, from the pre-dominance of the concept of masculine hegemony within sport and masculinity research.

Hegemony theory assumes that prime social institutions, such as sport, help reproduce and maintain dominant ideologies that aid the position of dominance of ruling groups, but oppress and marginalise other groups (Sage, 1990). This theoretical perspective could, therefore, encourage researchers to primarily focus on how sport contributes to the maintenance of existing problematic relations of power. Such a focus may also encourage researchers to marginalize or trivialise men's sporting pleasures.

In offering this critique, I do not wish to undermine the importance of the findings stemming from research that has used the concept of masculine hegemony. Indeed, as Rowe (1998) suggested, critical feminist research, as underpinned by

hegemony theory, has been important "in puncturing sporting myths of unity, transcendence, and value neutrality" (p. 246). Nevertheless, I suggest it is timely for researchers to critically examine how the tenets of hegemony theory can act to influence ways of knowing about sport and gender. More specifically, I support Rowe (1998), Miller (1998a), Star (1992, 1994b, 1999a) and Andrews (2000), who have all suggested that it would be advantageous for researchers to employ new theoretical approaches, with different appraisals of power and resistance, to further critical examination of sport and gender. To which I suggest that Foucauldian tools could be of particular use to help "reckon with the tendency ... to overemphasise negative outcomes from men within dominant sport institutions" (McKay et al., 2000, p. 3).

In making this suggestion, I recognise that my research raised serious concerns about rugby's position of dominance within Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, the Foucauldian tools also allowed me to discursively analyse the men's accounts of *rugby pleasures* without dismissing them as principally contributing to a problematic gender order. My findings suggested that many of the men experienced multiple rugby pleasures and that these pleasures were not necessarily or overtly tied to issues associated with problematic masculinities or performances of disquieting or positively deviant behaviours (e.g. Hughes & Coakley, 1991). The rugby players often talked of the thrill of the game intensity, of the joy of performing select skills, such as a well-timed pass, or of the benefits of developing close male relationships with other players. Many of these pleasures highlighted the integral link of the body. These were accounts that talked of pre-game excitement and trembling hands, pumping hearts and nervous bladders. Or of accounts that suggested there was some seemingly incongruous joy in pushing bodies to the edge during training sessions and competitive games. Regardless of the pleasures gained, they were of significance for how the men negotiated their emotional and embodied relationships with rugby. These findings, therefore, help illustrate the sociological importance of examining sporting pleasures, as these pleasures encouraged continued participation in rugby.

Accordingly, if future critical researchers downplay the sociological significance of these sporting pleasures they risk promoting peculiarly disembodied and unemotional accounts of sport and masculinities that underestimate the complexities of body-self-sport relationships: "Just as pain and violence are

embedded in the discourses and practices of competitive sport, so too are bodily pleasures" (Gard & Meyenn, 2000, p. 30). Future studies of sport and masculinities could, therefore, be advantaged through closer examination and critique of the discourses of male sporting pleasures.

Although examinations of the significance of sporting emotions are relatively rare within studies of sport and masculinity, there are promising signs of change (e.g. Klein, 1995; Messner, 1996; Pronger, 1990; Sparkes & Silvennoinen, 1999). De Garis (2000), for example, highlighted the importance of social relations and the somatic and shared intimacies between male sparring/boxing partners, in a manner that helped challenge previous research assumptions about the shallowness of male athletes involved in sports associated with violence. Gard and Meyenn (2000) more pointedly concluded, in relation to their examination of boys' embodied sporting pleasures and pains, that if researchers want to help change the social influence associated with male participation in heavy-contact sports, that there is a need to more closely examine the sporting discourses of pleasure. The relevance of such a conclusion seems apparent given that many young males and a small but increasing number of females are attracted to heavy-contact sport participation, despite the risks of injury and pain, and the "numerous social and cultural shortcomings" (Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001, p. 133) of such sports. At the least, an increased analytical focus of sporting pleasures could possibly help challenge the tendency to overemphasise negative outcomes within critical studies of masculinities and sport.

Conclusion

My research adds to understandings of how heavy-contact sport influences the lives of males with respect to the gendering process. In comparison to previous research, my findings cautiously encourage a more optimistic reading of the sport/masculinity relationship: a reading that does not position men involved in heavy-contact sport as simply dupes of masculine ideologies, nor one that positions heavy-contact sport as a context that primarily produces dominant and problematic masculinities. Through employing Foucauldian theory, I was able to examine how the interviewees were subject to multiple discourses of rugby and, therefore, how each man could develop similar yet, at times, opposing understandings of rugby and masculinities. My findings also raised concerns about how the dominating

discourses of rugby and masculinities helped constitute rugby's position of dominance, and how this position resulted in relations of power that caused a diversity of problems and pleasures. Through conducting this study, I became concerned about the difficulties that many of the men had faced in negotiating their relationships with rugby and masculinities. In response, I suggested that one strategy for helping alleviate such negotiation difficulties could revolve around the publication and dissemination of the men's collective stories of their rugby experiences, to offer alternative discursive resources and opportunities for helping deconstruct and reconstruct dominant ways of knowing rugby and masculinities.

This research lends support to Andrews' (2000) speculation that "Foucauldian theorizing" (p. 125) could be advantageous for helping understand the relationships between sport and masculinities. Foucauldian tools provided a useful and theoretically coherent framework for helping understand the complex relationships between gender, bodies, subjectivities, sporting experiences and power.

EPILOGUE

Living the contradictions

I began this thesis with a narrative of self and I end with a self-reflection on how this study has changed my views towards rugby and rugby players. When I first started planning this study, over five years ago, I was strongly influenced by the critical research, grounded in hegemony theory, that argued that sports like rugby primarily act to promote a dominant and problematic way of being manly, and that this form of masculinity helps structure a gender order that maginalises and subjugates females and other masculinities. I was, therefore, of the opinion that the dominance of rugby needed to be firmly challenged to help promote more equitable gender relations. More specifically, and even though I was a somewhat passionate ex-rugby player, I quietly viewed rugby players as ignorant for not only putting up with long lists of injuries but also for not understanding their role, or what I believed their role was, in the promotion of a problematic form of masculinity. My view of rugby and rugby players was, therefore, negative and categorical. Rugby was, in my mind, a problematic sport of violence and I resented its cultural dominance. My initial intentions of this study were, accordingly, to help reveal and promote the problems of rugby, so that its dominance could be actively challenged. I set forth on a research mission of emancipation.

I found, however, that my categorical and negative views of rugby were somewhat problematic to sustain. At times, for example, I found that I still enjoyed watching the All Blacks. Although I was critical of particular rugby images emanating from my TV screen I, nevertheless, found myself excited by some of the rugby action; particularly the 'quick hands' in the backs that led to scoring. I even found myself thrilled by some of the hard tackles – ones that undoubtedly led to pain and injury - yet at the same time I would shake my head with disdain and be paradoxically critical of the rugby culture. I was living a prime contradiction and I felt like a hypocrite: I knew that my viewing of rugby was indirectly helping support rugby's cultural dominance, a dominance that I wanted to challenge.

I was also aware that I supported rugby's dominance through actively joining in conversations about rugby with male work colleagues or friends; like the brief conversation I had in the lift going to my office this morning: "Hey, Rich",

said Mike, "did you see the Blues match in the weekend? It should be a cracker of a semi-final against the Brumbies." "Nah, mate, didn't see it", I replied. "But you can never trust those Brumbies, I wouldn't want to put money on it."

These types of conversation caused some concern and I often wondered how I should negotiate them, given my concerns about rugby. For example, I wondered, should I actively protest rugby by not joining in these conversations or through offering my critical views of rugby? So, at times, I would experiment with different techniques of resistance. Yet, I found that if I did offer critical comments about rugby, I did not always like how this acted to position me. It made me feel somehow abnormal – as if there was something wrong with me. For example, toward the end of a recent lecture in which I critiqued the place of rugby, I noticed several of the students, mainly males, looking disgruntled. I subsequently started to feel uneasy, almost unpatriotic, as if I were somehow letting 'my side' down. The pressure finally got to me and in my closing statements I relented: "Hey, rugby's not all bad. I use to play the game and quite enjoyed aspects of it". And then, using nationalism (a major dividing practice), I made a problematic attempt at humour: "And of course I still support two teams, the All Blacks and any team playing the Wallabies."

After this class, I thought through what had happened. By being critical of rugby, I had felt personally threatened. In response I turned, once again, to the dominance of rugby to help legitimise my stance and to defend myself, or more specifically, to defend my sense of manliness. By stating I had once played rugby and still enjoyed watching the New Zealand men's team, I had used rugby to try and show I was a normal man. Moreover, I recognised that the technologies of domination associated with rugby were still impacting on me and it was difficult to escape their disciplinary power and live a life free of contradiction or tension.

To help understand my contradictory relationship with rugby, I drew on Foucault to analyse and write about my rugby experiences (e.g. Pringle, 2001a, 2002). I found this process useful. Through reflecting on particular rugby experiences, I recognised that rugby had significantly influenced and shaped the course of my life. Importantly, I accepted that my contradictory relationship with rugby was fuelled by competing discourses. This recognition allowed me to feel less hypocritical about my relationship with rugby and although I still believed that

aspects of rugby deserved critique, I accepted that other aspects deserved celebration.

When I began the interviewing process for this doctoral study, nevertheless, I still wanted to hear clear-cut stories of the negative side of rugby to draw on in my thesis to help build a strong case to protest the dominance of rugby. I did hear many stories that revealed problems associated with rugby, yet the men's stories, in general, were not always clear-cut. The majority of the players, for example, who quit rugby at a young age out of fear of pain, still talked of some of their positive experiences. At first, I was disappointed to hear these 'confused' stories. Perhaps, I thought, these men were also ignorant of rugby's harm. Yet, with greater reflection I started to realise the complexities associated with the social influence of rugby. And again, I reflected that the men I interviewed were subject to competing discourses of rugby. Foucault's tools, therefore, seemed highly appropriate for attempting to make sense of the complexities of the men's lives.

Having conducted my research and written my conclusions, I now recognise that my attitudes towards rugby have changed. I still have many concerns about the pervasive dominance of rugby in Aotearoa/New Zealand, yet I do not view rugby players as necessarily foolish. In contrast, my concerns now rest with the dominating discourses that surround rugby: it is these discourses that I believe legitimate rugby's position of cultural dominance and continue to shape in a complex and, at times, problematic manner prevailing understandings about what it means to be a man. Accordingly, my initial research mission of emancipation has morphed into a desire to raise awareness about the workings of select discourses of rugby. In this manner, my *resistance* to rugby's problematic articulations with masculinities, is now related to providing critiques of rugby's dominance, to highlight how select discourses of rugby can cause suffering and feelings of isolation for some males, and injuries and pain for others. At the same time, I am clearly aware of how these same discourses can also cause varying degrees of pleasure.

Through writing this thesis and reflecting on how multiple discourses of rugby and masculinities act to discipline males in particular ways, I have also become aware of how multiple discourses of academia have exerted a strong disciplinary influence on me. I have been disciplined, for example, to think and write in select ways and in this manner, my often-inert body, typically in front of a

computer screen, could be thought of as docile. There have also been a series of costs, some causing degrees of pain, associated with this academic disciplinary process: the occasional sleepless night, the development of a reasonable caffeine habit, and somewhat ironically, given my pro-feminist concerns, my marriage partner and mother of our two boys –Dixie - has over the last few months increasingly undertaken the bulk of parental duties to help me – 'the male' – complete my doctorate. Yet, in a reflexive manner, I do not feel like an academic dupe – disciplined – but not a dupe.

I suggest that the way that I negotiate my relationship with academia is perhaps somewhat similar to how rugby players weigh-up the costs and advantages of participation in a potentially damaging sport. The final point that I am raising, by making a loose analogy between academia and rugby, is to illustrate that whatever people do, they will always be subject to certain discourses and disciplined in certain ways, with resulting relations of power, and some of these power relations will undoubtedly be problematic. Yet, the important factor is to be critically aware of how involvement in various truth games, such as academia or rugby, can help construct particular ways of knowing and how these ways of knowing influence abilities to exercise power. Foucault stated: "People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does." (as cited in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 187). Although I think Foucault somewhat underestimated people's abilities to be reflexive about their social practices, I suggest his sentiment helps justify my role as a researcher: to help raise critical awareness.

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Appendix A: Introductory letter

Department of Sport and Leisure Studies

(Date)

(Name and address of potential participant)

Dear (name)

It was good to talk to you recently about my research interests with respect to rugby participation, injuries and manliness. This letter is a follow-up to our informal conversation. As you know I am undertaking this research into rugby experiences towards my PhD at the University of Waikato. I would like to formally invite you to become an interview participant in my research project – 'An examination of men's experiences of pain and injury with respect to rugby union participation'.

I have attached an information sheet to this letter, which provides a brief overview of the aims and processes associated with my research project and the activities that you would likely be involved in. This sheet also provides information about what specific aspects of your rugby experiences I am interested in hearing about. Of course you may have ideas about other questions or topics of conversation and I would be interested to hear your thoughts.

Also included in the information sheet are details about your rights as a research participant, such as your rights for confidentiality and to be well informed of the research process. I will phone you in the next few days to ask if you have any questions or concerns about your potential involvement in the research process. If you then wish to be a research participant we will organise a convenient time and location for our interviews to take place. Before the first interview takes place I will ask you to read and sign the consent form.

I look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

Richard Pringle

Appendix B: Information sheet

Information sheet for research participants

Research Project: An examination of men's experiences of pain and injury with respect to rugby union participation.

About the research
Rugby has been commonly called New Zealand's national game, even national religion. For many years people have believed that participation in rugby, specifically for boys, is beneficial for helping develop sound character. Not surprisingly, many people encourage boys to participate in rugby. However, rugby is also recognised as a 'rough' sport with a relatively high chance that participants will at some stage be hurt or injured in the game. Given that most people want to avoid being hurt or injured I am interested in examining how men who have played rugby make sense of their rugby experiences, specifically related to their experiences of pain and injury.

About the researcher
In my youth I was a keen rugby player who played provincial representative and first XV rugby. It was primarily my youth 'success' in rugby that encouraged me to study physical education at the University of Otago. In my late teens I started to shy away from rugby participation and became involved in other sporting activities such as volleyball and tennis. Nevertheless, my rugby experiences have had a strong influence on how I have thought about myself. In part, my own experiences in rugby have played a role in instigating this current research project.

Currently, I am a lecturer in the Department of Sport and Leisure Studies, at the University of Waikato and this research project is directly related to my doctoral studies.

The research process
If you agree to take part in this research project I would like to interview you about your rugby experiences, specifically related to pain and injury. I would like to conduct two interviews with you; each interview would be approximately 60-90 minutes in length. In the first interview I would like to hear about your experiences in rugby participation, such as your early experiences in rugby, what you enjoyed and perhaps what you didn't enjoy. I would also like to ask you about any injury experiences you have had in rugby, and your views towards 'aggressive' play within rugby. In the second interview, I would like to explore the notion that rugby is a 'man's game' and ask questions about your views towards rugby, manliness and injury.

The interviews will be taped, with your permission, and a transcript (a written recording) made of the tape. You will receive a copy of the transcript to check, amend or delete anything as you see fit.

Research supervisors:
I have supervisors from the University who are helping guide me through my doctoral research. My chief supervisor is Dr. Wendy Drewery, if you have any questions or concern you are welcome to contact her by phoning 838 4500 Ext 8465.

Confidentiality:
The information I gain from the interviews will be stored in a confidential manner in my office. In any written reports, such as my doctoral thesis or research publications, I will use pseudonyms throughout and will ensure that readers will not be able to identify the interview participants.

Consent:
In line with the ethical guidelines of the University of Waikato, you will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the aims and processes of the research prior to the interviews, and you will be asked to sign a consent form, if you agree to take part in the research.

Withdrawal from the research:
Any participant in the research has the right to withdraw from involvement in this project at any time prior to the interviews or even during them. After the interviews you also have the right to not allow me to use some or all of the information in the interviews.

What happens to the interview information?
After the interviews have been transcribed I will read the transcripts carefully in order to help understand the similarities and differences between each man's set of rugby experiences. I will then write up my findings in my doctoral thesis with an aim to complete this by the end of 2002. As a research participant you will be provided with a summary of my findings, and if you so desire I would be happy to meet further with you and discuss these findings further.

Contact phone number:
Please feel free to contact me if you wish to ask further questions about your potential involvement in this research project.

Richard Pringle: Ph 856 3061 (home) or 8383500 Ext; 6205 (work)

Appendix C: Consent form

Participant's consent form: Participant's copy

Name of research project: An examination of men's experiences of pain and injury with respect to rugby union participation

Name of researcher: Richard Pringle

I have received an information sheet about the aims of this research project and on my rights as a research participant. I have had a chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with Richard. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand my identity will be kept confidential throughout this research project. I understand that I may withdraw from this research project at any time or decline to participate in particular aspects of the research, if I wish.

I agree to participate in this research project under the conditions set out on the information sheet.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Participant's consent form: Researcher's copy

Name of research project: An examination of men's experiences of pain and injury with respect to rugby union participation
Name of researcher: Richard Pringle

I have received an information sheet about the aims of this research project and on my rights as a research participant. I have had a chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with Richard. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that interview transcripts and my identity will be kept confidential throughout this research project. I understand that I may withdraw at any time from this research project or decline to participate in particular aspects of the research, if I wish.

I agree to participate in this research project under the conditions set out on the information sheet.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix D: Short biographies of the research participants

Colin, a sizable man at six foot five inches, was 28 years at the time of the interview and studying for a Bachelor of Sport and Leisure Studies in the university department that I was lecturing within. He lived with his girlfriend and their eight year-old daughter. He had a ready smile throughout the interview and despite his considerable successes in professional rugby – for a period of time it was widely believed in rugby circles that he would become an All Black - he was modest and quiet spoken. Yet, at times, he was very animated in re-telling stories of his rugby experiences, especially ones related to injury incidences.

Darryl, at 40 years of age, had recently completed his degree, extramurally, in Maori and was employed at a Kura Kaupapa (Maori emersion school). Darryl and I had played rugby together for our secondary school First XV and had been teenage friends. He played club rugby until his mid-twenties and was still actively involved in touch rugby and the occasional game of golf and social tennis. He was married and had a teenage daughter and two younger sons. His children were all provincial soccer players and Darryl was proud of them. Darryl self-identified as Maori.

Derek, at 50 years of age, was a brother-in-law. He shifted to Aotearoa/New Zealand at ten years of age but still thought of himself as an American. His degree, completed via extra-mural study, was in history and religious studies but he was employed, at the time of the interview, as a builder. His only participation experience in rugby occurred during informal primary school games, but he liked watching the occasional All Blacks match on TV. He was a particularly verbal interview participant.

Edgar, at 39 years of age, had been a close friend since university days. His degree was in biochemistry and physiology and he was now tutoring at a small polytechnic. As a child he had severe asthma and had spent numerous weeks in hospital. By the time he attended secondary school he had had very little participation experience in any sports and was conscious of his small stature.

He disliked secondary school physical education; particularly the classes in which he was expected to participate in rugby. At the time of his interview, he was living with his Japanese girlfriend.

Finn, at forty years of age, was in his eighteenth year of primary school teaching. He was married to Jane who he had met during volunteer service abroad in Bhutan. They had three young boys. Finn had been friends with my wife, Dixie, when they trained to be teachers in the early 1980s, and this was how Finn and I had become friends. Finn had never been an overly keen sport participant, but had played rugby at primary school. His prime passion was music and he was a talented singer and guitarist.

George, 38 years of age, was born in Malawi but shifted to New Zealand with his family when he was a young boy. I met and became friends with George in my undergraduate days when he was studying to be a photographer. He played rugby in primary school, actively protested the Springbok tour in 1981, but was now a tele-visual fan of professional rugby. Although self-employed as a photographer he supplemented his income by reading electricity-meters. He lived with his partner and had two young children.

James, 34 years of age, was born in New Zealand. His father had founded a local rugby club in the 1950s and James spent many Saturdays until his early twenties immersed in that club environment. I approached James about the possibilities of an interview on the advice of a friend. I found him to be a very affable chap and we have subsequently played several games of tennis together. He works as an accounts clerk.

Kahu, 41 years of age, was studying for his degree in sport and leisure studies. He had what some would call a 'chequered past' having been an ex-gang member with the notorious *Mongrel Mob* and having spent time in jail for his role in an assault that severely injured a policeman. The self-made tattoos visibly displayed on his hands and arms were a constant reminder of his 'previous' life. Kahu, raised by his extended whanau (family), spoke only Maori until he attended primary school. He played rugby throughout his school

days and for his First XV, had more recently coached a women's rugby team, and was still an active participant in touch rugby. As an older student in the Department that I was teaching in, I had got to know Kahu. I played in his touch rugby team on several occasions when they needed additional players.

Lionel, 38 years of age, grew up on a dairying farm in rural Aotearoa/New Zealand. He trained in computer science at the University of Auckland and is now employed in the information technology industry. He swims regularly for fitness, and plays a good game of tennis. Lionel had recently married. He played primary school rugby because it was compulsory and remembered his rugby experiences with mixed emotions. I contacted Lionel through the advice of a friend. I found him to be very articulate.

Morris, 50 years of age, had passionately played rugby in the forwards from a young age until his early twenties. He had trained as a teacher, but had more recently completed his doctoral thesis and was working at a university. He was married with adult children. I met Morris briefly at an academic conference, where he revealed his concerns to me about masculinities and violence. I subsequently invited him to be an interview participant. He happily accepted.

Seamus, 42 years of age, was born in England but shifted to Aotearoa/New Zealand as a child. On his first day at his new school he was encouraged by his peers to play rugby and he subsequently enjoyed playing the sport as it provided a means of feeling accepted. He stopped playing at fifteen years of age after he broke his arm in a tackle, and became critical of aspects of the rugby culture. He was a successful entrepreneur, married with two children. I met Seamus at his child's birthday party, where we briefly spoke about my research interests.

Sebastian, 37 years of age, was born in England but after his African/Italian father and Kiwi mother divorced, he came to live in Aotearoa/New Zealand with his mother. He was fearful of being hurt in rugby while at primary and secondary school, but was involved in athletics. Sebastian and I met at Physical Education School at the University of Otago and were close friends. At that

time, he was a keen body-builder but was also interested in painting, poetry and African music. After completing his degree, he has lived in Canada, Australia and England and has been employed as a model, gym instructor and manager. He more recently completed drama school and enjoys the life of a sometimes-employed thespian.

Tom, 35 years of age, was born and raised in the Waikato region on a large farm. Throughout his school years he was a passionate and successful rugby player but partly due to an injury scare while playing in his First XV, he chose to retire from rugby. After completing his science degree, Tom worked as a secondary teacher but left to work in a series of administrative and computer-oriented jobs. Over the last two years he has been hampered by a recurring back problem that stemmed from a touch rugby injury, and he has not been able to work in full employment. During our interview, although he spent much of the time lying on the floor, he was showing signs of physical recovery and optimism. Tom and I were teaching colleagues for a six-month period in 1991.

Willy, at 21 years of age was the youngest interview participant. He was a student in the degree programme that I was teaching. He had played rugby since he was five years of age and was currently playing under 21s. He had suffered numerous rugby injuries and had undergone a series of operations on his back and wrist in relation to some of these injuries. Yet, he was still a passionate player. He had also played soccer and basketball, played the drums in an "old-timers" marching band and enjoyed participating in aerobics. Willy also helped organise and run recreational programmes for children with mental and physical disabilities. On the day of our interview he wore a Mickey Mouse T-shirt, had his black shoulder-length hair in dreadlocks, a ready smile and bright eyes. He self-identified as part Maori-part pakeha.

Appendix E: Interview guide

Participation histories/experiences in rugby.
Can you please tell me the story of how you first started playing rugby?

How did your involvement with rugby change, as you grew older?

Who were influential in encouraging you to play or not play? How were they influential?

Please tell me about other sporting or recreation activities that you were involved in your youth? What about now?

What was the story of how you decided to stop playing rugby?

Rugby experiences of pain, fear and pleasure
What were/are the aspects of the game that you enjoy(ed)? Can you tell me any specific games or incidences that were particularly pleasurable? How did you show your enjoyment?

Were/are there any aspects of participating in rugby that concern(ed) you? If so, what were they and how did they make your feel? Can you tell me of any specific times where you felt concerned playing rugby?

Have you ever been injured while playing rugby? If so, can you tell me about the injuries – what sort of injuries? How did they occur? How did you react to the injuries? How did you treat them (e.g. follow Doctor's advice)? How did you feel about them? How did your coach, team-mates and parents react to your injuries?

How did you feel about the chances of getting injured in a game of rugby? Have you ever been fearful or worried about getting hurt in rugby? If so, how did you manage these concerns about being hurt? Was there anything about rugby that you were fearful of (e.g. playing poorly)?

Have you ever played in pain or with an injury? If so, can you tell me about a particular time? And what sort of factors do you think encouraged you to play with an injury? How do you feel about the issue of playing in pain?

Touch rugby and rugby are similar games, however, there is much less chance of getting injured in playing touch, does this make a difference to how you would experience or enjoy playing these two games? If so, how?

For someone who has not played rugby or even grown up in a country where rugby is played, it may seem strange to them that people appear to enjoy participating in an activity where there is a reasonable chance of getting injured or hurt. How could you explain to this person why you are/were willing, even enjoyed, participating in rugby?

The Coach of the NZ Maori team recently stated: "aggression and mongrel is good in rugby. Eye-gouging is not." What do you think he means by this statement? How do you feel about his statement?

How do you view the differences between aggressive play and violent play? For example, how do you make distinctions between a head-high tackle that causes injury, and a 'bone crunching' tackle that is within the rules of rugby but also causes injury?

Some of the activities that occur within rugby, and within the rules of rugby, such as tackling and rucking could be deemed illegal if they occurred in different social settings; how do you make sense of this?

Understandings of masculinities, rugby, gender relations and links

How would you describe the 'type' of rugby player you were/are (e.g. your character on the field)?

What is the image that you have of rugby players?

Reflecting back on your school experiences, how would you describe the boys who played rugby? Did you view the boys who played rugby any differently from the boys who played other sports? If so, how?

How do you think others may view you if you are known as a *skilled* rugby player?

If you think of ex-All Black 'greats' from the 1950s and 60s, such as Colin Meads, Ian Kirkpatrick, Don Clarke and Fergie McCormack, what sort of images come to mind?

If you think of more recent All Blacks, such as Jonah Lomu, Sean Fitzpatrick, Josh Cronfield, Jeff Wilson, Marc Ellis or Michael Jones, what sorts of images come to mind?

What characteristics do you believe that rugby players need to have, to be successful in the game? How do you value these characteristics?

It has been suggested (by Jock Phillips) that denial of pain is among the most admired characteristics of a rugby player e.g. the ability to get up from a hard tackle and immediately play on, how do you view the ability to deny pain?

What does the phrase 'being a man' mean to you? What is the typical image of kiwi male?

For many years within NZ/Aotearoa rugby participation has been recommended for boys, primarily because there has been a belief that it helps turn boys into men. How do you feel about this belief?

How do you feel about females playing rugby? What do you think female rugby players enjoy about playing rugby? How do you think rugby influences gender relations?

Health and masculinities

How do you define health? Could you talk about things you do to specifically look after your health?

Do you believe there are connections between playing rugby and health? If so, what do you think they are?

How do you think rugby impacted on how you viewed and used your body?

Would you encourage people to play rugby for health reasons or for fitness?

Why do you think women tend to live longer than men?