An assessment of the extent to which the spiritual/interior experiences arising from specific examples of human physical activity can be interpreted/clarified through the use of the concept of embodiment (informed and enriched by insights arising from religious studies) as an interpretive key.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, inter-disciplinary in nature and orientation, seeks to assess the extent to which the spiritual/interior experiences arising from specific examples of human physical activity can be interpreted/clarified through the use of the concept of embodiment (informed and enriched by insights arising from religious studies) as an interpretive key.

Diversity of attitudes to the body, evident in theoretical and practical variations, necessitates a clear definition of the particular understanding of embodiment which underpins this study, an indication of how embodiment when used as a 'key' might assist in the interpretation of the experiences to be investigated, and an explanation of the process by which the critical question was identified and developed. In order to provide the methodological framework, Chapter 1 clarifies the synthesis of personal experience, practical knowledge and theoretical understandings which underpin and authenticate a research method characterised by a process of journeying 'back and forth' between key 'pieces' of evidence.

In the second chapter of the study the experience arising from human physical activity is discussed and possible modes of interpretation considered. Embodiment as a key for this experience is examined in relation to sport (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 is a survey of understandings of embodiment, drawn largely from religious sources. Thereafter in Chapter 5, sacred dance will be considered. In Chapter 6 I refer to circumstances, situations and experiences which may impede and distort the recognition and celebration of the fact of our embodiment as experienced in and through our bodies.

Findings support the use of embodiment as a viable 'key' for experiences arising from certain types of human physical activity. Fully celebrated and assessed anew for different contexts, embodiment may prove to be a predominant motif of our time, redeeming and enriching our sense of what it means to 'be' in our bodies.
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Until one is committed there is the chance to draw back — always ineffectiveness concerning all acts of initiative, and creation. There is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans — that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too.

All sorts of things occur to help one that would not otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in ones favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it! Boldness has genius, magic and power in it. Begin it now.

Goethe
INTRODUCTION

'Embodiment' – definitions and usage

The key term for this study is embodiment. Account will be made of the variance that exists in the use of the concept of embodiment, the manner in which authors approach the concept of embodiment, and the different settings in which writing conducted in an embodied consciousness might be found.

Whilst taking into account these understandings, insights and utilisations of embodiment and recognising that my usage will be defined against this backdrop, I wish to state that my work is neither a reaction against, or conducted in deference to, these interpretations. Recognising the need for clarity of purpose and intent in any study (but perhaps especially where the crucial terms are open to different interpretations) leads me to submit the following as indication of what is particular and unique to this study, its foundation, focus and impetus in terms of embodiment, and the manner in which it is intended that my use of the concept of embodiment will assist in the interpretation of the experiences that are at the heart of this study.

I have responded to the interchangeability of different meanings of embodiment both within and across contexts by conducting an analysis of the etymology of 'embodiment', an approach that I have not encountered in other analyses of embodiment surveyed. Over and above the 'bodiment', 'bodies', 'bodied', or 'bodying' component of the word, the prefix 'em' and its variant 'en' brings to the term embodiment a sense of putting on or into, surrounding or covering with, furnishing with, and causing to be in a certain condition (Collins 1989 pp. 496 and 492). Defined as a whole the most helpful and pertinent definition of embodiment for our purposes is: "the investment of a spiritual entity with body or with bodily form, to render incarnate" (Collins 1989 p. 496). The Chambers dictionary notes an alternative spelling, 'imbody', and gives the definition: "to form into a body: to make corporeal: to incorporate: to organise, to unite into a body", and for embodiment it has: "the act of embodying, the state of being embodied, that in which something is embodied" (Chambers 1988 p. 461). The thesaurus...
reference conveys three strikingly simple aspects which further deepen working understandings and assumptions about embodiment; 'personification', 'realisation' and 'identification', terms which are ripe for unpacking later in the study (Collins 1989 p. 192).

Discussion with a eurythmist in the course of research ratified the definitions and clarifications gathered about the term. In eurythmy, where vowel and consonant sounds represent specific actions or forms, the sound 'em', as evident in words like embellish, empower, embolden, empathy is represented by a gathering in, drawing to oneself type of movement. This indicates a possible 'connectedness' in the use of language, and raises the possibility that some terms may reach out and prove relevant across a diversity of contexts.

The richness of these definitions and relevant synonyms acts as a bridge between my awareness of possible interpretations and applications of embodiment and the claim I wish to make for this study to have its own, unique, understanding and use of the term.

In this study, the employment of embodiment will be altogether more 'accessible' than its use in some of the more theological and philosophical analyses surveyed. This 'accessibility' is in no way to diminish the academic rigour, validity and perceived significance of this work. To do so would be to enact a dualism of the most fundamental kind. The role of embodiment in what follows, is both inspired by and a reflection of:

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1 Eurythmy, based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, is a three-dimensional movement form which has therapeutic, pedagogical and artistic applications, see Steiner (1926).

2 The following explanation is useful in relation to the philosophy of movement and form which underpins eurythmy. The Eurythmy Association of Great Britain says: "Every poet senses the qualities inherent in sounds and their combinations. In eurythmy we awaken to these forming powers of language as we bring the sounds to life in gesture and movement. Alliteration, rhythm and rhyme can all become visible. It is the same with the 'universal language' of music: notes and intervals are made visible as well as beat, rhythm and pitch. In this way eurythmy does not illustrate music, but reveals it. In eurythmy the essential matter is not that the body itself is beautiful, but that it can be played upon as an instrument. We allow our whole being — body and consciousness — to become permeated by a sound of speech or music, by red or blue, by the dynamics of a straight line or curve, so that our gestures and the surrounding space are alive and charged with these qualities. We 're-tune' our individual instruments and release the music and speech into movements" (Eurythmy Association of Great Britain 1996 p. 1).
the intention to bring embodiment away from arid, abstract concepts and constructs, to convey within its use something of the grounded, empirical quality which breathes life into this term, enabling its reality to be experienced in our sinews, 'known' in our bones (see Foster 1978);

the practical area to which it is intended that embodiment will be applied;

the inter-disciplinary orientation which seeks to harness the wisdom inherent in different perspectives (see 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3);

a heuristic research method which allows for a search for new principles and which constitutes a creative method of investigation;

the perceived strength of embodiment to 'gather up' in the sense of this term conveyed by Tauler: "It is certain if God is to be born into the soul, it must turn back to eternity, must recall itself and concentrate all its faculties within itself, the lowest as well as the highest, and its dissipated powers must be gathered up into one, because unity is strength" (Tauler cited in O'Shea 1992 p. 5);

a desire to 'embody the notion of embodiment' which I believe to have been over-theorised, dis-embodied, and even appropriated by some authors through its formal, abstract, and strictured use. Therefore there is a wish to recover the essence of a term whose very construction suggests a 'down to earth' quality, a bridge between the physical and the spiritual, a respect for the senses and the 'courage' to use them (see Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. 104). An embodiment which conjures a pictorial image of incorporation, inpouring, incarnation, a synthesis and strength from without experienced within; the licking of an ice-cream on a summer's day; a pronunciation of the word which lingers on the 'em', in a spirit of longing, serenity, contentment, passion — and sometimes paradox and pain.

3 See Moustakas in Reason and Rowan (1981).
4 This image of my own is inspired by the genre of language which is a hallmark of much theological writing about embodiment. Ruffing's illustration in relation to sensory experience is representative. She shows that experiences in and through the senses are not restricted to moments of solitude or times shared in beautiful locations: "Even more clearly patterned in our sensory awareness are experiences closer to home — foods we taste and smell and associate with particular occasions; the feel of water in the shower or a scented soak in the tub; the refreshment of a drink of cold water on a warm day; the aroma of coffee which entices us out of bed; the smells and taste and touch of a love; the touches and smells of any special relationship, cradling a baby,
In line with the relational emphasis of this study, an emphasis essential if the paradoxes thrown up by an inter-disciplinary study are to be resolved, all of these points must be held in connection.

In the pursuit of the process of the study it is not deemed to be within the parameters of this work to analyse what has been termed ‘body-theology’. This is a considerable area of enquiry within which discussion of embodiment in its religious context can be found. It is also not considered necessary to assess all theological and philosophical enquiry undertaken in relation to embodied spirituality. The intention should be made quite clear. Inspired by a tradition of contemporary and contextual religious studies it seeks to enhance, enrich and ‘encolour’ the working understanding of embodiment for a specific use which will be detailed below. Particular inspiration is found in insights into the body offered by those such as Moltmann-Wendel who in employing the story of the woman with the haemorrhage reminds us:

"...how central the body of God (of Jesus) and the human body (the woman's body) once were in Christianity and how they could motivate us, with our knowledge of the loss of our bodies as the loss of ourselves and of the interchange between body and energy, to ask new questions about our bodies in the present". (Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. xii)

The 'asking of new questions', through consideration of embodiment, is seen to be of significance and urgency in the process of trying to name, speak to and make sense of what it is to be in our bodies and the experiences arising therefrom. It is also a pursuit regarded as worthy of research. My use will reflect its linguistic possibilities being used variously as a noun embodiment, a verb embody or embodies, an adjective embodied or a participle embodied or embodying. It is an encapsulation of its incarnational, empowering, investing

nursing an infant, embracing a friend, shaking hands with a colleague, comforting someone who is grieving, giving or receiving a massage" (Ruffing 1995 p. 105). Augmentation of the efficacy of the latter occasion of sensory experience will be made in 1.2.

The term 'encolour' is here created and utilised to embellish the working and unique understanding of embodiment in line with the vibrancy and vitality I wish it to possess. At the end of the research whilst sorting through some notes I came across the following by Jyoti Sahi: "Physicists say that colour only emerges from the interaction of pure light — energy and matter. If there were no matter, there would be no colour. And so in the same way, a spirituality has to be embodied if it is to have colour" (Sahi 1995 p. 89).
qualities, and a recognition that linguistically the word can be used in different ways. It seems to me that since embodiment is found in no singular location in religious studies nor confined to a particular academic context this might highlight possibilities for embodiment to be a concept which could be contextually adapted — as an interpretive key for specific types of experiences, in this case those arising from human physical activity.

I wish to record that although my use of the term embodiment is generally underpinned by a positive understanding, research has made me guard against naive assumptions in relation to ‘experiencing’ through the body. Insights gained across a wide field of investigation have acted as points of growth in consciousness. These include McFague (1993), Arnold (1991), Oglesby (1978) in relation to gender both from a theological and sports perspective, Nelson (1992b) and Stuart (1992) in relation to sexuality; and Goffman (1963) and Scarry (1985) in relation to stigmatization and disability. Acquaintance with the reflections on ‘experience’ offered by those such as Hogan (1995) have also proved useful as an encouragement for my own recognition of the perspective from which I write and the pit-falls of engaging in any discussion of experience which clearly is a contentious and loaded term.

Moving from reference to ‘body’ to a consideration of ‘being’, it should be noted that the presence of this term in the title is meant to be read in two ways which give different understandings of the word and its implications depending upon whether it is expressed as a proper or ordinary noun. Expressed as a proper noun ‘Being’ can refer to what we could term the sacred significant other, the Thou of the I/Thou relationship, the transcendent, omnipotent, omnipresent one. It is the ‘Being’ of the mystical paradox — that which is experienced deep within, in the totality and reality of our existence, in an embodied way. It is the Being which is word made flesh. It is the mystery of the incarnation. Hence it is the Being from without, being within. Written as ‘being’ there is an intended reference to our essence, to

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6 In the course of the study, discussion will take place in relation to the role and effect of experience in research and writing.
our actuality, to the fact that we are. Being allows for an embodiment that comes from the state that most describes who we are, in our totality, our 'isness', our being in our bodies, not in a displaced way but rather in the 'stuff of life', the place where we are. As Beverly Wildung Harrison shows from a theological standpoint:

"Life and the embodied world of flesh and blood are the true gifts of God. We cannot withdraw from the struggle". (Wildung Harrison cited in Grey 1987 p. 117)

It is believed that all the considerations gleaned from this process of contextualisation take us from the level of 'embodiment' as a factual, existential statement, or abstract concept, to a stronger, deeper and richer sense of embodiment as reflective, descriptive, and indicative of the implications, effects and possibilities of what it is to be in our bodies, with all the positive and negative implications of this. An embodiment which is not abstract or arid concept, but that which penetrates and is felt in our sinews.

Contextualising human physical activity

A foundational aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between the spiritual and the physical. It is necessary to make reference to this latter element as expressed in human physical activity, a term which is central to this study along with 'being' and 'body' – both of which have been considered earlier.

The choice of human physical activity as a field of enquiry reflects my own expertise and interest in this area, my appreciation of its value as integrative to human experience, and my conviction that there is a vital task to be undertaken in being open to new ways of identifying,

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8 This forms part of a reaction to Mary Daly's work and is prefixed by the statement: "We cannot join Daly in a joyful journey to the 'otherworld" (Wildung Harrison cited in Grey 1987 p. 117).
9 Extended definitions of 'physical' take place in 2.1.
10 Human physical activity is a broad umbrella term for a range of activities which can be classified according to different criteria. There are numerous variables such as individual/team, professional/amateur, and land/water-based to name but a few. Further exploration of the term will also take place in 2.1.
understanding and interpreting the religious/spiritual/interior/affective/emotional experiences arising from sport and dance (across the range of competitive, recreational, spectative, therapeutic and artistic contexts in which they occur). I consider such experiences to be equally as significant to the subject as those occurring out of mainstream religion.

At an early stage of the research I found inspiration in the work of those such as Alistair Hardy (1975) who drew upon his experience, interest, and expertise in the area of physical science to enlighten his understanding of the spiritual dimension. His vision, to synthesise the wisdom of different disciplines, gave a purpose to my emerging endeavour where I sought to bring together two apparently diverse areas of human experience — to interpret what occurred in physical activity by harnessing insights drawn from religious studies. The fact that the spiritual and the physical, or as they appear in institutionalised form, religion and sport, are regarded as diverse is seen in comments such as that of Shirl J. Hoffman in the preface to his valuable Sport and Religion:

"Religion is serious and solemn and concerns things eternal. By contrast, sport is frivolous, light-hearted and ephemeral". (Hoffman 1992 p. vii)

There are various ways in which authors have addressed philosophical, religious, and spiritual questions arising from sport. Those such as Caillois (1961) have focused on the interpretation of sport through philosophical means, whilst the interest of Mieth (1989) and others is in ethical and moral considerations. Some seek to identify and analyse religious components

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11 This range of terms is used because of the recognition that different descriptions could be made of experiences arising from human physical activity. Caution must be exercised in ascribing a religious/spiritual significance to experiences which the subject might not describe as such or where the primary function of the setting in which the experiences arise is not connected with religion or spirituality. The terms used are distinct terms, not reducible to each other, but which in combination convey something of the essence and richness of the experience in question.

12 I am here indebted to, and would like to remember, the late Dr. Gordon Browning of the Horticultural Research Institute, East Malling. At an early stage of the research he introduced me to the work of Alistair Hardy. For a recent review of Hardy's work see Hay (1994).

13 Caillois (1961) sought to classify sport according to its essential purpose identifying such characteristics as agon (competition), alea (chance), mimesis (pretence) and illinx (vertigo). Others possible characteristics on which to base a taxonomy could be social experience, health and fitness, pursuit of catharsis and aesthetic experience.
within sport. Harry Edwards' (1973) observation about the nature of the relationship between sport and religion is amongst the most striking and succinct synthesis I have encountered:

"Sport has a body of formally stated beliefs, accepted in faith by great masses of people....sport also has its 'saints' — those departed souls who in their lives exemplified and made manifest the prescriptions of the dogma of sport...Sport also has its ruling patriarchs, a prestigious group of coaches, managers, and sportsmen who exercise controlling influence over national sports organisations. Sport has its 'gods' — star and superstar athletes who, though powerless to alter their own situations, wield great influence and charisma over the masses of fans....Sport has its shrines, the national halls of fame and thousands of trophy rooms and cases....Sport also has its 'houses of worship' spread across the land where millions congregate to bear witness to the manifestations of their faith". (Edwards 1973 pp. 261-262)

Such sentiments seem to suggest a status for sport akin to a religion. However, Chandler takes a strong line in relation to any question of a connection between religion and sport. She argues that sport's status as a religion should not be determined by examining observable characteristics, hence we must look from the inside out and not from the outside in. Having done this we find: "fundamentally different phenomena" (Chandler cited in Hoffman ed. 1992 p. 55). Chandler seeks to show that whilst the Christian and Navajo religions are strikingly different they both: "fulfil a religion's unique function, which is that of dealing with questions of ultimate meaning" (Chandler cited in Hoffman ed. 1992 p. 59). Whilst accepting that within sport we find examples of belief, ritual, sacrifice and transcendence, Chandler insists that these take place in a context designed wittingly and specifically by human beings, for the delight of human beings, and she concludes:

"... sport per se cannot tell us where we came from, where we are going, nor how we are to behave while here; sport exists to entertain and engage us, not to disturb us with questions about our destiny. That is the uncomfortable prerogative of religion". (Chandler cited in Hoffmann 1992 p. 59)

Whilst I agree with the title of Chandler's work and its presumed major premise, 'Sport is not a religion', I part company with her argument, as developed, which appears separatist and dualist. Her conclusion conveys a naive view of the import and impact of the experiences
arising from sport. Throughout this study I provide evidence of the frequency of occasions and multiplicity of ways with which individuals are in fact dealing with 'ultimate questions' through sport, whether these arise from positive or negative settings, and the possible arising sense and recognition of embodiment.

In the later part of the study, there will be as full a consideration of the literature surrounding the sport/religion question as the parameters of this study allow. However, at this stage, in order to illuminate the diversity of views on the sport/religion question, Hoffman's reflections in the following regard can only prove helpful:

"The debate concerning sport's status as a religion hinges largely on how one defines religion. There is a virtual smorgasbord of definitions from which to choose, but two general classifications of definitions deserve mention here. Theologians and philosophers tend to define religion in substantive terms, focusing on its content and inner core and explaining how it relates to higher beings or powers. Religion is approached through a rigorous intellectual analysis of religious statements, doctrines, and beliefs. Behavioural scientists and many religious scholars attempt to define religion in more empirically verifiable terms. Whereas philosophers and theologians are most interested in the normative problem of what an ideal religion should be, social scientists are most concerned with how religions operate in societies, independent of its specific value scheme. It shouldn't be surprising that such disparate purposes and methods can lead to different definitions of religion and, ultimately, to different opinions regarding the religious significance of sport". (Hoffman 1992 p. 3)

There must be a way to respect the differences between the two spheres of experience whilst seeking to connect and reconnect, and indeed the work of those such as Little (1992 pp.20-

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14 For an exploration of the characteristics of 'ultimate questions' see Tillich (1962 p. 62).
15 The validity of making connections is established as a theological tool throughout the work of those such as Grey (1989 and 1991). The use of the terms 'connect' and 'reconnect' are intended to indicate that there are deep, long-standing and valuable connections between religion and sport, the spiritual and the physical which, having been battered and bruised by a tradition of dualistic thinking, are in need of redemption. A discussion of such connections can be found within the lengthy analyses of the significance of sport in its educative and cultural contexts by VanDalen and Bennett (1971) and Harris and Park (1983). In relation to work on 'mutuality' of those such as Janet Surrey at the Stone Centre for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, Carter Heyward comments: "Our growth as persons is facilitated not primarily by differentiating ourselves from one another but by connecting. It is within our connectedness that we are able to recognise and value our differences" (Heyward 1989 p. 13). Jennings (1975) displays what Mary Grey might call 'connected knowing' (Grey 1996 p. 2) when in relation to movement therapy she
21) has indicated that the relationship between the two contexts can be successfully explored and that philosophical problems involved in relating experiences arising from these respective dimensions might be overcome. Moreover, experience and reflection in the course of the research has indicated to me that there are far more pressing areas of concern within the relationship between sport and religion than debate as to whether or not sport is a religion. Whilst taking note of the pre-occupations, to date, of the so-called theology of sport, and being open to its wisdom as and where appropriate, this study aims to 'journey around' the more spiritual, experiential, embodied, and emotional aspects of the relationship. As will now be shown, this will entail the description and interpretation of the experience arising from physical activity in the light of the already examined concept of embodiment. It is within this specific area that I would like to contextualise this work and locate its contribution to the fields of both religious studies and sports studies. Morgan and Meier (1988) bring together the work of authors who have used embodiment in relation to sport. I am confident that at the time of writing my work offers a radical approach in terms of its content and method which centres around the connected context I develop for embodiment and human physical activity in the light of insights arising from religious studies.

**Developing a connected context for embodiment and human physical activity.**

I wish here to further clarify, the conceptualisation of embodiment in this study.

We have seen evidence of variations in the use and context of embodiment which in relation to theology quite clearly can be:

- a specific theological theme;
- the window through which to examine the work of a philosopher or theologian;
- a conceptual or theoretical basis on which to conduct enquiry;

discusses mutually reciprocal qualities that can be mobilised such as activity and passivity, receptivity and productivity, consciousness and unconsciousness (Gordon cited in Jennings ed. 1975 p. 6).

16 The particular concern here was the relationship between recreation and religion.
the inspiration, orientation and impetus for discussions of the manner in which we experience in our bodies.

This understanding of embodiment's use *a posteriori* is vital if we are to understand *a priori* its use in this study. In other words identification of the existence of its different uses, and evidence of its adaptability, is important for this study which seeks to use embodiment in an applied sense. It is essential if the use of embodiment as a key in this thesis is to retain its focus.

It has been shown that the understanding of embodiment in this study rests upon a basis which recognises and where appropriate celebrates:

1) the fact of our embodiment;
2) the potential for its positive exploration;
and yet also for consideration by way of balance,
3) the factors which might distort our sense and recognition of our embodiment and impede its celebration.

Interest in sport and religion sparked a desire to conduct research; fascination with the religious/spiritual/interior/emotional experiences arising from participation in human physical activity ensued; the encounter with embodiment indicated possibilities for the interpretation of that experience. The critical question arose: To what extent can the spiritual/interior experiences arising from specific examples of human physical activity be interpreted/clarified through the use of the concept of embodiment (informed and enriched by insights arising from religious studies) as an interpretive key?

It should be noted that I seek to use the word embodiment as a methodological and interpretive tool, and am keen to explore the extent to which, and manner in which,

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17 Interpretive key can be taken to mean the function served by a term (such as embodiment) which is descriptive, analytical, evaluative but perhaps above all explicative of the experience to which it applies.
embodiment offers possibilities for the interpretation of aspects of the experience arising from physical activity. Amongst significant elements in pursuit of the resolution of this question will be the different types of experiences arising, the different locations from which they spring, and most particularly their beneficial effect as contributory to a greater sense of our personification, realisation and identification — our being in our bodies.

There is a requirement for the interpretation of physical activity to take place in a manner which is balanced and which recognises the other side of the story. Does embodiment as an interpretive key allow for a consideration of embodiment that might be experienced in distorted forms which can arise in and through physical activity? In our descriptions, how do we take account of the premature ageing and injury which can affect an individual in a physical manner or the emotional and psychological toll of pressurised participation? In the wider context how do we interpret the social, political, commercial, and environmental exploitation linked with physical activity which would seem to be the antithesis of embodiment? These factors present a significant 'problem' for resolution not least since the presence of these impediments to embodied experience does not appear to prevent experience that is embodied. To give an example, the fact that commercialism has seriously affected and influenced sport does not apparently prevent individuals and groups from gaining purposeful experiences from the sporting context.

Reflecting the practical need to narrow the focus from a wide field of possibilities in order to retain the integrity of the pursuit, two specific examples of human physical activity have been selected for interpretation in, and through, embodiment. It is considered that the most accurate assessment can be made by choosing examples which are different in context, type

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18 For a discussion of such pressures see Brandmeyer and Alexander's consideration of physical impairment and psycho-social disability in professional baseball (1984 pp. 46-53).
19 See Allison ed. (1993) and Cashmore (1990), both of which act as useful readers around these issues arising from sport.
and characteristics. To this end sport from a 'secular' setting, and sacred dance from a religious setting will be the specific areas of interest.

Contextual body-theologising acts as suitable and sufficient inspiration and evidence of the possibilities and validity of the application of theological/religious insights into the wider sphere. These factors contribute significantly to the process of resolution of the critical question. Conscious of these insights, it is hoped that this study will be representative and reflective of the recognised need and imperative to 'make connections' in order that physical activity, understood to be a significant location of contemporary spiritual/interior experience, might be more fully understood. It is perceived that this process hinges upon and is facilitated by the very recognition, acceptance and celebration of the fact of our 'being in our bodies' — our embodiment.

Developing a context for embodiment and religious expression

"The body has become the first resort of the canniest historians and neohistorians, classicists and geographers, theologians, feminists and postcolonialists. Cultural studies flourishes as a scene of body regards. Like some weighed-down black porter bent beneath the burden of some large white man the body bears the brunt of current research. Few of us, it seems, can imagine getting to grips with any trope, topic, person, period of history, text or set of texts except as bodily stuff. And we will do it, of course, with bodily stuff, for language itself has become body language — all gestural, orificial, buccal, hymeneal and dark navel. Body is, for us, all of meaning, our text, our final signifier, our place of ultimate signification". (Cunningham V. 1996 p. 15)

It is not only those engaging in earnest research around issues of the body who would agree about the weight of attention and concern to which the body has been subject in recent years. Issues connected with the body have bombarded us from all sides, arising from almost every significant area of human existence, including health, diet, exercise, religion and lifestyle.

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20 The distinction between ecclesial and secular here is methodological in function and is made in the recognition of the relationship between these two spheres.

21 In Chapter 1 specific examples are given of this interest in the body, manifest in different settings.
All of this work, regardless of its particular emphasis, context, or concerns springs from the simple and obvious 'fact' that we are body. Certainly, as we shall see throughout this study, our experience 'of' and 'in' our bodies is mediated experience — influenced by positive factors but also possibly distorted and impeded by gender, illness, disability, bodily decay, the ageing process, disfigurement or any other significant factor(s) arising from our *sitz im leben*. Illustrative of this is the following reflection by Wright that:

"...our experience of God is rooted in our embodied human experience as male and female, we observe also that within their own groups women and men have a diversity of life experiences which mediate their knowledge of God. Add to that race, ethnic and cultural identity, economic status and geographical region, and you have a complex of factors that, if God-knowing begins with unique experience, will influence a person as much as gender". (Wright W. 1995 p. 135)

These, along with our inherent and developed characteristics, skills and talents are all facets of, and influential upon, our bodiliness. The fact that our life is lived in, through, and with the body is common to us all.

Throughout the research much reflection has taken place in relation to body-descriptive terms such as bodiliness, corporeality and most particularly embodiment, the central theme of this work. Hence whilst recognising that it is not the only body-descriptive term nor, as shall be seen in due course, the only key that could be used to access the experiences at the heart of this study's investigations, it is the term selected for particular attention because of its perceived particular role and strengths as an interpretive tool. Clearly there is a diversity of intention and emphasis in the use of body-related terms and indeed their often liberal sprinkling

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22 Indeed by way of illustration of this, Thompson (1997 p. 933) provides a graphic account of 'When birth means death' by illustrating how inadequate ante-natal care for women in developing countries affects the way they live and experience.

23 Wright poses interesting questions in relation to gendered ways of knowing God such as: "Do men and women know God differently because they are differently embodied?" (Wright W. 1995 p. 133). She reflects upon her own experience: "It was my gendered identity, my being a woman in this culture and time, and the subtle roles assigned to me here that shaped my ways of knowing God" (Wright W. 1995 p. 133). Graham's research applied similar insights to Christian pastoral practice and theological formation (Graham 1993).
and unqualified use in works to do with the body could lead to confusion, suggesting a need for clarification of actual and intended use wherever the body is the subject of enquiry.

Linguistically, the term embodiment can be used in different ways. In relation to personhood and character we might say that a person is the embodiment of a characteristic, that the characteristic is embodied in him/her, that s/he embodies the characteristic, or that an embodying of a characteristic is taking place in someone. The notion of embodiment would also seem to apply to places, periods in history, or the particular qualities of a group of people.

A good illustration of this type of use of the concept of embodiment is found in the discussion of male spirituality conducted by Repicky (1995). He cites Kent Nerburn who, in writing to his son, summarises the expectations of manhood it was expected that his son should 'embody' (Repicky 1995 p. 113). There are other examples; commenting on the debate about the right to march in Northern Ireland, Fergus Walsh described the parades as the 'embodiment' of the wider political struggle (BBC News 12th August 1996), whilst from the sporting context, Averbuch (1985) based an article on Grete Waitz as the 'embodiment' of women's running.

In relation to the mind, the psychotherapist Anne Wilson-Schaeff notes two aspects of embodiment arising from her work on addiction; being in our bodies and being open to the information that is stored there — both essential if we are to participate in our lives (Wilson-Schaeff 1992 p. 292). Moving across to the sociology of sport it can be noted that embodiment has been used in relation to problems presented by paradoxes apparent in women's involvement in sport. Rintala contends that change is required in the social construction and constraints of the gendered body:

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24 This refers back to mention made earlier of Wright's (1995) insights into the effect of gender on perception of self and others.
25 The 'paradox of women' in sport is illustrated by Laurel Davis in 'A Post-modern Paradox? Cheerleaders at Women's Sporting Events' (Davis 1989 pp. 124-133), an issue she examines in the light of Lyotard's (1983) claim that comfort with paradox can be seen as a specifically post-modern phenomenon. She says that the general lack of controversy over cheerleading at women's sporting events can be read as a decidedly post-modern way of dealing with meaning that is paradoxical. Two aspects are incongruous, firstly the situation itself is paradoxical on account of the conflicting messages of women's proper place in sport and proper gender behaviour; secondly, those involved are self-contradictory in so far as they simultaneously express a liberal degendered narrative as justification for the situation whilst putting forward views that conflict with the liberal
"An important step in this is to see one's body as both receptor and agent. One's body is both one's access to and one's way of acting on the world. The body is the aspect of oneself which is viewed but it is also the aspect of oneself which does the viewing. The interaction of the embodied individual and the world is two way. The world acts on the embodied individual and the embodied individual acts on the world. Realising this is an important step in the process of empowerment". (Rintala 1989 p. 142)

In relation to personhood and jurisprudence, Mary Douglas acknowledges the fact of embodiment: "Because of embodiment, we cannot claim to be able to be in three places or two, at the same time" (Douglas cited in Hargreaves Heap ed. 1992 pp. 45-46). With regard to self-expression and self-transcendence Rosemary Gordon says:

"The urge to 'embody or to 'incarnate' rests on the fact that we sense and dream and that we always live at the same time in a world of facts and a world of meanings. There is thus a constant striving to bring these two worlds together: and while on the other hand we always search for ever more adequate forms through which to express the ever-changing world of our experience, we also need to imbue with meaning and significance the sensuous forms that we encounter". (Gordon cited in Jennings ed. 1975 p. 5)

To augment and concretise the process of contextualisation, reference was made to other research around embodiment that has been conducted in a similar time frame to this work. I wish to bring to attention Habeas corpus: theories of embodiment in the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and contemporary feminism (Chatwin 1994). The impetus of Chatwin's thesis is a focus on the understanding of embodiment held by a particular author (although later reference is made to others such as Irigaray26), with a conclusion which dialogues between feminist thought and Merleau-Ponty's concept of embodiment27.

narrative. Davis says that those concerned: "...neither recognise nor reflect on this self-contradiction" (Davis 1989 p. 124).
26 Irigaray's work includes Speculum of the Other Women (1975) where the focus is female sexuality, against a backdrop of insights arising from psychoanalysis.
27 An example of Merleau-Ponty's reflections on embodiment is as follows: "My body is geared into the world when my perception presents me with a spectacle as varied and as clearly articulated as possible, and when my motor intentions, as they unfold, receive the responses they expect from the world. This maximum sharpness of perception and action points clearly to a perceptual ground, a basis of my life" (Merleau-Ponty 1962 p. 250).
More specifically for our purposes, we can illustrate some uses of the term 'embodiment' that are found within spiritual reflection upon this concept. Taking the theme of the senses Ruffing argues:

"Return to the body is replacing flight from it, and appreciation for all forms of embodiment is rapidly becoming a hallmark of postmodern spirituality. A profound healing of the dismemberment of the western mind and psyche from its physical body, social body and earth body appears to be a sign of the times". (Ruffing 1995 pp. 101-102)

From spirituality we can move to sacraments, MacQuarrie says that: "The visible embodiment of the Church's holiness is its sacramental life" (MacQuarrie 1981 p. 406), and that sacraments are: "...institutional forms suited to our embodied existence" (MacQuarrie 1981 p. 407). We move from sacraments to a consideration of how we might know God in the form of Wendy Wright's reflection that: "We are drawn by our paradoxical capacity for imagining the unimaginable, somehow to transcend what we as embodied persons can know" (Wright W. 1995 p. 141); whilst Buckingham reflects upon culture and embodiment thus: "God is so close as to be physically one with us, living the same embodied life" (Buckingham 1995 p. 124). These different reflections would appear to find a summary in Carter Heyward's observation on the inter-relationship between different elements of 'being' and the contribution of this relationship to liberation of the individual which she sees as depending upon: "...the tenacity of the connections and coalitions we are able to forge together. To do this work, we must be able to envision these connections and embody this tenacity" (Heyward 1989 p. 3).

An overview of recent theological writing likewise indicates the importance of the body to authors across a range of theological concerns, and the use of the term embodiment within this. Some such as Rubem Alves (1986) and Richard Rohr (1994) appear to write with an embodied consciousness — an awareness of issues relating to our bodies which affect the way we live and experience. Rohr reflects metaphorically and comments on the dichotomy between concepts and lived experience:
"We in the West... grew up in antiseptic rooms. Our little babies are put in nurseries. We decorate the nurseries, but we shut the door.... No wonder we live in such shame about our own bodies... We live in an artificial environment, a kind of incubator. Not the way most people have lived — in a kind of natural connectedness with one another's bodies". (Rohr 1994 p. 166)

Other theological authors seek to focus on a particular context which may impinge on our experience in, of and through our bodies such as Eiseland (1994) who writes with the particular contextual consciousness of disability. The words of Sallie McFague (1993), for instance, in relation to the gendered awareness of our body act as a point of caution against over-idealised notions of embodiment:

"Embodiment for human beings is certainly a physical reality as we have underscored, but it is also a construction of culture, and even the physical dimension is a highly constructed reality. Even physical reality is experienced differently in one's cultural, economic, racial, and gender situation. There is no experience-in-general nor any body-in-general, yet there is experience and there is body, both constructed and both particular. That we are embodied (all differently and constructed variously) and that we respond from our own experience (all differently contextualised) influence us as we reflect on adopting constructs within which to live our lives". (McFague 1993 p. 87)

McFague's words also act as a suitable jumping off point into the first chapter of this study which seeks to chart the dimensions of experience which shaped this thesis. It is hoped that the introduction, in providing a backdrop of insights about embodiment and in clarifying the intended use of this term in the study, has provided a suitable foundation for what follows.

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28 James Nelson displays a clear development of thought in his writing about embodiment in relation to sexuality (Nelson 1979 pp. 19-36), and in his more recent studies on body theology (1992a) and male sexuality and spirituality (1992b). This could be also said of Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel's (1994) book which is of importance to this study, where a clear exposition of embodiment is revealed through her particular process and concern which is women's bodies.
CHAPTER 1
Formative influences upon the study

This chapter is intended to show the manner in which the factors outlined below contributed to the study as part of its observational evolution, and constitute its experiential, theoretical and methodological underpinning. My intuition and growth in consciousness was strengthened and of increasing significance. A facet of this process was almost meditative, and could not always be articulated even in the realms of the mind. The points of reference were stored as 'building blocks' to be used and subsequently reflected upon.

"...I was trying to take an early association and contrast it, or link it, with one's present self and all that one has learned, or half-learned, or not learned at all".
(O'Brien E. cited in Quinn J. 1990 p. 143)

These words strongly relate to what has been my task in pursuing this research. What follows in this chapter is an account of the basis and extent of formative influences on this study. My intention is to indicate the manner in which a topic considered worthy of proper academic enquiry sprang from a harmonisation of autobiography/personal experience, practical/professional experience and theoretical understandings. Therefore the section that follows is informed by the concept of 'journeying' and the arising 'narrative' as 'lived interactive' — on-going points of reflection — within theological and methodological settings.

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29 The widespread significance of story and narrative is recognised across academic disciplines and cultures. Evidence of its universal significance comes in a plethora of examples including Towards a Theology of Story (Navonne 1977), Our Faith Story (Purnell 1983), Storytelling: Imagination and Faith (Bausch 1984). Also see Sullivan (1996) and research such as Pevsner's (1993) investigation into the role of the Creole folk tale in Martinique. The importance of narrative is further emphasised by reference to 'Ageing: The Report of the Social Policy Committee of the Board for Social Responsibility' (The General Synod Board of Social Responsibility 1990) which stressed that: "Talking about the events of our lives can affirm a sense of progress and wholeness. The value of reminiscence is that, even when what is being revealed relates to difficult times, it can help to maintain a sense of purpose or self esteem. The experiences of past and present are bridged. Thinking and talking about the future is made easier, what appears to be the uncertain residue of life can be transformed into a time of personal and spiritual growth and religious conviction".
An understanding of the value of these reflections is crucial to an appreciation of the purpose of this work, which conforms to heuristic\textsuperscript{30} methods of research. Furlong's identification of the strengths of a theological method akin to 'piecing a quilt' (Furlong 1988 p. 2), and Rebecca Chopp's observations in relation to Nancy Eiseland's 'back and forth method' within her work on the theology of disability (Chopp in foreword to Eiseland 1994 p. 12), facilitate and authenticate the 'doing' of theology in a cyclical/dialogical, rather than linear/propositional, manner. Hence, in my study 'pieces' of reflection and 'pieces' of intellectual evidence will be fused in order to make a coherent argument which journeys back and forth between life experience, and social and cultural experiences of movement in a religious sphere. Growth-giving encounters comprising personal experience and reflection can be used to raise questions and thus become theoretical pegs on which to hang the inter-disciplinary context of the study. Where appropriate, justification and critique will be provided of this subjective element within the thesis.

Additionally I draw strength for this pursuit from MacQuarrie's assertion that as with other disciplines, several methods of study are employed together in theology:

"The vindication of any particular method can be found only in the kind of theology to which it contributes. If it leads to a coherent and intelligible presentation of what is recognisably the genuine content of the revelation, as that has been held in the community of faith, then a theological method vindicates itself". (MacQuarrie 1981 p. 34)\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{30} My understanding of heuristic research will be detailed below in 1.3.

\textsuperscript{11} McBrien (1981) clarifies the theological understanding of the term 'community of faith': "Although it was not always obvious in the midst of medieval excesses, it is a matter of Christian principle that the believer's relationship with God is a mediated relationship; mediated not only, not even primarily, through the biblical Word, but in and through the community of faith in which that Word is proclaimed" (McBrien 1981 p. 1066). In the context of sport 'the community of faith' could be said to be those involved in any relationship with a given activity which provides points of contact, mutuality and shared experience. A tentative link with the sociological concept of 'social worlds' can be provided with the possibility of a common ground of human experience being variously expressed in different academic traditions. In Chapter 3 the consideration of 'social worlds' undertaken by Rosecrance (1987) will be utilised as part of the consideration of the context of recreational sport
1.1 Background to the study

In my introduction I stressed that my study would explore and expand the term ‘embodiment’.

In this chapter I relate to how this concept emerged as a key one for me.

In my formative years I found significant interest and fulfilment through:

a) physical activities, both as a participant and spectator,

b) religious/spiritual events such as youth days, discussion and prayer groups, pilgrimages to Taizé and Lourdes,

and therein gained ‘experiences’ which were in some way qualitatively different from other experience(s) of ‘everyday life’ and which seemed to harmonise elements of my being, bringing me to a greater understanding of what it meant to be me. There were both heightened moments, and experiences which were less dramatic, more even and balanced in character.

At this stage the absence of a ‘key’ — a mode of interpretation — may have enabled me to be more open to what the actual experience had to offer. At a much later point of enquiry I encountered the work of those such as Marghanita Laski (1961), who sought to document occasions of ecstasy; Hetherington (1975) who was interested to synthesise descriptions of the experience that he termed ‘the sense of glory’; and David Hay (1994) the object of whose enquiry was the nature of spiritual experience. However these definitions only went so far in describing the reality that I was trying to ‘pin down’. As we shall later see, when I came

32 The term physical activities is here taken to mean dance and team games. Clarifications of different types of sporting activities will take place where necessary.

33 For a comprehensive discussion of experiences which are variously described but which all contain a heightened, focused sense of being see Marghanita Laski (1961). Richard P. McBrien (1981) has an interesting discussion of peak-experience related to parapsychological phenomena and mysticism (McBrien 1981 p. 1086).


35 David Hay was at one time the Director of the Oxford Centre for Religious Experience. Vardy (1990) acknowledges the scale of the work undertaken by Hay when he says that experiences and phenomena in question have been recorded and reviewed by Hay who according to Vardy: “has conducted many interviews throughout the country under carefully controlled conditions and has found that a very high proportion of people claim to have had experiences of a power or presence beyond themselves”. (Vardy 1990 p. 105)
across Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel's (1994) exploration of 'embodiment', I found it possible to employ her reflections in order to better understand and interpret my experiences in the social and cultural expressions of both physical and religious activities.

As a participant in different types of sporting events and movement activities such as dance, I knew of the elation, ecstasy and deep sense of achievement when all elements of human being, emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical, our 'whole' selves, seemingly come into harmonious being to facilitate 'the experience of a lifetime'. As a keen spectator of sporting events of various kinds I had witnessed the intensity of experience that goes along with participation in sport at a high level, and indeed at any level where so called 'super-human' effort takes place. Although this latter term is one of those used loosely by sports commentators, such a colloquialism appears to convey a deeper truth about the extent and intensity of the human endeavour involved. (Conversely one can also understand the intense despondency when all factors necessary for victory or success, whatever the relative relevant meaning of these terms, do not come together). In the total context of my sports involvement I can now say that I glimpsed what Laughlin would term: "...the epiphanic dimension of games and sport" (Laughlin 1993 p. 85), where peaks of experience gained through physical activity might point to a religious dimension.

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36 Having studied and taught Sports Studies I realise the importance of being clear about terminology when discussing physical activities. Harris and Park show that: "...scholars are far from complete in their agreement about the nature of sports, games, and play" (Harris and Park 1983 p. 2). Theorists such as Caillois (1961) were influential in developing efficient taxonomies and as such helped to inspire academic rigour in the pursuit of classification of physical activities.

37 In using an expression like 'selves' I recognise that it is open to different interpretations and is a value laden term and concept. I therefore here state the simplest and most general definition of self to be found: "The distinct individuality or identity of a person or thing...that which is essential to a person" (Collins 1989 p. 1385), and am mindful of the insight given by Douglas who remembers Isaiah Berlin's warning that anyone else's definition of a person is apt to become an instrument of coercion (Douglas cited in Hargreaves Heap ed. 1992 p. 43).

38 The term 'experience of a lifetime' does not imply that there is only one such experience which people may have in life, rather such a term could be called a 'cliche' or less pejoratively a 'truism' which expresses some deep reality about what is happening.

39 This disillusionment arising out of participation in sport is an aspect of impediments to embodiment which will be addressed in Chapter 6.
Working as a classroom assistant at a school for deaf children\textsuperscript{40} enabled me to observe children whilst participating with them in movement sessions, drama and physical education lessons. Both those pupils with a natural talent for movement who produced a high level of performance \textit{and} the less talented seemed to relish the opportunity to express themselves physically, and to combine individual endeavour and participation with others. This seemed to go beyond simple enjoyment, whether that be derived from the social aspects of movement participation, or from the health benefits of exercise, skill and practice. The enjoyment of the pupils playing games formally or informally, at whatever level, seemed to indicate a potential for 'experience' through movement which existed naturally, without being manufactured. The experience could also apparently be harnessed in order to create enjoyment through socialisation, in such activities as Scottish dancing\textsuperscript{41}. The intensity and depth of experience, visible in their expressions and reactions, were an 'echo' of the experiences I had had in 'movement' situations. I also took part in various liturgies at the school and was interested to note the degree to which the element of movement was significant within the worship.

Obviously there was the physical nature of the sign language which was used for the purposes of communication, but more notably, a great emphasis was placed on the physical 'medium' as a means of communicating the significance of constituents of corporate celebration such as the liturgy of the word and the penitential rite. Examples include 'painting' smiles on the children's faces to convey friendship, blowing on their hands to represent the Holy Spirit\textsuperscript{42}, and striking the breast as a symbol of sorrow. Observations made here have thus clearly proved useful as ongoing elements for consideration in the light of current perceptions about embodiment\textsuperscript{43}, in relation to the interpretation of experiences arising from physical activities.

\textsuperscript{40} Observations made at St. John's School for the Deaf, Boston Spa, West Yorkshire, Summer 1982.
\textsuperscript{41} Also observed at St. John's School for the Deaf (1982). Jennings (1978 p. 8) shows how important it is for children to be aware of their own bodies as a means of communication and a reminder of their potential.
\textsuperscript{42} Such an idea is grounded in Johannine pneumatology, see John 21. McBrien highlights the theological significance of this concept when he cites the Orthodox theologian Nikos Nissiotis: "Pneumatology is at the heart of Christian theology, it touches all aspects of faith in Christ" (McBrien 1981 p. 370).
\textsuperscript{43} Since these observations took place prior to formal study of such areas, I had no 'vocabulary' with which to understand or describe the experience and any suppositions made used my own experience as a point of reference. Despite the untutored nature of this analysis, these observations proved significant at a later date and, in 1985, became the basis of an undergraduate dissertation on 'Physically educating the deaf, an analysis of literature, provision and attitude'.
I decided to extend and deepen my interest in the spiritual and the physical in the form of a degree course in Religious Studies and Movement Studies. As learning opportunities occurred I began to find points of reference and a framework of analysis for the enhanced and enriched experiences which I had encountered in 'spiritual' and 'physical' realms. These points of gradual understanding occurred particularly in those parts of a Movement Studies course that discussed the psychological and social elements of human physical activity and across a range of components of the Religious Studies course.

I became acquainted with a range of insights arising from what could be termed the theology of religious experience. It is outside the remit of this study to make major investigation of this theological area but it is desirable to identify briefly some significant strands, chosen because their inclusion assists the establishment of the conceptual framework. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1958) reacted against the aridity of the scholastic period, focusing on what he termed a 'sense and taste' for the infinite, and Rudolf Otto (1923) built on this with his idea of the 'holy'. Those such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Henri Bergson (see Moore 1996) took a phenomenological approach focusing on a stream of experience and consciousness. Within the area of religious experience can also be included religious experience which arises out of a specific context such as Eiseland's (1994) work on disability and the innovative work and developing field of 'Implicit Religion', led by Edward Bailey, which seeks to identify and articulate religious experiences which are found in everyday human endeavours, activities and

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44 In a manner characteristic of the audacity, fervour and enthusiasm of youth, my intention in pursuing these courses (and the intention to qualify subsequently to teach them) was on the one level to redress the shortcomings of the manner in which I had been taught these subjects and also on the other to build upon the valuable experiences that I actually had. I felt ambivalent about the 'amorphous' nature of the non-academic religious education which I had received where I frequently longed for more factual and concrete information. I also wished to enlarge upon the deeper, more experiential nature of movement to which I had the privilege of being introduced by an enlightened physical education teacher who did not focus simply on competitive sport experiences, but encouraged us to explore our beings in our bodies. A particular dance on creation was probably my earliest experience of exploring existential questions through movement.

45 For a commentary on Otto's concept of holiness see Raphael (1997).

46 Bergson's work is described as philosophy but its impact has been on a broader canvas, affecting the disciplines of cognitive science, psychology, religious studies, French studies and literature. See Moore (1996).
encounters (see Bailey 1997). More recently I have become aware of the documentation of religious experience which has as its foundation the inter-faith dialogue and includes the writings of, among others, Bede Griffiths (1973) and Diana Eck (1993).

These strands are outlined here in line with the earlier stated intention to draw from the writing about religious experience wherever appropriate in order to help the process of the interpretation of the experiences which are its major concern, namely those arising from human physical activity. As indicated those chosen within this brief outline are those deemed supportive to the thesis.

The deepening of knowledge offered by the two respective under-graduate academic disciplines, against the backdrop of personal experience already highlighted, began to make me more aware of points of 'confluence' between the spiritual and the physical which seemed to require interpretation. These ranged through 'moments' within recreational/competitive activity such as victory ceremonies; points of overlap particularly in relation to the function of religion and sport in contemporary life (for example as rites of passage); socio-economic aspects of the institutional nature of both; and the spiritual/interior experience to be gained through engagement with physical activity whatever the achievement motivation or particular participation characteristics. There were also the deeper, more intangible and mystical aspects of the experience to be gained through physical activity. I perceived that these points of 'confluence', whilst already recognised in academic interest, were in need of renewed interpretation and I was challenged to consider the manner in which this might be done.

During the years post-degree this interest remained at the back of my mind. This awareness deepened as I encountered new experiences particularly when working as a teacher. An experiential 'cameo' is useful here47. I taught the same group of pupils both for Religious

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47 The school concerned is Nicholas Breakspear R.C. High School, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, 1985-1987.
Education and Physical Education and furthermore had some individuals from this group for individual special needs sessions. As a probationary teacher I wondered about suitable teaching strategies, and how religious concepts and spiritual experiences might be more effectively communicated through movement in the form of drama and mime. I also tried to analyse why the manner in which the quality of their movement in physical education activities (including dance) seemed to be enhanced by a period of contemplation and reflection around a theme, and how very occasionally, as if by chance, a deepening of experience appeared to take place. The success of some elements of these approaches and strategies came back to me when struggling with individuals in special needs sessions where the material was largely in written form, and which therefore seemed to disregard the possibility and efficacy of transmitting concepts and ideas in a more experiential manner perhaps in a physical and/or reflective mode. Whilst working at a school for children with moderate learning difficulties I saw even more significantly than before that physical activities seemed to offer a learning and experiential opportunity, a supposition based on the responses that pupils made in these lessons and from anecdotal evidence as to the level of their enjoyment and fulfilment through participation.

During this time and throughout the duration of the research the terms 'holistic' and 'wholeness' seemed increasingly of use in relation to a wide range of lifestyle concerns such as

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48 Again such suppositions were based on my observations of the pupils in these different educational settings and on informal and anecdotal evidence from the pupils concerned.

49 One of my tasks was to reinforce work on electrical currents to which the pupils had been introduced in a science lesson. They seemed to internalise the concept to be grasped when I encouraged them to stand in a circle, playing Chinese whispers, in order to convey the manner in which a circuit might be unbroken. To illustrate how a circuit can be broken I simply removed one of the group and tried to play the game despite the gap. The use of the body was obviously a key element here.

50 The school concerned here is Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone, Kent, 1989 - 1991. An example of experience through the physical is that of the Ball pool, a netted space filled with coloured, plastic balls, the idea of which is to convey kinaesthetically knowledge about space, weight and volume. In a more formal context I demonstrated the workings of an atom by ascribing to individuals in the class the task of running at various speeds around the nucleus to represent the behaviour of electrons.

51 The time period in question here spans from approximately 1987 to the time of writing, 1998. The term holistic can be taken to mean: "the treatment of any subject as a whole integrated system, especially in medicine, the consideration of the complete person, physically and psychologically, in the treatment of a disease" (Collins 1989 pp. 730-731). It could be argued however that concepts and ideas regarding the term 'holistic' have extended beyond the treatment of disease towards the importance of the prevention of malaise by means of a holistic lifestyle. The argument could be developed that in theory and practice, recent and current
health, food, and therapies, many of which seemed to offer spiritual and physical healing. The eclectic nature of activities was striking, with a range including healing holiday weekends entitled 'Sowa Rigpa and Chi Kung' (based on the Tibetan art of healing) offered by such agencies as 'The Health Club', an international symposium of Storytelling as a Healing Art; to the particular brand of music therapy investigated by Maxted who rather ironically comments:

"...the leaflet promised 'out of body experiences ....generated by a Cosmic Surrender in accordance with the sonic wave of creation". (Maxted 1995 p. 27)

Features on television and radio programmes, articles in magazines and a large availability of books on the subject seemed to indicate that a whole industry was developing around these concerns. There was scant explanation as to the underlying conceptual and theoretical concerns on this issue are more akin to an idea of holistic which arises from a philosophical understanding of the term which holds that: "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, that is, that a system may have properties over and above those of its parts and their organisation", and additionally: "...one of a number of methodological theses holding that the significance of the parts can only be understood in terms of their contribution to the significance of the whole and that the latter must therefore be epistemologically prior" (Collins 1989 pp. 730-731). 'Holistic influences' are best understood in the context of a definition of alternative (or complementary) medicine such as: "...the treatment, alleviation, or prevention of disease by techniques such as osteopathy and acupuncture, allied with attention to factors such as diet and emotional stability, which affect a person's general well-being" (Collins 1989 p. 43).

The paths to wholeness referred to here include such practices as Bioenergetics (see Lowen and Lowen, 1977), the Alexander Technique (see Leibowitz 1991, Stevens 1994 and Brennan 1995); and T'ai Chi (see Parry 1994).

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There was also reference to such things as Circle dancing in 'No ballroom, no waiting, just healing' (Hodgkinson 1991 p. 25). Such articles strengthened my own impressions, accrued from on-going practical experience, that a range of participation motivations exist in relation to Circle Dancing, as well as various experienced benefits (including social/spiritual/therapeutic/emotional).

Formerly IBISS, a centre for holistic growth in Isleworth visited in the course of the research.

This symposium was held at Emerson College, Sussex from 10th-23rd July 1994 and included workshops such as 'The Hero's Journey — finding the story of your life'; 'The Soul's Journey in Gesture: story as a path of self-knowledge'; and 'Once Upon a Mid-Life; stories and the mid-life journey'. These types of themes are typical of those on offer in courses and seminars with a holistic emphasis.

An example of such interest evident in magazines is drawn from New Woman: "...true holistic health...depends on a whole system of 'subtle' energy within and around the body, linking body, mind emotions and spirit" (September 1991 p. 106). In the same issue and brought together in one article is information on 'chakras' (energy centres in the body), acupuncture, aromatherapy, ayurvedic medicine (ancient holistic medicine of India), 'Bac Flowe' remedies, body-work including Shiatsu, colour therapy, crystals, homeopathy, kinesiology, reflexology, relaxation and meditation, spiritual healing, visualisation, hypnosis, psychotherapy.

Kathy Walsh has drawn attention to the Festival of Mind, Body and Spirit which has been held for twenty years with ever increasing popularity. Just prior to its opening in 1995 she commented: "Thousands will take part in lectures and workshops which will be offering myriad ways to healing, wisdom, ecstasy, peace and
framework although many of them seemed to be connected with the recovery of a healing tradition:

"The philosophy of energy medicine goes back thousands of years but has only recently been rediscovered due to the increasing popularity of natural medicines, based on the premise that physical and emotional health are not separate. Meanwhile, we are fast becoming more sensitive to all kinds of things — on the minus side to pollution, to stress and distress, and on the plus side to therapies such as spiritual healing, and the power of mind over matter". (Courtenay 1991 p. 106)

Moreover there seemed to be unqualified and unsubstantiated use of terms — a tendency evident in the same author’s reference to the general efficacy of alternative therapies:

"The spiritual act of letting go of grudges or past hurts frees up energy to revitalise your body cells". (Courtenay 1991 p. 106)

Part of this interest seemed caught up with New Age concerns, may have been to do with a revival of sixties trends with interest in the 'Age of Aquarius', and seemed to involve such factors as self-empowerment/positive thinking, getting in touch with nature and being more aware of our spiritual selves. The term 'New Age' has been subject to investigation by authors who although they may have different emphases seem to agree that these all lead to a common term which covers different meanings and understandings58. Toolan (1992 p. 35) sees new age spirituality as 'an unruly torrent' in so far as it has a complex genealogy fed from 'multiple streams', a view echoed by Northcott:

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58 Kathy Walsh provides an interesting and succinct clarification: " 'New Age' is an umbrella term covering diverse, often conflicting ideas and activities. Some described as New Agers reject the label, and resent being lumped together with beliefs and activities they judge superficial, dangerous or simply dotty. The New Age Movement draws upon religious and philosophical ideas and practices from the East, but is also firmly rooted in the spiritualist, occult, metaphysical, magic and 'Native' religious traditions of the West, often combined with insights drawn from modern scientific disciplines such as psychoanalysis or quantum physics. New Age interests often overlap with those of the peace, ecology, feminist, human potential and natural health movements, but are not reducible to them" (Walsh 1995 p. 269). Also see Saliba (1993).
"Since New Age spirituality is no protean, it is impossible to define as precisely 'this' or 'that'. It is not a single phenomenon but rather a totality of individuals and communal pilgrimages towards a multitude of 'holy grails' variously described and understood". (Northcott 1993 p. 177)

Many of the apparently eclectic range of interests, expressions, and practices had a physical dimension and seemed concerned to fuse our often disparate, 'disembodied' selves, in a manner which recovered, reclaimed and reconnected our essence, our totality, our histories, our selves, our being. Through extensive participant observation on many courses, workshops and seminars around these themes, I observed that a deepening of human experience in and through our bodies was the focus of many of these activities.

What drove people to try to gain such experiences — to make such personal and financial commitments to such endeavours? Was this indicative of a tremendous need within humanity to attain a state of 'wholeness'?

In pursuit of a resolution to this question I conducted an on-going survey of possible insights in addition to making reference to sources pre-dating the research. This proved a worthwhile task — despite variations according to the particular context or interests of the author, some similar themes emerged in relation to discontent with traditional forms and manifestations of religion and the essential search for truth and meaning of the human condition. From the context of movement therapy, Jennings (1975 p. 3) said that a need and search for meaning was reflected in creativity, that there existed the desire to find some order behind the discontinuities of the world, to find some sort of significance and that: "Possibly as a result of living in a 'machine age', many people are forgetting how to use their bodies...today relaxation is something that frequently has to be learnt" (Jennings 1978 pp. 8-9):

"...we always search for evermore adequate forms through which to express the ever-changing world of our experience, we also need to imbue with meaning and significance the sensuous forms that we encounter". (Jennings 1975 p. 5)

59 I attended courses, workshops and seminars including holistic gardening, Native American dancing, the use of artistic therapies, liturgical dance, circle dancing, and holistic spirituality.
Maria Widl argued that people today question the meaning of: "...what they experience, strive for and suffer" (Widl 1990 p. 137) and therefore Christian communities should reflect upon the reasons why so many people apparently look elsewhere as part of their quest for meaning. Widl had her own theory as to why this might not be the case:

"Churches are garrulous, destitute of experience, stagnant and unimaginative, joyless and anxious, too self-absorbed...the critical point is not whether one belongs to the Church or not, but whether one has found a secure place where one is taken seriously and can participate to the extent that time and interest allow". (Widl 1990 p. 139)

In a similar vein and as a possible explanation for the popularity of New Age Spiritualities, Woods (1993 p. 177) suggested that they emphasise divine immanence over transcendence. Moltmann-Wendel too, looked to the culture which, with the 'massive' support of the Christian churches: "...has constantly repressed the body and excluded or devalued all that is fleshy, bodily, material" (Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. xii). This may well lead to spiritual innovations, which Dinges saw as: "...more often than not an indictment of organised religion and its failure to respond in creative and dynamic ways to new cultural trends" (Dinges cited in Saliba 1993 p. 230). Losack contended that like the pilgrim, quests or spiritual 'journeys' may be manifestations of our inner search (Losack 1995 p. 8). Within his particular focus, Celtic Christianity, such a search allows for the acknowledgement of frailty, brokenness, and:

"...healing and redemption...a spiritual vitality and wholeness" (Losack 1995 p. 9). Annie Lennox suggested that: "...our society makes us out of touch with ourselves", to such an extent that she, from her perspective within the culture of popular music, saw the churches to be finished, with individuals being as likely to receive spiritual experience in a concert venue (Lennox cited in Blaylock 1995 pp. 3-4). A quarter of a million people attending two concerts by Oasis in August 1996 might suggest some substance to her argument. During the same week-end significant audiences for the American evangelist Morris Cerullo's 'Mission to

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60 Also see Saliba (1993) for discussions of the challenge of new age interests to mainstream Christian churches and their possible responses.

61 Walker (1996 p.34) provides a useful synthesis of the New Age Movement.
London' might also indicate something of the type of religion that individuals warm to. Ultimately this chronologically-presented survey of possible causes of a sense of alienation and a quest for meaning can be synthesised by reference to the following suggestion by Bede Griffiths, that people:

"....are looking for something... that the Church and the whole world has got to discover: new structures by which the inner life can be expressed. It is the inner life people are seeking and a style of life to go with it". (Griffiths cited in Sahi 1995 p. 139)

Whilst being interested in the foundations of this quest and the steps taken by individuals to find a home for this search, I perceived a danger in the possible 'exploitation' of the desire for wholeness and the uncritical acceptance of claims, amusingly expressed by Sampson:

"Pretending to be an acorn growing into an oak tree at nursery school is most people's only stab at self-expression. Now stressed adults can let go with the help of a friendly therapist. Thrum, draw, wave your arms around — And expect to pay around £25 an hour". (Sampson 1995 p. 25)

Somewhat more seriously, Griffiths expressed concern at the possible exploitation of the sincere, deep-rooted and genuine quest expressed. He identified the problem to be a lack of spiritual mentorship in the religious traditions of western society meaning that individuals:

"...can become prey for the self-deluded or cynical teacher who loves power, sells teaching for money or creates unhealthy cult-like communities" (Griffiths cited in Sahi 1995 p. 145).

Moving on, theological authors were recording an interest in the appropriateness of expressing oneself bodily as a necessary element of the human condition. Those such as Harvey Cox (1969) had developed a thesis that humankind had lost touch with the centre of being as a result of secularisation and industrialisation. In the 'eighties, Matthew Fox62 took the lead in

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62 Matthew Fox was instrumental in the establishment of The Institute In Culture and Creation Spirituality which offers courses in dances of universal peace, dreams and liberation, and aikido. Similar work is carried out at The Centre for Action and Contemplation, founded 1987 by Richard Rohr, OFM, and has a holistic emphasis as evident in its publicity material: "A collision of opposites form the cross of Christ. One leads downward preferring the truth of the humble. The other drives leftward against the grain. But all are wrapped
recovering truths about humanity and our relationship with God in what we could describe as a 'holistic' way, and by what could be termed a 'fall/redemption' model of spirituality. He contributed greatly to the wider debate in his seminal Original Blessing (1983), arguing that this model had dominated theology, biblical studies, seminary and novitiate training, hagiography and psychology for centuries:

"It is a dualistic model and a patriarchal one; it begins its theology with sin and original sin, and it generally ends with redemption. Fall/redemption spirituality does not teach believers about the New Creation or creativity, about justice-making and social transformation, or about Eros, play, pleasure, and the God of delight. It fails to teach love of the earth or care for the cosmos, and it is so frightened of passion that it fails to listen to the impassioned pleas of the anawim, the little ones, of human history. This same fear of passion prevents it from helping lovers to celebrate their experiences as spiritual and mystical. This tradition has not proven friendly to artists or prophets or Native American peoples or women". (Fox 1983 p. 11)

Additionally of interest was the work of those who were suggesting that the physical might be employed and harnessed as a path to spiritual wholeness. Authors such as Louis Hughes (1991) were discussing the possibilities for 'God awareness' through the medium of the physical, contending that our physical and spiritual sides are often fragmented, in different places because of the life styles we lead. Through what are termed 'body keys' (rest, breath, body, place, sound, rhythm, simplicity and wholeness), doors are opened to stillness of body and mind leading to intimacy with God. He proposed that:

"Above all you will experience a dawning realisation of the Power behind creation as a wise and loving God, indeed a Father, who is gently drawing us to himself, healing us and leading us". (Hughes 1991 p.9)

Hughes contended that body awareness is not only about avoiding disease, it is also about being prepared to hear what my spirit, and innermost being is saying to me, understanding and safely inside a hidden harmony: One world, God's cosmos, a benevolent universe. We envision CAC as a faith alternative to the dominant consciousness, offering hope, inspiration and challenge to a despairing world".
improving myself. Through a series of clearly described ‘exercises’ he showed that an encounter with one’s ‘inner space’ is possible:

“As we become accustomed to quietness and the practice of meditation, we will think of ourselves less and less in terms of body, social position, nationality, occupation, skills, knowledge, feelings, or life-history. All these things are important, but they do not quite get to the heart of who I am. The real ‘I’ cannot be described in words, it can only be experienced in silence”. (Hughes 1991 p. 63)

In a similar vein, Donagh O’Shea (1992) detailed how through retreats entitled ‘The Body in Prayer’ a great potential exists for enrichment since: “Great energy is released when a truth is experienced in a full-bodied way; and the Christian faith is the most full-bodied of all: Jesus is the Word made flesh. But in our practice we reverse this and we turn everything into words. As someone put it one would think that the central revelation was, ‘The flesh was made word’” (O’Shea 1992 p. 2). Doris Donnelly (1992) showed how we might be brought closer to God through a variety of physical means, as did Jyoti Sahi who illustrated that:

"Dance, drama, even the martial arts, represent expressions of primordial cultural movement which recognise the connection between physical strength and effectiveness and the conscious direction of the mental energies. The two naturally belong together, and flow into each other as complementary dimensions of human life...the body is the vessel and vehicle of great conscious powers". (Sahi 1995 p. 89)

So to draw the strands together, whilst conscious of the problems encountered when relating experiences arising from different contexts, I was interested in areas of overlap between the spiritual and the physical, two apparently disparate realms which offered experience, enhancement and enrichment from their respective strengths and characteristics. I observed the existence of a range of locations where experiences were offered which apparently harnessed a point of confluence between the physical and the spiritual.65 I read and reflected

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65 ‘Confluence’ here means a flowing together of two hitherto individual streams of thought. I have adopted this word inspired by the image of two rivers merging at a certain point and thereafter taking on a new character whilst retaining and drawing strength from each. If one looks at the confluence of two rivers, their joining provides places of still water and turbulence, sites of eddying and back flow.
upon insights which tried to explain the perennial quest for meaning but which also addressed
the manner in which this search had recently been channelled through activities which in
particular offered wholeness and healing. Thus I was, perhaps unconsciously, conducting an
intense dialogic-hermeneutic. In other words my experience and observations were ratified
by observation, experience, reading and reflection.

Throughout the research then I noted and investigated practices from a wide field of vision
which seemed to be suggestive of:

- a positive view of our bodiliness,
- spiritual/interior experience arising from human physical activities,
- the physical being used as a mode of expression for our ‘inner selves’,
- healing/wholeness apparently attained through the physical,
- an interface or confluence of the spiritual and the physical.

Much reflection upon the practical research undertaken across these categories brought the
realisation that a significant problem had been identified in the clarification of such areas of
human interest and endeavour. The challenge remained to find a way of interpreting the
interior/spiritual experience arising in and through this physical element which reflected the
fundamental interests which were inspirational to the study, and yet was sufficiently realistic as
to cogently and clearly offer advancement to the understanding of the field in a worthwhile
and acceptable manner.

Employing the ‘back and forth’ method mentioned earlier, I now outline the absolute core of
the study. I found the encounter with the concept of embodiment to be a breakthrough in
relation to the pursuit of a description or key and also as a focusing device for what it might be
possible and advantageous to seek to do through this study. I had encountered the term in

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64 Often used in relation to the analysis of biblical texts, such a tool: "...reflects on the interaction between text
and community, or text or interpreter" (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1991 p. 5).
James Nelson's work on sexuality (1979), but was interested to see its role in contemporary religious understandings where the sanctity of our 'ordinary', basic beings, of our 'isness', our embodiment was recognised and celebrated, as opposed to a view of individuals as detached entities inclined and intended to seek expression outside of this corporeality. Reference was made to this area of concern in my introduction. The use of theological tools, insights, motifs and understandings seemed to me to be a way forward, to offer interpretive possibilities for the experiences arising not only in a religious/spiritual context but in other places where we gain significant experiences which represent the very 'stuff of life', and are found in the very places where our whole, embodied selves find expression, including human physical activities. It appeared to offer more possibilities than existing keys that I had come across, which will be outlined later in Chapter 2. It was also a concept which found resonance within me. As I investigated embodiment and began to sense its possibilities the following came to be increasingly relevant and I began to perceive how it might be a useful tool in the interpretation of the experiences of interest to the research. There was a: "...perception of a meaningful pattern or gestalt" (Hetherington 1975 p. 49) and a feeling similar to that described thus by Gateley:

"It is all beginning to fall into place,
All the messy unclear pieces.
Tumbling together into
A vague harmony". (Gateley 1994 p. 68)

As can be seen from the above, the areas of influence on the development of my thinking could be summarised as arising from personal, professional and theological considerations. Overall, this development continued for ten years as an R.E. teacher, a Lecturer in Sports Studies, and a teacher of children with a range of special needs. Experiences with children and young people in both the Catholic and state school contexts, involvement as a catechist, my role as a parent, my aforementioned appreciation and interest in the world of movement in

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65 Such a view of person is woven throughout non-dualist, non-separatist theologies such as feminist, creation-centred, and liberation theologies and spiritualities.

66 This can be simply defined as the reality of our corpus, our body.
sporting, liturgical, therapeutic and artistic contexts, acquaintance with the insights offered by contemporary spirituality, and my own personal faith journey which led me to look for deeper and richer modes of expressing faith on an individual and corporate level were all formative influences on the development of the thought processes behind this study. As we shall now see events of my life have further deepened and informed the critical question and convictions in relation to embodiment. I would humbly invoke Carter Heyward's reflections upon her inspirational *Touching Our Strength* (1989) as a link between the different elements in the development of this chapter:

"Its intellectual roots are in a critical, reflective, matrix of spiritual struggle; theological study; social analysis; political commitment; personal passions, fears, dreams, biases; and of course, in the many relationships that continue to form and reform my capacities to love, learn and work" (Heyward 1989 pp. 18-19)
1.2 Autobiographical section

Here the focus is matured through the exploration of suffering and the identification of 'growth moments' in which I found experiences of embodiment. This section is worked into the fabric of the study, encouraged by similar and successful approaches to be found elsewhere in contemporary spiritual and theological writing.

In the introduction 'embodiment' and 'beingness' were set out as key terms, and I also indicated the 'piecing of the quilt' and 'back and forth' process as being integral to the method of this study. What constitutes the 'pieces' and those topics between which the reader goes back and forth are linked. The 'pieces' are pieces of evidence of human experience. They subdivide into physical experience and religious experience and the journeying to and fro between these aspects of experience serves to unite what at first may appear to be disparate pieces of experience so that they are sewn together and constitute the overall fabric of the overarching concept of 'Being in the body'. Successive chapters will examine in depth the nature of physical experience and will indicate how, within bodily experience, transcendental, religious modes of existence may take place. Before moving to physical experience, then, it will be useful to have made some investigation of religious experience.

Religious Experience and Personal Experience

The study of religion covers a range of methodologies and topics. Among these religious experience, as a point of access to transcendent reality, has generally been acceptable. Religious experience here refers to those occasions when an individual engages with unseen sources of energy, undergoing a sense of exaltation, liberation, extreme harmony and peace or in contradiction, a sense of imminent darkness or fragmentation linked to externally threatening energy fields. In world religions individuals may explain these experiences through

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67 Examples include Alloway (1993) on depression; Eiseland (1994) in the area of disability; Biddulph (1994) whose work is conducted from a male perspective; and Garcia and Maitland (1983), Furlong (1988) and Hogan (1995) whose work draws upon women's experience. These all provide support for the subjective element in this thesis.
the symbolism of a given religion – thus Christians may talk of meeting God or Christ or Angels, or being attacked by the devil.

From one religious experience whole systems of religious thought may emerge as with Teresa of Avila’s account of the spiritual life and the stages of prayer or John of the Cross’s account of the ‘dark night’ of the soul. Religious experience thus comes to define the inner dimension of human experience – an inner dimension which looks outwards, through embodied experience to that sphere of existence which is the ‘The Other’ and is of cosmic proportions. It is likely that the format in which religious experience is expressed will be an autobiographic one – or at least a report of visionary events, as with Julian of Norwich’s report of what she saw and heard during the liminal state of illness68.

An autobiographical approach is also recognised for its validity by Peter Berger. In his update/introduction to a later edition of Rumour of Angels (1990 pp. ix - xiii), which he had first written twenty years earlier, he reflects upon what had been his purpose and intention. Whilst providing a serious critique of his former work, in and through this revisionary piece he is able to reflect upon the impact and import of this approach both at the time and in ensuing years. He had suggested in his earlier work that there was to be found the basis of a theological programme rooted in what Europeans call ‘philosophical anthropology’ and the broad tradition of liberal Protestantism stretching back to Friedrich Schleiermacher. Unlike many expressions of the liberal Protestant tradition, however, such a programme would not secularize the religious definitions of reality, but rather, on the contrary, it would, ‘transcendentalize secularity’. As the following indicates, these formal academic references were linked with an approach based on experience:

"...I wanted to draw a very rough sketch of an approach to theologizing that began with ordinary human experience, more specifically with elements of that experience that point toward a reality beyond the ordinary. I called this approach 'inductive' and I indicated a number of experiential complexes that could be considered 'signals of transcendence'. (Berger 1990 p.x)"

68 A modern parallel can be found in the reflections of Tina Beattie (1997).
From the field of feminist theology subjective experiences also contributed to the theologizing of those such as Mary Daly whose work has proved pivotal in this field. In the autobiographical preface to the 1975 edition of *The Church and the Second Sex* she shows how being dismissed from her job, the resultant controversy and the final gaining of promotion led to what she had described at the time as a profound: "...growth in understanding" and: "...mutually transforming confrontation" (Daly cited in Grey 1987 p. 102). Grey herself, speaking implicitly for the power of the personal 'stories' of individuals says:

"It is with hope that reflection on spirituality may lead ineluctably to reflection on theological concepts, which will then issue in effective action, that I write, continually searching for ways to ground theological concepts in actual experience" (Grey 1987 p. viii)

As indicated at the commencement of this section, a further rationale for the subjective element will be provided as and where appropriate and helpful in this study. What has been provided thus far provides a backdrop for the following.

**Narrative**

Earlier in the chapter I outlined something of the role of past experience in this thesis. This included experiences arising from sport which I then tried to make sense of in religious terms. In this section I continue this process whilst employing my key method of harmonising 'pieces' of evidence and moving back and forth between experience and reflection.

For the first year of formal study I conducted the research on the basis of ideas and suppositions about the parameters of the relationship between the spiritual and the physical which have already been demonstrated as significant in the inception and formulation of a research proposal. However in the second year of this study a period of turmoil commenced in my personal life which challenged and perhaps more accurately deepened my awareness of the relationship between the spiritual and the physical and authenticated my increasing conviction regarding the validity of embodiment as descriptive of human experience.
This period which changed my attitude and thinking commenced with the emergency admission of my husband to hospital with symptoms which caused great alarm and required a brain scan. Nothing abnormal was discovered and my husband gradually recovered his health. For a few months there was a return to a period of tranquillity.

However, in May 1993 at seventeen weeks pregnant with our third child I went for a routine ultra-sound appointment only to be told that the baby was dead. The shock of this was enormous as I had believed everything was progressing normally as it had done with my previous two pregnancies. Three days elapsed between the news that the baby had died and the so-called, and incredibly impersonally termed, 'evacuation of the retained products of conception'. When a similar fate had befallen friends I had shuddered to think how I would cope, and could barely imagine a worse thing to have to endure than carry one's dead baby.

Now I was in that very situation but, without doubt, I can say that during these three days I felt a serenity and calm I would not have imagined it possible to feel in such a situation. These were truly moments of grace, of blessing, of privilege, of wholeness, of embodiment. There was a deep feeling that in carrying the body of one who had returned to the world of the 'soul' I had a deep connection with this spiritual life, indeed all spiritual life. It did not seem to matter that I did not know the exact moment when my baby had actually died.

The operation itself was relatively unharrowing, the emotional legacy afterwards centred around the perceived violence of the procedure of the operation, a violence which as the mother of the baby concerned was very difficult to bear. Alongside this ran the grief of not, and therefore never, knowing the gender of the baby. Despite this pain there was a deep and abiding sense of, and personal encounter with, the resurrection — experienced vicariously.

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69 Embodiment in this context should be understood according to the conceptual framework established in the introduction to this study.
70 Here I am using a broad interpretation of what might, from a certain spiritual tradition, be termed 'heaven'.
through what I 'knew' in a profound and embodied way about what had happened to our baby. This conviction regarding my baby coincided with a search for a suitable name. The hospital chaplain had suggested choosing a non-gender specific name and while looking through a baby names book I came upon Anastasia, one meaning of which is 'resurrection'. This seemed appropriate not only because I was convinced that this was something in which my child was already sharing, but because of the unexpected, powerful range of emotions I had experienced which had turned 'darkness into light'. We therefore chose Anastasia, not primarily as a name, but as a motif of remembrance of this time of unexpected growth, insight, and blessing.

More recently after the birth of our fourth (third living) child I suffered post-natal depression. This most serious bout of illness with which I personally have had to contend, led me to understand as much about the 'mystical' nature of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual than I had previously encountered through literature and observational research. The experience of depression brought me to an encounter with an embodiment that is inextricably bound up with brokenness, and a sense of being emptied out of self-worth. I resisted the temptation to read what could be described as 'paper-back' wisdom but identified with and indeed found around me expressions of 'paradox' which spoke to my own situation. There was a deep paradox in the circumstances of my illness in that

71 How right Melanie May is when she says: "Resurrection has been terribly tamed or relegated as one more relic of a religious worldview long since worn out" (May 1995 p. 15).
72 Here, at this juncture I wish to make special mention of Anna. My G.P., Dr. Jacqueline Witt was reassuring about the effects of such an illness on the baby. Using the spiritual outlook typical of the practice she told me of her conviction that babies were sent with the necessary equipment to deal with this illness.
73 Melanie May's powerful work centres around her conviction that her most formative theological insights have arisen from her body as knower rather than having foundation in her knowledge arising from theological training (May 1993). Another author, Paulin, tells of his contact with Alex, the handicapped child of his friends, and how the birth of Alex made him rethink what he had previously written about salvation (Paulin 1992 p. 4). These are clear examples of experience informing theology.
74 These experiences enable me to gain enhanced meaning from theological insights in relation to paradox, re-read with renewed insight. These include Moltmann-Wendel's reference to the cross: "a hope that there is life in death, gain in failure, resurrection in passing away" (Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. 105), and Meister Eckhart's description of our relationship with God: "...the deeper the valleys, the loftier the heights that rise above them; the deeper the well, the higher too: for depth and height are the same thing (Eckhart cited in O'Shea 1992 p. 2). These examples speak to the moments of clarity of thought and understanding about the nature of existence which occurred at the deepest moments of depression. O'Shea himself shows that if we look to the wider tradition of mysticism within the Christian tradition we find a tapestry of the 'synthesis of
at the very time when all should be joyful with the birth of a long-awaited baby and the first precious stages of infancy, this deep and complex illness should visit me. Another contradiction was that I found there to be physical symptoms associated with depression, not of a psychosomatic sort where perhaps an underlying emotional condition causes a physical illness, but a searing pain in the depths of the throat as if the depression was trying to escape from within me. The use of a dialogical-hermeneutical model enables me to approach texts such as the following with new understanding of the symptoms from which the demoniac needed healing and I thus find resonance in Grey's comment arising out of her consideration of Ruether's work that: "...women's own experience becomes a key to hermeneutics" (Grey 1987 p. xiv):

And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.
And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." (Mark 1:21-27)

The relevance of this story for my situation can be further thematised in relation to my own experience. I was treated under the care of my doctor, assisted by a counsellor and therapeutic masseuse76. Jesus may have cured this person with physical touch just as the masseuse used her gifts to heal me with a type of massage that has a clear spiritual

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75 As already indicated, paradox is a key theme of post-modern thinking — see the earlier reference to Davis (1989). It is also recognised by those such as Moltmann-Wendel as integral to an understanding of embodiment (Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. 105).

76 Anthroposophy is the term given to the philosophy which is based on the insights of Rudolf Steiner. The complementarity of the approaches used to treat me reflects the anthroposophical basis of the practice.
dimension. This undoubtedly assisted the process of my liberation from what has been so aptly described as the 'swamp' of depression (Currie and Currie 1992 p. 100).

Contrary to the popular understanding of depression I at no stage felt 'down': how often people understand this to be what depression is — feeling miserable, in a rut, low. It was a stunning encounter for me with the fact that things are not what they seem and that even though we may think we understand, we may think we know what something is like, we can never know an experience in all its nuances and complexities until and unless it has been our pain. In reflecting upon religious experience we would do well to bear this in consciousness when we dare to presume we can speak for and make religious statements about the experience of others. One can only hope to embody the insight identified by Fox:

"When a person has suffered deeply even once and has owned that suffering, that person can never forget and never fail to recognise the pain of others." (Fox 1983 p. 143)

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77 See ‘Helping through Touch: The Embodiment of Caring’ (Peloquin 1989) which looks at touch, its power and its role as integrative to personal well-being and indicates that there exists a biological need for touch, particularly empathetic touch. I note here the 'em' prefix which I discussed as part of the establishment of the working understanding of embodiment.

78 Paradoxes were experienced on all levels of this illness — from the mystical to the practical. It was almost impossible to tell people about my illness — in fact I developed an analogy that expecting me to do this was like asking a person with a broken leg to climb Everest. Part of my reticence undoubtedly lay in my awareness of the stigma of such an illness, and equally as significant was the inability to actually carry through a task.

79 I also note quite simply the privileged position from which I do research. As a juxtaposition to my opportunities I note Kwesiga's (1993) research into the access of women to higher education in Uganda. Carter Heyward (1989) says (with what appears to be a touch of irony to close): "Western theologians, like most other thinkers in Euroamerican culture, tend to assume that in our work we speak for everyone. It often seems to us a shame, moreover, that so few folks among the largely unaware masses realize how lucky they are to have such wise and generous spokespersons" (Heyward 1989 p. 5). Looking to the context of human physical activity, the dangers of assuming that we understand and can act upon such a basis are highlighted by Danigelis (1984) when he said: "...we know almost nothing about the sport's involvement of the disabled elderly. What we think we know is based on incomplete information, contradictory theoretical perspectives and an ideology which either ignores the elderly disabled or says they are in need only of firm guidance" (Danigelis 1984 p. 76).

80 In situations where an experience of pain cannot be shared Aine Cox provides some powerful advice: "...speaking with someone in soul pain is like trying to operate on a level under the skin. It is scary, unknown, painful territory. There are no paths, no indications, no directions. One feels insecure and at a loss. In this situation one has no answers, no advice, and above all no right of admission to that inner, sacred space of the other person unless invited and accepted" (Cox 1997 p. 983).
Happiness made me sad — everything was for me a reminder of mortality. The joy of any moment was robbed by intense pain that the moment had passed and would never come again — this made me constantly question what the point of life was at all, what the point of the point was, and engendered a pervasive nihilism. On another level I found new and deep meaning in the expression 'mind over matter'. The popular wisdom to 'get on with it' is an irrelevancy for a depressed person since as Lowen and Lowen show: "...it is almost impossible for a depressed person to lift himself out of his depression by thinking positive thoughts" (Lowen and Lowen 1977 p. 4). Mind and matter must somehow, against all odds and capabilities, be combined to combat the confusion, 'the spaghetti in my mind', the anxiety, the inability to make decisions, the self doubt — all of which are facets of depression. The problem is that the energy it is necessary to use in order to engage in this combat saps energy necessary to aid recovery. I frequently experienced a complete shift of attitude in one day from utter brokenness to hope brought by the achievement of small goals. Ultimately the experience of depression led me into contact with some of the most deeply spiritual and mystical moments that I have yet encountered. Alloway described depression as so painful and elusive — a 'darkness invisible' — as to be almost beyond description (Alloway 1993 p. 73). I would extend this to say that the depth of the spiritual encounter was also almost beyond description81. It felt as if I had only previously been seeing through the glass darkly.

My own experience of embodiment arising from these experiences has given me some tools of perception which act as a window to certain underpinning elements of this study. These impinge on the content and on the method and argue for the use of narrative, in this case autobiography, within a religious framework. This harmonised with the degree to which embodiment as descriptive of the human condition and some experiences arising from it, was

81 There is a Christian tradition on growth through suffering and in the preparation of this chapter I have been particularly interested to consult research around the issues of theological aspects of depression. Turner (1988 pp. 157-170) examines the writings of John of the Cross on purgative suffering as contributive to growth. Loewenthal (1992 pp. 101-108) found that depression, and suffering in general, are important opportunities for spiritual development. Lake (1986) provides a sound theological and psychological analysis of depression as part of his approach to pastoral care (see Chapters 3 and 4). For other treatments of depression also see Hart (1992) and Frost (1992).
increasingly being seen to be worthy of attention. This developing consciousness and insight took place on an intellectual, emotional and mystical level, a level which touched at the very core of what it means to be person, to be human, a level where the spiritual and the physical can and do meet, where we are, and importantly know or can know ourselves to be — as embodied human beings\(^2\).

\(^2\) To paraphrase Paige's (1994) reflections on depression as outlined in his book *Coming Apart: Coming Together* this chapter has been about a journey — "a long road from darkness to light, from pain to peace, from disintegration to a new sense of wholeness" (Paige 1994 p. 9).
1.3 Establishing the criteria for reference – the search for an appropriate method and style.

This section will show how a setting was established in which and through which to place the study's findings, appropriate to my aims and intentions in this study, reflective of its interdisciplinary nature, conducive to the desire to be open to all constructive ways of knowing, and of assistance in the weaving of apparently disparate threads. Along with the other elements within this chapter, it will become apparent how my experience fused with my enquiry as part of a continual theoretical underpinning.

I was encouraged to examine the formative influences upon my rationale, my criteria for evaluating, and my fundamental mind-set with which and against which I might judge the validity of a theory or hypothesis. Hence in the search for a method I approached this study with an awareness of the manner in which such factors as my own experience and development in academic and intellectual processes might influence this study.

Within Movement Studies, a comprehensive and balanced study of the various different aspects of human movement necessitates the use of different conventional research methodologies that may be required in the scientific realms of biomechanics and physiology, or the conventions for research usual in the social and psychological sciences. In terms of Religious Studies, I came to this research as someone who had grown through a period of development influenced by incarnational, feminist, creation-centred, and liberationist approaches all of which seemingly valued the contribution and validity of the authenticity of

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83 I found interesting the work of those such as Paige-Smith (1994) who fuses experiences of and attitudes towards disability. I perceived evidence of the type of approach for which I was trying to aim.

84 Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of: "two paths merging within a narrative" is a useful point of reference here (Bakhtin cited in Moi ed. 1986 p. 39).

85 The particular research methodology chosen would fall in line with the trends and conventions evident in the wider area from which the sports studies discipline draws its inspiration. Demonstrably the area of Movement Studies is broad ranging in its interests and concerns. There exists much debate about the title, nature, and content of courses which may be variously described as Sports Studies, Sports Science, Physical Education and Human Movement Studies. The spectrum of disciplines influential upon Sports Studies is best indicated and illustrated by reference to the 'A' Level Sports Studies syllabus where pupils, quite unusually for 'A' Level study, are required to be able to write competently across a range of disciplines.
personal experience. Moreover they all appeared to be celebrating the God whose epiphany and incarnation is located in human experience.

So wishing to hold in tension the tradition of wisdom arising from conventional research methods and yet be open to new possibilities it was with interest that I became aware of research options, such as those presented by Clark Moustakas in *Human Enquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research* (see Reason and Rowan 1981). Moustakas expresses dissatisfaction with traditional research methods, believing them to be limited in their provision of a meaningful process and argues for 'heuristic research', a term which Cashmore identifies as usually referring to a device or strategy that serves to stimulate investigation (Cashmore 1990 p. 15). For clarification purposes heuristic can be taken to mean:

"Using or obtained by exploration of possibilities rather than by a set of rules".
(Collins 1989 p. 720)

These small definitions seemed to speak to the pursuit for a language of investigation and analysis in which I was involved and reflected the type of method and style that was perceived to be in harmony with the content and process of the study, namely my own heuristic device established as my key tools in the form of the fusing of, and journeying between 'pieces' of evidence and experience of interest and concern to the study.

The continuing development of a personal research methodology gave an impetus to my study and pin-pointed the options for a radical, personal approach which sprang from my strengths, my experiences and my insights. Something which was reinforced here was the importance of discussing the topic of the tension between body and spirit. In the introduction/Chapter 1, reference was made to Richard Rohr's comment on the split consciousness of Western society.

Further reading of those such as Teilhard deChardin (1973), Fox (1983), Swimme (1984), Berry (1988), and Waldrop (1992) led to an awareness of how authors have sought to
overcome a dualistic consciousness which may affect dialogue between science and other traditions of academic enquiry. To illustrate this I shall use a quotation taken from the perspective of science looking outwards:

"Science is about a great many things...It's about the systematic accumulation of facts and data. It's about the construction of logically consistent theories to account for those facts. It's about the discovery of new materials, new pharmaceuticals and new technologies.

But at its heart science is about the telling of stories — stories that explain what the world is like and how the world came to be as it is. And like older explanations, such as creation myths, epic legends, and fairy tales, the stories that science tells helps us understand something about who we are as human beings, and how we relate to the Universe". (Waldrop 1992 p. 318)

Looking outwards from the religious sphere, Fox quotes the late E.F. Schumacher who believed that there are two places to find wisdom — in nature and in religious traditions (Schumacher cited in Fox 1983 p. 9). Fox argues however, that since the seventeenth century religion and science have been at odds, with religion becoming privatised and science an employee of technology. He cites examples such as the burning at the stake, in 1600, of a former Dominican friar called Giordano Bruno who was seeking to: "discover the cosmos anew according to the scientific work of his contemporaries" (Fox 1983 p. 10). He then contends that there has been blame on both sides but indicates that religion and science were once team-mates who offered a 'cosmic myth' which allowed for an understanding of the universe, to find meaning in it, and to live out their lives with meaning. He calls for:

"...a truce — and more than a truce, a common exploration of wisdom among scientists and spiritual seekers alike; the wisdom that nature can teach us and the wisdom that religious traditions can teach us". (Fox 1983 p. 10)

The task and relevance for this study, with its inter-disciplinary nature and desire to make connections seemed to me therefore to be about learning from science without being a slave to it. Applying this to the task of developing a research methodology, it seems appropriate and
indeed essential to apply the spirit of empirical and conventional research methodologies if not the letter.

Thus personal experience lies alongside religious experience. In my thesis I will move between these two aspects of life in the body – all that I encounter and those things which I encounter and which open out into the religious sphere. In Chapters 2 and 3 I shall apply this to physical experience and more particularly to a variety of sport-based experiences. In this context I employ the concept ‘religious experience’ both as a contextualising term for assigning meaning to the material events of life in a body and as a bridging term for moving from sport and movement as socio-cultural phenomena to the pursuit of religion in its social and cultural expressions.

In this area the work of those such as Alistair Hardy\(^6\) appear very attractive as an encouragement for the pursuit of trying to ‘knit disparate threads’\(^7\). Hardy, the founder of the Religious Experience Institute at the University of Oxford, used his experience of the physical sciences and his interest in spiritual matters to further understanding of religious experience. I was impressed by the rigour of such an approach but held in tension that even if one could begin to describe spirituality according to certain norms and categories, as Smart remarks in The Religious Experience of Mankind:

"There is a special difficulty... in undertaking a description of religious experience. We have to rely upon the testimony of those who have the experience and their reports must be conveyed to us either by writing or telling". (Smart 1969 pp. 12-13)

\(^6\) Another author who sought to find a point of connection, in this case between Einsteinian and post-Einsteinian physics and mysticism, is Fritjof Capra (The Tao of Physics cited in Fox 1983 p. 322). Also see Fox, M and Swimme B. Manifesto for a Global Civilisation (cited in Fox 1983 p. 323) where a theologian and physicist combine to put together a work proposing a new paradigm resulting in a 'letting go of Newton in science and Augustine in religion'. Fox refers to Alfred North Whitehead's Science and the Modern World (cited in Fox 1983 p. 327) of which Fox says: "Philosopher-scientist Whitehead explores the implications of twentieth-century physics for the coming together of science and religion and the healing of the bitter breach between the two that happened in the past few centuries" (Fox 1983 p. 327).

\(^7\) This phrase appeared in The Guardian (6th February 1996) by way of a description of the skill of the philosopher Sadie Plant.
I began to wonder if certain key informative experiences such as insights gained during my first degree, and my own personal experience and encounter with embodiment would be validated and my process justified by the notion of experience as the 'prime authenticator' of religious truth. I was encouraged by the writings of Margaret Hebblethwaite who used her own bodily experience of motherhood as a tool to reach out to the transcendent deity. Hebblethwaite's work and that of Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1976), spoke to my experience as a mother, and as a woman with an interest in theology in so far as it showed a particular way of 'doing' theology. Moreover it inspired my developing method, and instigated reflection upon the manner in which our reading 'around' a subject can inform more than the content. Additionally it was exemplary of how meaningful theological/religious and spiritual reflection can arise from within a person who is writing theology and in and through the process bring together significant strands of his/her life. To use a visual image it is as if the person writing is a compendium of their experience where all elements are drawn together, and then after due consideration and reflection a certain outpouring of reflection takes place. Thus it is with this study that what makes this unique as a piece of research is that it stems from me, from my experience, from my personality, from my *sitz im leben*.

My intention for this chapter was to illustrate the way in which certain elements were contributive towards the observational evolution of this work, formative of its experiential, theoretical and methodological underpinning; to indicate clearly how a strengthening of consciousness of embodiment took place; and to outline the nature of the empirical warrant that assists the process of the interpretation of experience that is both desirable and necessary.

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88 To this end I find the image of an hourglass helpful as a pictorial metaphor for the process of these elements coming together.
89 For an explanation of theoretical understandings of the term 'warrant' see the work of Toulmin (1958), later developed with Janik and Ricke (1979).
in this study. The inter-disciplinary nature of this work has been, and will continue to be, well-served by a heuristic method which respects the possibilities of illustrating what 'the body knows' (May 1995).
CHAPTER 2

Clarification of human physical activity and experiences arising thereof.

The main purpose of Chapter 1 was to establish some foundational aspects of my study, in particular to establish the link between body, experience, and religion. Chapter 3 will commence the application of embodiment as an interpretive key for human physical activity. This chapter seeks to act as a 'bridge', providing an opportunity to focus on what arises in and through the physical and how that experience might be described. This will be accomplished by providing brief definitions of the terms 'physical' and 'human physical activity' (2.1), some established and possible descriptions of significant experiences (2.2), and brief accounts of such experiences arising from human physical activity with particular reference to the sporting context (2.3). It is intended that the method and content of this chapter will provide the requisite clarity to the description of experiences arising from human physical activity. It is hoped that in this way embodiment can be assessed alongside other possible keys and in the process be seen to offer particular possibilities for accessing in a greater way the totality of experiences of, and arising from, being in the body.

2.1 Definitions of the 'physical' and 'human physical activity'

In this section I do not intend to provide exhaustive definitions of these terms nor enter lengthy debate as to their use and interpretation. The aim is to convey the fact that the physical and human physical activity have a range of understandings and applications.

Recognition has been made of the existence and effects of a tendency to downplay the value of physical experiences as a medium for religion and spirituality in Christianity, which has impeded the recognition and celebration of our embodiment. Such a framework has effectively 'trapped' the physical, an awareness of which underpins a significant degree of contemporary theological and spiritual writing.
'Physical'

This term is of interest across a range of practical and theoretical areas and is often used interchangeably with associated terms such as 'the body'90.

a) In common everyday parlance, the word physical would be readily and uncontroversially taken to correspond to that aspect of our lives which is involved with, related to, springing from, our bodily selves. It could also be said to act as an umbrella term for activities which originate in our bodies, which in turn could be described as the 'shell' which contains elements as diverse as our nerves, our emotions and our physiological functions.

b) Throughout the history of thought, understandings relating to the 'physical' have been the focus of much attention with this and other terms such as 'body' and 'matter' being at the centre of philosophical discussion.

In relation to gendered ways of knowing and experiencing in sport, Rintala (1989) shows that stereotyped attitudes have had a significant impact on understandings of personhood and attitudes towards the physical. Moreover it has affected perceptions of what it is to be human, or more particularly male/female, and the types of behaviour considered gender-appropriate:

"With the world set up in value-ordered dichotomies, gender differences established, and male superiority assumed and deduced from those differences, one could begin to see the ramifications for women. Woman became defined as 'not man' and from this dichotomy, as males were characterised by default so were females. As males were characterised as relational, females were characterised as emotional; when men were described as active, women were described as passive; when males were defined as being subjects, females were defined as being objects. These characteristics came to be accepted as the distinct natures of women". (Rintala 1989 p. 135)

90 It must be noted here that the use of the term 'physical' alongside associated and applied concepts such as 'bodily' and 'corporeal' is undertaken in the consciousness and appreciation of their discrete etymology and philosophical significance.
From the theological tradition, Schüssler-Fiorenza shows that women's experience of the physical in the form of their spatial awareness and movement is constricted by the disciplining practices of kyriarchy91, which enforce: "A specific repertoire of gestures, postures, and mannerisms" (Schüssler-Fiorenza cited in Manazan ed. 1996 p. 46). She contends that women are taught that they should take account of their physicality by attending to the manner in which they sit, walk and speak in order to form an impression of graceful and appropriate behaviour:

"Through their clothing, movements, gestures, and smiles women must communicate that they are 'nice', unthreatening and subservient — in short, that they are 'feminine'. Their body language must be deferential, timid, and subservient". (Schüssler-Fiorenza cited in Manazan ed. 1996 p. 46)

Such observations, alongside the approach exemplified by Wright whose focus was gender construction in physical education (Wright J. 1995 pp. 1-24), indicate the possible effect of such attitudes on the physical activities that girls and women may feel to be appropriate. By way of balance Askew and Ross (1988) in their consideration Boys don't cry: Boys and sexism in education, Nelson's more recent work into male spirituality (1992b), and the work of sports sociologists such as Dunning (1986) have all focused on men's perceptions and self-image developed in and through the physical92.

c) The term 'physical' can have different meanings and functions within and across various fields of human enquiry. This may be due to one's background, culture, and academic training which may influence and mediate our experience and understandings of the physical. We need only look at the diverse subject areas of 'physical science' and 'physical education' to appreciate the complexity of producing a universally accepted definition of this word 'physical'. Within academic disciplines which focus on the physical as manifest in and springing from our bodies there appears different concerns and emphasis led by specific requirements and interests. A

91 Kyriarchy is defined by Schüssler-Fiorenza (cited in Manazan ed. 1996 p. 43) as the rule of the master, lord or husband.
92 Also see Biddulph's (1994) work on 'manhood'.
theorist of physical education, sport science, and movement studies will have an understanding of 'physical' largely influencing and influenced by the particular beliefs as to what elements of the physical should be included as worthy and worthwhile within programmes of physical education, movement studies and sports science. The 'movement theorist' would seek to work with such 'physical' elements as diverse as skill, technique, tactical ability, perception, kinaesthetic awareness, aesthetic appreciation, muscle strength, as well as the social, emotional and psychological benefits which are deemed to be connected with movement (see Feder and Feder 1981)93. The 'physical therapist' would seek to harness a perceived point of growth that can take place through the physical and which may lead to healing in such practices as different forms of therapeutic massage (Gillanders 1995) and Bioenergetics (Lowen and Lowen 1977). The importance of the experience through the physical which different practitioners recognise would appear to be underpinned by a philosophy of the body which holds that our experiencing of, in and through our bodies makes a deep and abiding impression upon the process of our lives and our histories. Scarry summarises this when she says: "...what is remembered in the body is well remembered" (Scarry 1985 p. 110)94.

'Human physical activity'

In addition to defining human physical activity, I wish to discuss and reflect upon some perceptions in relation to what might be offered to, and what might be considered desirable by, individuals/groups through the experience arising from human physical activity.

The term 'human physical activity' can clearly be taken to mean/imply a broad range of endeavours/pursuits undertaken with, and made manifest through, the body where within this activity all elements of our being are synthesised — our emotions, our psyche, our spirits.
I have identified seven areas in need of clarification under the broad term 'human physical activity':

a) Since the earliest days of civilisation and throughout history, humankind has been involved with human physical activity in one context or another. It might have been for survival in the form of hunting and fishing, using the body as part of worship, or engaging in physical activities for leisure purposes. In their exhaustive work on the history of physical education, Van Dalen and Bennett (1971 p. 3) argue that the way man has viewed and used his potential to engage in physical activity has had a significant impact on society. Across different historical periods and contexts, sport and dance would have performed certain different cultural, anthropological, and social functions but the common thread is that in every generation human physical activity would have been present and recognised for its significance. In considering activities such as jousting and hunting, Cashmore conducts a fascinating analysis of the manner in which 'competition' as a phenomenon entered into human interest in terms of its function and validity:

"They are products of a human imagination ingenious enough to create artificial situations that human evolution has rendered irrelevant. But, once created, they have seemed to exert a control and power of their own, eliciting in both participants and audience, a pleasurable excitement that encapsulates the thrill or 'buzz' of a hunt, yet carries none of the attendant risks". (Cashmore 1990 p. 53)

b) All people are involved with human physical activity at some time in their lives. To a certain extent it comes 'naturally' to us as part of the pattern of normal child development in

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95 It is beyond the remit of this study to enter into a lengthy account of such areas. However it is important to record this as a significant area of interest for movement theorists working within the field of the philosophy of sport. Important authors here are those such as Caillois (1961) who contributed a depth to the understanding of the inherent philosophical underpinning of sport.

96 This statement may appear open to question when applied to the severely disabled — however even for the quadriplegic 'life' implies physical activity in some form or another including blinking or smiling. However the absence of the ability to actively engage in and with the physical may bring moments of despair and may be metaphorical of the personal and social isolation experienced by the individual. The captive too will experience a hindrance of the opportunity for physical activity — John McCarthy records the delight of being moved to a larger cell: "We could actually walk around it and exercise without bumping into each other all the
the form of play which, in its various manifestations, has a physical dimension and which has been the subject of much concern with notable works such as Gulick (1920), Piaget (1951) and Bruner (1976). J.J. Rousseau's *Emile* (first published in 1762 and cited in Cashmore 1990 p. 60) argued that physical training and competitive sport would yield positive results in the overall education of children. Such attitudes underpin the policy and practice of physical education curricula, indeed physical education has an established place in the school curriculum with the work of those such as Munrow (1972) acting as a pivotal point around which debate has been conducted. More recent interests in physical education have extended the debate about physical education into areas to do with gender (Hargreaves 1994); the teacher/pupil relationship (Cohen and Mannion 1980); and levels of inactivity in children and young people (Warburton 1993). All of this discussion centres around the perceived underuse/misuse of the growth — what I might call the embodiment — that is available through human physical activity.

c) Many adults remain engaged in sporting activities of one kind or another, whether competitive/recreational, individual/team, active/spectative. If we extend the frame of reference to include gymnasium training, fishing, aerobics and hill walking, a range of other diverse activities such as shove ha'penny, bar billiards, skittles and of current popularity 'play-stations', and those involved in a spectative role, we will begin to appreciate not only the phenomenological significance of physical activity but also the difficulties in arriving at a precise definition or classification.

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*time* (McCarthy 1993 p. 94). The challenge is to find ways of naming and interpreting the experiences arising from the loss or deprivation of the ability to experience our embodiment with ease.

97 Warburton's (1993 p. 2) research focused on the physical activity of children aged between four and eleven years with results indicating that pre-adolescent children do not engage in a sufficiently high level of physical activity to maintain health.

98 For considerations of the underlying reasons for participation see Ebbeck et al. (1995) and Ogles et al. (1995).

99 In *Pilgrim in the Microworld* Sudnow conducts a narrative around the Industry of video and computer games (Sudnow 1983).
An overview and synthesis of variables of physical activity would seem to be useful with clarification included where appropriate:

- individual/team (e.g. singles tennis/football)
- active/spectative
- recreational/competitive
- judged/refereed
- recreational/competitive
- boundary/non-boundary (e.g. netball/lacrosse)
- combative (e.g. boxing)
- ball/implment based (e.g. football/bowls)
- artistic (e.g. ice-dance)
- sporting/non-sporting (e.g. rugby/cooking)
- indoor/outdoor
- universal/local
- popular/minority
- time oriented/point oriented (football/tennis)
- equine (three day eventing or The Grand National).

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100 It must be noted that within each of the given examples there may be numerous component parts which contribute to the overall efficacy and enjoyment of an activity as a leisure pursuit. For example in fishing there are many elements such as venue selection, method selection, bait selection, bait preparation, pre-baiting, ground-baiting, casting and waiting which are not solely centred around the actual catching of the fish, but each of which is vital to the process.

101 This list of conceptual categories is developed and included in order to give as inclusive a framework as possible to the discussion.

102 This first clarification immediately raises a further point, illustrative of the difficulty of definition and interpretation, since one can play tennis as an individual within a team structure in such an event as The Davis Cup.

103 Again a difficulty of definition occurs here. Whilst cooking is primarily functional or recreational, there is also a competitive element in such competitions as 'Masterchef' and 'Ready, Steady Cook' which appear to attain the status of a spectator sport given the significant television audiences for such programmes.

104 A fascinating example here is three-day eventing comprising cross-country, dressage, and show jumping which are time oriented, artistically oriented and point/time oriented all within one event.

105 In terms of the embodiment/distortion of embodiment tension, 'The Grand National' is interesting for two reasons, firstly the increasing concern expressed about the welfare of the horses, their rights as animals, their embodiment, and secondly the huge amount of money involved in gambling which as we shall see in Chapter 6 can bring distorted experiences of embodiment.
• elitist/egalitarian (polo or football\textsuperscript{106})
• blood sports\textsuperscript{107}

Additionally, in order to be truly reflective of all human physical activities with which people are involved and in which they find fulfilment, we should perhaps make reference, however briefly, to activities including gardening, eating, sewing, decorating, carpentry, craft, reading, listening to music and even dog-walking. They may fulfil some criteria laid down in certain taxonomies by which physical activities can be classified — all these can give rise to enriching experiences both individually and as part of a group\textsuperscript{108}. Whilst not of concern to this study, the subsequent assessment of embodiment as an interpretive key might help in the recognition of the often subtle and under-stated value of such physical activities. I was interested in the controversy surrounding the inclusion of ‘minority’ sports in the Olympics where there appeared to be a dualism enacted on the basis of those sports considered ‘real’, ‘Olympic’ sports, and those regarded as novel, eccentric and misplaced, typified by the following television listing:

"Over to Atlanta, where Sue Barker introduces more action including the final stages of the featherweight judo competition, the women's individual all-round

\textsuperscript{106}This distinction aims to show that some sports are not open to all because of the prohibitive costs of involvement, whereas for football the minimum of equipment is required.

\textsuperscript{107}This controversial form of physical activity must be included. It is outside the remit of this study to focus on the ethical issues involved. In defence of hunting as sport for pleasure, Vitali (1990) argues for its consideration as ethical on the grounds that it does not violate the animal's moral rights and has human exercise as a primary objective. He sees this as sufficient to compensate for the apparent evil which results from the untimely death of the animal. It would appear as if Vitali is here applying what moral theologians call 'the principle of double effect' defined by McBrien thus: "The principle which holds that an evil effect can be permitted so long as it is not directly intended, is not the means of achieving a good effect, and is not out of proportion to the good effect" (McBrien 1981 p. 1242). Whilst the latter might be a matter of opinion, Vitali's claims would appear to flounder on the first two elements of this definition. Vitali also holds that hunting contributes beneficially to the ecological system by direct participation in balancing of processes of life and death which is the basis of a thriving ecosystem (Vitali 1990 pp. 69-82). By way of balance, King (1991) looks at hunting from the perspectives of animal liberation, the land ethic, primitivism, and ecofeminism and bears in mind ecofeminist claims in relation to sport hunting as part of patriarchy's focus on death and violence. For King, hunting should be contextualised within the wider setting of patriarchal social relations between men and women. As an act of violence it is an element of the cultural matrix which is destructive to both nature and women (King 1991 pp. 59-85). Also see three articles under the heading 'A-hunting we will go?' by Speight, Nowell and Jarman (The Tablet 19th July 1997 pp. 926-927), written in response to proposals to ban fox-hunting.

\textsuperscript{108}For a recognition of the aesthetic/spiritual dimension of certain leisure activities see Henderson (1993) and Heintzman and VanAndel (1995).
gymnastics final gets underway, and there's boxing, tennis, badminton and beach volleyball. "When is French cricket going to get in?" (Daily Telegraph July 25th 1996)

d) To be fully understood, the phenomenological significance of human physical activity must be considered alongside social, cultural, and anthropological factors. Bly (1991 p. 69) extrapolates the physical elements from the rites of initiation of Native American Indians. In a similar vein and over a significant time period Granskog (1993 pp. 3-25) participated in and studied the phenomenon of the Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon and found there to be deep cultural and ritualistic elements, not least in its role as a rite of passage that transforms the lives of those who compete in it. Clearly such an experience through the physical is gained in different ways according to the social and cultural context, however what is implied and signified both in the individual and corporate context by the interweaving of elements within physical activity? One perspective is documented by Stephen Jones who writes from his own experience through his "sitz im leben":

"It is impossible to convey the almost religious fervour for the team and the sport, the reflected magnificence, in life as a Welsh teenager during the towering height of the Welsh teams of the 1970's." (Jones cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 153)

e) The need to exercise and diet and the possession of a positive mental state are some of the predominant motifs of our time. As part of this trend gymnasiums are very popular, used by individuals with a range of motivations and reasons for partaking in such an activity — top-level athletes will use gymnasiums to prepare for specific events, other individuals with no specific training goal work out to various levels and degrees of intensity but with other

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109 Responsibility for the teaching of Sports Activity Analysis at 'A' Level has given me an opportunity to reflect upon, and discuss at length the constituent elements of sport. I perceive that an element of the debate about Olympic sports during the Atlanta Olympics centred around Anglo-centric understandings of sport. Beach Volleyball became an object of derision as a non-starter in the sporting league and yet it is clearly not a minority sport in other countries. The BBC commentator Hamilton Bland, deputed to cover Beach Volleyball, reported that as a sport it is more popular in Brazil than football (Olympic Grandstand 30th July 1996). See Bell (1979) for a survey of games which gives equal weighting to their global context, to their historical and cultural significance.

110 The Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon is comprised of a 2.4 mile ocean swim, 112 mile bike ride and 26.2 mile run.
health/recreation benefits in mind. The plethora of fitness and exercise videos, (a trend helped along commercially by the involvement of high-profile media stars), and the range and popularity of aerobic exercise classes\textsuperscript{111} are also adequate proof of the perceived and felt need to keep fit by harnessing the benefits of physical activity.

Worthy of note here is Jane Fonda whose fitness video attained world-wide fame and popular acceptance in the 1980's. She has recently retracted much of the advice given therein, cautioning about the deleterious effects of an excess of diet and exercise (see Langley 1996 pp. 10-12). In her work on images of women in magazine advertisements Duquin (1989) shows that the health and fitness movement of which such videos were a part has brought about little change in fashion's ideal image of woman;

"...the advertising industry continues to portray women as sedentary creatures, consuming the accoutrements of beauty, and posed seductively waiting for their prince. Far from reflecting an authentic image of woman as mover, ads symbolise and perpetuate myth. And today, as yesterday, fashion's ideal woman is still too often a sleeping beauty". (Duquin 1989 p. 107)

f) Sustaining an interest in something, no matter how beneficial we know it to be is difficult unless a positive, emotional and psychological impetus exists. The overall popularity of physical activity of the sporting and dancing nature must surely indicate that the experience to be gained is seen to be advantageous, worthwhile and life enhancing. At a later stage embodiment will be used as a mode of interpretation for these life-enhancing aspects of human physical activity; a distortion of embodiment through human physical activity where life-enhancement does not result will also be considered.

g) Human physical activity must also be understood according to its deep and connected relationship to other aspects of our being.

\textsuperscript{111} If aerobic classes constitute a sub-group within any taxonomy of physical activity, then it must be noted that within this category there are different types of aerobic activity, such as high-impact aerobics, low-impact aerobics, callanetics, step aerobics, and even 'bums and tums'.
We earlier noted Bede Griffiths reflection upon the essential spiritual quest of the individual. In relation to the 'quest' underpinning physical activity we can invoke Chatwin who in his *Songlines* (1988) develops a theme which includes a consideration of the essential human migratory instinct, the restlessness, nomadic yearnings and inner movements which are an essential part of humanness and journeying and thus brings into focus the role of movement, which is a manifestation of our bodily selves and present in some form in all types of human physical activity.

Involvement in physical activity is seen to affect and effect other personality dimensions in such a way that its benefits are recognised not to simply reside in the physical. Evidence for this is found in dance, celebrated for the higher/affective/interior/spiritual effects that such participation might have in the participant. Indeed in relation to Martha Graham, Stodelle says:

"For Martha, every motion had mysterious significance. And when the dancer performed her most famous solos — *Incense, the Cobras, Nautch, Yogi* and *Radha* — she felt that she was being initiated into the mystic rights of the Orient". (Stodelle 1984 p. 11)

The same may be true of the experience gained amongst participants, and also by spectators:

"With the intuitiveness of genius and the perception of a seer who penetrates the timelessness of human behaviour, Martha searches for and finds the crucial, telling movement needed for the choreography of the moment. It is at once visceral, ancient, and present, resonating in us physical responses that our bodies recall having experienced even before we were born". (Lang cited in Stodelle 1984 p. xiv)

In a different area of movement studies, theories such as the 'transfer of training' (see Tanaka 1994 pp. 330-339) and 'mental rehearsal' (see Winters and Reisberg 1988 pp. 279-290) are testimony to the recognition that human physical activity does not operate in a vacuum.

112 Syer has a useful chapter with practical examples of how he worked with his clients: "...to cross reference their sporting and non-sporting lives" (Syer 1986 p.148).
Indeed as Davis et al. indicate, investigation into these areas constitute the 'roots' of sports psychology, having branched out from the first flourishes of experimental work into sport conducted by researchers such as Norman Triplett (Davis et al. 1995 pp. 365-375).

Theoretical and practical examples indicate the relationship between elements of the physical. This can be demonstrated in different ways by reference to Syer and Connolly: "When you imagine yourself moving, the muscle groups involved in such an action actually move on a subliminal level" (Syer and Connolly 1984 p. 48) and also by reference to Blue (1987 pp. 551-552) who reports that the tennis player Hana Mandlikova was able to radically calm herself down by staring at her watch for one minute and then imagine the hands moving for a minute. Steve Perryman summarises the powerful relationship to which this evidence points:

"For good or ill, thoughts and feelings affect our performance although we rarely find time to discuss them". (Perryman cited in Syer and Connolly 1984 p. 7)

The efficacy of training techniques based on theories such as those outlined above is evidenced by the authority with which experts in the field speak, not only within high level sport but in applications of these theories to business people and anyone interested in building team-spirit within their organisation113. At the end of his book Team Spirit—The Elusive Experience (1986) John Syer gives details of 'The Sporting Bodymind', a consultancy which helps sports people improve performance through systematic programmes of mental training. The consultancy's choice of name stresses:

"...that body and mind are one. Your thoughts and feelings affect your physical performance, just as your physical state and activities influence the way you think and feel. Everyone experiences the changing relationship of body and mind in their daily lives. For sports men and women the relationship is critical". (Syer 1986 p. 222)

113 The former England Rugby captain Will Carling built a significant career as a 'motivational speaker' at business seminars, where he would draw upon his experience in his role as motivator to his team in order to similarly motivate business people.
This indicates the manner in which such programmes of training are based on assumptions and beliefs about the relationship between our physical natures and our minds, indeed the inter-relationship of all aspects of our beings in our bodies, which is a facet of embodiment according to the understanding in this study.

Again it is not of concern within this study to become pre-occupied with the debate about the extent to which any beneficial 'spin-off' of sport might be transferred, rather what needs to be clearly stated is that such beliefs exist. Cumulatively such factors would seem to indicate the extent to which human physical activity is seen to be a 'potent force' for change and one that as such may be exploited, for good — or for ill. Moreover we can identify within the previous points many aspects in which we find evidence of embodiment, according to the understanding of this term in this study, in the inter-connectedness of elements of our being. Indeed it is arguably these points of connection that individuals are seeking to harness in engaging in activities which use physical activity as a route to, and means of, healing.

Terms used in relation to human physical activity, particularly in its therapeutic context, or where there is some suggestion of a relationship between the body or the mind or the physical and the spiritual are often used interchangeably, arguably without due reference to their meaning and significance under the umbrella term of 'wholeness'. Human physical activity is often significant within 'paths' to wholeness which in recent years has become something of a 'buzz-word' for a state/condition/experience worthy of attainment. Such physical activities which offer such an 'experience' are therapies such as T'ai Chi and the Alexander Technique (Stevens 1994 and Brennan 1995).

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114 The word 'exploited' is here used in a neutral sense to indicate the manner in which embodiment might take place — elsewhere we shall see how the 'potent force' might be manipulated and might actually result in distorted experiences in and through the physical (see Chapter 6).
Summary

Despite widespread recognition and acceptance of the 'benefits' of participation, the classification of sport, and also another major physical activity dance, is difficult because of the wide range of criteria according to which classification might take place. For example:

- Depending upon the criteria we accept for what constitutes sport we could include a range of activities from football, through horse racing, to darts, to tiddly winks. This indicates the large range of sporting endeavours with which people like to be involved, either as individuals or team members.

- The range of dance forms illustrates why it may be difficult to find appropriate definitions and interpretive keys for dance. Ballet, jazz, modern, tap, ballroom, and ice-dance are all included under the umbrella heading of dance and yet have quite different characteristics. There is also a hierarchy of what is perceived to be the most pure form of dance. Dance occurs in different cultural milieu where it might have tribal, anthropological, societal, recreational, or artistic significance.

- In seeking to describe human physical activities, we must, in addition to sporting and dance endeavours, also focus on such activities as the aforementioned Alexander Technique and T'ai Chi, and also other activities such as Sports Therapy, Yoga\footnote{See Zebroff (1995).}, Medau, eurythmy, massage, and aromatherapy, and Bioenergetics. These are all manifestations/bridges between movement, sport and healing which in recent years have appeared to be the object of much interest.

For purposes of clarification this sub-section has focused on the 'physical' and 'human physical activity', and whilst it has indeed indicated some of the different understandings,
interpretations and applications of these two terms, it has simultaneously highlighted various nuances within the nature of the problem. Critical questions are seen to be:

Is it possible to find a description of human physical activity which speaks across the range of activities, participation motivations, and identified characteristics?

What term might encompass something of the depth and breadth of experience to be gained from participation in human physical activity, where there are 'moments' of wonder, awe, exhilaration, completeness and yet brokenness?

Hence:

To what extent can embodiment be an interpretive key for experiences arising from specific examples of human physical activity?
2.2 Some established and possible descriptions of significant experiences arising from human physical activity.

I now turn from 'physical' and 'physical experience' to 'experience and religious experience'.

2.2 and 2.3 aim to 'journey around' established descriptions of 'defining' human experiences and also provide accounts of these experiences arising from the particular context of human physical activity. Accounts and perceptions in relation to sacred dance will be included in Chapter 5 which deals specifically with this area of activity in the religious context.

In the main introduction at the beginning of this study, a spectrum of views was documented concerning the status of sport as a religion. It was noted that it was outside the remit of this study to engage in a debate that has already been significantly conducted within the theology of sport and from which it was deemed that no advantage could be gained by this study.

There is also an area of debate which focuses on the manner in which experiences arising from physical activity should be regarded and by which they should be categorised. Such deliberations can be contextualised as part of a wider debate concerning the status that should be accorded to any significant experience which arises from settings other than those pertaining to mainstream religion yet which could be described as emotional, affective, interior and possibly spiritual. According to Hetherington the consciousness expanding moments in question are such that:

"Many people testify that from time to time they have an experience which seems to them to have a transcendent quality, an out of time or out of space dimension which sets it apart from everyday experience" (Hetherington 1975 p. 34)
Griffiths poses a question in relation to these experiences:

"What creates the aesthetic experience? What for example makes the shivers go down our spine when we hear a certain piece of music? Why at certain high moments does this sense of joy come over us". (Griffiths 1992 p. 5)

I shall term these experiences 'consciousness-expanding' (Hey cited in Longmore ed. 1991 pp. 68-69) and 'defining' in order to enable their consideration to proceed with clarity, integrity and without the need for continual constant qualification. Ultimately we will look to assess the extent to which fortified understandings of embodiment may be interpretive of such experiences which particularly arise from human physical activity.

It is not intended to make an exhaustive 'comparison' of embodiment with other interpretive 'keys' that have been developed to describe these significant affective, higher, interior, spiritual experiences. It is recognised that these categories of understanding originate from various academic disciplines with different functions and purposes. However it is deemed worthwhile and necessary to 'consider' these other keys, at least as a way of recognising the manner in which interior experiences have been described and at best by way of 'counterpoint', a 'foil' against which to evaluate embodiment. Such a process may help to assess if there is any validity in regarding embodiment as part of a spectrum of such descriptions. The established descriptions that follow do not exist primarily as keys for physical activity, but it will be seen that some authors have applied them to this area.

It is important to state briefly that we are seeking to describe 'moments' which are experienced as in terms of heightened awareness and also the more enduring state of existence which has a special quality in terms of the recognition of ourselves as body spirits (see MacQuarrie 1981), and moreover, according to the theme of this study, embodied spirits.

Lengthy consideration of all keys is neither possible nor desirable within the remit of the critical question. The task of this section, which seeks to 'gather in', has been greatly assisted
by Hetherington's comprehensive synthesis entitled *A Sense of Glory* (1975). Although he quotes Arnold Toynbee's definition of such experiences: "...moments as memorable as they are rare in which temporal and spatial barriers fall and psychic distance is annihilated" (cited in Hetherington 1975 p. 34), he contends that a 'workable' definition of these special experiences seems impossible and claims that many writers have attempted it and failed.

Hetherington indicates that to be able to make such a definition would imply that all the experiences as reported have a common quality or qualities which could be clearly expressed in words. He shows that the problem is that by their very nature they are highly subjective and personal, 'notoriously difficult' to identify and describe verbally (Hetherington 1975 p. 35) and that:

"The range of experiences recorded is immense, their nature clearly depending both on the cultural training of the experiencer and on the circumstances in which the experience occurred. Their intensity and duration vary, although the experience is typically very brief and often described as lasting only a moment. They are usually recognised at the time as having a special quality, although they are sometimes only recognised for what they are in retrospect\(^{116}\). They are, most commonly, 'triggered'\(^{117}\)...... by scenes of natural beauty, religious rituals and practices both by individuals on their own and in groups, aesthetic perception and creative achievement, scientific discovery and intellectual insight, sexual experience, childbirth, athletic achievement, and in moments of personal crisis especially when insight is achieved. Social interaction with one or several other people, especially when sharing a common purpose, is also a well known trigger\(^{118}\). (Hetherington 1975 p. 36)

So Hetherington indicates the dimensions and nature of such phenomena and also identifies the problems associated with the pursuit of description. Despite his words of caution, however the process of description itself is not rendered worthless or impossible. The task and challenge is to proceed with a recognition of the inherent difficulties, enabling this recognition to strengthen one's consciousness of the need for integrity at all times when attempting to define and describe spiritual/interior experience. It is acknowledged that one's own experience

116 This is very important for later understandings of embodiment.
117 Hetherington (1975 p. 36) attributes this term to Marghanita Laski.
118 Hetherington (1975 p. 36) mentions that some drugs apparently produce experiences which seem very like peak experiences.
does not necessarily authenticate the experience of others\footnote{Moreover the same activity or phenomena might not be universally experienced in the same manner.}, and that we cannot with integrity describe experiences arising from physical activity as spiritual unless that is the vocabulary attested to by the individual concerned. However through a careful reading and application of the literature the evidence that is available can be carefully selected and presented in order to provide an empirical warrant for interpretation and analysis, a process that will be attempted in this and the remaining chapters. Such empirical evidence can be underpinned and augmented by holding in tension the relational and inter-disciplinary character of this work.

Hetherington (1975) introduces the attempts that some authors have made to describe these phenomena in their range and variation. These include the use of the term 'Fire' by Paschal, 'transcendent ecstasies' by Marghanita Laski, and Abraham Maslow's 'peak-experiences'. He also says that the term 'timeless moments' might have been appropriate on the basis that it seems to relate to what he describes as the 'out of time' dimension which appears so often to be significant though not always (Hetherington 1975 p. 35). We could add to this Freud's concept of 'oceanic experience', or phrases common in mystical writing such as 'The All', or 'the Absolute' (Gordon cited in Jennings 1975 pp. 2-3). Indeed, some experiences might be defined in terms of spiritual or natural mysticism (Higdon cited in Hoffman ed. 1992 pp. 77-81). However, in his work The Varieties of Religious Experience William James (1902) noted that mystical experiences can be more or less divine, more or less religious and that: "...boundaries are always misty, and it is everywhere a question of amount and degree" (James 1902 p. 39). Hoffman calls upon the work of Merton (1970) and Hood (1975) to illustrate that:

"...mysticism has a rich tradition in many mainline supernaturally referenced religions, including Christianity but mystical events do not always focus on an objective or transcendent deity, nor are they always interpreted by the individuals who experience them as being in any sense religious. Thus, it has not always been easy to draw lines separating natural mysticism from spiritual mysticism". (Hoffman 1992 p. 67)
Peak-experience is perhaps one of the best known terms for the description of the experience in question — the development of this term can be largely attributed to Abraham Maslow (1964). Syer and Connolly offer a useful definition and explanation of peak experience:

"Peak experiences involve little or no conscious control. They are effortless. The five-stage process of changing counter-productive attitudes involves moving from recognition of the old to effortless performance of the new. Our experience suggests that when you begin to recognise the patterns of your personality, connections are built, which over a period of time, add up to some kind of critical mass. The critical mass of awareness creates the base which allows a synthesis to take place from this. From this synthesis a peak experience of peak performance can result". (Syer and Connolly 1984 pp. 105)

Moreover, it is a mode of description, a key, which is used in relation to the type of experience of elation found in victory or some other outstanding achievement (see Chapter 3). It seems particularly applicable to the experience arising from physical activities which offer an exhilarating encounter, such as mountaineering, hill-walking, rock-climbing, water-skiing, and rally driving. In the case of mountaineering we could speculate that the 'peak experience' might apparently come from different aspects of the activity such as its inherent characteristics; the sense of oneness with creation, the landscape, or the environment, or perhaps from a particular achievement such as the scaling of a particular summit or the attainment of an expedition's target.

Of all the keys encountered perhaps it is Interiority which best assists the illumination of the word embodiment, which as has been shown is considered to speak best to the reality I am trying to describe and which for the purposes of the thesis will be used as my tool, my interpretive method — my key. I found the term 'interiority' clarified by Louis Bouyer in his *Introduction to Spirituality* (1963) where he talks of an 'interior life'. He indicates that there

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120 Lincoln Allison (1993 p. 207) shows how the experience of natural and traditional landscapes and sporting endeavour are prime candidates for the higher pleasures discussed by John Stuart Mill, in so far as they are qualitatively different from ordinary pleasures and worthy of public encouragement and protection.
Many individuals who can be considered to have an 'interior life' which for all its richness is unconnected with religion and spirituality according to even the broadest definition:

"Poets and artists may be complete unbelievers and even avowed materialists and, nevertheless, experience and communicate a richness of imagination, of thought, of emotion, which is all their own. They may know nothing of the 'religious life' and even have no 'spiritual life' — if by this we understand at least some access to a reality other than that of the sensible world, and one which transcends the individual. But it cannot be denied that such people have an 'interior life,' nor, often, that this life is of an exceptional richness". (Bouyer 1963 pp. 2-3)

Recently, I came across the writings of Etty Hillesum which also express this interior consciousness. In the introduction to her diary, J.G. Gaarlandt shows that she was not inspired by theology, dogmas or synagogue. Instead she addressed God in a personal manner, exemplified by the following:

"When I pray....I hold a silly, naive or deadly serious dialogue with what is deepest inside me, which for convenience' sake I call God......And that probably best expresses my feeling for life: I repose in myself. And that part of myself, that deepest and richest part in which I repose, is what I call 'God'. (Hillesum 1981 p. xv)

Initially I was excited by the concept of interiority, hoping to use it as a key. It seemed to offer the possibility of describing a range of human experiences broadly relating to the affective and emotional side of life. It seemed that experiences arising in an artistic context could be described, including those to be gained from participation in dance, music or art or those experiences resulting from a passive involvement and interaction with the arts. If these experiences could be discussed in as near a spiritual context as integrity allowed then it seemed to me that we might also be able to find a way to dialogue about the sorts of experiences gained through sport which I personally interpreted in spiritual terms. In the context of sport these experiences have been subject to attention in such a manner by authors such as Higdon (cited in Hoffman ed. 1992 pp. 77-81). I recognised that the strength of my religious experiences somehow paved the way for experiencing many things in spiritual terms but was
convinced that the experiences to be gained from sport and movement activities had an independent existence, worthwhile and defining in character and not dependent on religious affiliation. Logic must dictate that this be the case since one could not assume that the subjects of 'interior' experiences would necessarily always share a similar background of religious/spiritual experience. An example of this could be that the individual members of a choir may derive an uplifting of spirit gained through the actual singing of a piece which may, in any case, convey mystically its own spiritual dimension. But they might also gain something through the participative element itself. These experiences will be open to all without any prior knowledge of spiritual matters being necessary. So interiority seemed to offer several ways of dialoguing. Firstly with reference to experiences gained in a particular activity or endeavour by subjects who may not necessarily experience something in the same way. Secondly across a range of activities which may differ strikingly in content, method, philosophy and situation. Ultimately however it was not deemed to offer as many possibilities as embodiment as an interpretive key.

Indeed none of the terms or keys noted here were considered to offer the same interpretive possibilities as embodiment which recognises the physical dimension of our existence within religious experience and is perceived to speak to both the more temporal and more enduring aspects of the experience arising from human physical activity, and which will be evaluated in this regard in Chapters 3 and 5. What can be said about these terms however is that they stand in relation to embodiment as part of an eclectic range of keys and concepts which have been developed to describe the state of being in the body and the experiences arising therefrom. Clearly the experiences and states of being in question are inextricably linked with the fact of our embodiment and the qualities and essence of the feelings and emotions arising from interaction between individuals, between individuals and the biosphere, between individuals and God.

This sub-section has indicated some of the possible descriptions for experiences arising from human physical activity in which I am interested. It points to the fact that they have both a
heightened and yet temporal dimension when experienced in and through our bodies. These can be carried forward to 2.3. where consideration will take place of some specific accounts of the experience arising in and through human physical activity which have been selected for attention, analysis, discussion and hypothesis in the light of embodiment.

2.3 Brief accounts of significant experiences arising from human physical activity with particular reference to the sporting context

In Chapter 3 it will be noted that a taxonomy has been developed which will facilitate the consideration of embodiment as an interpretive key for the interpretation of a breadth of experiences arising from human physical activity. Here sport will be considered in its competitive, recreational and spectative contexts. It is hoped that the examples that will be provided will facilitate the application of embodiment to experiences that arise from within and around what I term the 'total sport context'. This context is one which makes a significant impact on the lives of many, summed up in the following reflections by Coe:

"There are very few people who eschew all forms of sport and fewer still who claim to have done so. For the vast majority of us, sport kindles memories of triumphs and tragedies in childhood, adolescence and adulthood; it cloaks a field of dreams. Be it competitive or social, organised or impromptu, a team game or solo pursuit; whether we dedicate our lives to it or from time to time dip our toes in it, sport touches us all...What does sport mean? Generally, it gives us visual rather than word images, and provides us with some of the most powerful pictures of twentieth century society. Sport is theatre, cinema, television and photography, and through these media we can see sport as the human condition cut to the bone. Sport has pace and stillness, drama, comedy and tragedy. It conveys more vividly than any other branch of human activity the elation and despair in everyone's emotional range". (Coe 1992 pp. 7-9)

In the continued process of the resolution of the critical question and by way of preparation for Chapter 3, I wish to present some evidence of experiences which have arisen from each of these contexts — competitive, recreational, and spectative — in order to convey the breadth of settings from which such experiences might be liberated. I have borne in mind various approaches to the description of religious experience including James (1902), Schleiermacher
(1958) and Buber (1983 edition); methodological approaches of those such as Gilbert and Abell (1983); the comprehensive and enlightened treatment of issues pertaining to sport and religion provided by Hoffman (1992) and to *The Psychic Side of Sports* discussed by Murphy and White (1978)121. I decided to select some accounts gathered by investigation across a range of sources arising from Sport Studies, and perhaps most significantly the anecdotal accounts of sportspersons and those involved with sport. I consider the latter to be significant as forms of narrative springing from this particular 'community of faith' and would like these anecdotal accounts to be accepted as authoritative sources within the field.

It should be noted that in providing the following examples I recognise a certain 'blurring of the edges' between different aspects of sporting experience and indeed in Chapter 4 address myself to this problem. It is a recognised facet of the taxonomy that I have developed. Thus in these accounts I note that experiences arising from the competitive context can be as powerful whether they arise from professional or amateur events in a highly structured or informal context. Similarly it must be recognised that some individuals might gain an element of recreation through sport played with a competitive bias. Additionally, the experience of the spectator can be multi-faceted. What follows are intended as 'cameos', 'snap shots' to bring into consciousness some of the threads that make up the tapestry of the experience through sport.

If further justification is needed for a widening of a concept of significant spiritual/interior experiences, and a particular warrant necessary here, then critical religious support is provided by the writing of Rudolf Schleiermacher on religious experience. In his *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (1958), Rudolf Schleiermacher contends that in all ways the Deity is to be contemplated and worshipped and that it is desirable that at all times there should be a dim sense of many religions, indeed: "...the great moments must be few in which all things agree to ensure to one among them a wide-extended and enduring life, in which the same view

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121 Also see an issue of Concilium entitled *Sport* (Baum and Coleman ed. 1989) for a valuable contribution to the debate.
is developed unanimously and irresistibly in a great body, and many persons are deeply affected by the same impression of the divine" (Schleiermacher 1958 p. 252). In his introduction to this edition Rudolf Otto highlights a major thrust of Schleiermacher's intent in this particular work, identifying that Schleiermacher was wary of fixed notions of what constitutes religious experience, seemingly urging a recognition of the power of experiences that may indeed arise from other realms of action, feeling and being:

"He wished to show that man is not wholly confined to knowledge and action, that the relationship of men to their environment — the world, being, mankind, events — is not exhausted in the mere perception or shaping of it. He sought to prove that if one experienced the environing world in a state of deep emotion, as intuition and feeling, and that if one were deeply affected by a sense of its eternal and abiding essence to the point where one was moved to feelings of devotion, awe and reverence - then such an affective state was worth more than knowledge and action put together. And this was what the cultured had to learn from the beginning". (Otto in the introduction to Schleiermacher 1958 p. xix)

Such insights from writing about religious experience act as point of connection with, and a contextualisation for, the experiences which are the particular concern of this study. In line with the critical question, it is not intended to describe these in solely religious terms, but rather to locate them within a framework of spiritual/interior experiences through the use of embodiment as an interpretive key.

a) The competitive context

These accounts, from well known athletes, describe a range of hitherto unconnected sporting events, each one sharing however, a common intensity of experience. I present, in sequential form, a series of brief accounts, 'pieces' of evidence - a style adopted in order to convey a clear impression of their quality.

Franz Klammer says that he was: "...skiing on the edge of my courage" when competing in downhill races (Klammer cited in Herd 1993 p. 155), whilst Daley Thompson describes his Olympic decathlon victory thus: "That was everything wrapped up into one...that was my
moment" (Daley Thompson cited on 'The Greatest' BBC TV 13th May 1996). These are
typical of the type of clichéd responses so favoured by commentators and similarly indulged in
by sportspersons which fits the media bill for a succinct but expressive reaction to victory or
defeat. In a rather more developed manner, the Brazilian footballer Pele says of a particular
performance that he felt: "...a strange calmness he had not experienced in any other game. It
was a type of euphoria: I felt I could run all day without tiring, that I could dribble through
any of their team or all of them, that I could almost pass through them physically. I felt I
could not be hurt. It was a very strange feeling and one I had not felt before. Perhaps it was
merely confidence but I have felt confidence many times without that strange feeling of
invincibility" (Pele cited in Syer and Connolly 1984 p. 104). Jack Buckner sums up the
whole agony of competition:

"The final moments before the gun goes are the worst of all. You've been
waiting for hours and you stand on the line looking down the track. Ahead is a
race that will reflect months of hard work. You are about to concentrate all
this effort into a solitary race that may determine whether your season is judged
a success or failure. Why do you put yourself through this?". (Buckner cited
in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 229)

It is against this backdrop that the 'sense of glory' arising from victory can be set:

"The noise of the crowd intruded into my blissful trance. The vast stadium that
fifteen minutes ago had appeared so remote and lonely was now full of friendly
faces. The cheers and congratulations all rolled over me as I jogged a victory
lap, deliriously happy. I did not even feel tired, just intoxicated, my most
exhilarating race". (Buckner cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 232)

With the realism of a hardened campaigner he also conveys the utterly transitory spatio-
temporal nature of these moments:

"I decided to wave to the world and savour the brief moment of glory. Then it
was all over". (Buckner cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 232)

122 See Hetherington (1975).
b) the recreational context

Towards the end of the research period I came across an account which illustrates one type of experience to be gained through the recreational context; it is considered of significance and hence on account of its descriptive powers I include it here. Clearly the author interprets this experience through the window of his faith and religious insight. We can tentatively use embodiment as an interpretive key to examine the nature of this experience and in the process justify analysing, for the purposes of this study, recreational as well as competitive sport.

David Rice (1996 p. 1016) provides an example of moments of 'happiness' he gained through sport which seemed to reveal an extra dimension\(^{23}\). On Pentecost Sunday at dawn, he played golf on the links in Montrose, Scotland. His perception of the sanctity of this place can be found in his comment that: "This links needed no Jack Nicklaus nor any other architect. God designed it". From his account clearly he feels close to nature — his are clearly heightened as he appears to see and hear more lucidly:

"East, the shimmering, sparkling North Sea; a three-mile sweep of sand, gleaming lighthouse on a rocky promontory to the south; craggy, sculptured cliffs to the north. To the far west, the rounded, first slopes of the Grampians. In the foreground, the stretch of dunes and hollowed links, yellow-splashed with the flower of prolific whin bushes". (Rice 1996 p. 1016)

There is also evidence of a recovery of the essence of childhood, facilitated through the uninterrupted view provided of his birthplace — a view arising from his presence in this sporting setting:

"Visible was the window of the very room where I emerged from my mother's womb. As Nurse Low helped me out and into breath, my first living sense of light through that window was from the sea-shone sky. The Pentecost touch of heaven was experienced along with a powerful, poignant sense of home, of my roots — of the very moment and place where my extra-uterine experience began". (Rice 1996 p. 1016)

\(^{23}\) Some aspects of Rice's experience — the sanctity of place, the heightening of senses, will be explored further in Chapter 4.
This interior, defining moment, of peak, consciousness expanding embodying experience was triggered on the sixth tee as he stopped: "to breathe to look, and to listen. The sense of timeless unhurried well-being was profound". In these timeless moments a clear sense of synthesis, closure, gestalt\(^\text{124}\) appears to occur, since it: "...seemed to embrace the whole of my life experience" (Rice 1996 p. 1016). Rice conveys superbly the juxtaposition inherent within such experiences when he says of his defining moment: "...it had duration, but, still was quickly gone". He closes his account by conveying not only the enduring quality of these moments but also that essence of mysticism which embodiment, properly applied within the understanding of this term as set out earlier, might encompass:

"Four years later, the lovely sixth tee, high on the dunes where I had stood, fell into the sea, victim of coastal erosion. That never-to-be-forgotten, prayerful moment has its solid base both in the eternity of heaven, and in the fleetingness of earth". (Rice 1996 p. 1016)

This account is clearly interpreted through the eyes of Christian faith — nevertheless it would seem to speak to the coming together of relaxation and peak moments, brilliantly fortifying the conceptual framework of embodiment which it is my concern to continually strengthen in and through this study. In terms of the recreational context, however it does not allow sufficiently for the social benefits to be derived through participation. This will be returned to in 3.2.

c) The spectator context

The following two accounts are useful here and are presented as 'pieces' of evidence.

Stan Illy in 'Pele and the class of 70', details the summer of the Mexico World Cup when he and his classmates were sitting their 'A' level examinations. For Illy there was what we might call a 'mystical connectedness' in the synthesis of these two events\(^\text{125}\). He describes this as a

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\(^{124}\) See Whithington (1975 p. 49)

\(^{125}\) 'Mystical connectedness' can be here taken to mean the simultaneous fusing of significant elements, experiences, or insights arising from our experience.
magical spell — that which 'welds' together the public and personal world. For all the group, England's presence and their progress to the quarter finals contributed a vital richness to the tournament and provided an emotional wave (Hey cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 65).

Commensurately, when England lost there was a noticeable 'pall of depression and rancour'.

Hey goes on to talk of 'transcendent moments', which contained 'revelations of technique and imagination', most notably from Pele:

"In the split second it took the ball to rise into the thin air and then fall just past the post with Viktor scrabbling helplessly, the whole footballing world, and, for certain, the whole of our school, seemed to go through an intellectual and spiritual transition.

The sheer daring of the attempt, the visual and athletic co-ordination it entailed, created what might be called, in the language of the time, a consciousness expanding moment". (Hey cited in Longmore ed. 1991 pp. 68-69)

I cite some extracts from Germaine Greer's account of her reactions as a spectator of Euro '96 (Greer 1996 p. 1). I find her reflections interesting for various reasons. In Chapter I I noted that the physical and the spiritual are often recognised, according to a dualistic analysis, to be at opposite ends of the experiential spectrum. In her article Greer connects the spiritual and the physical in an original and interesting manner, however her article was greeted with surprise by many people with whom I came into contact — that Greer — a feminist, should have an interest in Gascoigne — a footballer, was clearly bewildering, thus illustrating another dualism of attitude. Furthermore I, along with millions in the country, found Euro '96 an emotional and spiritual experience, of a defining and consciousness-expanding nature. Greer articulates my experience and most probably that of others:

126 Hey reports a request by a classmate the morning after England had been defeated by West Germany. He requested that he should be excused from an examination due to being emotionally unfit as a result of the defeat: "Imagine a Frenchman having to take an exam the morning after Waterloo he pleaded in vain" (Hey cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p.66). Behind this amusing anecdote lies the reality of the importance of sport in the individual and corporate consciousness which goes far deeper than the mere interest in sport and is suggestive of a deeply founded emotional/psychological/interior and spiritual experience. Also see Thompson 'This sporting life: hope, glory and inevitable pig-sickness' (1996 p. 22).

127 On August 17th 1996, the opening day of the football season, David Beckham of Manchester United Football Club performed a similar feat of creative flair facilitated by technical mastery. Soccer pundits inevitably compared the two events.
"I watched Euro '96 the way some people view Victoria Falls, stricken with awe...I was astonished by the strange nobility of the spectacle...The England team was a team as few national sides have ever been; they threw themselves at the implacable Germans as if no man had ever broken a leg on a football field. The instinct for self-preservation was in abeyance, overridden by something more basic and utterly mysterious". (Greer 1996 p. 1)

Greer goes on to give her impressions of Paul Gascoigne in what constitutes a valuable example of a spectators' interpretation of a player. It provides a striking juxtaposition with most of the media coverage of Gascoigne, who has been regarded by many sectors of the media in a derisory way:

"Chief among them and everywhere was Paul Gascoigne, a player I had heard much of, but never seen. I had been informed that he was a liability, past it, should have been dropped; terribly unfit he was, they said. Sports writers made him out to be a kind of elderly brat, emotionally unstable, a prima donna with dodgy tendons and brittle bones. The tabloids bitched him for ignoring his responsibilities as a father and decided he was the one who smashed up the jet bringing the team home from Hong Kong". (Greer 1996 p. 1)

She then journeys through her impressions of Gascoigne, evidencing her impressions of him, acclaiming him as better than George Best: "...because of the evident generosity of his spirit and his wholesale identification with the team before himself" (Greer 1996 p. 1) — this is interesting because identification is a synonym of embodiment that is carried through this study. She also succinctly summarises a reality I perceive in relation to the cultural significance of sport:

"He may be an idiot...but he is an idiot savant. His genius is for football, and football is an art more central to our culture than anything the Arts Council dares to recognise". (Greer 1996 p. 1)

Summary of 2.2 and 2.3
Established ways of describing defining, consciousness-expanding experiences have been selected from a range of terms/keys which originate from and are of major enquiry within

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128 For a discussion of the depiction of Gascoigne in the media see Miller (1996 p.4).
different academic disciplines. They provide a foil against which embodiment might be assessed as an interpretive key, and a context for its fullest evaluation.

Accounts have been provided of experiences arising from within and around the total sport context and have indicated an intensity which could be variously described. It should be noted that in providing the examples according to the taxonomy: competitive, recreational and spectative, I recognise areas of overlap between the first two categories. Problems arising from this taxonomy will be addressed in the forthcoming chapter where it will be seen that embodiment can be used as an interpretive key across different areas of sporting endeavour.

It would appear that embodiment seems to offer possibilities for the consideration of heightened experiences like those normally associated with victory and the more enduring experiences which may arise over a period of time. Moreover embodiment as a key appears to speak to the fact that experiences in and through human physical activity arise in and through our being in our bodies and yet can have this strong sense of the 'other'. As Charles Davis (1976) shows, human consciousness and physical reality are 'bound' together in mutual relationship where neither can be experienced without the other:

"Physical phenomena are then apprehended, not as bare facts, but as representations full of human meanings. They are taken as expressions of man's conscious life, extensions and counterparts of this experience as subject. Interpreted by human consciousness, they also serve as hierophanies of the holy, transcendent reality in which they participate. Furthermore, they enter into the dynamism of man's spirit, not as sacred objects, but as embodiments of the eros in him as subject toward the mystery of that same transcendent reality". (Davis 1976 p. 42)

This chapter has provided definitions, clarifications and accounts of the terms physical and human physical activity, and noted some established and possible descriptions of the experience arising therefrom. Where appropriate connection has also been made with relevant insights of religious experience, in order to try and develop common strands, most notably those that deal with the realm of feeling and emotion. It has also made reference to anecdotal
accounts of the experience to be gained and enjoyed from involvement as a participant or spectator, employed within the rationale as outlined in this study that such accounts are of value and significance in the description of the experience arising in and through physical activity (see 3.3). It is hoped this 'journeying through', although brief in character, has provided 'pieces' of evidence useful in the process of the study which has yet to make specific consideration of embodiment as an interpretive key for human physical activity (Chapters 3 and 5) and will also survey themes of embodiment arising from a religious context (Chapter 4). These are seen to be the major contributions of this chapter to the process of this study.

The inter-disciplinary nature of this study aims to liberate a vision in relation to experiences and states of being arising from human physical activity which I see to be inextricably linked with the fact of our embodiment. By way of conclusion to Chapter 2, I quote Rice again who, in relation to his golf-course experience poses an existential question. He reflects upon these significant moments, similar in quality perhaps to the sense and taste for the infinite of Schleiermacher (1958), the 'fascinans tremendum' of Otto (1923 pp. 8-41), and the relationship of the 'I' and 'Thou' of Buber (1983 edition). Some of the significant terms from writing about of religious experience can thus be employed as an aid to interpretation of these powerful episodes arising from human physical activity:

"That moment of heaven — place bound, time-bound, yet reaching beyond — in an obvious way, seemed to embrace the whole of my life experience. Perhaps there's a hint, a figure there, of the way that heaven itself will honour our earthly existence". (Rice 1996 p. 1016)

129 As already indicated human physical activity in the contexts of sport and sacred dance have been chosen on account of the particular interests of the researcher and because it is perceived that these settings offer a way to work toward the resolution of the critical question in a balanced manner.

130 By this Otto meant the mystery that is both overwhelming and fascinating.
CHAPTER 3
Embodiment as an interpretive key for the experience arising from human physical activity in its sporting context.

The latter part of the last chapter was concerned to look at the experience arising from physical activity and to briefly consider some ways it might be described and interpreted. It was also concerned where appropriate to make connection with some aspects of writing about religious experience which it has been deemed necessary to include in the study as part of its theoretical underpinning.

In this chapter the particular concern is to apply the on-going fortified awareness of embodiment to a range of facets of physical activity and the experience arising therefrom. In order to facilitate the most comprehensive consideration of sport which takes into account a broad span of activities and participation motivations, human physical activity in its sporting context will be considered across three broad categories and within each of these will be located areas of particular interest. It has proved problematic to develop a context for the consideration of the experiences arising from human physical activity since there are clearly areas of overlap across these categories, not least that activities undertaken recreationally do not necessarily imply a diminution of the competitive spirit. It is hoped that embodiment will be equally applicable across all categories whilst respecting both the nuances within each and yet the areas of overlap between them. To this end it will be of interest to consider:

a) experiences which arise from the framework surrounding participation in competitive sport (3.1);

b) experiences which arise from the recreational sphere of sport (3.2);

and

c) the experience of the spectator (3.3).
This teasing out of different aspects of involvement with sport enables an application and penetration of embodiment into its nuances, and the fullest possible assessment of embodiment as a possible and productive key for certain experiences arising from sport.

I wish to interpret consciousness-expanding, defining experiences that arise across these categories in the light of the concept of embodiment. This will take place within the conceptual framework for this endeavour which has been established thus far through the examination and discussion conducted particularly in Chapter 1. This construction of this framework has been effected through the elucidation of the actual and envisaged use of 'embodiment' as a description, motif, or key; the clarification of the critical question; the definitions that have been provided of central terms and the explanation of the particular methodology deemed suitable for the achievement of the study's aims.

What follows rests on the contention that interior, spiritual, affective, higher, transcendent, religious experiences can be liberated from settings other than those that might be considered strictly religious. As indicated in Chapter 2 these experiences can, in the main, be regarded as consciousness-expanding and defining. It is deemed desirable to journey around both the less-temporally focused and more enduring aspect of sports participation and involvement\(^\text{131}\). Since it would be easy to assume that the experience in and through sport resides simply in direct involvement within the confines of the time-bound parameters of the contest, a range of experiences originating from the sporting context will be considered. Lonsdale's account of a particularly significant experience which occurred before a game commenced indicates that an embodied experience can be provided just as effectively from this surrounding context:

"It took up only a few seconds of a bright winter's afternoon in Oxford when, for a short, exhilarating moment, I experienced perfect harmony of eyes, feet, body, mind and spirit". (Lonsdale 1991 p. 232)

\(^{131}\) I use the terms participation and involvement here since there are many who derive pleasure from the sporting context who do not actually compete. This will include a range of people who may be associated with a sporting situation as coaches, organisers, club secretaries, and so on. In the recreational context, many people will do this on a voluntary basis.
Such experiences inspire and inform this section as do the experiences presented for inspection in Chapter 2. It indicates that there may be factors both intrinsic and extraneous which form part of what I call, for the purposes of this study, the 'total sport context'. There is usually more significance attached to the former, however in my opinion, the latter are just as worthy of respect and interpretation and should be given equal weighting. Across both settings we are dealing with defining experiences, which can be personally and vicariously experienced, in and through a range of physical activities. It is considered desirable to bring them into an academic framework in order that the efficacy of embodiment as an interpretive key for them might be assessed. Indeed it is hoped to demonstrate that embodiment is a key which enables the significance of experiences reported from, and evident in, all these settings to be equally and universally interpreted.

Also clearly underpinning this process is the contention that this is a subject matter worthy of consideration — Huizinga's comments in relation to play seem to have some validity here in relation to sport — despite its varied analysis sport is accepted to have play elements:

"...the consciousness of play being 'only pretend' does not by any means prevent it from proceeding with the utmost seriousness". (Huizinga 1955 p. 8)

In the introduction I outlined possible variants in the use of embodiment — embodies, embodying and so on. In this chapter use of these variants will be made where possible and appropriate in order to most fully examine the validity of the critical question in which the fact of our embodiment forms such a significant component. The sporting facts are invoked from memory and where appropriate, necessary and possible ratified by reference to records and other relevant sources. Interim summative points will be made when consideration has taken place of embodiment as an interpretive key for the experience arising from the competitive/recreational distinction. A summary will then be provided at the end of this chapter when all three contexts of interest have been discussed.
The pursuit is conducted in, and influenced by, an on-going awareness that inherent problems exist when one seeks to harness the insights of one discipline and apply them to another, or when an attempt is made to relate experiences from one frame of reference and another. These problems may be practical in nature but are most fundamentally philosophical because it would be all too easy to fail to recognise the different conceptual frameworks operating within, and arising out of different contexts. Within these respective conceptual frameworks are a range of etymological and epistemological considerations. As indicated and demonstrated thus far, at the heart of this thesis and indeed foundational to its critical question, is the expressed desire to engage in a relational process, where the frames of reference of sport and religion are brought together. I see it as vital to hold in tension an acknowledgement of possible problems alongside the inspiration I have found in successful approaches and methods of finding 'power in relation' and 'knitting disparate threads'.

3.1 Embodiment as an interpretive key for the experience arising from competitive sport

Already established in this study is the significance which such activity has, whether in an individual/team or popular/minority dimension. This sub-section will interpret certain aspects of sports involvement where a competitive element is the primary characteristic of participation. Competitiveness is not only a facet of high-level or professional sport, but is present in sport played in a serious and committed manner at any level.

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133 As indicated earlier in footnotes this was said to be the strength of philosopher Sadie Plant (see The Guardian 6th February 1996).
134 In this section comments made in relation to the experience arising from physical activity allow for the fact that some sports have a keen following and participation rate amongst disabled persons. At this juncture I do not wish to enact a dualism which might imply that the experience is any less significant for disabled persons, nor enter the realms of the often simplistic analysis of the place of the disabled in sport, which celebrates triumph over adversity, the strength of the human spirit and so on. Whilst this may indeed be indicative of the experience of some I also believe that such models of the disabled in sport are constructed through the media in order to locate disabled persons in a particular place in society. My previous research into the physical education of the deaf indicated the need to be quite clear about the role of sport in the lives of disabled persons and how easy it is to generalise and compartmentalise. A lengthy discussion of the disabled in sport is outside the remit of this study, however in Chapter 6 consideration will be made of the distortion of the fact of our embodiment through illness, disability and so on.
1) Relay events

These are usually located towards the end of athletic competitions and seem to have an inherent emotional/corporate significance. Relay events range in 'significance' from those at a school sports day — to those at the end of a major international athletic competition — in their respective ways each may be fiercely contested. A relay at a school sports day may be in its own way as significant to a pupil (and his/her parents!) as an Olympic relay event might be to a nation. In a relational sense there is the individual's awareness of his/her contribution to the overall effort. Such races are physically intense, often when competitors are extremely tired having competed in the preliminary rounds and finals of their own specialism. There is sometimes the opportunity for athletes whose chances of a medal in the individual event would be remote but who, in harmony with their team-mates, perceive and realise the chance of victory. We also have to take into account the factor of the cumulative emotional effect of previous events — along with the added tension inherent in a relay that an athlete may confirm their status gained in the individual competition or attain victory at this final chance.

In the Atlanta Olympics of Summer 1996 Linford Christie, having 'failed' in the 100m and 200m, looked to the 4 x 100m relay as the last hope for a medal chance — which became cumulatively 'embodied' and distilled into each successive event as his competition progressed. In the qualifying rounds of the relay, in which he took no part in order to rest for the final, a British competitor dropped the baton and consequently the possibility of attaining victory at this final chance evaporated.

Some relays in swimming provide an interesting case for analysis. In medley relays the character of swimming is synthesised into the event — where each of the four major recognised strokes has equal weighting, thus in this regard a medley relay embodies the character, substance, and spirit of the swimming endeavour alongside the other mentioned facets of a relay.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{135} If a medley relay 'embodies' the character of swimming, we can extend this to consider events such as the decathlon and pentathlon which synthesise different elements of track and field.
In whatever sport they occur, the relays would often appear to have a strong cathartic effect, with the event itself appearing to have a ritualistic significance in drawing the wider competition to a close. Thus it might be suggested that relay events embody, layer upon layer, the hopes and expectations of individuals and groups as well as in some sports such as swimming, embodying the essential nature of a given sporting activity.

ii) The embodiment of individuals and groups through achievement, victory and performance which surpasses expectations

Defining moments within the sporting context can be found in the pleasure of unexpected victory, often relative to our own expectations or the expectations of others in relation to that performance. The 1996 men's singles final at Wimbledon is an excellent example of this with two unseeded players, Richard Krajiccek and Mal Washington, reaching the final, (7th July 1996). Krajiccek's reaction upon winning was visible evidence of this moment of realisation and identification that dreams had been fulfilled, embodied in that one moment. For other players a tremendous satisfaction may be had by reaching a certain stage or a tournament — especially if this is an improvement on a previous performance. This satisfaction, and the ensuing self-esteem may bring its own enhanced sense of 'being in the body'.

There are some achievements which attain a status which exceeds the fact of winning itself. I contend that this is because of the manner in which these achievements speak to, and speak of, the fact of our embodiment and the possibilities for its celebration and the way that the respective achievements embody fundamental aspects of personhood and their fusion, be they physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual. Achievements are particularly powerful where we glimpse something of the determination of the human spirit — where victory has been attained despite difficult circumstances — notable here are Nikki Lauda's victories in the

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136 'Personal best' is a term used to describe the quantifiably best performance, usually by an athlete in track and field events, but also in other events such as cycling and swimming. It acts as a significant benchmark against which an athlete can train according to individually established goals and against which performance can be judged in parallel with other variables such as the quality of the competition and environmental factors.
Grand Prix drivers championship of 1975 and 1977, even though a serious crash had threatened his life and left him severely disfigured. Additionally impressive and enduring in significance is the situation where the victor is or becomes a metaphor, an icon, in fact embodies the aspirations of a group. The black American athlete Jesse Owens stands out as an example here — Hitler's reaction upon his victories in the Berlin Olympics of 1936 encapsulated the Nazi attitude to and intention towards blacks and minority groups, whilst Owens' victory and the dignity with which he conducted himself were an embarrassment to the Nazi regime (see Baker 1988 and Dyreson in Barney and Meier eds. 1994 pp. 46-54).

In addition and worthy of note are 'once in a lifetime' exploits of those such as the American long-jumper Bob Beamon. In the Mexico Olympics of 1968, he jumped a distance previously unsurpassed by himself and his contemporaries (29' 2½") which I suggest can be interpreted as an example of the untapped resources of the embodied individual, where in a certain moment all facets of personhood are fused, leading to outstanding achievement. Encapsulations of achievement judged against a sporting landmark come in the form of Roger Bannister's 'four minute mile' (6th May 1954)\textsuperscript{137}, Gary Sobers becoming the first batsman to score six sixes in first class cricket (1968), and the score of a maximum 'ten' by the gymnast Nadia Comeneci. Those such as Comenici (Gymnastics, Montreal Olympics, 1976), Jesse Owen (Track and Field, Berlin Olympics, 1936), and Mark Spitz (Swimming, Munich Olympics, 1972) attain a level of comprehensive excellence across a sport through victory in different elements of their chosen activity and in all cases the achievement of at least six gold medals in one Olympics — in these individuals we can glimpse the depth and breadth of human capability. A sportsperson may try to join a sporting elite of a few participants who have attained a certain standard — the achievement of a gold medal in four successive Olympics by the oarsman Steve Redgrave (1984, 1988, 1992, 1996) accorded to him the status of being one of a few athletes to achieve this feat. Additionally we can consider Martina Navratilova (Tennis) and Carl Lewis (Track and Field) and those such as Sir Stanley Matthews (England footballer) who played at

\textsuperscript{137} See Bannister (1955) for his own account of this experience
international level at the age of fifty, Fred Titmus (Middlesex cricketer) who played test match cricket in four decades, John Aldridge (player/manager of Tranmere Rovers) whose goal in August 1996 brought the achievement of having scored a goal in eighteen successive football seasons. These individuals embody the longevity of sporting achievement with victories which span not years but decades and stand as a juxtaposition to those unfortunate sportspersons whose careers are cut short through injury. Into these achievements is embodied something of the determination and resilience of the human spirit, especially against a 'goal' a pre-set target.

Even within one event 'victory' and achievement can take various forms — some will aim to win the London Marathon, others will simply wish to finish. The completion of a marathon is a feat, the experiential validity of which is well-recognised in terms not only of physical aspects, but also on account of spiritual, emotional and psychological elements of being. It is useful to bring this into focus in relation to the recognised phenomenon of marathon running known as 'The Wall' which is experienced by novice and expert runner alike. I would contend that this is a powerful synthesis of being, where for a relatively short period of time, but what seems like an eternity, our 'being in our bodies' comes into conversation with itself where there are circles within circles of belief, hope and self-doubt related to one's perception of the ability to persevere with the race. Aspects of embodiment to which further reference will be made in Chapter 4 such as the 'senses' can be identified in the individual's experience in this difficult period of the race. Perhaps most notably we can see that the 'celebration of the body' can be recognised here as a celebration of its brokenness, its weakness, its failures, as well as its strengths and resilience. The crossing of the finishing line in a marathon is an encapsulation of all of this, just as it is in a sprint race which is arguably a microcosm of all these elements. The synonyms of embodiment that are being carried in consciousness through this study — personification, identification and realisation are also identifiable here, assisting in an

138 In Chapter 6 attention will be given to the issues arising from the curtailment of a playing career and the implications of this for understandings of embodiment arising from human physical activity.
139 The theme will be further developed in Chapter 4.
understanding of how we might usefully dialogue about embodiment and how embodiment might be an interpretive key. I contend that within the loneliness of the long-distance runner, of whatever ability, these three elements are fused within the self-dialogue that is arguably a facet of any sportsperson's performance.

Also worthy of consideration are the following experiences which reside in the corporate, public domain. They might be shared by participant and spectator alike, and are often particularly memorable and emotional, and those which convey to anyone who has ever witnessed and entered into them the power of the 'experience' to be gained not only in actual human physical activity but in the associated rituals and conventions. Those who recognise them, who acknowledge the power of the experience, either vicariously or personally, form what could be termed a 'community of faith', a group of people who share similar experiences where such insights find authentication140.

iii) Victory rostrum moments

I use this phrase to describe the moment of presentation of the medal or trophy which is a symbol of victory be it an Olympic gold medal, the F.A. Cup, or the Yellow Jersey in the Tour de France (see Fotheringham 1996 p. 12). Interestingly, from the point of view of these physical items being symbolic of hopes and dreams, The Ashes started as a contest for a trophy which did not exist. It was only after a mock obituary had been published which lamented the death of English cricket (1882) that a woman in Sydney burned a stump and presented the ashes to the England captain in an urn. The Ashes remain in the Memorial Gallery at Lords, even when the competition for them is contested in Australia. Thus although the symbol of victory is not physically present, it is just as powerful in the consciousness of the team and nation.

140 For an explanation of this term see footnote McBrien (1981 p. 1066).
The spectator shares in the catharsis of the victory rostrum moments and might venture to imagine that s/he shares something of what the participant is feeling. The auditory and visual senses are significant — the sight of the flag, and the sound of the national anthem played as a mark of victory. There may well be a nationalistic and jingoistic significance, and this may also form part of the sportsperson's and spectators reactions. It would appear that the emotion of these moments can be appreciated whether one is an adherent of the particular sport in question or a sportsfan in general.

In the style of some theology of sport (see Part I of Hoffman ed. 1992 pp. 1-62), a religious motif could be imposed in order to assess the religious elements of such occasions and postulate that within the physical accoutrements of victory such as medals and trophies, the spirit and essence of competition becomes 'really present', that the moments of presentation are eucharistic. Additionally we could draw a parallel between the fact that just as spiritual experience is open to those who are not adherents of religious groups, so the 'higher' experience of victory rostrum moments would appear to be open to those who do not share the 'vocabulary' of the sporting event but are receptive to its emotional quality.

However, I contend that through the use of embodiment as a key we can arrive at a more accurate interpretation of the emotional and possibly spiritual significance of such occasions. I believe that they are experiences of embodiment which connect us to something deeper. Encapsulated into the presentation, the victory rostrum moments, is what has gone before — here the effort and sacrifices involved in rigorous training and participation come together in the form of public, formal recognition. The emotional reaction of the Searle Brothers and their cox Gary Herbert upon the presentation of their rowing gold medals and the playing of the anthem became a point of national interest not only during the Barcelona Olympics of 1992 but afterwards. It enjoys enduring significance as representative of the personal and vicarious emotion of such moments. As an 'icon' for the sporting year it was shown repeatedly and became a focal point in events such as BBC TV's Sports Review of the Year programme. As a sporting moment its significance has outlasted the time frame of its own occurrence.
insofar as it formed the script and underlying narrative of sports coverage in preparation for the 1996 Olympics. As 'leit motifs', sports 'scriptwriters' thus appear to utilise these powerful images in their construction of atmosphere and expectation\(^{141}\). This point will be developed at a later stage of the study in Chapter 6 since such construction may actually be exploitative of the emotional capacity of sports, leading to the 'manipulation' of the spectator in particular.

To move laterally for a moment I believe that it is also the technique by which sports scriptwriters accentuate personality characteristics of certain sportspeople such as John McEnroe, Paul Gascoigne and Eric Cantona. There was a metamorphosis of the media depiction of the latter which moved through stages of presentation based on Cantona the villain, Cantona the oddball, Cantona the footballer par excellence and Cantona the reformed character\(^{142}\).

iv) The presentation of the teams — playing of the national anthems and community singing

Such occasions can clearly afford the opportunity for the expression of xenophobia, racism and nationalism, most simply expressed by fans booing during the playing of an opposing team's national anthem. I write in full recognition of the analysis that could be made of the ritual of community singing at sporting events in terms of its cultural and functional significance. Indeed sports sociologists such as Donnelly and Young have been keen to focus on such rituals as part of their structural analysis:

\[^{141}\text{Other examples of these 'leit motifs' favoured by sports scriptwriters, particularly those in the visual media include Virginia Wade's Wimbledon victory in 1977, Red Rum's various triumphs in The Grand National, Bobby Moore's lifting of the Jules Rimet trophy in 1966, Mary Peters' success in the pentathlon in the Olympics of 1972, Paul Gascoigne crying in the 1990 World Cup semi-final against Germany in Turin, Italy where a booking would have excluded him from participation in the final had England qualified. Such motifs are usually drawn from popular sports and have a significance which is greater than the event itself and forms part of folk-lore which resides in a wider sphere than that of the sporting. This occurs according to similar processes by which individual and group emotion might be constructed and steered by significant others in a liturgical context}\]

"...the singing of obscene songs — often to hymn tunes — becomes a parody of chapel hymn singing at school, and the vilification of homosexuals becomes an overt form of denial for heterosexual males who still apparently prefer an all-male setting based around a contact sport and communal bathing. The cultural forms permitted and encouraged the vilification of women during a time of apparent threat, and also allowed the re-creation of simple schoolday values such as comradeship and sportsmanship". (Donnelly and Young 1985 p. 22)

Where appropriate such insights will be developed in Chapter 6. Whilst recognising the negative interpretations that can be made of community singing, I also wish to focus on this as giving rise to significant experiences which are in need of interpretation for their temporal and lasting significance to both individuals and groups. In what way, if any, do they engender emotions and states of being that give us a sense of who we are, a sense of our embodiment?

I offer as an example here the enduring image of the black South African Chester Barnes standing alongside his white compatriots during the Rugby World Cup of 1995 and the presentation of the team to Nelson Mandela. This would have been unthinkable at one time given the status of rugby within the Afrikaner consciousness and its centrality within white supremacist aspirations. Claims that the British Lions tour of South Africa in 1974 was unconnected with the politics of this country floundered with the South African Minister of Sports' appearance in the dressing room immediately prior to a test match in order to remind the players of their national 'duty'. Twenty-two years later, Chester Barnes embodied the aspirations of a new South Africa and was symbolic of the spirit of change. The singing of both national anthems, *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika (The Call of South Africa)* and *Nkosi Sikeleli Iafrika* (Enoch Manyaki Sontanga) further heightened and was reflective of this.

An integral component of the closing ceremony of the Atlanta Olympic Games brought another deeply significant moment involving a South African athlete. Josia Thugwane, the winner of the men's marathon, was the first black South African athlete to win a gold medal in 143 Source — BBC TV 'Clash of the Titans' July 1996.
144 For a history of this anthem see Couzens (1993 p. 20)
The playing of the national anthem alongside Stevie Wonder's *Happy Birthday to You* (in recognition of the life of Martin Luther King whose birthplace was Atlanta) was a moving moment of deep connection. It brought together two of the most significant human rights campaigners of the twentieth century. To adopt the theological motif of 'power in relation' (Grey 1989 pp. 88-93 and Heyward 1989 p. 3) we can see Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela as mystically connected, as powerful in relation, for what they embody about the struggle for liberation. At a smaller point of distillation, the sporting moments featuring Barnes and Thugwane could be interpreted as embodying the first, difficult steps towards emancipation, freedom, self-determination, identification, personification and realisation, the first moves towards the conditions by and through which the fullest possible circumstances for embodiment might be realised for all, where the embodied spirit of the people will be matched by equal rights and opportunities for all.

As will be subsequently demonstrated, critics of sport and its media coverage criticise moments which are constructed for the emotional effect. They might also raise the issue of the particular moment involving Thugwane as paradoxical and juxtaposed to the deprivation of the black person in the Olympic city of Atlanta and indeed throughout America. Whilst taking account of these criticisms I contend that such planned and unplanned, predicted and unpredicted sporting moments could be interpreted as occasions representative of the personification, identification and realisation of the struggle against racism, particularly significant since both men were clear that oppression defiled the oppressor as much as the oppressed

Emotion during the playing of the national anthems is frequently visible within television coverage on a national scale — particularly in the Five Nations Rugby Championship where the *Flower of Scotland* (The Corries) and *Cwm Rhondda* (traditional melody) take on a

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145 Thugwane dedicated this race to his country and his president. See Lemke (1996 p. 28)
146 This was also a recurrent theme in Brian Keenan's (1992) account of his captivity.
particular cultural significance\textsuperscript{147}. During Euro '96, Gary Neville's commitment and national pride were called into question in the form of severe criticism by some sectors of the tabloid press for not singing during the National Anthem. He was clearly focusing on the task ahead, in fact to my mind he appeared the epitome of embodiment — his being was totally in his body, yet such is the recognised corporal significance of such moments that his non-singing left him open to criticism.

What underpins such emotion would seem to be that at these moments of ritual and corporate significance there is a bringing together of training over a period of years, along with the realisation of a dream, the fulfilment of expectations on the part of oneself, and one's family, manager, mentor, peers, and countrymen/women. It is this defining moment, this experience of confluence which it is believed can be interpreted according to understandings of embodiment\textsuperscript{148}. If one doubts that this is true let us recover from Edwards' narrative of the 1974 British Lions tour, where he clearly shows what is going on in the mind of an international sportsperson at the point at which their contest begins. Notwithstanding the triumphalist overtones, the quotation illustrates the degree of emotion involved:

"Here was a captain about to go into battle. Willie John McBride was respected by his troops. Again I see him in team talks before Test matches in South Africa in '74 puffing the pipe, then slowly raising a bent finger to sum up the whole discussion. 'Just remember lads there is no retreat. No more talk now: just make peace with yourselves". (Edwards 1978 p. 136)

Community singing at sporting events raises interesting questions. At one time the singing of 	extit{Abide With Me} prior to an F.A. Cup Final, led for many years by Arthur Gaiger, would meet with almost universal participation amongst those present. As Mitchell illustrates, 	extit{Abide with Me} has a particular point of connection with Wembley Stadium as a:

\textsuperscript{147} A particularly moving sporting moment was perceived in the singing of 	extit{Cwm Rhondda} by Jonathan Humphries at Cardiff Arms Park, February 1996.

\textsuperscript{148} It is appropriate here to refer to the apparent experience derived in the staging, playing out and winning of the Rugby World Cup of 1995 by South Africans as the host nation.
"...hymn that has enshrined nearly every major event in the 73-year-old stadium with a unifying solemnity that is hard to describe unless you have experienced it" (Mitchell 1996 p. 13)\footnote{As part of his commentary on the singing of *Abide With Me* in the 1987 F.A. Cup Final between Middlesbrough and Chelsea, John Motson employed a religious metaphor: "Sir Cliff Richard, woood them at Wimbledon, now going to worship with them at Wembley" (BBC Sport 17th May 1997).}

The compilation recording *The Best Footie Anthems in the World ... Ever!* (Virgin Records Limited 1996) exemplifies the corporate significance which such songs have. Commenting on *Three Lions* (Baddiel, Broudie, Skinner 1996) which became a national anthem during Euro '96, Barry Davies argued that something of the 'spiritual' significance of singing at sporting events is returning (BBC TV 26th June 1996)\footnote{Sweeting (1996) has his own ironic interpretation of the 'power in relation' between popular music and football which was so much a part of the Zeitgeist during Euro '96: "Football and rock music have spawned a shared literature of intensely wry, poignantly self-pitiful memories in which boys who have never quite become men wrap themselves up in ceaseless replays of reassuring memories as an alternative to confronting the crumbling social realities of '96" (Sweeting 1996 p.4).} in a manner and intensity reminiscent of the Arthur Gaiger *Abide with me* days. Is the 'peak experience' gained through this communal singing indicative of the shared emotion, a moment of 'eucharist' between opposing fans; is there an inherent spirituality/interiority within the song itself? Syer (1986) speaks of the protection that can be invoked with power by any team of people engaged in such an expression of solidarity:

"The old-fashioned community singing (in Wales the singing of hymns) prior to a match could be described as a ritual dedication 'to the highest'. If the individual so wished, it could have been used as a conscious request for protection. Such a ritual can help each member of the crowd, group or team to retain access to a sense of self, whilst simultaneously experiencing oneness with all others". (Syer 1986 p. 38)

Certain songs become anthems peculiar to a particular athlete or sport, whether it be *Danny Boy* (*Londonderry Air*) to the boxer Barry McGuigan, or *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* to rugby fans. This is interesting because the latter song is an appropriation of a black negro spiritual song, which would have been sung with tremendous sincerity as an anthem of hope for liberation, into another context where it takes on a role as part of the vulgar and often sexist rituals surrounding rugby. Songs such as *Flower of Scotland* have seemingly evolved into
statements of national pride and form part of the agenda of self-determination of a nation such as Scotland. Whilst describing this as a mundane melody, Macmillan (1996) says that such is the emotional impact of this song that:

"It is widely accepted that the spiritual singing of *Flower of Scotland* won the Grand Slam for Scotland in 1990". (MacMillan 1996 pp. 16)

In terms of embodiment *You'll Never Walk Alone* (Rogers/Hammerstein.II. EMI Publishing Ltd. 1963) is an interesting song for consideration. Popularised by a Liverpool band, Gerry and the Pacemakers, the song became a favourite amongst fans of Liverpool Football Club. Ian St. John in his autobiography *Boom at the Kop* (1966 p.12) outlines the uplifting effect of the first gusts of singing that can be heard long before the game starts which always includes this song. In the intervening years it has become a powerful symbol of solidarity for this club, and the city of Liverpool, at difficult times such as that of the Hillsborough disaster of 1989. *You'll Never Walk Alone* is specific to Liverpool F.C. in club competitions. Unlike other club specific songs, however, it is an anthem which has a unitive aspect when the national side are playing, thereby embodying an apparent contradiction that what separates in one sporting context can unite in another. Clearly in terms of football this song holds a particular place possibly because of its accumulated significance, having being etched into consciousness as a motif of growth through suffering, as a statement of solidarity where individual identifies with individual, as the embodiment of corporate mourning and yet of corporate hope.

*A World in Union* set to the tune of *I Vow to thee my Country* (Holst: The Planet Suite) is becoming increasingly popular as a theme for sports programmes, particularly rugby. Jarvie (1992 pp. 12-13) cleverly employs this title to pose a question on which he bases an article: 'A World in Union? Does the singing of national anthems produce global harmony or national emotional fervour?' The ultimate resolution of this particular question is outside the remit of this study. However Novak (cited in Hoffman ed. 1992) alludes to the exhilaration of the human body, the desire, the will, the sense of beauty, and a sense of oneness with the universe
and other humans which can come through corporate singing and thus assists the summing up of my perceptions about the emotional function of singing to the individual and group in terms of embodiment. He contends:

"You need chants and songs, the rhythm of bodies in unison, the indescribable feeling of many who together 'will one thing' as if they were each members of a single body. All of these things you have in sports". (Novak cited in Hoffman ed. 1992 p. 41)

v) Moments of silence arising from the total sport context

Such moments act as an interesting juxtaposition to the level of noise that can arise from corporate singing at sporting events. Embodiment may prove to be as effective as a key for the consciousness expanding and defining experiences connected with silence that arises in and around sporting events.

Silence as a facet of sporting events may link into a period of national mourning such as the widespread observance of a minute's silence as a mark of respect in the wake of the Dunblane tragedy, a context outside of the sport itself, and the Hillsborough disaster of 1989, a tragedy occurring in a football context. The minute's silence observed prior to the commencement of the F.A. Cup Final of 1989 between Liverpool and Everton is arguably one of the most moving ever witnessed, and was a moment of synthesis for the nation's mourning, it was a moment where this grief was embodied — liberated and brought into identification and realisation. Fans, a minority of whom immediately before this gesture did not feel compelled to observe respect for the national anthem, were united in solidarity giving rise to the amazing 'sound' of more than of 70,000 people observing this period of quiet.

Another dimension of the silence arising, often paradoxically from sporting events which we would imagine to be noisy, is provided by Slusher:

"In searching for the 'sounds' of sport one quickly hears the roar of the crowd, the crack of the bat and the thundering of racing feet. But if one listens a little
harder and a little longer, one comes to hear silence. There is a silence within the performer, in the tenseness of the crowd, in the fear of the hunter and in the beauty of the ski slopes". (Slusher cited in Hoffman 1992 p. 62)

Further examples of 'moments of silence' in sporting events occur in the following form:

- the silence that meets the departure of a team from a competition due to a mechanism within the rules of the games that facilitates a sudden ending to the competition. There is a juxtaposition between the elation of one set of players and fans and the despondency of their vanquished opponents. This is most particularly noticeable during 'sudden death' situations such as the golden goal in football where the first team to score in extra time wins. It is also clearly a significant reaction to the ultimate point of departure from a tournament in the form of a penalty shoot out. Gareth Southgate, who missed a penalty in the semi-final, describes both the emotion of Euro '96 and the finality of penalty shoot-outs:

  "The nation was drawn together in a way which normally happens only during wars or royal weddings. The song was Football's Coming Home [sic] and all of a sudden that one incident ended it". (Southgate cited in deFerrante 1996 p. 3)

- the sepulchral silence requested by snooker referees as a contestant plays key shots;

- the spontaneous silence as breath is held during a crucial shot where the spectators respect the players' need to concentrate as in the final putt in a golf competition;

- the silence necessary to catch fish and the inherent silence of being one with nature at dawn:

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151 A penalty shoot-out clearly has the potential to assign certain roles to players depending on the outcome. This can be noted in the juxtaposition between David Seaman and Gary McAllister after the England versus Scotland game (June 1996). "The penalty shoot-out is the perfect stage for heroes and villains to emerge from the drama of football" (Lawrence 1996 p. 14).

152 Interestingly Hornby (1992 pp. 230-231) describes this suddenness as part of the ecstasy of football.
"I tip-toed up to the shallows and listened to the silence, hoping to hear it either gently or abruptly broken by the swirl or leap of a big carp". (Yates 1993 p. 34)

This element of silence within sporting situations is linked, clearly and inextricably, with the employment of our senses\(^{133}\). It is in and through these silences that the tension and emotion of the moment is felt, and from these moments that the catharsis of a sporting situation is liberated. Clearly there is disagreement amongst authors as to the degree to which such moments might be regarded as episodes of spiritual mysticism, natural mysticism or religious experience. This is a point where I believe embodiment to cut through this debate which seems to me to be so relative to one's understanding of what constitutes religion, spirituality and mysticism and also to the degree of respect accorded to 'profane' settings as liberative of such experiences. Ryan's account of traversing a ski slope in the Canadian Rockies integrates a theological consciousness with such moments and for me speaks of the realisation of being, the embodiment that takes place in and through physical activity:

"On one occasion, I took a lift up to the very peak and crossed over the top, gliding down into a back bowl. Within seconds I discovered myself completely alone in a vast expanse of space, with the jagged peaks towering above me, no other skier in sight and not a sound to be heard. I stood transfixed for a long while. The Scriptures use the word 'theophany' for such moments when the divine is experienced breaking through and transfiguring natural events with a sense of the sacred. When I finally pushed off with my poles, I did so slowly and deliberately, with a sense of one touched by the Holy and visited with awe. Even now, months later, I can recall that experience and those feelings with astonishing clarity. I have no other word for it than mystical". (Ryan 1986 p. 168)

By way of contrast and not contradiction I wish also to allude briefly to the level of sound, in the form of cheering, shouting, and sometimes jeering, which is a facet of sporting events. This noise may be celebratory in character, arising as a result of a catharsis where tension is released upon the scoring of a point or the attainment of a victory. In sports such as athletics

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\(^{133}\) The role of the 'senses' in heightening a sense of 'being in the body' will be of interest in Chapter 4.
and gymnastics several different events might be taking place at the same time. There may be a sudden rush of celebratory noise arising from one event at the very moment when a participant in another event is at a crucial point in their participation. There is clearly the need for an individual to 'be' in their bodies in order that such episodes of noise do not interrupt performance. Buckner aptly describes this sensations:

"The noise of the crowd intruded into my blissful trance. The vast stadium that fifteen minutes ago had appeared so remote and lonely was now full of friendly faces. The cheers and congratulations all rolled over me as I jogged a victory lap, deliriously happy. I did not even feel tired, just intoxicated, my most exhilarating race". (Buckner cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 232)

vi) Opening and closing ceremonies

Mallon (1984 pp. 333-337) provides essentially positive accounts of such occasions. However, Tomlinson (cited in Jackson and McPhail 1989 pp. 7-11) sees such ceremonies to be occasions for nationalistic 'histrionics' and show-biz spectacles, and of particular concern to this author are the ceremonies of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

Using a liturgical metaphor, it could be postulated that in the case of such events as the Olympics these spectacles perform a similar function as the 'entry rite' and the 'go in peace' of the mass. They would seem to have a quasi-religious significance with many parallels to the sorts of rituals we might observe in religious services. The trappings include officials who have a ministerial significance such as Juan Luis Samaranch, the President of the International Olympic Committee; mottoes and declarations which function like eucharistic prayers; the presence of many people from different places either in a spectative or participative capacity; symbols like doves and in the case of the Olympics the flame, lit in Olympia several months before the Olympics and then carried in an unbroken chain of movement to the place of the competition itself; dancing and music to enhance the celebration, just as these elements might be used to enhance liturgy; heads of state and government whose presence gives a status and aura, similar to that which attends an important state occasion which has itself a religious
significance. I think here of the state opening of Parliament, a royal wedding, and a coronation ceremony where the 'sacred' and 'secular' might be said to meet.

vii) The haka and other pre-match rituals
This is a feature of pre-match activity undertaken by the New Zealand All Blacks and also the Western Samoans which Simon O'Hagan describes as:

"...perhaps the best and certainly the most dramatic example of how sportsmen will sometimes put on a public display of psyching themselves up for the challenge that lies ahead, and at the same time send out warning signals to the opposition". (O'Hagan cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 103)

Phenomenologically the haka is worthy of special mention for its tribal and cultural overtones. It is also noteworthy on account of its efficacy as symbolic ritual, where those 'performing' it present a united, cohesive front to the opposition, to impress and intimidate them with their strength. Gareth Edwards' response to facing such a performance makes for an interesting comment which indicates the manner in and through which these rituals can make the individual appear to transcend the normal, almost becoming super-human in the perception of others:

"It takes a second or two to tell yourself that they are only human". (Edwards 1978 p. 59)

Alongside such rituals we must consider other aspects which in addition to singing give an individual a heightened sense of awareness, of potential, of influence and even of invincibility. These could include the promotion to captaincy or the wearing of the team's colours. The latter example seems particularly open to interpretation in the light of embodiment, particularly in relation to the identification with the team and club, and realisation of the status attained. John Gallagher sums this up:

"However, the thing that really managed to put me at ease was pulling the All Black jersey over my head. As I picked it up my mind was saying 'This is it."

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154 See McCarthy and Howitt (1983) for the story of rugby in New Zealand including an account of the Haka.
This is it' and once it was on, I felt invincible. A lot of players say they feel the same way; when they put on the All Black shirt for New Zealand they feel as if they can't be touched by defeat. I suppose it's a bit like putting on a set of chain-mail armour before going into battle". (Gallagher 1991 p. 79)

Other aspects may not have the same awesome impact as the Haka although they would appear to perform a similar function. O'Hagan brings to attention:

1) The action of the Scotland Rugby Union team before their Grand Slam decider against England in 1990 in the form of the: "slow, inexorable step of driven men",
2) The 'Graham-Gooch-patented huddle' where England cricketers link arms and form 'cosy little circles' emerging at least believing they can win, and
3) Dynamo Kiev's simple organisation of themselves into two sub-teams and subsequent practise game prior to the 1986 European Cup Winners Cup where they: "worked themselves up into such a state of high-powered readiness for the match proper that you could sense its outcome even before it had started" (O'Hagan cited in Longmore ed. 1991 pp. 103-4).

All appear to be moments where individually and corporately there is a focused and concentrated being in the body, transformed into a visual statement of unity of status and intent, which temporally synthesise the different strands of what has been, what is, and what is to come.

viii) the sacred space/place of sports competition

As part of the on-going fortification of the central themes of this study, significant attention will be paid to 'place' as a constituent theme of embodiment in Chapter 4. Here I would like to approach in brief detail some elements in relation to the sacred space/place of sports competition that are worthy of consideration at this juncture of the study.

As well as possibly viewing games as sacred, what could be termed 'sacred space' may be found in sport during periods of non-participation. These may be 'inter-game' or 'intra-game' in occurrence.
Inter-game, in other words between games, there is the opportunity to reflect on past performances, to focus on what might have been, to remember particularly accomplished feats, to nurse and recover from injuries, to re-charge emotional and physical batteries, to train and prepare. This parallels in function, periods of meditation and reflection in a religious context, especially where this occurs in retreat form, and mirrors the type of 'groundwork' that goes into the preparation of major liturgical events where practice and collaboration may need to take place. Intra-game, that is within the confines of the game, sacred space can be found in pre-match and 'half-time' talks, and 'time outs' in such sports as volleyball. They are a juxtaposition to the activity of the match, an opportunity to make brief but often effective changes to strategy, to make substitutions, for a coach to give verbal 'encouragement' to the players, just as a retreat director might encourage a retreatant.

Sportspersons often report an attachment to a particular venue, with the claim that their performance is enhanced due to factors which may include the specific physical characteristics of a place or an emotional association with it. Within some sports certain places have a vast significance, as part of the folk-lore of a given community or social world, and additionally may be a focus which unites all followers and adherents of a particular sport despite club-based allegiances. It is to such places that there are pilgrimages at times of particular competitive significance. Some have an internationally recognised importance as 'Golden Temples' since they are regarded as the actual or mythical 'homes' of a particular sport. Here the foundation and character of a sport finds embodiment in an almost universally accepted manner. It was this that Martina Navratilova acknowledged in her plucking of the 'sacred turf' of Wimbledon at her 'final' appearances. Other places are also significant because a 'key' event which acts as a peak celebration of a particular sport is located here — for instance we could include Aintree (Grand National, Horse Racing); The Crucible (Embassy World

135 The concept of a social world will be used in relation to the consideration of the experience arising in the recreational sporting context in 3.2.
136 The use of 'final' should be qualified here since tennis players tend to return in doubles and veterans matches.
137 The involvement of Embassy is interesting here because of the debate about the suitability of certain sponsors for sport.
Professional Snooker Competition); Wembley (The F.A. Cup, Football) and Lord's (Cricket). Some places of sporting significance would be open to debate in terms of their significance and therein embody debates of self-determination and nationalism. Twickenham, whilst accepted by some as the 'home' of Rugby and the focal point of English Rugby allegiance, might not compete for the emotional attachment to rugby grounds that would be held by Welsh and Scottish fans.

A further dimension of place is the widely accepted advantage of 'playing' at home. Proposals for the relocation of stadia meet with contention from the different interest groups, amongst whom are fans who may be particularly attached to a venue. Mitchell (1996) connects proposals to redevelop Wembley Stadium with the way in which the mere fact of playing at Wembley would appear to be an experience which gives individuals a heightened sense of being in the body since this is: "...probably the one patch of turf anywhere in the world that could lay claim to being the spiritual home of football" Mitchell (1996 p. 13). He contends that if the power of sentiment has any sway then Wembley will have a future:

"Wembley's obituary has edged near to the top of the queue in recent years, of course, rumours of its demise not so much exaggerated as regretfully whispered; nobody likes to see institutions crumbling, metaphorically or otherwise. And, juiced along in old age by the restorative power of sentiment, trembly Wembley won't go quietly. She will be tarted up to do the continental at Euro '96 and every single player, no matter how jaded, will be lifted just by walking on to the ground". (Mitchell 1996 p. 13)

Fans may also feel displaced as a result of commercial pressures upon clubs which may lead them to provide accommodation for business/commercial interests and the need to re-order stadia to accommodate the requirement to make such places 'all-seater'. Hornby (1992) notes that this in line with the recommendations of the Taylor Report (1990). Whilst recognising the need for change, he laments the effect of these proposals on what he terms 'the football

158 Also see Glaister (1996 p. 10) who discusses the proposals for the re-development of Wembley Stadium.
experience' which seemingly include such elements as the driving rain and an enormous rolling roar throughout the match:

"...football crowds may yet be able to create a new environment that electrifies, but they will never be able to recreate the old one which required vast numbers and a context in which those numbers could form themselves into one huge reactive body". (Hornby 1992 pp. 76-77)

This quotation seems to speak to the individual's personification, identification and realisation embodied within the crowd present at a 'sacred' sporting place. I identify research possibilities of the application of scales, similar to those used by Twigger (1994), to extend understandings of the significance of 'place' in a religious and sporting context, to understand the nature of attachment to sporting place. I also venture to suggest embodiment would be a useful window through which and by which to judge this attachment, the nature and type of experience that can be found in the mere attendance at a significant sporting place, regardless of the outcome of the competition.

Summary to 3.1
It is believed that in this sub-section, extension has been made to the understanding of experiences arising from around the context of the competition in such a way as to argue for their equally considered attention as those experiences arising from direct involvement with the game. This has been achieved by the teasing out of the strands which comprise the 'total sport experience'. Whilst conscious of negative interpretations of some of the elements considered it would appear that embodiment offers significant opportunities for the interpretation of the experience arising from what was, for purposes of classification, termed the competitive context. Encouraged by this we now move on to another area within this investigation where, through specific attention, an attempt is made to locate embodiment within experiences arising from the recreational sphere of sport.
3.2 Embodiment as an interpretive key for the experience arising from sport in the recreational context.

In the last sub-section embodiment as an interpretive key was applied to a range of aspects arising from sports involvement where the primary characteristic is a competitive element. It would seem that a heightened experience can be gained just as much through recreational sport as competitive, the types of peak experience and the elation of victory can be achieved by individuals and teams whose raison d'être, point of entry into the activity is primarily for recreation. Here we are interested to focus briefly on the 'experience' arising from human physical activity undertaken primarily for recreational reasons, and locate evidence of embodiment within this consideration. Here the achievement motivation — the perceived benefit — will centre around relaxation, enjoyment, and possibly social interaction. Because of the general absence of stress and anxiety which high-level competitive participation gives rise to, it is fair to assume a calmer and more enduring quality to the experience when sport is conducted 'recreationally' always bearing in mind the passion with which sport is played at any level.

Rosecrance's (1987) extended discussion of the concept of 'social worlds' sheds some light on the strength of the emotional and social experience that is gained through sport and the processes by which individuals within these groups might be embodied. He refers to the definition of social worlds and calls upon Lindesmith's interpretation of this concept: "...those groups of individuals bound together by networks of communication or universes of discourse and who share perspectives on reality" (Lindesmith cited in Rosecrance 1987 p. 15) This definition reminds us of the earlier identified elements of personification, identification and realisation. According to this perspective mass society can be broken down into individual units, through a classification based on the essence of their personhood and the manifestation of this in activity and endeavour:

159Recreational is clearly an umbrella term from beach cricket or park football to 'The Comrades' an ultra-marathon event in South Africa.
"Expanded cultural opportunities for travel, communication and personal choice encourage the proliferation of a host of specialised worlds...surfing, Greek dancing, Startrekking, coin collecting, river running, vanning, rock grouping, skiing and jogging" (Rosecrance 1987 p. 15)

I find the concept of social worlds conducive to the process of making sense of the recreational motivation for sport. It might be that the primary rationale for participation in a sports activity is social — where the sport is the door to this experience. It would also seem that the social world might be an unexpected by-product of participation in sport. Either way I see it as entirely possible and consistent to interpret arising experiences as embodied if, along with Lindesmith, we recognise the sharing of a vision and communication as being significant elements of sports' involvement, along with beneficial elements from sport attested to throughout the study and typified by Lesieur's contention that there is a level of social communion arising through sport (Lesieur 1987 p. 5).

Activities such as hill-walking and fishing are of interest since they would appear to offer both a peak-type and a more enduring, calmer experience. Apart from the enjoyment of the activity's inherent characteristics, there clearly is the element of the sense of solitude, the sense of harmony with oneself, with nature, with the environment, with creation, in other words oneness with nature. There exists a sort of temporary opportunity to 'drop-out' and yet return to the strictures of everyday life. There is a meditative element, akin to that experienced whilst on retreat — the opportunity to synthesise the 'I/Thou' questions of our life, to engage and reflect upon matters of difficulty and emotional aridity, to live through a 'desert experience' of a transient nature. We might recognise the social, emotional, psychological and spiritual benefits, and may articulate them — or we might just know that we have had the opportunity for a 'time-out' or a 'feel-good' experience. Amongst the plethora of writing about play the following seems particularly useful here:

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160 It is important to note that Rosecrance's particular focus is that of the social world of the gambler. By way of further elucidation he adopts Strauss' model which focuses on the structural components of social worlds such as primary activity, the site where the activity occurs, the technology to facilitate the activity and the organisation to further the activity (Strauss cited in Rosecrance 1987 p. 15).

161 See Theberge (1995) for an analysis of sport as community experienced in and through ice hockey.

"The theory of play as information-seeking suggests there is a human need to interact with the environment in order to achieve an optimal level of stimulation, arousal, and interest. Play is thus seen as a type of behaviour concerned with maintaining a stimulating flow of information; once the human person has satisfied the more pressing needs of survival, he or she tends to seek out interaction with the environment of a more challenging or complex variety...The human person is viewed as having a need to produce effects in the environment and to demonstrate competency with a resulting satisfaction from a feeling of competency". (Snyder 1984 p. 20)

At the outset and upon initial consideration it would appear that we might use embodiment as an interpretive key for the deep level of social relationship that is experienced through recreational sport, for the relaxation that comes through the simple fact of participation in human physical activity whether as an individual or as a member of a team, for the benefits to be derived to our 'whole' beings through the involvement, and perhaps as a more appropriate key for the experience of the 'significant' other which is gained through sport. With the strictly competitive/high-level component taken out of the frame it may be that our participation in physical activity undertaken recreationally gives us a particular experience which is about us as whole beings — that the strength of the arising experience lies somewhere in an enhanced recognition of our personhood, of our being in our bodies.

Clearly experiences gained through sport in the recreational context can offer a certain type of atmosphere and arising experience which is connected with being one with nature, feeling grounded, having time to reflect, a sense of liberation, and time to recognise the paradoxes of life. Journeying 'forth' we can see that these themes are of concern in Moltmann-Wendel's (1994) work on embodiment — focus on particular themes relevant to this work will be of concern in Chapter 4. Journeying 'back', it would seem that the experience can also be interpreted as embodiment for the personification, identification and realisation which might come through participation.

163 With such activities however there are some problems arising which may speak more of the distortion of our embodiment — they can be elitist, and raise questions in relation to the environment which are paradoxical — those who love outdoor activities can also unwittingly be doing environmental damage. Additionally some sports are so dangerous that significant questions of individual responsibility are raised — mountaineers and potholers often need rescuing which can put the lives of others in danger.
3.3 Discussion of problems arising from an analysis of the competitive/recreational distinction and an assessment of embodiment as an interpretive key across these categories

In addition to the problem already identified in relation to the evaluation of such a diverse range of physical activities the particular problem identified at this stage of the study is the extent to which embodiment not only speaks to the experiences which clearly arise from and pertain to either the competitive or recreational context but also to the complexities, areas of overlap, 'crossing of purposes', paradoxes which are apparent within the two areas. What category of understanding can we find which effectively speaks a) to each context and b) speaks within, clarifies and interprets the nuances?

Difficulties of description, classification, analysis and interpretation arise, because of a blurring of the edges between competitive and recreational sport. Some of the activities considered as recreational may well have a competitive element, and the physical demands and rigour involved should in no way be underestimated, nor should the competitive dimension. Sunday morning football is amongst the most fiercely contested of any sporting endeavour, popular with thousands on a weekly basis with teams based in the workplace or arising out of social relationships such as those revolving around the social world of a public house.

Moreover as well as giving rise to gentler 'moments' through the beneficial effects of social interaction and physical exercise, recreational activities can also offer peak-type, ecstatic, heightened experiences. These originate from the attainment of a target — a hole in one scored in a round of golf, a hat-trick of wickets in cricket, a '147' in snooker, or a nine-dart finish in darts\(^\text{164}\). Additionally 'outdoor' activities seem to be particularly likely to offer an

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\(^{164}\) These moments are particularly significant for what they express about our being in our bodies. Each of these different phenomena, are arguably only possible when there is a fusion of aspects of ourselves. They are relatively infrequently occurring - for example in twenty-one years of world championship snooker competition held at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield a '147' break was achieved on only four occasions by Cliff Thorburn, Jimmy White, Stephen Hendry and lastly Ronnie O'Sullivan in May 1997 who completed this feat in only five minutes and twenty seconds.
exhilarating experience — the scaling of a peak, the simple act of walking where one feels at one with nature and recognises one's 'embodiment' within creation, the attainment of a goal specific to that activity — such as catching a fish for the first time or the rush of adrenaline occurring when surfing a wave.

Earlier, the marathon was used as exemplary of the emotional/spiritual aspects of sport, encapsulated within one event, in an attempt to interpret the 'working through' of the cyclical dimension of such an event as an experience of embodiment. We can return to the marathon now, this time to thematise an occasion such as the London Marathon in order to illustrate it as paradigmatic of the contradictions, the problems of description and interpretation that can arise from a crossing of purposes largely connected with the different participation motivations. It is perceived that embodiment speaks to the arising issues.

a) On the one hand this event is a significant component of the competitive, high-level, professional athletics calendar, regularly attracting the world's top long-distance runners and acting as an indication of who is 'on form' and whose preparation is going well for events later in the year such as the Olympic or Commonwealth Games. Disabled athletes who train and compete at an international level similarly regard the London Marathon as a personal and public statement of their form. Some participate against their own expectations, whether it is to beat their personal best, to improve on last year's time — or simply to finish, and may or may not be running to raise money for charity. A huge number compete for this sole purpose. These individuals may never have run a marathon before or undertaken any serious training.

165 See Turner (1996) for an account of the different type of participants. In relation to age range and what are termed 'special' athletes Turner says: "This year's age range is from 17-84, they vary from world class to the lucky to be alive" (Turner 1996 p. 23).

166 On a much smaller scale I was part of a group who 'ran' together in the Tunbridge Wells half-marathon in 1992. The group ranged from 1) a man who had completed an ultra-marathon in South Africa — the Comrades race is considered to be one of the most rigorous of its kind in the world, 2) myself who had at various times been actively involved in physical activity, 3) some individuals who exercised informally for health/recreational purposes. This range of previous experience and ability was embodied in the joint competing of all for a sole purpose which was to raise money for Cancer Research. The starting point for this was the successful treatment of one of the group of runners. His participation in this physical activity as part of the group, against all odds, could be meaningfully interpreted as an experience of embodiment.
As part of his analysis of the satisfaction of competition, Snyder (1984) cites the work of Nash who recognises the intrinsic dimension of taking part in a fun run which is organised without regard to winning:

"...people are supposed to enjoy themselves, each according to their own individually defined motivation for running....To simply participate and to run as far as one can in the presence of others who intrinsically feel the goodness of the fun may be eventful". (Nash cited in Snyder 1984 p. 20)

Stebbins' (cited in Snyder 1984 pp. 16-18) offers some insights useful for analysing the sport role and possible motivations. He draws the distinction between leisure as 'casual' or 'serious'. Casual leisure includes activities such as watching television, going on a picnic, whereas serious leisure is distinguished by the: "development of skills and knowledge, the accumulation of experience and the expanding of effort" (cited in Snyder 1984 pp. 16-18).

For Stebbins serious leisure is a significant way to find self expression and personal fulfilment and he argues that it has the potential for greater 'pay-offs' than casual leisure. Moreover there is are characteristics that should be seen as continuous in nature rather than belonging to different categories. Accompanying serious leisure is the requirement to work through pain and commit a significant degree of effort and personal commitment; there is a 'life-cycle' to the involvement — with intensity and turning points; enduring benefits such as self-enrichment and self-enhancement, and a sense of achievement; an identification of the individual with the pursuit; and participation in a sub-culture of special beliefs, norms, values and standards. Thus does the sport role 'denote' part of one's self-identity (Stebbins cited in Snyder 1984 pp 16-18).

b) Taking an overview of the London Marathon, we see in one event the possibility of a synthesis of both the peak type of experience most commonly associated with achievement in competitive activity, and the less temporally-focused experience which is a feature of much recreational activity. It can also be noted that within an individual's participation there may be

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167 Snyder utilises Stebbins' work in his consideration of sport involvement for the handicapped (Snyder 1984 pp.16-26).
a coming together of several characteristics of experience. An individual's completion of an event may be relative to all sorts of expectations, and participation may be undertaken for a variety of reasons known only to him. The completion of the event, even in a comparatively slow time, may be a huge personal milestone, achievement and 'victory' of sorts.

I suggest that because of the different characteristics, evident within an event and within the possible experience of an individual competitor, established categories of understanding such as peak experience and timeless moment can be seen to be lacking insofar as they cannot be comprehensively applied. Whilst experiences may well be defining and/or consciousness expanding, it is difficult to justify their description and interpretation as peak, ecstatic, or timeless.

As a description of the recognition of self that arises deep within us through these consciousness expanding and defining moments/experiences 'embodiment' may well appear to offer more possibilities. Furthermore, within this complex of experiential aspects that clearly arise in the example of the London Marathon but which can also be identified within and across a range of sporting events, we might recognise some of the themes of embodiment which will be of concern in Chapter 4 such as the role of the senses. Also apparent are the afore-mentioned aspects of embodiment in the form of personification, identification and realisation. The experience of the 'winner' of the race may well be that of embodiment — where that peak moment, the ecstasy and the exhilaration brings into their personhood aspects of human experience not previously experienced; an identification of his/her individual achievement, and a realisation of who s/he is — where this 'is' forms an existential statement. In the case of the 'ordinary' participant the self-recognition may come through a variety of factors related to the participation motivation whether that be the recognition of one's personhood through the social interaction, the emotional experience of completing such a rigorous event, the achievement of the personally set goal; the identification will come through the locating of one's efforts within the wider domain; and realisation may occur of one's strength and resources. All of this rests on the understanding of the marathon as a profound
and intense experience, as a combination of experiences within the one race ranging through emotions of hope, expectation, self-belief, despair, self-doubt which are at one and the same time mingled in linear and cyclical ways and which contribute to the 'piecing of the quilt' (Furlong 1988 p. 2).

This dialogue with the event and with oneself that occurs within the participant in the case of an individual activity and between participants in a team activity is a recognised phenomenon in other sports. According to one analysis of tennis, the psychological and emotional processes involved are known as the 'inner game' which describes so eloquently the mingling of experience, the manner in which the tennis player lives in paradoxes and moments which are in quick succession soul-destroying, liberating, and redeeming. The interesting thing about tennis is that the key moments are so concentrated.

As part of this summary I wish to make some further observations in relation to embodiment:

In encompassing the range of experiences through sports participation, embodiment would seem almost to offer possibilities for the manner in which a series of experiences may be formative upon our personal development over a period of time. This series of experiences may give rise to a negative state as we shall see in Chapter 6, or to a state of wholeness, where it is perceived that this comes through a recognition of our brokenness and a working through of the paradoxes of life. This point is most effectively described by reference to two famous sportspeople and the personal and public trials that they have faced as a result of their participation at a high level of competitive sport.

The middle-distance runner Diane Modahl was accused of taking performance-enhancing drugs and was subsequently banned from international competition. At great personal cost,

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168 There are some variables to be considered here — a) the pursuit of victory against time confines (examples being games with time restrictions such as rugby) where the participant is aware that time is running out, or b) the pursuit of victory against the opponent's progress towards that same goal (an example being activities without time constraints such as tennis).
emotionally and financially, she has fought to clear her name. Her disappointing withdrawal, forced by injury, from her event in the Atlanta Olympics was another element of the cycle of hopes and disappointments, struggles and successes which she experienced. Her participation in sport could be seen as a metaphor for the mingling of embodiment and the distortion of embodiment which has characterised her life at the time.

Stuart Pearce missed a penalty in a sudden-death shoot out in the World Cup of 1990, effectively signalling England's departure from the competition at the semi-final stage. In the 1996 European Championship, Pearce bravely stepped forward to take a penalty. His reaction upon scoring was seen by millions, his facial expressions putting beyond all doubt the depth at which experiences arising from physical activity are felt. The facts of the case, the clear emotion along with Pearce's comments after the match can be effectively interpreted using terms more commonly associated with theological discussion. Whilst successful in the intervening six years, Pearce carried with him this brokenness. His action in scoring in Euro '96 was at once an atonement and redemption both in a personal and public sense (see Lawrence 1996). On account of this therefore it was a poignant moment when four days later Pearce was amongst the first to comfort Gareth Southgate whose penalty miss caused England's departure from the tournament, reminding us of the earlier quoted maxim of Fox that:

"When a person has suffered deeply even once and has owned that suffering, that person can never forget and never fail to recognise the pain of others". (Fox 1983 p. 143)

169 Peter Terry (1989) shows that participants in individual sports experience greater anxiety before, during, and after competition than participants in team sports since there is an increased sense of isolation in individual sports like gymnastics, tennis and golf than in the 'relative anonymity' of team sports. However, there are some moments in team sports when one individual is stressed more than his or her team mates by being put momentarily in the spotlight. The batsman in cricket, the shooter in netball, and the player who takes a penalty in hockey or soccer are all faced with moments of isolation when their individual contribution is placed under close scrutiny" (Terry 1989 p. 196). In the BBC TV programme 'Match of the Eighties' (4th August 1997), the former Brighton F.C. player Gordon Smith recalls his failure to score the winning goal from what would have been the last kick of the match against Manchester United in the 1983 F.A. Cup Final. He was clear 'on goal' and yet shot straight at the goalkeeper. He described it as the: "...miss that would come back to haunt me in future years".
It is important to clarify that I am not suggesting that all descriptions of experience arising from sport are reducible to embodiment, other terms have their own specific and valid foundation, function and application. Nor am I seeking to use embodiment in opposition to the more established keys, but rather to argue for its use as part of a spectrum of descriptions of the experiences arising through both competitive and recreational sport and particularly where it is perceived that there is a crossing of purposes and characteristics. There seems to be a need for terms which facilitate dialogue within an example of an experience and across a range of different experiences. What I am arguing for is embodiment to be considered alongside the categories of understanding considered in Chapter 2 as complementary, revealing a different side of the picture, a different light to the diamond, in a similar way to the cube of Niebuhr's imagining:

"H. Richard Niebuhr spent a number of years trying to formulate a comprehensive perspective on faith. He likens faith to a cube, from any one angle of vision, the observer can see and describe at least three sides of the cube. But the cube has back sides, bottom and insides as well. Several angles of vision have to be co-ordinated simultaneously to do any real justice in a characterisation of faith". (Niebuhr cited in Fowler 1981 p. 67)

3.4 Embodiment as an interpretive key for the experience arising from the spectator context of sport.

Ellis Cashmore (1990) shows that the basis for spectating is found in the existence of activities that can be viewed and analysed by others. This forms the basis of a type of vicarious participation which is the experiencing of an event in an imaginative way through the actions of the participants. He contends that archery was one of the first events which facilitated the execution, measurement and analysis of a symbolic hunt:

"The facility for bringing the rationality and emotion of a hunt to a home base made it possible to include dozens, or hundreds, of people in the whole experience. Just witnessing an event offered some continuity, however tenuous, within change: spectators could 'feel' the drama and tension of a supposed hunt from another age, through the efforts of the participants". (Cashmore 1990 p. 44)
This raises questions: What is the significance of contemporary sporting competition for the spectator? How can the experience arising from the spectator's relationship with the event, the participants and fellow spectators be defined? What does embodiment offer to the description and interpretation of the spectators' experience? This section will aim to look at what might be the more positive aspects of the spectators experiences whilst the distortion and exploitation of spectators will be considered in Chapter 6.

The significance of human physical activity emerges if we include 'spectators' actually present at an event and those 'present' by means of media coverage. Eric Cantona, in his much discussed *La Philosophie de Cantona* (1995), claimed in celebration of football: "Football is perhaps the last spectacle which is able to create an open and intense social relationship. Nobody is forced to come to the stadium. Nobody is made to sing". He also contended that: "...there is no finer childhood than that which is balanced between sport and the imaginary" (Cantona cited in Wheen 1995 p. 3). Whilst this is clearly a point of contention we can say with certainty that the act of spectating at sporting events feeds the imagination and fantasies of many children in terms of their sporting aspirations. Arguably these are part of a wider imagining of one's being in the future. As if to balance the stark commercialism of Alan Shearer's £15 million transfer to Newcastle United Football Club in the summer of 1996, much was made of the 'home-coming' of the 'geordie lad', the sheet-metal worker's son from Tyneside (source BBC News 8th August 1996). In the manner usual of the humour and inventiveness of the football fan the spirit of the footballing summer of '96 was harnessed with the re-working of 'Football's Coming Home' to 'Shearer's coming home' thereby appropriating the embodying spirit that underpinned this song. The fickleness of football fans was indicated by the speed with which Blackburn fans vocalised Shearer's fall from grace in their eyes.

As Beisser shows the 'fan': "...enjoys a peculiarly luxurious position between the camaraderie and the anonymity of the crowd. He can share intense feelings with strangers who understand" (Beisser cited in Snyder 1984 p. 139). The spectator enjoys an immediate or
distanced relationship between the participant/event and him/herself. Beisser describes the fan as an athlete once removed, since s/he is an athlete in spirit if not in fact. He shows that through this vicarious participation, the fan experiences the joy of victory, the sorrow of defeat, and the tension of the decisive moments. Moreover:

"Additionally, even if involvement is impossible because of physical impairments, one may participate in sport by intense forms of spectatorship, such as a collector of sport memorabilia or membership in fan clubs that often result in incorporating the characteristics of serious leisure. Indeed, sport spectatorship that includes a deep psychological identification with a team may enhance self esteem as fans 'bask in the reflected glory' of successful others with whom they identify". (Beisser cited in Snyder 1984 p. 18)

More recently and in specific relation to the community of writers Brackenbury comments that:

"The fact of knowing that we are connected with writers doing the same thing all over the continent has given us a community that is not just local". (Brackenbury 1996 p. 7)

This connects us with the concept of social worlds already considered and has cross-relevance for the spectator context. The conjoining of an individual with others reaches striking proportions for events of national significance — here the hopes and dreams of members of a social world — perhaps joined by race, nationality, or adherence to a particular team — are embodied.

Various descriptions, definitions and taxonomies have been identified in relation to the spectator as fan. Loy (1968) defines a fan as a special type of consumer who is an:

"...individual who has both a high personal investment in and a high personal commitment to a given sport" (Loy 1968 p. 70). He also helpfully draws distinctions between primary consumers who become vicariously involved in a sport through live attendance — these are

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170 Here, Beisser uses athlete in the broad sense of the word, meaning sportsperson, and not with a meaning specific to track and field.
active spectators, and secondary consumers who are those who vicariously involve themselves through the mass media and are defined as passive spectators — a definition which I feel does not allow for the actuality of physical movement conducted by sports fans. Loy also discusses tertiary consumers who become vicariously involved with sport other than as a spectator through conversations about sport or reading about sport (Loy 1968 pp. 69-70). Barnett (1990 p. 93) indicates that there are two types of viewer. The first is a committed person who will watch anything, the second is someone whose disposition towards sport will depend on extraneous factors like programming and a special interest generated by a particular event or personality. He contends that there is also the likely existence of a third category which is composed of the casual viewer who is not committed to watching a sport wherever televised but to certain events within sport. I would like to add a fourth — the spectator, of whom there are many, who will watch when a match has a particular national significance or where a particular personality seems to harness the feeling of a particular moment in time. It is within these examples that the spectating of sport is particularly unitive, harnessing the spirit of the time when there was an embodying of a common interest. From recent memory some notable examples exist:

"When in June 1963 Henry Cooper floored Cassius Clay at the end of round four, the nation counted in unison". (Barnett 1990 p. 95)

and in relation to the snooker match between Dennis Taylor and Steve Davis in the final of the World Snooker Championship of 1985:

"...the drama which was unfolding on those millions of small screens and kept the goggle-eyed viewers out of their bed had more twists than the most outrageous thriller, more emotion than the most soppy soap operas and an unbelievably tense climax". (Dennis cited in Herd 1993 p. 157)"
These anecdotal examples are underpinned by a phenomenological significance to spectating which is beyond question, indeed in any consideration of the experience arising from sporting activity the depth and intensity of the spectator experience cannot be underestimated. Exemplary of this is Michael Novak’s *The Joy of Sports* (1976), a book about the theology of sport inspired by Novak’s reflection that at the age of 40 he cared so much for the fortunes of the Dodgers. The spectator may be involved in a range of activities associated with adherence to a particular team, but as Cashmore shows it is the performance itself which is the focus for and the object of the interest and emotion:

“Question anyone who has witnessed a sports event firsthand, or even on television, and they will be unlikely to disagree that the essence of sport lies in the actual sporting performance. The moment when competitive humans bring to an end their preparations and make visible their self-willed mastery of a particular set of skills is an engaging experience that easily surpasses reading reports, watching interviews, or studying form, or any of the other ancillary activities associated with sport”. (Cashmore 1990 p. 13)

We can employ an approach similar to that of Novak (1976) which occupies a particular place in the theology of sport which involves the identification of ‘religious’ elements within sport. Upon such a basis are claims made in relation to sport as a religion. The identification of religious elements in relation to spectators and spectating would engender various insights. Through the vicarious nature of sports spectating it might be said that individuals can step outside of themselves, to ‘mystically’ engage with a team in a relationship which also involves thousands of others actually/really present and sometimes symbolically present throughout the medium of TV/satellite/radio. The shouts of these displaced supporters can have a prayer like quality to them, the spectator knows that they cannot be heard in the sporting arena itself,

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172 In a different context Hentschke (1993) has conducted some interesting research in relation to listening to music in an audience setting and musical development.
173 The Dodgers are an American baseball team.
174 Conversely such an approach is one which raises alarm bells amongst those concerned with idolatrous elements which might enter sport.
175 For a discussion of sport on television see Barnett (1990).
but this does not stop the verbal encouragement from the living room. This is the sporting equivalent of bringing an individual or team into prayerful consciousness. In an interactive age we arguably relate far more with the micro-chip and associated technology than we do with religion. This interpretation of spectating according to the motifs of organised religion undoubtedly has a function in terms of the development of understanding of the extent to which spectating may give rise to some experiences which might otherwise be filled by mainstream religion and can be seen as part of a tradition within the 'theology of sport' for which such an interpretation is deemed to be important. According to such an analysis it is clear that the 'religious' significance of sports spectating might be analysed.

As indicated in the introduction however, I believe that this type of approach to the experience arising from sport only provides part of the picture and indeed to stop here is to locate one's interpretation in a context which rises and falls with ways of knowing that delimit our experience and its significance. It is certainly an approach which does not do full justice to the paradoxes of sport, to the construction of emotional experience in sport, to sport as part of a system that can so easily preserve the interests of dominant groups and which can effectively be an impediment to the full and unbridled experiencing of our selfhood. I am far more concerned to look at the manner in which the experience of the spectator can be recognised and harnessed and how, through other factors, we might know and understand more of what the experience of being a spectator implies for our 'being'.

The following two examples indicate the process by which the spectator might be informed through the actions of the participant and the radical potential of the relationship. Burt shows how the spectator is challenged by dancers such as Fergus Early by means of dance vocabularies and through the unconventional use of his body to reassess aspects of masculine

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176 A humorous anecdote illustrates this point well. Immediately prior to Gary McAllister's penalty kick for Scotland against England in the European Championship match of 15th June 1996 the ball inexplicably moved to the side several inches. Despite the fact that this penalty was arguably saved due to the skill of the goalkeeper as opposed to the ineptitude of the penalty taker, one 'pundit' member of ITV's commentary team attributed the ball's movement to millions of England fans, present as spectators and watching at home, blowing the ball in unison.
experience and identity that are made invisible in mainstream cultural forms (Burt 1995 p. 166). Whilst much of the work seems to have had the function of highlighting some of the more negative elements of being man in western society:

"...there are sometimes glimpses of possible alternatives where the rules are ignored and conventions and traditions destabilized and denaturalised. Where these works challenge homophobic, heterosexual conditioning, restrictive logocentric ways of thinking and communicating, or tightly bound aspects of male identity, they give glimpses of possible alternatives. They suggest that there are ways in which some men are surely, albeit with great difficulty and in slow motion, responding to recent debates about the nature of gendered identity and dancing and working to acceptable ways of being masculine". (Burt 1995 p. 189-199)

In a different, although still relevant context Stella Baltazar (cited in Manazan ed. 1996) illustrates how an Indian classical dancer called Mallika Sarabai, has begun to challenge the mythical figure Rama by taking the role in dance of the daughter of Sita which when performed in front of an audience clearly has a profound message to convey. Through this she calls into question the Sita's traditional position and liberates the Sita who represents the cause of right. After questioning Rama's cowardly actions she refuses to join her husband and takes refuge in the bosom of Mother Earth. Baltazar comments that:

"Our Hindu sisters in this way offer a new hermeneutic of a traditionally venerated Indian myth as an attempt to re-interpret Hinduism and re-read Indian tradition from the perspective of women". (Baltazar cited in Manazan ed. 1996 p. 62)

Quite clearly then it is difficult and imprudent to make generalisations about spectator tendencies or underestimate the complex nature and inherent possibilities within the

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177 See Horwitz (1993) for a treatment of the possibilities of challenging dominant gender ideology through dance.
178 Burt (1995 p. 166) shows that a result of the pluralism of post-modern practice is that a 'hierarchy' has ceased to exist between different styles or subjects in dance.
179 The use of dance here can be contextualised within the account provided by Gnanadason (1994) who says: "The holistic vision of Indian women springs from their experience of being women in a world that has denied them a life of dignity and personhood" (Gnanadason 1994 p. 77).
relationship between spectator/spectator, spectator/participant\textsuperscript{180}, or spectator/event. The point must be made that sporting events (which include dance-type activities in the form of ice-dance, gymnastics and so on) can have a unitive function, an educational function, or conversely can serve a purpose which impedes our liberation and exploits our embodiment.

Barnett's analysis of the role of spectators helps to guard against any generalisations regarding their function or characteristics (1990 p. 93). This is important for our purposes since any claim to interpret the experience of the spectator in the light of embodiment may or may not be relative to the degree of emotional investment. It is also vital to note that an understanding of the behaviour of spectators is a crucial component in the efficacy of advertising campaigns.

I identify the role of the spectator, but more particularly the experience of the spectator, as seriously under-researched given its phenomenological significance and moreover what I see to be the mystical, psychological and emotional aspects of the involvement of the spectator with the competition itself, in relationship to the players, coaches, and other spectators and the obvious socio-political possibilities of the spectator/participant relationship.

What can usefully be said then about the experience arising from spectating? It is here in regard to the experience of the spectator that embodiment seems to offer possibilities as a radical interpretive key to a significant area of involvement in relation to human physical activity. Often to a greater degree than the players who are actively involved, and the manager/coach whose concentration is focused on the tactical and technical implications of his decisions, the spectator feels, lives out and experiences the range of emotions associated with a particular sporting scenario\textsuperscript{181}. The individual has total and complete involvement with their whole beings in their capacity as spectators, and in the course of one match they can have a

\textsuperscript{180} For an examination of this relationship focusing on the inherent aesthetic aspects see Arnold (1985 pp. 1-7).

\textsuperscript{181} Notable examples are Elton John crying prior to Watford's performance in the F. A. Cup Final, Alan Wells' wife's reaction upon his victory in the 1980 Olympics 100m sprint event, and the joy of Mrs. Underwood, mother of Rory and Tony on their simultaneous appearance as part of the England Rugby team.
range of experiences, from ecstasy to despair, feelings of liberation, relationship, identification with self and others and recovery of their team's previous team status and qualities. It is also significant that these experiences are not fleeting in significance — they are influential, life-enhancing and possibly life-changing. Reminders of particularly memorable sporting events have a Proustian quality to them, as Hey's comments show in relation to his afore-mentioned memories of the 1970 World Cup:

"Twenty years later, the memories of that summer are still strong enough to make me feel the warm sun again, to hear the hiss of the satellite transmission on the television, to recall the thrill of Brazil's invention and daring, and, yes, the sense of gnawing dread which 'A' levels induced. But I remember Brazil more than examinations". (Hey cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 72)

Embodiment here seems to offer significant interpretive possibilities. As with defining moments of national/international significance the popular conception is that most people can remember where they were when England won the World Cup in 1966. As such it is one of those moments which I would describe as cutting itself indelibly into time, into individual and corporate consciousness. Other moments such as these include the outbreak of war, the Hillsborough or Heysel disasters, the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima, the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and John Lennon, and the first lunar walk. As such I contend that these moments constitute landmarks for the history of a generation which both form and reflect what I have called the Zeitgeist, reflecting the spirit of the time. They are pivotal points, motifs, and part of a contemporary oral tradition whose significance cannot be underestimated. I argue that for all the brokenness often implied these are experiences of individual and corporate embodiment. Whether at a level of fantasy or whether a true reflection of the Zeitgeist England's victory here is, I would argue, an example of a corporate embodied experience, where moreover, the total significance amounted to more than the sum of the significance to individual players or supporters. An example where, for a moment, our embodiment was experienced to the core in such a way as to leave an indelible mark on our narratives, our histories.
Summary of main findings in relation to embodiment as an interpretive key for human physical activity across the three sporting contexts in question, competitive, recreational and spectative.

1) in the competitive context of human physical activity embodiment offers a widening of interpretation away from a mere consideration of the ecstasy of victory or achievement or the desperation of defeat. Embodiment enables a recognition of the complexity, the process of the situation,

2) in the recreational context of human physical activity embodiment enables account to be made of less-temporally focused experiences which are potentially equally as significant as growth moments. It also would appear to describe the broad experience arising out of participation in sport as part of a social world,

3) with regard to the experience of the spectator embodiment has provided a window through which to focus on an area widely recognised as of significance in popular terms and yet apparently under-recognised in the literature.

Taking an overview embodiment seems to have offered particular possibilities as a way of coping with the paradoxes and dichotomies apparent in some examples across the three contexts, enabling a simultaneous identification of similarities and differences.
CHAPTER 4

A consideration of embodiment informed and enriched by reference to religious sources

In line with my overall method in this thesis, pieces of evidence relating to religious experience and the body will be presented in this chapter. We can journey ‘back and forth’ to other sections which focus on sport as embodied experience, as encounter with a transcendent sphere and we can also link to elements of the thesis which focus on the broader and perhaps more conventional spectrum of what constitutes religious experience. I have adopted some themes of embodiment identified by Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel in *I Am My Body* (1994 pp. 103-105) since this appeared to offer a coherent and productive process by which the ‘pieces’ of evidence could be presented. I have selected four areas of particular interest:

Recovery
Senses
Celebration Of The Body/Sanctity Of Place
Recognition Of God In Human Experience

In making reference to *I Am My Body* as a methodological tool and ‘jumping off’ point I am not seeking to authenticate Moltmann-Wendel’s statements as being a complete and comprehensive reflection and analysis of embodiment. Through the synthesis of both insights into embodiment provided thus far and defining characteristics of embodiment which it is intended that this chapter will make clear, it is hoped to lay the strongest possible foundations for the on-going resolution of the critical question.

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182 In my use of the term ‘religion’ it should be noted that as I am Christian many examples and much of the overall language for discussion have their roots in the Christian religion.
183 In addition to these Moltmann-Wendel recognises some other key themes which will be integrated as and where appropriate, including paradox, relationship, incarnation, ecological concerns, humanity of Jesus and contemporary concerns.
184 Moltmann-Wendel herself is quite clear about the purpose: “It is not meant to be a revival of Western individualism in feminine form. It refers to a self which is bound up in this multi-dimensional body and which experiences relationships and selfhood through it” (Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. xi).
Recovery

"A theology of embodiment does not seek to outline a new theology, but it does seek to open up a forgotten place which is important today, from which there can be theological thought and action: the human body. It seeks to draw attention to our origin, to the fact that we are born from mothers, a fact which is constantly forgotten in a culture of fathers but which shapes us all our lives, whether we are women or men". (Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. 103)

In common usage, the term recovery would generally be taken to mean the state of being which is an improvement on a previous physical or emotional condition. It can also be used to describe the finding of lost items. Religiously speaking the term 'recovery' incorporates something of the spirit of these definitions but has a discrete purpose, meaning and significance which will be explored further.

In relation to feminist dialogical-hermeneutic biblical studies, recovery is the tool of re-visiting a foundational text of Christianity in order to indicate its misappropriation by a dominant patriarchal, andocentric culture and also to show how a text might be read anew. Schüssler-Fiorenza contends that unless key stories are theologically conceptualised as integral to the proclamation of the gospel: "...biblical texts and traditions formulated and codified by men will remain oppressive to women" (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1991 p. xv). Such a recovery of woman's history must both restore women to history and indicate the history of Christian beginnings to women (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1991 p. xx):

"Both Christian feminist theology and biblical interpretation are in the process of rediscovering that the Christian gospel cannot be proclaimed if the women disciples and what they have done are not remembered. They are in the process of reclaiming the Supper at Bethany as women's Christian heritage in order to correct symbols and ritualisations of an all-male Last Supper that is a betrayal of true Christian discipleship and ministry". (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1991 p. xiv)
In Schüssler-Fiorenza's work, associated concepts of reconstruction, rediscovery and reclamation are employed in addition to recovery. The mutuality and symbiosis of these theological tools is demonstrated in her succinct explanation of the explorations of the book which:

"... attempt to reconstruct early Christian history as women's history in order not only to restore women's stories to early Christian history but also to reclaim this history as the history of women and men". (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1991 p. xiv)

Recovery is of importance to Mary Grey in *Redeeming the Dream* (1989). In a manner which demonstrates the inter-connectedness of contemporary theologies (which I believe is a major factor in their ability to make pastoral response to contemporary spiritual questions) she makes reference to one of the most significant figures within the creation-centred tradition. She illustrates the manner in which Matthew Fox urges us to recognise and reject the harm that has been done by a redemption-based spirituality, and the call he makes for us to recover the opposite perspective in the form of a creation centred-theology and spirituality (Fox cited in Grey 1989 p. 5). Grey shows that for women, the act of recovering a sense of being created in the image of God is a redemptive act, where they can reclaim lost wholeness and a sense of self-worth (Grey 1989 p. 6). She adds a note of caution in saying:

"In our over-anxiety to oppose the strand of anti-physicality and anti-sexuality found in Christian theology and assert the positive qualities of bodiliness, and in particular, female bodiliness, we can too easily imagine a spirituality formed exclusively from female experiences — such as childbirth — praying to God the Mother, stressing only qualities of nurturing and nourishing — and this at a time when women struggle to succeed in professional spheres, when we seek for ways of identification other than our physical roles. There has to be a way of reclaiming bodiliness and wounded sexuality expressive of the totality of human personality". (Grey 1989 p. 6)

Reference across a range of sources in search of evidence of the earlier identified themes of embodiment indicates that 'recovery' is recognised to be possible and desirable in many facets of 'being'. Although differently and contextually expressed, a significant theme within creation
spirituality, feminist theology, and eastern spirituality appears to be the 'recovery' of the child 'within', where authors share similar insights and concerns. Lurie (1990) is concerned that under the guise of 'development' our losing touch of the inner child has affected our capacity to engage with ourselves and others:

"Folklore is not only a medium helping its audience to understand and control a world and allowing the release of forbidden impulses; it is also the oldest form of the arts. Before there were paintings and symphonies and ballets there were beautiful woven cloths and baskets, haunting tunes, and ceremonial dances. Before there were novels and television shows there were legends and ballads, which everybody in the society knew and repeated. Today, unfortunately, most of us are consumers rather than producers of the arts; and a lot of what we consume, though it goes down easily, is second-hand and second-rate. Or else it is so complicated and intellectual that it doesn't have much impact: we have to work to understand it, maybe work even harder to like it". (Lurie 1990 p. 202)

She shows how children are still living partly in a folk culture, evidence which comes in that:

"...they are still actively inventing and passing on stories and verses, some of which have the simplicity, originality, and profundity of great folk literature" (Lurie 1990 p. 203), and she indicates that:

"Too often, as we leave the tribal culture of childhood — and its sometimes subversive tales and rhymes behind, we lose contact with instinctive joy in self-expression; with the creative, imagination, spontaneous emotion, and the ability to see the world as full of wonders. Staying in touch with children's literature and folklore as an adult is not only a means of understanding what children are thinking and feeling; it is a way of understanding and renewing our own childhood". (Lurie 1990 p. 204)

In the wider context of literature there are strong autobiographical accounts of the magic and sanctity of childhood which suggest an experience that could be described as embodied. Polly Devlin invokes language which contains striking and strong visual imagery. Recalling the 'undeniable beauty of her childhood', what her sister described as its physical and sensual quality, she says:
"It was so tranquil and a good deal of the time it was golden. There was the endless sound pattern and routine of a small farm: the slow mooing of the cows on their way to the pasture and on their return in the evening; the jangle and jingle of a horse's leathers and reins and the clip-clop of hooves on the roads; the great rumble of the hay-lifter". (Devlin in Quinn ed. 1990 pp. 43-44)

This quotation has impact and relevance within this section but also acts as a point of synthesis with other important aspects of the study. It undoubtedly shows the power of revisiting and recovering significant formative experiences which have impact precisely because they are not 'once and for all'. Moreover, the physical dimension of the language has enormous efficacy, conveying the enduring role of our sensory experience. The detail and richness of the author's recall of these memories and experiences in and through the physical, suggests an experience that was at the time 'embodied' and continues to offer a point of reference for an experience of embodiment which lies in such memories and their subsequent invocation into 'active consciousness'.

Given the particular context that embodiment will be applied to forthwith, these references to the recovery of the spontaneity and creativity of our childhood are of relevance, insofar as much of the quality of childhood is experienced through physical activity — in the form of play, whether individual or interactive, or in relation to discovery in the natural world. In both contexts it would appear that as children we are largely unhindered in our capacity to experience in our bodies. This takes place on an unconscious level — as does the celebration of our embodiment manifest through the readiness to express ourselves in and through the physical. Of course the reality for many children is that:

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185 I develop this term here to describe the recall of people, places, and events which is more than a memory but which has a quality and dimension evocative of the original experience. These experiences are not simply reducible or equivalent to the well-documented Proustian type experience where a particular object evokes a certain memory. I contend that this 'active consciousness' occupies a particular place within our 'embodied' memories — where memories are not only remembered but also felt in our physical selves. This would appear to link with the manner in which memories arising from physical activity are remembered. Most participants would undoubtedly attest to a form of an 'internal re-enactment' of a winning moment or a particularly successful manoeuvre. It is almost a form of mental rehearsal a posteriori, (see Chapter 2 for earlier reference to mental rehearsal).
"...child labour — especially in developing countries — is among the greatest evils of the age. It denies young people their entitlement to physical, social and spiritual growth. It denies their very humanity". (Monks 1996 p. 912)

It seems that unless the right to childhood can be reclaimed for these children, their contextualised experience of embodiment will continue to be exploited.

Within this study, which seeks to take account of the synthesis of the physical and the spiritual, the spirituality of the Eastern Christian communities are of interest. Janet K. Ruffing (1995) aptly alludes to and summarises the contribution made by some sectors within the Eastern Churches when she shows that Eastern methods of meditation practise have enabled the preservation of teaching about the physical in ways more 'accessible' than have been provided by the Western Christian tradition. However, related to the notion of 'recovery', she does show that 'similar processes' are 'buried' within Western spirituality and can be found not only across a range of classical Christian texts (such as those of the Ignatian tradition which incorporate the inner and outer senses in prayer), but also in the experience of women mystics who practised embodied spiritualities throughout the Middle Ages:

"Spiritual traditions in both the East and West have developed various strategies which enlist our psycho-physical reality as a partner in seeking transcendence and as a profound meditation of spirit itself. The most fundamental bodily rhythms of pulse, breath, waking and sleeping, walking and sitting still have all been combined with various types of sensory awareness and concentration focused on either internal or external sensing through the traditional five senses". (Ruffing 1995 p. 101)

It is worth remarking at this point in the survey that there is an inter-connection of themes within theologies of, or about, embodiment. As we shall see subsequently Moltmann-Wendel (1994) identifies the senses to be a significant factor within an understanding of embodiment and here the senses are identified by Ruffing to be integral to the strength of 'embodied' spiritualities.

186 Ruffing does not indicate which groups she has in mind. It is important to recognise the multiplicity of religious expression that is broadly referred to as Eastern. It must also be noted here that the spiritualities of the East do not have a monopoly on the use/ recognition of the body in prayer and of the relationship between the spiritual and the physical.
The use and efficacy of religious 'tools' such as recovery and reconstruction illustrate their centrality to contemporary theology. They encourage us that there is the opportunity for every generation to revisit familiar 'places' in order to discern and discover afresh how the 'truths' of human existence are seeking expression in the contemporary milieu. Effectively employed, recovery clearly reminds us that much of what is valid, in a religious and spiritual context, is not 'new', but originates from a depth and tradition of wisdom, insight, and understanding, thus what is of concern is the recovery of the lost strands of tradition.

As we shall see the experiences within which this wisdom lies are revisited, redeemed and recovered — a process which at a later stage may well provide encouragement for the task of recovery in some areas of sporting life\textsuperscript{187}. In fact, against this backdrop the controversy surrounding the commercialism of the Atlanta games, discussion about the types of sport for inclusion within the Olympics and questions about the character of the so-called Olympic family, the BBC TV commentator David Coleman made reference to the notion of recovery in his closing comments about the Games and its future. In illustrating that something of the original ideal had been lost he recognised that:

"...the next summer games will take us into a new century. We can sit back and enjoy the bringing together of so many nations. But the fact is that the dreams have become grossly inflated. Idealism has been overtaken by commercialism. It's time to look back and cut back. It's time, too, to look forward to refining the Olympic programme. For Britain, too, it is time to look at what we're doing for both our young and established sports men and women. Spending National Lottery money on capital projects may be needed. But what about the athletes, from all sports, who are going to fill them and inspire our children? The I.O.C. must have a re-think; so, too, must our politicians". (Coleman BBC TV Sport August 4th 1996)

\textsuperscript{187} This will be returned to in Chapter 6. The use of recovery here is not intended to imply the resurrection of attitudes towards sport which might be held by dominant groups, rather the recovery of the potential that lies within movement forms to realise something of our embodiment.
The Senses

"It seeks to give people once again the courage to use their senses, which atrophy in a rational culture, to stand by themselves and their experiences and accept themselves with their bodies, to love them, to trust them and their understanding and to see themselves as children of this earth, indissolubly bound up with it". (Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. 104)

The 'it' of Moltmann-Wendel's statement relates to one of the constituent elements of a theology of embodiment, according to her statement of such at the end of I Am My Body (1994). Her identification of the theme of the senses as being of significance and importance is truly representative of one of the major themes explicitly expressed across theologies of embodiment and other theological writing about embodiment. The senses, their importance, recovery, and celebration are seen as vital if we are to be, and become, embodied individuals and communities, fully able express the depths, extent, and reality of our being. There is an identification of the role of the senses in, amongst other areas, liturgy, our relationship with each other, and God, and in our perception of ourselves and the place and importance of our bodies.

François Marty draws our attention to what seems a fundamental and yet often forgotten fact, that in communal worship an appeal is made to the sense organs, examples being the need of the ears to attend to words spoken and the use of our mouths to join singing (Marty 1995 p. 22). For Marty the role of architecture is important since this offers a point of unity between the different arts. It does this by delimiting a space in which the arts assigned to the different senses can appear. Amongst Marty's most useful contributions is his scriptural analysis of the basis for the recognition of the importance of the senses. He shows how our spiritual sense comes to fruition where ears, eyes and touch converge. The link with worship is sought in the body of the believer which is the temple of the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19),

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188 Theological journals have acknowledged the significance of themes of 'embodiment' and 'the body' by devoting entire editions to these concerns, see Concilium (1995 Volume 3).
189 The relationship between spiritual experience and the senses can be here drawn out by way of interpretation of the sensory dimension in the subjective element of the thesis (see Chapter 1).
only by being a member of the body which is the church (Eph. 5:30). Faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:14). Seemingly the facet of antecedence is an important one related to the senses. Don G. Campbell (1989) describes how the sensory parts of the brain that operate during dreaming are different from the parts used in conscious awareness, but the sensations they give rise to are real: "These inner tones, gestures, and colours have become familiar to the mystic, to the contemplative listener, and to creative people. The awareness is deeper and more powerful than thought; it is an acute sensing in an awakened powerful space" (Campbell 1989 p. 34). The Possible Human by Jean Houston (1982) is a well-conceived and soundly-underpinned treatise of the topic of 'body-awareness' where Houston shows how our senses can facilitate either healing or changes in patterns of muscular tension and a release of inhibition of movement. Houston indicates an understanding of the role of the senses — indeed the role of all body-elements, from the outset:

"Through our bodies we experience the external world and come to know it. Incarnated, we are spirit become matter, interactive with our external environment through our skin, our muscle, our bones — a miracle of highly differentiated and flexible organism, uniquely designed for processing and acting upon information". (Houston 1982 p. 2)

Woodruff (1982) draws together themes of the soul, the senses and the body in a manner which indicates the synthesis of these elements in the relationship of the individual with God and she cites Mechtild of Magdeburg who claims her body shares in the spiritual experience:

"As love grows and expands in the soul, it rises eagerly to God and overflows towards the Glory which bends towards it. Then Love melts through the soul into the senses, so that the body too might share in it for love is drawn into all things". (Mechtild of Magdeburg cited in Woodruff 1982 p. 42)

It is interesting to note that the senses are recognised to be a vital component of catechesis and Religious Education. To a great extent, popular and well tried books on children's'

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190 The popular therapy of reflexology, a form of therapy in which the soles of the feet are massaged appears to recognise similar human elements to those mentioned here by Houston. See Gillanders (1993).

191 See Hammond and Hay (1990) for an experiential approach to Religious Education. This has however been subject to a critique by Thatcher (1991).
liturgy rely for their method, process and efficacy on sensory elements, an example being Joan Brown's *Welcome the Word* (1989). Similar use of the senses is found in the liturgical settings common amongst groups within 'The Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust' and 'Faith and Light Movement'. Here full use is made of the senses as a 'conduit' through which gospel messages and elements of worship can be conveyed as fully as possible to those with a range of disabilities.

We might pose the question as to why such an awareness of the senses is important, and if the senses are so integral to our experience and human condition then why we find it so difficult to be in touch with them, to be aware of them, to integrate our total experience within them, and to harness them. Ruffing (1995) shows that most of us need to relearn a way to experience the richness, beauty and even terror of our world. Various factors have caused a detachment from our experiencing and sensory awareness, and despite an abundance of instruments such as ultrasound imaging and magnetic resonance we are for the most part not aware of sensing which is possible in ordinary life (Ruffing 1995 pp. 104-105). Ruffing conducts an interesting discussion of the nature and range of the senses that should be considered in this debate including the extension of the traditional senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. In a manner which I find interesting given my association with sports studies, she goes on to propose the inclusion of those related to balance, spatial location, proprioception and kinaesthesia. We need to develop tactile, kinaesthetic, olfactory, or taste sensations especially in an age which depends so much on telephones, computers and a whole range of other electrical equipment:

"All consciousness eventually appears to require the language of the senses and the experienced history of sensuous life in order to communicate anything about itself at all. Our senses...are the ways we experience, remember, feel and respond to that to which we are present and conscious". (Ruffing 1995 p. 103)

Ruffing's citing of the powerful episode from John's gospel where Peter is reduced to tears (John 21: 15-19), and the use of touch as a symbol of service by Jesus at the Last Supper
(John 13: 1-11), led me to revisit the Scriptures. One could add here that for St. Thomas faith in the Resurrection came only through his use of the senses:

"Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing."
Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:27-28)

In Luke's parallel Resurrection narrative this dialogue is recorded between Jesus and the Apostles which again illustrates Jesus' invitation for others to share in the use of senses, and additionally indicates Jesus' sense of his own embodiment:

"See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have'. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?'" (Luke 24:39-41)

From her experience of retreat-giving Ruffing says that we would do well to draw upon the: 
"...storehouse of images accumulated throughout the entire history of internal and external sensation" in order to place ourselves in a gospel scene or in an imagined landscape (Ruffing 1995 pp. 105-106). As a spiritual director she has noticed that the experience of God becomes more intimate when retreatants allow images of touch, taste, sensation as well as vision to influence them. Ruffing provides what she terms 'contemporary descriptions' which include research with men and women whose spiritual directors judged that their religious experiences were constantly mediated through imagery, nature, symbol or sensations. She discovered an amazing variety of God in the senses. The respondents described internal imagery, rich experiences in nature with music, bodily sensations which registered either their psychological and physical openness to God, or a felt sense of God's presence to them or in them. The majority described the ways that remembered places and experiences subsequently became incorporated in their imaged prayer (1995 pp. 106-108). One woman described prayer that occurred primarily in images and words that led to experiences of God through physical means, an experience so powerful that:
"The only thing that made any sense was to be face down to express in the body some inner posture of surrender. Being terrified, overwhelmed, thrilled and loved, at peace, all that at once". (cited in Ruffing 1995 p. 107)

This is an interesting parallel with the use of prostration for example at ordination, professions and the solemn liturgy of Good Friday. From the context of human physical activity this action often occurs spontaneously at a point of victory, an example being the immediate, corporate falling to knees in a prayer of thanksgiving by the entire South African rugby team on their victory in the 1995 World Cup Tournament. More recent episodes come in the form of Richard Krajcek's spontaneous prostration upon victory in the Wimbledon tennis tournament of 1996 and Michael Johnson's similar action when achieving victory in the 200m sprint at the Centennials Olympics in Atlanta later that summer.

A recognition of the role of the senses in our total experiencing would seem to be a constituent part of an embodied consciousness. This sensory experience can be fostered at an early age, but the impetus towards greater accountability in education in the form of league tables continues to have a 'knock-back' effect. It is a skilled teacher who can respond to the largely enforced challenges of contemporary educational requirements whilst protecting the 'space' in which his/her charges can come to a greater understanding of themselves, their peers, and their environment through the senses which were their sole means of communication at birth, forming the essence of the expression of their being, their embodiment at that stage. It is little wonder therefore that by adulthood many of us are incapable of using our senses to appreciate both the beauty of creation and the damaging processes inflicted:

"We who have lost our sense and our senses — our touch, our smell, our vision of who we are; we who frantically force and press all things, without rest for body or spirit, hurting our earth and injuring ourselves; we call a halt".

(U.N. Environmental Sabbath Program cited in Roberts and Amidon ed. 1991 p. 92)

192 This links with ideas of peak-experience and timeless moment documented in 2.2.
Celebration of the body/sacred place

"A theological return to embodiment recalls the distinctive feature of Christianity, that God became body and in doing so has confirmed and healed our bodily nature". (Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. 103)

The allusion here to a return to the body is interesting. It brings into consciousness the incarnation, a core theme of Christianity and a facet which resonates with other understandings of embodiment. As indicated in Chapter 1 it was a growing awareness of this 'return' to the body that was a major, influential factor upon the inception and development of this study at all levels and also contributive towards the formation of the critical question. I observed evidence of this return in the fact that in recent times, wherever one has looked there seems to have been an interest in and recognition of the role to be played by the 'body' in relation to many areas of human existence not least health, education and spiritual expression.

I have deliberately included the idea of sacred place alongside celebration of the body because much of the work on the body seems to refer to the body itself as a 'sacred place', moreover there is much to be gained by taking a connected, synthesising approach to the total physical context in which we might have embodied experiences or celebrate our embodiment. This will be important to bear in mind when taking considering the panoramic physical aspects of the 'total sport experience', and in view of the debate surrounding whether the experience through sport can validly be described as religious experience.

193 'Place' was of central concern to Twiggcr (1994) in research on psychological attachment to place and identity where the area of London Docklands was of specific interest. Three studies were undertaken, firstly into aspects of the person's attachment to his/her environment, secondly into the underlying structure of the construct of place attachment and thirdly the use of established identity principles. Awareness of this work has led me to further consideration of 'place' in both the religious and sporting context. In the course of research for this study I have encountered cross-disciplinary work on pilgrimage, particularly in theology and social sciences which addresses the significance of 'place'. Additionally, anecdotal accounts of particularly significant experiences arising from human physical activity often feature what I refer to in the text as 'panoramic' physical aspects. By this I mean the range and combination of locational and physical elements which synthesise in an often unconscious manner. These elements do however contribute to what I shall term the 'total sport experience'. Here I use this term to describe the breadth and depth of encounter with self, others, the environment, and the situation which characterises involvement with sport. In Chapter 4, further discussion will take place of the significance of 'place' within sport.

194 Here I use the term 'total sport experience' to describe the breadth and depth of the encounter with self, others, the environment, the situation, that characterises involvement with sport.

195 Elsewhere in the study I allude to the spiritual/natural mysticism debate in relation to the experience arising from sport.
There is a significant range of literature calling for the body to be celebrated which reflects upon the concept of sacred place — what follows is a selection of that which is deemed most pertinent and helpful to the scheme of this study.

A good starting point is the manner in which some authors seek to define the body and examine its function, and having accomplished this, move from here to an argument for the body's capabilities to be recognised. Jane Buckingham (1995) does this in her article 'Yet in my flesh shall I see God: Culture and Embodiment' where she shows that: "The Body is a dell thing. Ensouled, essential to our personhood, compact or clumsy, our body gives us shape and resonance in the world, proposes our sexuality, expresses personality, connects us with others. It resists stasis. In death it exchanges living change for decay. Christians anticipate the body's glorification and reunion with the soul in God" (Buckingham 1995 p. 122). Of particular concern to Buckingham is the manner in which culture might bind us to a particular understanding in relation to personhood and God.

Phillip Sheldrake (1995 p. 92-93) also works around the theme of the body, however his particular concern is the celebration, the 'befriending' of the desires that we experience in and through our body. He refers to the distinction made by Cranmer in The Book of Common Prayer between the desires of our own hearts and the holy desires that proceed from God's inspiration, and then goes on to define 'holy desires' as those that ultimately find rest and quietness in God and tap into energies that are partly physical. Moreover Sheldrake's assertion that: "Spiritually, the human body is the sacrament of a person who is in the image of God" (Sheldrake 1995 p. 97), brings the reader directly into a concept of the sacramentality of personhood. It seems that if we can accept such a view it has implications for our understanding of levels of 'being' in the Church and particularly of what it means to be in our bodies. It is an understanding proposed, developed, and woven through James Nelson's work both in his earlier Embodiment (1979), and his later work on Body Theology.
"I do not just have a body, I am a body. I am always interpreting myself as a body, creating my meanings as a body and using images and language to give significance to my bodily functions and dysfunctions, states of health and disease. Knowing that and taking that seriously contributes greatly to good medical care. Too often we have been taught by culture, by religion, and by medicine that our bodies are something quite different from our real selves". (Nelson 1992a p. 124)

By way of augmentation of the importance of place within theologies of embodiment, several sources are worthy of note. Colasuonno (1992) focuses on the spirituality of the pilgrim missionary and notes some universal characteristics of those pilgrims who are on the road to a sacred place in an active relationship with mystery. Rosalind Brackenbury (1996) provides an account of the 1996 Key West Literary Seminar which had the theme of 'American Writers and the Natural World'. For her the hallmarks of the event were the intimacy and straight-talking where all contributors talked of their memories, their beliefs and the 'places' from which they came. Clearly connectedness was an underlying theme with the comments of Dan Gerber being typical of those recorded by Brackenbury: "If you look at our bodies in terms of particles and molecular structure, you can't tell where I end and you begin" (Gerber cited in Brackenbury 1996 p. 7). Brackenbury reflects:

"The words from the platform were for us. They made sense of our writing, our often isolated efforts, our passion and our sadness about the place we live in, this island, which is a microcosm of the whole world: small, vulnerable, beautiful and under attack". (Brackenbury 1996 p. 7)

The earlier mentioned Go Down to the Potter's House (O'Shea 1992) is a beautifully written book which effectively synthesises the themes of the body and the sanctity of place. Within it insights about what it means to be in our bodies are inter-woven with O'Shea's experience in the use of pottery as a retreat aid and as a path/vehicle to a deeper spirituality196. A major point of interest in the book, in fact its lynch pin, is the use of the body within the physical

196 It is worth bringing to attention the thoughts of King (1992) who says that our ecological mistreatment of the earth may stem from our view of God. Instead of viewing God as potter and the world as pot, we may need to consider the world as embodiment of God, a view which would make our inhumanity to one another and our rape of creation offences against God (King 1992 pp. 54-55).
activity of pottery as an aid to self-discovery and as a tool in retreat work. O'Shea describes the manner in which this is accomplished in what are termed 'Body in prayer retreats'. For him great power is contained in this work which evolves as a method of full-bodied prayer and a palpable way of seeking God. As if to substantiate the authenticity of this work he contends that this is in continuity with the spiritual tradition of the Dominican order, and comments that in finding this spiritual aid a recognition takes place of the fact that:

"It is often true the nearer something is the harder it is to see". (O'Shea 1992 p. 3)

Again, apparently seeking to ground the work in a deep historical and religious context O'Shea refers to the influence of the thirteenth century writing 'On the nine ways of prayer of Saint Dominic'. This relates strongly to our purpose and indicates graphically that there is a historical context to the relationship between the spiritual and the physical enshrined within mainstream Christianity, the 'still small point' of which we might describe as embodiment. O'Shea shows us that this method of praying pays special attention to bodily prayer, with each 'way' being visible in distinctive body posture. Seemingly Dominic's devotion showed plainly in his personhood. For him, as O'Shea shows, the soul stirs in the body and the body in turn stirs the soul. In Dominic prayer came from his whole self — as manifest in his preaching which abounded in stories, metaphors and other bodily ideas (O'Shea 1992 p. 2). O'Shea's work, as detailed in his book, is primarily located in a retreat house in County Cork, Ireland. Again we have the notion of place, an appreciation of the sanctity of which is so vital for our purposes. Integral to the location referred to by O'Shea is a place of meditation called 'The Mews' which he describes as a:

"...place for the expansion of the spirit, for prayer, for the eternal craft of seeking God. There is nothing to correlate to one's distraction, there is no furniture and no focus of icon and candle" (O'Shea 1992 p. 18).

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197 See Tyler (1997 p. 954) who illustrates how all the great 'prayer-ers' of the past have emphasised the importance of a rhythm of life
198 On a cross-cultural basis, this brings to mind the five prayer gestures of mainstream Sunni Islam known as salat (see Riddins 1990 p. 86).
With reference to the prayer/meditation life of the Findhorn community Woods (1993) indicates that alongside the collective rituals:

"...individuals are encouraged to meditate in the sanctuary and in the Park where various symbols, and the strange fecundity of the garden itself, are said to encourage spiritual awareness and inner harmony". (Woods 1993 p. 193)

This description would speak to most people who could easily call to mind from their experience a place of tranquillity in which they found it easy to relax, meditate or pray, whether that be a place that they actively and deliberately visit for the purpose of meditation or a place that they have visited perhaps in the course of a holiday or retreat which holds special memories related to this tranquillity. Native Americans revere their sweat lodges; some might find a particular time of day conducive to praying whilst others find they can meditate or pray 'through' a certain physical activity on account of its solitary, calm and quiet characteristics. Activities which spring to mind here are those which involve being 'close' to nature such as hill-walking, fishing, and rambling. Points of connection appear in relation to physical activity and its place of importance within contemporary individual and corporate consciousness. The sanctity and/or the opportunity provided for meditation occurs not only as a result of participation but also as a result of the qualities of the location in which the activity takes place. With the licensing of places to marry other than churches, individuals have sought the 'sanctity' of sports venues for the solemnisation of their marriage vows.

Interestingly the deliberate employment of space for beneficial purposes and the design of the internal environment is recognised by agencies such as The Sports Council: "Movement and dance activities require internal surroundings that are more sophisticated and comfortable than those for many sports activities. Good colour schemes and textures, variable lighting conditions and curtains can all contribute to an interior which can provide for the varied needs of movement and dance activities. Windows giving some natural daylight, ventilation, and a view or feeling of contact with the outside, can also add to the quality of the space. These characteristics of a pleasant interior, which can be varied to suit different moods, can often be a great advantage in permitting a wide variety of other social and arts uses. Acoustics are important in providing good conditions for music and teaching" (The Sports Council 1986 pp. 3-4).

Increasingly, it is possible to purchase a 'wedding package' at venues which include stately homes, vineyards and other novel places of interest. Such ceremonial occasions appear to have elements of the more extreme form of packaging of weddings focused on by Goldstein-Gidoni (1993) who noted that contemporary Japanese weddings are viewed as commercialised productions for a highly consumerist society. Amongst other areas Goldstein-Gidoni was concerned to focus on the invention of traditions. There were also findings in relation to the objectification and packaging of the bride herself by the wedding industry (Goldstein-Gidoni 1993 p. 2).
many fans have had their ashes scattered on the 'holy' ground of places such as Anfield, Lord's, or Aintree. To develop this theme of the sanctity of place, Martina Navratilova has in two successive years (June 1995 and 1996) bent down in what could almost be seen as a genuflective gesture, to remove a small piece of the 'sacred' turf of Wimbledon, and upon his victory in the long jump competition of the Atlanta Olympics, Carl Lewis scooped sand into a bag as a souvenir (July 1996). Such empirical evidence of the strength of positive association with place highlights the importance of its sanctity within any understanding of embodiment, indicates the validity of its inclusion in writing which arises from an embodied consciousness, and points the way towards embodiment being an interpretive key for examples arising from human physical activity: O'Shea has it thus:

"Our spirits are embodied in this flesh, but this flesh in turn embodies itself in the place where we are. It is a mistake to think that our being terminates at the skin. We fill a room or a house. In fact a house is an archetypal symbol of the self. For this reason, when people sit together in a room they are in a special sense — for better or worse — within each others selves. We are not simply separate entities but interpenetrating worlds". (O'Shea 1992 pp. 17-18)

If we live in our bodies, then our bodies live in the place where we are at any one moment — this underpins understandings of embodiment. Such a focus on place and the way in which it can create powerful memories and have a deep effect on us could be understood by most people. In many ways, in all sorts of contexts, for all sorts of reasons, we share the common human experience of visiting places associated with our earlier lives. These 'pilgrimages' can be accidental or intentional in so far as we can make a conscious effort to visit a place, for a specific purpose, or we might just be passing through. Returning to the home of our childhood, our school, the battle fields where we lost our friends, our homeland, the location of a particularly special holiday, amongst these stated and unstated examples most people would find a resonance. It has to be noted that the reactions evoked by such experiences do not only have positive aspect, they can also bring out negative emotions such as sadness,

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201 Such an understanding of sporting venues as 'sacred' places clearly rests on a broadening of terms of reference, which enables such sites to be recognised alongside classic understanding of holy place.
anger, bitterness, or confusion, if the place visited holds unhappy or unfavourable memories. The on-going return of refugees to their homes in the former Yugoslavia is paradigmatic of this. I would argue that the power of such occasions resides in the very tension between embodiment and its distortion, where growth comes through the very synthesis of all aspects of our being, in the intermingling of sorrow/joy, pain/healing. Bowker, writing about the poetry of place in Hallowed Ground encapsulates this when he says:

"The poetry of place, therefore, has this power to make us, not simply travellers in space, but travellers in time as well. It creates the possibility of our healing and of hope — first, because it renews the days of our peace; but second also, because it can take us back to places of our hurt in the past, and there, through the cleansing of our memory, it can start the process of our completion and cure. In that way it creates in us a better chance by far of becoming a hood of care and protection for others". (Bowker 1993 p. 6)

Recognition of God in human experience

Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel shows that a theology of embodiment recognises God in many human experiences: "...which remind us that life begins in the mother's body, that it begins as a twosome, not alone, and that our bodily life represents God's life on this earth" (Moltmann-Wendel 1994 p. 105). Such a deeply held, grounded, integrative view of life gives rise to a richness and yet simplicity of description of our relationship with God and the recognition of God's presence in human experience which is characteristic of religious writing about embodiment. The purpose of this sub-section is to note some insights offered by authors around this theme.

It is clear that within a framework of embodied religious experience the theme of the celebration of God in human experience — the final theme for consideration in this study — stands in relation to themes considered so far such as the importance of the senses, the celebration of the body and a recognition of the sanctity of place. Thus it would appear to offer possibilities as a point of synthesis for Chapter 2 in view of this mutuality of themes.

202 For example grief is experienced as a physical pain and expressed thus — 'broken-hearted'.
There is an acknowledgement of the sanctity of a range of human encounters which might normally stand outside a consideration of religious experience, thus offering particular inspiration to this study which seeks to make sense of interior/spiritual/religious experiences which arise from sport and sacred dance where the bodily, physical element is central. The recognition of God in human experience can be found in a breadth of writing both about embodiment and conducted in an embodied consciousness. Evidence will be drawn from a range of conventional and unconventional sources deemed to provide beneficial insights. For purposes of clarification the 'pieces' of evidence will be presented in point form.

i) Earlier in the chapter, evidence was given of the view that there should be recognition of the essence of childhood, and that recovery should take place of its spontaneity, simplicity and yet wisdom. This was seen to be a key element of some writing conducted in an embodied consciousness.

In a manner which links into a recognised motif of post-modernism and also another of Moltmann-Wendel's themes in the form of 'paradox', as well as focusing on the recognition of God in human experience, Ronald Cram in 'Knowing God: Children, Play and Paradox' indicates how:

"Children are born into a series of texts that shape the theological imagination. Playground songs or hymns may not be Christian in their theological presuppositions, but they are definitely vehicles of sacred play whereby cosmology is pondered and wherein ultimate concerns are discussed". (Cram 1996 p. 70)

ii) Writing about embodiment outlines the benefit that may be derived by a return to, and rediscovery of, qualities which are fundamental to our personhood, to our human existence. There seems to be the belief that this return can take place by going back to our 'roots', realising the vitality and significance of what could be described as our original selves (see section on recovery above). In order to understand this view of personhood and humankind, it
is important to recognise that our 'development' as individuals, societies and cultures is seen by some authors to have been our undoing. This has led to our finding it difficult to relate to ourselves, each other and God. Moreover our advanced understanding of some elements of our world have perhaps made it problematic to understand what is at the heart of other elements. The original meaning, truth, strength and reality is obscured and difficult to get in touch with and most notably the recognition of God in our human experience may be impeded. With particular reference to praise, Doris Donnelly (1992 p. 50) shows that we have lost our corporate contemplative spirit. With great effect she cites Annie Dillard who in Pilgrim at Tinker Creek (1975) alluded to: "...the coot's feet, the mantis' face, a banana, the human ear — and see that not only did the creator create everything, but that he is apt to create anything" (Dillard cited in Donnelly 1992 p. 138). Donnelly responds:

"Perhaps the responsibility of the beholder is simply to speak the truth and to declare what God has done. To be an effective praiser requires openness and receptivity to what we have and see around us". (Donnelly 1992 p. 52)

In a similar manner but in particular relation to the view that God is Green, Bradley (1990) uses similar language to Dillard in order to illustrate the responsibility of Christians in relation to the environment — where God must be recognised. Otherwise:

"...we will have failed God; the Father who knows and cares about one sparrow falling from heaven, the Son who communed with and redeemed the wayward forces of nature and the Holy Spirit who broods over the face of the waters just as she moves within our souls". (Bradley 1990 p. 11)

In a radical vein Rosemary Haughton (1982) employs similar metaphors to convey that the breaking through of God in Christ can be perceived by us because we are responsive to: "...little shocks of recognition — each Spring is new and yet it has happened before, here we find the key to the discovery of the lost language" (Haughton 1982 p. 16). By extending the metaphor and highlighting our sentimental attitudes towards spring which is all too often regarded as 'soft and cosy' Haughton says:
"Like spring, this breakthrough of newness is violent...It thrusts through, and because of, layers of rotted past. The diamond brilliance of the cuckoo's note is the result of many fledglings shouldered out of the nest to their deaths...even in the sheer perfection of each growing thing there is an integrity which is painful in its accuracy...the scent of lilacs in the dawn cuts through fuzziness of disordered desire, the etched whiteness of lily of the valley against dark leaves sears the imagination...This is the violence of absolute love, which takes the Kingdom of Heaven by storm in a silence of total concentration on the one thing necessary". (Haughton 1982 p. 17)

It would appear that all of these references, whatever their outlook, scope or point of reference, centre around a view which recognises God in human experience, which sees all things as sacred. We can bring them together in the form of the insights of Esther deWaal (1989) who summarises the attitude of St. Benedict who, according to his spiritual vision, asks us to: "...sanctify the present moment, respect essential nature, and see everything as God-given" (deWaal 1989 p. 80). Furthermore, material things are not only good in themselves, but are also an indication of God's loving attention, indeed: "God in fact reaches us where we are, at home, in the prosaic reality of our daily lives" (deWaal 1989 p. 81).

iii) Blaylock (1995 pp. 3-4) presents a very practical example of the recognition of God in human experience in his account of the use of popular music to move and inspire students in Religious Education and Acts of Corporate Worship. He believes spiritual development is encouraged through the power of these experiences. It is also useful as a means of facilitating discussion and understanding of ethical dilemmas — the use of Elvis Costello's _Let him dangle_ (Polydor Records) on the theme of capital punishment was particularly effective:

"The aim of all this is to drive the relevance of school worship home to the pupils, to create an atmosphere of interest and vibrancy, rather than resignation and boredom. In my experience, students who have confessed to hating acts of worship have changed their view, and become contributors by bringing in a tape or record, justifying its spiritual power to me, and listening with new attention to the programme that flows from it. Often the song is not much more than a trigger for the substance of the act of worship, but it is one of the best ones I've found". (Blaylock 1995 p. 4)
iv) The popular columnist on spiritual matters, Ronald Rolheiser, takes us to an early point of infancy in his re-telling of a story about the life of twins in the womb. Here he focuses on a universal facet of human experience — the birthing process. We see the embodiment of a sense of awe, mystery, beauty — and I would contend the sacred — within the relationship between the twins and the mother:

"Both grew silent, one becoming despondent and despairing, the other resigning herself to birth. One day they both sensed that what they most feared was imminent. They were about to be born. They cried as they emerged into the light and gasped to breathe in a way that neither had done before. In all that trauma, it took them a while to realise that they were now lying on the breast of the mother, gazing into a world whose immensity and beauty dwarfed anything they had yet imagined". (Rolheiser 1995)

v) Of particular interest is the experience of embodiment attested to by O'Shea (1992) who skilfully develops the theme of the recognition of God in human experience throughout his book. This recognition takes place in experiences arising in, from and through the medium of pottery. The account of this process acts as a metaphor for truths about life which are to do with knowing ourselves, each other, and God in a deeper and more radical way. A specific and appropriate example is found in O'Shea's conviction that we can be centred, as we might centre clay. Moreover O'Shea identifies a possibility for retranslation from pottery back into ministry and the fact that, as he sees it, the greatest outer mistakes come from what he terms 'inner wobbles'. Clay can be a chronicle of human characteristics such as uncertainty, feebleness, hesitation, fussiness, timidity, and lack of control:

"Sitting on one of these fences one evening, I had a sudden revelation. I call it that, though a lesser word might seem more suitable. The moment of understanding is surely a kind of revelation, an opening of the mind. I saw with sudden clarity that what I had really been trying to do during the previous weeks was not just to centre the clay but to centre myself. The clay had drawn my body, inch by inch, into the task: hands, arms, shoulders, trunk, even feet. When there was no more body to be drawn in, it drew in the mind. (It was on a morning when the mind was at great peace that the miracle had happened).

203 This quote can be revisited and has moving significance in the light of the controversy over the selective abortion of babies of multiple pregnancies.
The whole body and mind working together, that was a more profound centring than the centring of the clay. The clay was the outer shape, or indicator, of the inner centring. When I was centred — that is, acting as on force rather than as a cluster of contradictory ones — the clay showed this by its own centring, as it had so graphically shown the opposite before. (O'Shea 1992 pp. 9-10)

vi) A reference to insights drawn from other religious traditions and the sphere of literature in general, indicates that this recognition of God in human experience is not limited to the Christian tradition. The sentiments of Guru Angad who said that the world is the abode of God, and God truly lives in the world (cited in Roberts and Amidon ed. 1991 p. 363), are echoed by Thich Nhat Hanh204 who synthesised the tension that is often enacted between the worlds of the profane and sacred and the tendency to see some minds as being higher and more worthy than others when he said:

"The profane is the sacred. (The) everyday mind is Buddha's mind*. (Thich Nhat Hanh cited in Roberts and Amidon ed. 1991 p. 349)

Kolp (1993) makes reference to the Franny and Zoey of J. D. Salinger's writing, and thus captures something of mystery of the truth of the real presence, which I see as a religious concept inextricably linked with an understanding of embodiment, where the sanctity of human experience is recognised, in the very stuff of life — in our being and in our bodies:

"But most of all, above everything else, who in the Bible besides Jesus knew — knew — that we're carrying the Kingdom of Heaven around with us, inside, where we're too goddam stupid and sentimental and unimaginative to look*. (cited in Kolp 1993 p. 241)

Kolp goes on to refer to George Fox who in his journal admonishes, in a strikingly simple manner, those who know God that they should: "...come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone" (Fox cited in Kolp 1993 p. 241).

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204 Thich Nhat Hanh is a Tibetan Buddhist leader, usually resident in France.
vii) Finally I wish to invoke the following as an example of how spiritual experience appears to be gained by significant numbers of people as a result of their interest in, and passion for, an icon of modern times. It serves to indicate how interior/spiritual experience might be gained in and through something so central to the human experience of these individuals. Olson and Crase (1990) focus on those fans who visit Elvis Presley's mansion and who regard him as a spiritual leader. They indicate how he embodied a paradox of spirituality and sexuality that challenges anew different generations. They describe how he functioned as a symbol of hope for those caught in his poor southern heritage and point to his role as a catalyst for a worldwide youth movement. It is also shown that within this Elvis phenomenon, the feelings expressed, even after his death, enable them to express formerly repressed emotions without the factor of guilt. This resulted in feelings of well-being and hope for future. Whilst some would see such evidence as standing outside any notion of the recognition of God or the spiritual in human experience, the research conducted by Olson and Crase seems to indicate that for the adherents surveyed there is a sanctity in their past and present relationship with Elvis, and a reverence for places of association with him (Olson and Crase 1990 p. 277-282).

Clearly the recognition of God in human experience is a theme across a range of writing conducted with an embodied consciousness — within, across and outside of the Christian tradition and it is hoped that the selected examples have indicated the breadth of the recognition of God in human experience. Particularly significant is the strength of such a theme to assist in the interpretation of certain experiences, arising from human physical activity, in a manner which respects their importance, their intensity and where appropriate their sanctity.

Summary to Chapter 4
This chapter has employed themes outlined in Moltmann-Wendel's *I Am My Body* (1994). Her insights were used as a methodological tool and as a way of assessing the substance of the core themes of embodiment. The intention was to fortify the on-going consciousness and working understanding of embodiment in a manner conducive to the resolution of the critical
question, whilst taking into account the relationship between the theological and methodological trajectories of the study. I perceive that the strength of Moltmann-Wendel's work is that her book, whilst specifically about the bodies of women, directly addresses the topic of embodiment. She is not alone in this — others such as Nelson (1979) have engaged a similar approach.

The themes of embodiment that Moltmann-Wendel proposes towards the end of her book were considered, individually and cumulatively, to provide a sound basis through which to view the findings of the survey. Sufficient evidence was found to ratify that the areas selected for particular attention can indeed be regarded as core themes. Recovery, the senses, celebration of the body/sacred place, and recognition of God in human experience emerge as relevant both within theologies of embodiment and writing conducted in an embodied consciousness. The survey also indicated that the synonyms of embodiment — personification, identification and realisation — are integral to our ability to recognise and accept the fact that we are embodied. Thus the themes can be deemed to embody the wider picture of the aspects, qualities and characteristics of life that speak of and to the fact and celebration of what it is to be in our bodies.

The work of another author stands out as both an encapsulation of all that has been found about embodiment as a result of the endeavour and as an example of embodied writing arising from a different cultural context. I speak here of 'Mujerista Liturgies and the Struggle for Liberation' by Ada María Isasi-Díaz (1995 pp. 104-111). This article describes the conditions by which the Hispanic women of whom she writes, find and do not find personification, identification and realisation in their church context. Arising from her sitz im leben, the experiential place from which she theologises, Isasi-Díaz brings to our attention certain key points:

- the recovery of their voices — voices which are silenced by the marginality suffered as Hispanics, and especially as Hispanic women (p. 107);
the healing which comes through liturgy which clearly employs the senses, liturgy which in
many ways 'hears' the women 'into speech' (p. 107);

- the celebration of the body which comes about through the vision of their role in the
  Church (p. 108-110), and the recognition of the sanctity of place offered by mujerista
  liturgies which relocate the sacred in the midst of the Hispanic woman's struggle (p. 107);
- and finally in the recognition of God in human experience that arises through the
  particular identification of the strengths of their popular religion and subculture (Isasi-Díaz

Having presented the views of many authors in the course of this chapter which has by
necessity been conducted in the style of a survey, I wish to bring it to a close with some of my
own reflections about embodiment. They arise from due consideration of the evidence
provided thus far in the study, and generally reflect a religious paradigm which is relational;
inclined to celebrate the God who is manifest in a multiplicity of human experiences; takes
account of factors and influences on our way of knowing and experiencing ourselves, other
people, God, and the environment and situations in which we are embodied. The synthesis
that follows seeks to expand the findings about embodiment in a colloquial manner which
conveys the richness and breadth of understandings of embodiment and yet the simplicity
which is consistent with the manner in which I would like to see embodiment understood.

Theologies of embodiment, and writing conducted in an embodied consciousness, can enable
us to find God in all things, in all people, in all place, and to see God's hand in everything.
They can highlight the incarnational aspect of creation and empower us to find new paths and
possibilities, to connect the previously unconnected, to find relationship, and not to be
restricted to conventional understandings. Recognising the cyclical as well as the linear
dimension of human thought and process, such insights urge us to trust our instincts, emotions
and feelings, and to be liberated in order to 'be' as fully in our bodies as our circumstances will
allow. Through tools of recovery and reconstruction we can make reclamation and find
redemption. However embodiment as a description of the fact of our beings and as a vision of
our possibilities is no panacea or 'catch-all', indeed any reference must proceed in the recognition that embodiment and its distortion can be closely allied.

To pin embodiment down to a singular definitive statement would have been somehow to lose something of its essence. I am convinced of the rectitude of this statement. From my own experience of Eurythmy and Therapeutic Massage, to try to describe the wonder and efficacy I encountered was to threaten the purpose.

Having outlined, established, and fortified understandings of embodiment from religious and other sources, based on earlier observations that embodiment is a concept whose relevance is recognised in a breadth of contexts, we now turn to the application and harnessing of embodiment as an interpretive key for experiences arising from sacred dance. Just as with the consideration of embodiment as an interpretive key for human physical activity that was conducted in Chapter 3, so it is hoped that sacred dance will be radically and refreshingly reviewed in the light of an awareness of, and understandings about, embodiment.

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205 At various times in the course of the research I was part of a Eurythmy study group based at the Blackthorn Trust, Maidstone, Kent.

206 This is a view paralleled by Jostein Gaarder whose use of this illustrative story is worth quoting in full:

"Once upon a time there was a centipede that was amazingly good at dancing with all hundred legs. All the creatures of the forest gathered to watch every time the centipede danced, and they were all duly impressed by the exquisite dance. But there was one creature that didn't like watching the centipede dance — that was a tortoise."

"It was probably just envious."

"How can I get the centipede to stop dancing? thought the tortoise. He couldn't just say he didn't like the dance. Neither could he say he danced better himself, that would obviously be untrue. So he devised a fiendish plan."

"Let's hear it."

"He sat down and wrote a letter to the centipede. 'O incomparable centipede,' he wrote, 'I am a devoted admirer of your exquisite dancing. I must know how you go about it when you dance. Is it that you lift your left leg number 28 and then your right leg number 39? Or do you begin by lifting your right leg number 17 before you lift your right leg number 44? I await your answer in breathless anticipation. Yours truly, tortoise."

"How mean!"

"When the centipede read the letter, she immediately began to think about exactly she did when she danced. Which leg did she lift first? And which leg next? What do you think happened in the end?"

"The centipede never danced again?"

"That's exactly what happened. And that's the way it goes when imagination gets strangled by reasoned deliberation". (Gaarder 1995 pp. 339-340)
CHAPTER 5

Embodiment as an interpretive key for human physical activity
with specific reference to sacred dance.

In my last chapter I explored religion and embodiment through categories set out by Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel. I now within that broad context wish to focus on one particular category of embodiment within religion namely that of sacred dance. It should be noted that whilst this chapter has a specific function within the overall scheme of the thesis, the key methodological tools of the presentation of ‘pieces’ of evidence alongside the journeying ‘to and fro’ in the making of connections remain constant.

Having examined an area of human physical activity that could be said to reside for the most part in the secular, populist, majority sphere, it is deemed necessary to test the potential of embodiment as an interpretive key for human physical activity within a religious context. Such a pursuit lies within the theoretical and conceptual underpinning of embodiment that was established in Chapter 1 where an empirical warrant was established for the use of this term as an interpretive key. It is also inspired by a religious approach for sacred dance which might allow for the expression of the essence of what it is to ‘be’ in and through our bodies and which finds resonance in the recognition that: "Our cultural orb is centred around the axiom that Word became flesh" (Kristeva cited in Moi ed. 1986 p. 313) and that:

"...the creative presence of the Verb can be revealed at every historical moment, in every person and culture". (Daly 1985 p. 71)

It would be too great a remit to focus on all physical activity within religions, or even within Christianity, and some areas which would be possible for enquiry such as pilgrimage have

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207 I wish to qualify this distinction by highlighting that I see the secular and sacred as co-existent, co-terminus, symbiotic, a view where one is a window to the other, and in certain instances one and the same. In relation to human physical activity this is not to say that I see sport as a religion, more that I celebrate unreservedly the power of the interior/spiritual experiences arising in other than conventional religious contexts.
already been subject to much investigation across a range of disciplines. It would also have been too great a task to examine sacred dance within and across religions although note has been taken of the work of those such as Slade (1978) in relation to Buddhist and Hindu dance, Neubauer (1988) whose concern is Jewish dance and Shewey (1991) who reports the integration of art, everyday life and spiritual practice through the medium of dance that is not overtly religious or spiritual. Therefore the precise area of concern will be sacred dance within mainstream Christianity where I perceive there to be particular problems of description and interpretation.

Spontaneous sacred dance

Spontaneous sacred dance, also known as dance of the spirit, arises from a spiritual experience occurring in worship, in an individual or group context, an encounter with the 'significant other' at the heart of religious experience. This type of sacred dance could be described as a form of prayer, given that it is not pre-planned but arises out of what could be termed the 'immediate' spiritual experience. It occurs at any time in a worship context where individuals are 'moved' spiritually to such an extent that they feel inspired or compelled to dance. We could describe it as the prayer equivalent of 'jumping for joy'. It might be conscious or unconscious, and can be seen alongside other similar expressions of the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues.

It has to be said that such dance can be frenzied and appear anything but embodied. In the Christian context in which is located his concern, Robert Gribben urges a cautionary and considered approach to what he terms 'the dance of the Spirit'.

"...the Spirit is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the crucified one. Christian dance is never merely ecstatic, never merely an expression of feeling: it is the profound emotion of joy born of participation in the cross of Christ. This is a corrective to the escapist, shallow defence of some forms of worship in the 'charismatic renewal'. Let the Spirit free us in our worship, but let Him be the

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spirit of Jesus, who died, who was raised, who brings us life in its fullness*. (Gribben cited in Challingsworth 1982 p. 6)

There seems to be a parallel in Gribben's observations with the ecstatic frenzy of the Ba'al prophets who in their contest with Elijah on Mount Carmel: "...raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice; no one answered, no one heeded" (1 Kings 18:29).

We can arguably find a more balanced manifestation of spontaneous dance within the black pentecostal tradition where dancing may occur simultaneously with the music. Here the dance will convey praise, thanks and joy, and yet will be mindful of the oppression which is part of the wider, corporate consciousness. Assent in the form of gentle dance occurs in response to a manifestation of God's presence, a moment of revelation, through the vocal talents of worship leaders and participants. There is a widespread popular recognition of this worship and its attuned, respectful characteristics. Interestingly Gospel choirs, particularly the London Community Gospel Choir209, bridge the gap from the specifically religious into the wider context with many appearances on popular television programmes. This would seem to speak of the expression of a universal truth, of the recognition of the integrity of the worship, of the embodiment visible in those involved, and vicariously experienced and made real in those who look on.

As Newport (1983 pp. 71-83) indicates there is both a value and danger in relation to the integration of elements such as dance into worship and yet sacred dance should not be avoided. So a point of balance must be found, a benchmark, a mode of discernment between on the one hand the often frenzied, out of control, unharmonious spontaneous dance and the attuned, synthesised spontaneous dance seen in other contexts. The former may indeed have value, contribute to growth, but at the same time it may be open to misinterpretation, to exploitation, and may well feed in to a psychological complex that seeks to 'escape into'

209 Of associated interest here are the reflections of Davis into black spirituality from a Roman Catholic Perspective (Davis 1983 pp. 97-108).
religion. Embodiment appears to provide not only a mode of interpretation but also a means of evaluation, 'a benchmark' as to those situations and manifestations where spontaneous sacred dance is indicative of, and contributive towards, enduring growth — where the possibilities for the expression of significant spiritual/religious experiences are realised. To underpin this in religious terms:

"Ever new spheres become the place of a theophany. It is not man's own power that is at work here, neither is it merely God passing through; it is a mixture of the divine and the human". (Buber 1970 p. 166)

Planned dance in a Christian context

Moving from spontaneous sacred dance we now come to a consideration of what I am referring to as Planned sacred dance210. This usually occurs within a sacramental context and is more commonly known as liturgical dance. As is shown throughout one of the most comprehensive overviews, Liturgical Dance: An Historical, Theological and Practical Handbook (Davies 1984), this practice can be examined according to various aspects and elements. Liturgical dance often, although not always, takes place in sacramental settings. It can be broadly and helpfully defined as dance which is carried out with the specific purpose of enhancing ritual celebration, such as the elaboration or simplification of a theme, the illustration of a meditative piece of music or prose, or as part of a procession. It arises 'in' and 'out' of the worshipping Christian community, springing from the relationship of the individual with God and the desire to explore, deepen, express, and celebrate that relationship. The dance experience could be said to take place in terms of the visual spectacle by adding meaning to the ritual theme(s), and contributing to the experience of those actively involved in the dance.

210 The term 'sacred dance' is being used here by way of description of any dance used in a religious/spiritual consciousness or context.
Organised dance in a worship context has a choreographed, pre-planned and pre-determined element. The dance is devised in order to express a central theme of a particular ritual celebration. For this reason, this type of ritual dance could be said to contain an element of ‘performance’, a facet that will be discussed towards the end of this chapter. Planned sacred dance would seem to have a definite purpose and role within mainstream Christian worship. Authors such as Blogg (1984) have conducted significant work in relation to Christian drama and dancing, culminating in the production of clear guidelines for particular dances around religious themes.

Varieties in the practice of ritual dance within worship situations form a useful mode of comparison which serves to highlight differences in attitude and practices. The Catholic Church is a good example of this with variations in attitude and practice even within one denomination. Some parishes appear to integrate sacred dance within worship whilst in others it never takes place. There are many other variables including the expertise with which the dance is executed ranging from untrained dancers exploring uncharted liturgical territory often on a local basis, to groups such as the renowned and acclaimed Boston Liturgical Dance Ensemble led by their artistic director Robert VerEecke S.J. Attendance at a workshop led by him informed certain responses within this chapter211, an inspirational and formative experience since as VandeVelde (1997 p. 1) indicates he has: "...devoted his artistic life to the integration of dance and religious expression". He is one of a number of Jesuits who work within the area of the performing arts: "...as a lifelong career or as an imaginative and creative complement to other ministries" (VandeVelde 1997 p. 1). Whilst touring extensively, VerEecke works primarily at Boston College and the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, both of which offer courses in the liturgy and arts212.

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211 This workshop took place in London on 18th May 1996.
212 Interestingly, these Institutions are amongst the foremost contributors in terms of practical resources and ‘internet’ references, thus assisting significantly in the exchange of contemporary information and ideas in the area of liturgy and the arts, including sacred dance.
Robert Gribben shows that ritual dance must be broadly regarded so as to include posture, gesture, procession, music and special dress. He indicates that dance is not justified in Christian worship solely on the basis of dance being evident in human history as the natural expression of the human spirit, however useful, expressive and therapeutic it may be and goes on to comment:

"Liturgy is the ordering of movement, not only theologically, but of the human being, 'body and soul' in worship. This underlines the importance of the manner in which a liturgy is celebrated, by both president and people, and how vital it is as the visible expression of the written text". (Gribben cited in Challingsworth 1982 p. 5)

Challingsworth herself, in her instructional booklet on liturgical dance shows how people of all ages can take part in sacred dance, regardless of dance ability or previous experience, in a way which takes the individual beyond the restrictions of language, background and origin. She sees this to be the strength and joy of liturgical dance. Whilst recognising that singing is common in church whereas dance usually takes place only at the request of the minister or organising liturgical team, she draws the analogy between ritual dance and ritual by using the term 'dancing choir' alongside 'singing choir'. She argues strongly that both dancing and singing are forms which require practice and study, and a strong and knowledgeable leader (Challingsworth 1982 p. 8).

It would appear that since singing is largely accepted as a constituent element of ritual action, likewise should the possibilities for ritual dance be explored. Arguably the opportunity for both dance and music should be created within ritual. Levels of participation may vary from an individual to a large group — much will depend on the context and the location. Writing in 1982, Challingsworth suggests that dance choirs will eventually be part of religious observance in almost every church if a sound basis is laid (Challingsworth p. 10). Given experienced leaders and enthusiastic support, many can be involved with the dance itself and associated activities. Afterwards evaluation of the dance is seen to be vital in order to establish the prayer element, the degree of communication amongst and between the dancers, and the
degree of spiritual experience for the participants, the observers and the whole community. It is still the case that more attention could validly be given to the development of dance ‘choirs’ in Christian Assemblies for worship.

Geoffrey Snell refers to dance as 'a much-needed liturgical expression' in this media-oriented age in which we live. He argues that picture and symbol play an important role and thus ritual dance can be a valid means of communicating the Gospel. He urges that to speak to the times we need to discern the signs of the times, for when dance is used in worship it is not as a personal expression of an individual's relationship with God but rather something done for, and on behalf of, others in the form of a gift that must communicate with the other worshippers. This is an echo of the contemporary elements that were seen to be significant in the consideration of understandings of embodiment (Snell cited in Challingsworth 1982 p. 12).

Opposition, resistance, and discomfort are common experiences amongst those unfamiliar with ritual dance. Snell suggests that to counter resistance and suspicion and in order to make people receptive, general themes of art in worship, the Praise psalms, poetic forms and evidence of people dancing in the presence of God should be presented and examined. In this way a sound foundation for the development of liturgical dance is provided:

"Dance more than any form provides the opportunity for the whole body to be used as a means of giving ourselves to the Lord. In dance we use the mind, the will, our emotions, strength and energy. It is a means of expression for both young and old...an experiment into freedom in movement in conveying ideas such as praise and celebration, hope and despair, sadness and joy, love or hate. Liturgical dance is not about learning steps, but about communicating truth through movement". (Snell cited in Challingsworth 1982 p. 9)

I endorse Krosnicki's well developed argument that debate about dance in worship suffers from confusion about terminology, with far more possibilities being observed in relation to its description as liturgical movement and gesture (Krosnicki 1987 pp. 349-357). For our purposes we will persist with the term dance, because it does act as an umbrella term for all
the elements we might wish to consider. Quite clearly this question of description merits
deepen investigation.

To draw the strands of this sub-section together it would appear that the main characteristics
of planned sacred dance are that it:
i) occurs in worship, usually to tie in with a theme,
ii) is usually choreographed,
iii) can be done as an individual or as a group,

We can also extend our understanding to say that dance in worship:
iv) might bring together skilled/unskilled, trained/untrained dancers who may have a variety of
previous knowledge, expertise, skill, and understandings,
v) may be a vehicle for integrating the often excluded and marginalised — women213, the
disabled, the young.

Circle dancing

In contemporary society, circle dance takes place both within and outside mainstream
Christianity. I myself have encountered circle dance in both settings firstly during a retreat
where the circle dance was part of the overall theological theme, and also as a member of a
group that meets on a monthly basis in my home town, a group which has no singular religious
affiliation. I include circle dancing on the grounds that it finds a home within mainstream
Christianity and that as an increasingly popular form of sacred dance it is worthy of
consideration as part of the wider analysis.

In its modern form circle dancing was introduced, by amongst others, a German dance professor, Bernward Wosien. He had spent many years collecting dances from all over the world. Wosien taught these dances at the Scottish community Findhorn which is based on a holistic approach to life. Northcott (1993) records his observations of the place of ritual at Findhorn. He describes how the participants hold hands and dance in a circle which may in effect take the form of a spiral or a more linear circle. Northcott shows how the circular shape is a symbol of equality amongst and between the participants and the movement is representative of the inter-weaving of separate wills into a common purpose (Northcott 1993 p. 193).

Participants in circle dance seem to attest to a range of benefits of an emotional, physical, spiritual, and psychological nature. The following quotation is representative:

"Dancing together focuses our intent and means that we are adding our peaceful vibrations to the rest of humanity". (Jini Lavell cited in Hodgkinson 1991 p. 12)

Rees (1990b) details some antecedents and the historical justification for dance and in a manner interesting for circle dancing, notes that in the third century St. Hippolytus described Christ as the leader of the mystic round dance (Rees 1990b p. 43). The employment of this metaphor by Hippolytus could therefore be used as a Christian underpinning for the expression of embodied spirituality in and through circle dancing in the present times. However, it is worthy of brief mention that circle dancing does not meet with universal acceptance. In an article which discusses feminist theology alongside circle dancing, Alice Thomas Ellis concludes:

"Come to think of it, I did once do a dance in a circle, but I was doing the hokey-cokey and god(dess) was the last thing on my mind" (Thomas Ellis 1994 p. 31)
Having looked at both spontaneous and planned aspects of sacred, and also circle dance which stands as a form of 'spiritual' dance both within and outside mainstream Christianity there would appear to be further areas which are in need of clarification if we are to understand how sacred dance might be more fully embodied within Christian practice and more representative of our embodiment.

1) The range of practices

Across the spectrum of 'religions' both primitive, mainstream, and fringe there is evidence of the physical being employed as a mode of transference of common identity, belief and practices (see Van Dalen and Bennett 1971). Indeed anthropologists and dance historians have been concerned to comment on the role of this relationship in rites of initiation and passage, and if we consider evidence of spiritual/physical links throughout the world's religions we would find support for the significance of the relationship. For example, eastern religions employ the physical dimension as a mode of expression of spirituality. Some such as Father Francis Barboza, a Catholic priest from India, work to embody aspects of Eastern dance within the Christian context. In his particular case it is the traditional dance of Bharata Natyam which he seeks to make relevant. In general reference to sacred dance he says: "Readings from the Word of God are more meaningful when danced" (see Dove 1996 p. 5).

Even a cursory overview illustrates the potential for a broad range of views, practices and even beliefs in relation to sacred dance, hardly surprising if we take account of varying attitudes towards women's ministry, to issues of doctrine, and ethical and moral concerns. This would appear to show the need for 'keys' and ways of description and synthesis that enable us to dialogue about practices, beliefs and phenomena, and yet which do not force these into a 'melting pot' which denies the richness, variety, purpose and function of all shades and types of expression.
2) The place of sacred dance in worship

In the introduction to *Mirror to the Church* Monica Furlong (1988 p. 9) conducts an illuminating discussion of the factors which account for the disinclination to include women in worship. I contend that this body spirit tension can be taken as one of the primary reasons why our embodiment fails to find fuller communal expression through the use of sacred dance and contributes to attitudes which engender a reluctance to use the body in worship.

In view of negative attitudes to the use of sacred dance, and inspired by the possibility that worship expression that taps into the rhythms of which Tyler speaks will have a spontaneity and depth, it will be useful to present some arguments for the active employment of our being in our bodies through the medium of sacred dance:

3) Biblical references to dance in religious practice

There are biblical antecedents to dance being used in a religious context — the story of David (2 Samuel 6:14 RSV) is probably the best known but there are others214 such as Exodus 15:19-21 where we read of the prophetess Miriam singing and dancing after the rescue of people through the Red Sea. References can also be found in the Psalms: "Thou has turned for me my mourning into dancing" (30:11) and similarly in Lamentations: "The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has been turned to mourning" (5:15). Robert Gribben shows the relevance of the biblical references to dance for our purposes. With specific reference to the story of David, Gribben indicates that this occurrence of dance has a subtle theological significance:

"So the dance goes on. The biblical story places faith and fear, intimacy and awe, tragedy and celebration side by side. And this means that the dance is not merely ecstatic or the letting off of animal spirits; the dancer knows the dark side of life". (Gribben cited in Challingsworth 1982 p. 5)

In a very specific manner Gordon and Ronni Lamont (1983) use the Bible as the basis for a handbook designed for both churches and teachers to show how biblical sources can be the inspiration for a range of movement including mime and dance. This resource is thus simultaneously contextualised within the biblical antecedents for dance, whilst providing assistance to those who wish to build on this scriptural evidence in and through meaningful movement in a contemporary setting.

4) Early Christian evidence about sacred dance
In *The Great Mysteries* (1977), Andrew Greeley considers the nature, function and purpose of Christian dance. He demonstrates that although such dance is relatively uncommon within Christian worship today, early Christians would express themselves, their beliefs and emotion by dancing either in churches or at martyrs' tombs to honour them. Bishops and priests were involved in dance in church at Christmas and Easter. Despite body/spirit tensions and variations in practice it is clear that dance has played a part in the worship life and spiritual expression of Christians across a period of time.

5) Roman Catholic Contemporary views on sacred dance
Church Documents such as *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*) affirms the unity of being in the body:

"Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise, freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honour since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day" (*Gaudium et Spes* December 1965 paragraph 14).
Sacrosanctum Concilium (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) gives more detailed guidelines about the inclusion of the arts within liturgy²¹⁵, but requires a careful and balanced reading in order to draw conclusions. In the introduction it is affirmed that worship rites:
"...be revised carefully in the light of sound tradition, and that they be given new vigour to meet the circumstances and needs of modern times" (4). Moreover: "...the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community" (37) leaving it to the: "...competent territorial ecclesiastical authority...to specify adaptations, especially in the case of the administration of the sacraments, the sacramentals, processions, liturgical language, sacred music and the arts" (39). However, the faithful are also reminded that: "All artists...should ever bear in mind that they are engaged in a kind of sacred imitation of God the Creator, and are concerned with works destined to be used in Catholic worship, to edify the faithful, and to foster their piety and their religious formation" (127). In order to balance 'sound tradition' and 'legitimate progress', theological, historical and pastoral investigation must take place so that new forms of expression in worship: "...should in some way grow organically from forms already existing" (23).

6) Popular 20th Century hymns and sacred dance

By making reference to the scientific sphere, Bradley (1990) shows that dance fits with understandings of quantum physics, that there is a balanced interplay of chance and necessity visible in the fact that sub-atomic particles are in a state of constant motion. A further link can be made with the view of God held by process theologians who focus on God's love as persuasive rather than coercive:

"The idea of the dance of creation is one that we would do well to recover from its biblical and medieval roots if we are to restore the Green heart of Christianity. It is, of course, a strong motif in eastern religions, particularly in Hinduism where Shiva is regarded as the Lord of the Dance of Creation, the one who maintains the cosmos in life and who is also the presence contained in nature". (Bradley 1990 p. 44)

²¹⁵ See also 'Dance in the Liturgy' (1975) a document issued by the Congregation for the Sacraments and
This can be linked with, for instance, modern Christian hymns such as *Lord of the Dance* by Sidney Carter.

7) Popular culture, ritualism and dance

We would do well to look to what is embodied about ritual elsewhere in contemporary human experience — this dialogues with the ‘recognition of God in human experience’ that emerged as a major theme of embodiment in and through Chapter 4. Northcott argues that whilst there is banal commercial exploitation of ritual in popular culture and mass entertainment: “...there are a number of indicators of the re-emergence of ritual as a significant element in new social movements and new religious movements in the West”, and he cites as evidence of this the mobilisation of ritual within recent protest movements, and the degree of endeavour and interest underpinning the ‘Names Project’ memorial quilt for individuals who have died from AIDS where each individual is remembered with a square of material embellished with symbols indicative of that person (Northcott 1993 p. 190). There is in my opinion an untapped potential lying at the point of the recovery of the richness of ritual which appears to offer so much potential for a sound and enriched expression of our embodiment in liturgy.

8) Cultural considerations

In the course of this research I have taken every opportunity to participate in and observe sacred dance as well taking account of available literature. From this I have become aware of the need to avoid generalisations especially in relation to the cultural context of dance. However I wish to record briefly some thoughts arising from on-going reflection in relation to the relative paucity of sacred dance within worship expression.

Authors seem in agreement in relation to the central role of movement as a constituent element of the human condition and expression. Dance historian Walter Sorell writes that to primitive people, dance is never superficial or without purpose: “It is not done because 'it is the thing to

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*Divine Worship* for further guidelines and instruction.
do; but because it 'is' the thing" (cited in Feder and Feder 1981 p. 2). Feder and Feder themselves show that:

"...rhythmic movement, perhaps accompanied by sound and using the body itself as an instrument, was surely one of the earliest forms of self-expression, in which humans related their own beings to the constantly changing world in which they lived, a world filled with the rhythm of movement, of the days, and of the seasons". (Feder and Feder 1981 p. 3)

Clearly sacred dance finds comfortable expression in some cultural contexts. Meisner argues that the only European country to retain ritual dance as part of its tradition is Spain, a country which is proud of its rich and varied dance culture (Meisner 1993 p. 18). Reporting upon a conference about movement Meisner cites a "...dancer and choreographer from Benin in Nigeria" who: "...told how dance forms part of everyday life in Benin; for example, when he returns home, his grandmother greets him by dancing. From an early age, children are brought up with dance, feeling the rhythms as they are carried on their mothers' backs. There are dances for festivals and celebrations; in some villages, there are still traditional dances for rain and for the harvest. Dance is perceived as therapeutic, as a way of treating the sick, of washing away evil spirits" (Meisner 1993 p. 18-19). In relation to a musical context, but still illustrative of the point that embodied forms of worship are to be found in certain cultural settings, John Collier a former commissioner of indigenous American affairs, writes that:

"...a Navajo sing is communal healing, and the sick patient throws the healing back to all who are assisting him, in a profound process of therapeutic suggestion and self-suggestion which reaches to the obscure, central deeps of the body and soul". (Feder and Feder 1981 p. 3)

Television pictures showed Nelson Mandela spontaneously joining the dance at various points during his visit to England (July 1996). Unlike many politicians who engage in certain behaviours for the 'photo-opportunity', the spontaneity and sincerity of Mandela's actions were striking, as was the clear celebration of his embodiment. This is an interesting parallel with
Boris Yeltsin's spontaneous dance as part of his electioneering which has become the sort of media motif I discussed earlier in relation to sport.

I realise that the question of the role of sacred dance as a form of religious experience and factors which impede its use is complex and deep-seated in nature. However as Beckman (1986 pp. 53-57) indicates dance can be a way to support a range of feelings, attitudes and spirituality within ritual enabling the congregations to both tell and listen to a story and invite a response. Indeed as Buckingham shows:

"Our understanding and experience of God may be culturally conditioned, but God and our desire for God cannot be limited by culture. The desire to know and experience the action of God in the fissures of body and soul, the desire to be known utterly in body and soul by a living and active God and to be touched by that God — these can and do carry us beyond existing culture". (Buckingham 1995 p. 124)

9) Further Aspects of Sacred Dance: training and education
This chapter has sought to interpret sacred dance in the light of the conceptual framework that has been established throughout this study in relation to embodiment. Moreover this area of activity has been examined and assessed within a framework which recognises the need to explore and express our being in our bodies, is conscious of the impetus within worshiping communities to articulate their religious experiences, and holds in consciousness the themes of embodiment which form part of the theoretical underpinning including the senses and the recognition of God in human experience which are clearly significant elements within sacred dance. I now intend to examine two consequences of taking sacred dance seriously as a form of religious experience.

a) Developing dance as a form of religious experience
Initially by way of discussion I wish to address the practical problems that might be encountered in the execution of ritual dance if the differing skill levels and experiences of participants within a congregation/community are taken into account.
Deitering (1982 pp. 71-83) suggests that all ages can learn simple dances with a view to performance, since dance and movement are the language of human expression that most naturally enable a community to make response to the Lord as one body in Christ (Deitering 1982 pp. 56-61)\(^{216}\). Her later account of a workshop provides clear evidence of a setting where both healthy and infirm moved together in worship, thus expressing as a group an embodied spirituality. If sacred dance in a worship context is to be truly expressive of the embodiment of all in a worshipping community it would seem to be vital therefore that it should not 'exclude' in terms of levels of competence required to dance. Clearly leaders and participants in ritual dance would do well to harness the insights and advice found in resource material such as that of Challingsworth (1982), Davies (1984) and Levine (1991).

Discussions with participants in sacred dance workshops undertaken in the course of research reveals however that there is a perceived need for some participants in any group to possess some 'tools' of dance. Thereby the less experienced can be assisted in their expression by those who 'speak' a language that must only be conducive to the fullest possible expression through liturgy. That is not to say that a group of unskilled dancers could not execute an effective ritual dance and indeed there is also the danger that too much technique can detract from the perceived sincerity of the piece and create a distance between the dancer and the congregation. Sacred dance is not a performance, indeed too much of this element can be anything other than conducive to the enhancement of the community's worship, and yet the combination of expertise, a sound theological basis and an embodied spirituality which is synthesised in the work of those such as the Boston Liturgical Dance Ensemble can give rise to a profoundly spiritual/interior experience in which to share. Thus it would seem that a degree of skill is necessary in order to express oneself effectively in and through sacred dance, and yet as Long shows (1976) if we are to consider the 'medium' and the 'message' and hold them in close relation it can be seen that technically expert performances can lack meaning.

\(^{216}\) Also see Deitering (1981).
She contends therefore that in addition to the resolution of elements such as the stimulation of the imagination and dramatic identification, the performer needs to be affected by the truths that are being communicated.

Reference to some further sources extend what we could term the novice/expert question in a manner more directly expressive of embodiment. In a book about dance whose very title Knowing in my bones has relevance for our theme of embodiment, Ruth Foster (1978) offers some insights which can be usefully applied to the problem identified in terms of the degree of technical skill required for sacred dance. She shows that if there are shortcomings in the management of the medium there may be insufficient form given to the impulse or control exerted over it. In this way do we come to a greater appreciation and understanding of this illuminating impulse:

"As command of a medium increases, pervading and simultaneously pervaded by the inner impulse, the resonance between them is reinforced and the life of feeling nourished. But if attention becomes focused too persistently on the medium itself action ceases to be expressive and becomes impressive; that is to say, response to the medium as object becomes dominant". (Foster 1978 p. 4)

Paul Klee comments that: "the sap rises into the artist, and flowing through him, he conveys vision to work. His role is to gather and pass on what rises from the depths and yet this is a humble position" (Klee cited in Jennings 1975 p 9). Jennings herself focuses on the creativity that is embodied in the artist, in a manner which speaks to this question of the degree of skill and expertise, but also creativity and integrity that may be necessary in order to successfully convey and express religious and spiritual ideas:

"For the most important quality that marks a product as 'creative' is that it expresses a man's need and search for meaning and that it is imbued with value and excellence. Consequently creative activity forms an integral part of the process of personal growth and is an expression of that process. Thus it is not just novelty or doing or making something 'different'; rather it has to do with whether what one creates truly reflects one's own inner experience and resources and whether it is genuine, regardless of whether or not the product
happens to resemble something previously made or created". (Gordon cited in Jennings 1975 p. 2)

b) Sacred Dance and religious experience as an aspect of Religious Education

To extend the discussion in one further dimension I wish to make some brief observations in relation to the use of dance alongside other expressive arts in Religious Education programmes, where such use may spring from an on-going search for new avenues for the expression of religious experience. Brenda Wall provides an account of the factors that were involved in the re-location of her R.E. Department from the Humanities Faculty to that of the Expressive Arts Faculty where she found sympathetic encouragement: "...as the role of the imagination was a key principle for the sort of education that would unlock students' potential", an approach that was already used in the faculty for expressive arts involving art work, drama, sport and awareness exercises (Wall cited in Starkings ed. 1993 p. 181). This occurrence arose out of her dissatisfaction with methods which she said were encouraging her students: "...to gawp rather than gaze" (Wall cited in Starkings ed. 1993 p. 180) and was inspired by the type of work being conducted by David Hay and Edward Robinson at The Religious Experience Research Unit. She also took inspiration from Brenda Lealman who had suggested the presentation of Religious Education in a 'metaphoric mode' by use of the 'triggers of the imagination' and also recommended the type of approach suggested by Agreed Syllabuses such as that of Salford which encouraged the recognition of the spiritual dimension in creative and aesthetic areas of the curriculum\(^{217}\). Wall says:

"Above all it seemed to me that education of the heart needed to be integrated with education of the head, and furthermore, education of the eyes and hands"

(Wall cited in Starkings ed. 1993 p. 180)

\(^{217}\) In addition to the resources of the teachers and resources and talents which could be harnessed from other departments, R.E. Departments could do well to call upon the skills of those groups such as Reaching Out, a newly established group offering to do workshops/retreats employing dance and drama. One of the founders Angela Alexander is an example of the embodiment of a resolution to the novice/expert question considered as part of this analysis of sacred dance given that she is a trained dancer, qualified R.E. teacher and experienced dance facilitator. Research is possibly needed into such areas along the lines of collaboration between sacred dance artist and dance in education. Those such as Alexander have wide experience of organising and taking part in liturgical dance.
In a similar vein, Jacqueline Emery (1990) acknowledges that each of the expressive arts offers a particular ‘vantage point on the doings of life — drama is appropriate for exploring interaction and personal values whilst dance and mime help to focus on self-awareness, non-verbal body language and self-awareness. She sees them as keys to unlock the extra dimension of the spiritual whole, ‘heightening’ and ‘making real’ the content of our lesson (Emery 1990 p. 17-18). This point is also made by Cotter:

"When we pray, moving soul-deep into God, we inhabit a land of silence and groaning. But pictures, dance, music and words bring us to its borders". (Cotter 1997 p. 982)

Summary - Sacred Dance, Embodiment and Religious Experience

By way of summary to this chapter it can be said that quite simply and literally sacred dance would appear to offer the opportunity to express and celebrate our embodiment, as this term has been conceptualised in and through this study. It would appear that if our religious worship is to be truly expressive of our reality, our corporeality, then sacred dance must be recognised and more widely implemented. Perhaps as Wendy Wright (1995) suggests "...we have to unlearn all that we know", and moreover:

"What intrigues me is the idea that while particular embodied experience, including the experience of gender, does clearly shape our knowledge of God, it may be possible to speak of a kind of God-knowledge which begins to unravel all that we know, which can hear the silence beneath our varied voices, and through which, while respecting our differences, we can discover ourselves as one in our capacity for radical love". (Wright W. 1995 p. 142)

Embodiment would seem to be an inspirational, guiding principle in our attempts to do this. Thus in relation to sacred dance, embodiment:

- provides a way of understanding its validity despite differences in attitude, practice and efficacy;

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218 Wright's Western European perspective can be situated alongside African and Asian cultures in Christianity which already use dance as a form of expression of religious experience.
• can also help as point of classification for the range of activities which is brought together under the one term of sacred dance;
• helps to describe the deeply embodied dance common in some sectors of the Christian Church;
• speaks to the efforts of those engaged in exploring possibilities as to how to: "...animate the Body of Christ" (Bentley 1982 pp. 601-605), and those trying to discover new routes for the expression of belief through dance in situations where individuals are not naturally inclined to move or accept movement in their worship ceremonies;²¹⁹
• helps us to widen the concept of the expression of our 'being in bodies' through aesthetic means, and assists in an understanding of: "...movement as mediator of meaning" (DeMarinis cited in Adams and Apostolos-Cappadona 1990 p. 193);
• provides a guiding light by which our expression can take place in a manner which represents, expresses, encourages and mediates our embodiment, particularly acting as a possible benchmark for sacred dance which is 'embodying' as opposed to that which is not;
• describes the point of confluence, the defining moment, which lies at the heart of the relationship between the spiritual and the physical;
• provides an opportunity for the use of talents in an embodied, enriching manner. Additionally it provides a way of making sense of and interpreting the role of expertise in sacred dance.

All of the above points highlight how embodied experience might be found in and through sacred dance.

Embodiment as an interpretive key for sacred dance thus enables and challenges us to 'reclaim' its 'power'²²⁰, in order to find renewed purpose, significance, and interest in ways of expressing

²¹⁹ Here embodiment may also help to describe the radical possibilities for 'change' that are possible in and through liturgical dance, see Stewart (1994).
²²⁰ See 'Reclaiming the power of sacred dance (Recommendations for liturgical dance)' by Levine (1991 pp. 334-335).
ourselves in and through the physical, in and through our corporeality, in and through our being in our bodies in the recognition that:

"This God whom we have consigned to some great throne far away is bored. This God, this co-creator, this great Spirit of Sophia is bored because we will no longer play, we will no longer dance. We have so many problems and we are dealing with so much guilt and pain. And God says, 'Who will dance with me? Who will loosen up, who will dance with me?' The Spirit of Sophia, nevertheless, is alive and well and I think hovering over the jar ready to seduce us into new life". (Gateley 1993 p. 92)
CHAPTER 6
A discussion of factors affecting and distorting the experience, recognition and celebration of embodiment.

Thus far embodiment as an interpretive key for the experience arising from selected human physical activities has largely focused on the positive, life-enhancing, benefits and consequences arising from participation in the chosen fields of enquiry. However:

"The magnitude of pain on this planet is incomprehensible. The experience of sin, evil and death strains the human imagination and mocks our longing for cosmic, social and personal wholeness". (McIntyre 1993 p. 210)

This suggests that to simply focus on the positive implies that we might:
— ignore empirical evidence of the negative side,
— fail to be balanced in consideration,
— stifle further debate.

It is fitting therefore to focus upon factors which might affect, suppress, distort and impede our embodiment, its recognition and celebration — acknowledging that it is only in facing up to the 'shadow side' that we can recognise how truly interpretive and representative embodiment might be as a 'key'. In this chapter the term ‘disembodiment’ will be used to describe ‘distortions of’ and ‘impediments to’ embodiment — these are descriptive phrases that allow for the fact that some negative factors may be part of our human condition or may be imposed upon us as part of the human condition constructed for us through the expectations and attitudes of society. A consideration of ‘disembodiment’ which is within the remit of the critical question and according to the interests of this study will be best served by focusing on two areas as a direct counterpoint to the use of embodiment in preceding chapters. This chapter will fill out this initial meaning and extend ‘embodiment’ as a term by its other pole, its shadow. Then as summary is made within sub-sections of the chapter I will aim to flesh out this initial treatment of the key terms. The central methodological tools are further employed
here to build up the argument where the 'piecing of the quilt' is further augmented through the journeying 'to and fro' between key pieces of information:

- **human physical activity** — evidence will be presented of situations which indicate that sport is not always and not universally an opportunity for growth towards our personification, identification and realisation (6.1);

- **the religious context** — where relevant in this study, note has been taken of the tensions in religious perceptions of the body and the manner in which that has been a contributory factor to the oppression of our full sensing, of our imagining, of our experiencing. Here, evidence will be presented of challenges to be found in aspects of embodiment which can affect individuals both directly through personal involvement and also cumulatively through a fabric of mores, attitudes and values arising as a result of the failure to accept, celebrate and permit the equal embodiment of all (6.2);

Towards the end of these sub-sections I will make some summative points in relation to tensions which may be observed between embodiment and embodiment experienced in distorted forms. By this stage there will have been sufficient evidence presented throughout the study in order for this to take place. It is intended that a sound basis will thus be laid for final reflections and conclusions in relation to the critical question.

**Key questions underpinning this chapter would appear to be:**

- How do distortions of and impediments to embodiment affect an acceptance of 'being in our bodies'?
- Does it follow logically that tenets of 'distorted or impeded embodiment' can be established which are the opposite of findings about embodiment?
- Can we account for the manner in which embodiment and its antithesis might appear to be linked at certain points of insight, growth, healing and wholeness?
Before attention is paid to the areas for specific consideration it will prove useful to make some general observations in relation to facets of the human condition which prove problematic for positive understandings of embodiment. These include the ageing process; disability; ill-health — encompassing a range of physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual diseases and ailments; the contemporary pre-occupation with the body and arising malaise; the increasing sense of alienation experienced by those on the margins of society; a range of addictions; as well as person's inhumanity to other persons and the biosphere through acts of violence, terror, dominance and malstewardship. It would be too great a task to focus on all these areas therefore a selection has been made from the evidence gathered.

Impediments to, and distortion of embodiment in the human condition

In a contemporary sense and in a manner relevant to this study and its location of embodiment as central, the existence of suffering challenges simplistic notions of embodiment. Our television screens regularly bring us examples of person's inhumanity to person. Traditionally such areas have been known theologically as the problem of evil and the problem of suffering.

Peter Vardy (1992) takes a journey through these problems in his *Puzzle of Evil* where he uses the metaphor of a quest for their resolution:

"Like any quest it involves a search but in this case our quest is for unseen realities. We will probe the existence and nature of those dark and evil forces that seem to torment human beings and will try, as we go, to understand how it can possibly be that these fearsome forces exist in a world which many hold has been created by a wholly good and all powerful God". (Vardy 1992 p. 9)

So how do we resolve these issues? How do we cope with the plethora of illnesses that seem to be associated with the low self esteem that seems to be a factor in eating disorders? What is implied by the obsession with beauty, image, personality, all evidenced in the premise of self-improvement which underpins much of popular culture? What is suggested by the popularity of the plastic surgeon employed to create the perfect visage or body whose services are required cosmetically because:
"...rare is the person who is completely reconciled to his appearance, who has never longed to encounter a different face (or body) in the mirror. (Rudofsky 1974 p. 37)

How do we draw the distinction between possible life-giving properties and the potential there is to feed into the basic lack of self-acceptance suffered by so many? Is it life-changing, enhancing and giving or does it provide an ivory tower, an elastoplast to the inability to love ourselves as we are, to accept our embodiment? It would appear that there is a fundamental lack of self-acceptance inherent in the pursuit of what may well be illusory images, which seems to be inconsistent with a sense of our embodiment that comes through the facing up to paradoxes in our life, the working through of moments of pain. One of the most fundamental questions of the human condition is how to cope with growing old:

"...the body is part of our identity, and its afflictions and discontents, its donkey-like refusal to do what 'ought' to be done, destroys self-respect. The wrinkles that write a lifetime into a face like a letter to the young are dismaying when one looks into a mirror". (Sarton 1988 p. 97)

Duquin (1989) contends that some aspects of the health and fitness movement, and fashion advertisements, have self re-creation as a goal with an emphasis on the new look, the new body, the new and improved me. Whilst this can be beneficial insofar as women are incorporating physical and mental benefits into their daily routine, the negative side is that for some:

"...sport, exercise and body concerns are an obsessive, restricting, mandatory convention with strong moral overtones...Advertising rarely projects a wholesome and nonjudgmental image of women and fitness...Taking this game seriously has resulted in an epidemic of anorexia, bulimia, repeated cosmetic surgery, exercise addicts who acquire chronic injuries, and narcissistic spa goers self absorbed, but never at peace, with their bodies". (Duquin 1989 p. 107)

Sources such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television programmes which provide an insight into 'popular' perceptions seemed, during the early stages of the research, to be keen to
present almost unreserved acceptance of what the 'body' had to offer whereas latterly I have noticed a trend to present the potential hazards of involvement in certain activities. An issue of the Guardian from February 1996 brought together two areas of concern, addressed by John Illmans. He confronts the issues involved in the increased reliance on surgery as a way of pursuing a 'better' body, a better 'physical' image when he says:

"Arguably the need for such surgery has never been greater. We are crucially affected by being short, tall, stooped or disfigured. Even major changes in appearance can have a major impact on our body image, a red nose, a peeling forehead, at tiny bit of cotton wool on a shaving cut, a new pair of glasses". (Illmans 1996a p. 24).

Moreover, Illmans presents the opinions of Angus McGrouther, Britain's first professor of plastic surgery, who says that the answer lies in the classroom rather than in the operating theatre, for him it is society at large which needs treatment. What he terms the 'supermodel culture' has created a new cosmetic underclass which cannot face the outside world, with far more facially disfigured people than is generally recognised because so many afflicted individuals lock themselves away. He calls for an adjustment of views in relation to our body image — with disfigurement being the last 'bastion' of discrimination (McGrouther cited in Illmans 1996 p. 24) . We can look at other areas of this study to draw some conclusions as to what this implies for the embodiment of the individual — what sense is there of the value of oneself, in relation to oneself and to others:

"The emphasis on physicality appears to have particular significance in an age in which social critics have noted that people seem to be judged more by the contours of their bodies, by the appeal of their movement, and by the image of sensuality than by the content of their mind or the strength of their emotions". (Hahn 1984 p. 10)

Illmans second article in relation to our physical selves is 'Boys trapped by beauty myth' which is also of interest for our purposes. In it we read how young men are succumbing to their own

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221 There is also the question of body dysmorphic disorder — a syndrome where the sufferer imagines s/he is ugly (see Hammond 1996 p. 12).
222 I would not personally agree that this is the last bastion of discrimination — in actual and perceived terms discrimination can exist in areas wherever the individual experiences such circumstances.
kind of 'beauty myth' — a term popularised by Naomi Wolf's book, and they are just as vulnerable as girls to the images of 'ideal' bodies projected through the media (Illmams 1996b p. 25). Furthermore, we could argue that far from being helped in their embodiment, the challenge to men on the one hand to develop their more gentle sides, (the new man syndrome) and then also being told to find the 'wild' man within (Bly 1991 p. 6), must only lead to a confusion of expectations, values and roles. Repicky (1995) addresses the 'boom' in the health-club industry and the increase in plastic-surgery. Moreover he shows that socially acceptable masculine qualities have insidious ramifications which encourage the polarisation of characteristics that are considered appropriate for males/females and result in the over-development of characteristics of masculinity:

"Unsure of how to live out one's manhood, one attempts at least to appear manly, modelling oneself after the image of masculinity portrayed in movies, T.V. shows and advertising. Ironically enough, this pursuit of masculinity leads many boys to develop the same neurotic disorders related to self-esteem as are observed in girls. Furthermore, many of the bodies they seek to mirror are not those of real persons, but computer-enhanced images". (Repicky 1995 p. 114)

Clearly there is a danger of replacing a set of materialist/consumerist obsessions with a complex of anti-materialist/anti-consumerist, 'holistic', 'alternative' manias, which could be equally as antithetical to embodiment. The need and obsession to conform can be just as strong within a set of behaviours that are perceived to bring us more into our bodies. There will always be those who will flock to anything 'quid novi' on a fruitless quest for a holy grail that may not exist if they fundamentally fail to recognise that fulfilment, wholeness, or embodiment must always take account of the being that is essentially in our bodies. I identify a particular challenge to our embodiment to be the finding of paths conducive to growth and yet appropriate and reflective of the pressures of contemporary society. Where this challenge is not fully met we have to question the fullness of religious experience which I have shown to potentially lie at the confluence of the spiritual and the physical.
6.1 Impediments to, and the distortion of, embodiment arising from human physical activity

Thus far it has been possible to utilise embodiment as an interpretive key for the experience arising from physical activity because a predominantly positive view has underpinned the analysis. I have deliberately chosen 'human physical activity' as the frame of reference here in order to make possible a summative account of some issues related to the impeded and distorted experience of embodiment which can arise from its various settings.

In order to present a balanced picture and to pave the way for the weighing up of the comprehensive efficacy of embodiment as an interpretive key for the experience arising from a) the chosen examples of physical activity and b) the wider context of physical activity about which it is hoped to make some comment, it is necessary to turn attention towards negative experiences that lie within and arise from the total sport context. As entry is made into this section it will be useful to keep in consciousness the thrust of observations in relation to the positive facets and outcomes of participation in activities across the range of our definitions.

The observations that follow are social, psychological, emotional, spiritual, medical and economic in origin and characteristic. For purposes of clarification the research and reflection into these areas will be thematised.

Gender

In the course of research a personal 'coming to consciousness' has occurred through the acquaintance with literature that deals with factors such as post-modern interpretations and gendered ways of knowing. Insights gained initially through theological sources in this regard have been strengthened by updating my previous familiarity with sports sociology where I became aware of the degree of concern in relation to gendered ways of knowing and experiencing in and through sport. Reference was made to such sources as Hargreaves' (1994) synthesis of critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sport, Birrell and

Messner and Sabo (1990 pp. 1-15) show that feminist analysis of sport has a short history. In the mainstream feminist classics written before the 1980's such as de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1952); Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970); Daly's *Gyn-Ecology: The Metaphysics of Radical Feminism* (1978) little mention was made of sport. However Messner and Sabo go on to show that throughout the 1970's authors were developing a feminist critique of sport, which involved the analysis of the sorts of factors which led Theberge to conclude that sport was: "a fundamentally sexist institution that is male dominated and masculine in orientation" (Theberge 1981 p. 342). Books by Gerber et al., (1974) and Oglesby (1978) brought together the significant research on the subject:

"Feminist analyses uncovered a hidden history of female athleticism, examined sex differences in patterns of athletic socialisations, and demonstrated how the dominant institutional forms of sport have naturalised men's power and privilege over women. The marginalisation and trivialisation of female athletes, it was demonstrated, serve to reproduce the structural and ideological domination of women by men. In the decade that has followed, the feminist critique both of the institution of sport and of the androcentric biases in sport studies has had a profound impact. Feminism now makes a major contribution to defining the terrain of scholarly discourse in sport studies" (Messner and Sabo 1990 p.2)

Blue (1987) provides an important historical perspective which assists in an appreciation of the factors that contributed to the casting of individuals in a certain role through sport. An important function of English public schools was seen to be the development of the muscles of 'the purveyors of the Empire', with the tenets of Muscular Christianity holding sway. The

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223 Messner and Sabo (1990) go on to show however that within sport studies, feminist scholars have found themselves marginalised, just as feminist theory has been marginalised in the wider context: "There has been resistance to the new perspectives introduced by feminist scholars. And feminism is still struggling to develop into a more mature, fully developed paradigm" (Messner and Sabo 1990 p. 3).

224 A useful definition of Muscular Christianity is that provided by Ellis Cashmore: "A doctrine about the positive moral influence of physical exercise and sport, which had its intellectual roots in the philosophy of J.J. Rousseau in France and Gutsmuths in Germany and which was appropriately adopted by the public school of England in the late nineteenth century" (Cashmore 1990 p.61).
perception was that sport built character and manliness, indeed the word 'manly' appeared six times in Theodore Roosevelt's address delivered in 1893 on the value of athletic training. (Blue 1987 p. 104). This obviously affected and influenced the ways that boys and men came to know and regard themselves in relation to each other and to women and moreover:

"Sport thus excluded women ideologically. It was primarily the women of the leisured classes who slipped in: the wives and daughters of captains of industry: the antecedents of Sloane Rangers, rich girls on both sides of the Atlantic who attended the new women's colleges and were used to having their own way.....There was in America an additional impetus for women to participate: one response to the influx of European-born, often Catholic, immigrants was a WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) eugenics movement which believed strong women would bear strong, white, middle-class sons". (Blue 1987 p. 105)

Whilst Blue's suggestion that women are more heroic than men in so far as they not only have to show grace under pressure but also grace under the pressure of prejudice could be seen as rather separatist, I believe it can be read more effectively as indicative of the fact that when sport is an agent of the distortion of the fact of our embodiment there are no winners:

"Like male champions, women have achieved excellence at great personal sacrifice. They have endured pain, exhaustion, defeat. They altered their bodies with chemicals. They have, for sport, submitted to the surgeon's knife. In the 'amateur' sports, they have endured the indignity and participated in the lie of under the table money. The women who have become champions are no better than they should be; no better than the men. They have followed the male competitive model; they have won at all costs". (Blue 1987 p. xv)

Drugs

Elsewhere in this section I have used the rather wordy but more accurate label of the distortion of and impediment to embodiment. However here we could say that 'disembodiment' can come 'metaphorically' and 'actually' through the deliberate use of drugs in order to enhance performance, or to attain/sustain a position within an event. The lack of honesty precipitating and underpinning such an action arguably undermines traditional values

223 The struggle for women to achieve, to 'make it' can be linked to the 'shadow side' of religious experience where pain can sometimes be regarded as a positive force.
of fair-play and playing for the pure satisfaction of competing. The well-known trite sports aphorisms, such as 'good guys come second' arise from a context where victory is all that counts. Pressures upon competitors across a range of activities are enormous and create problems where a mismatch of talents might be coupled with our desire to win. This paradox might be easier to face were pressures not so great and possible benefits not so tempting. As Figone shows: "In short, athletes would like to find a substance which works similar to the way spinach works for the cartoon character, Popeye, believing it will either give them the edge or provide motivation for intense training leading to improvement" (Figone 1988 p. 25). Also demonstrable are the pressures that face young players, including time spent away from home, economic hardship and so on. Even if the athlete does take drugs there is no guarantee that performance will be improved:

"However, if the athlete perceives drugs are at least partially responsible for achieved success, even though in reality they are not, continued use is predictable. In many cases, the athlete indeed knows that drug ingestion may have long-term adverse effects as in the case of anabolic steroids, but, the fact is that what is communicated to him is that his drug is necessary for individual and team success. In team sports collective success is dependent upon each and every member carrying out prescribed role functions. When team-mates, coaches, trainers, and significant others believe and expect the athlete should use drugs, the role pressures exerted leave the athlete with few alternatives — especially when performance is not at an acceptable level". (Figone 1988 pp. 31)

Figone goes on to show that at this point, when performance has fallen, the athlete is faced with the decision of selecting some mechanism to improve performance: "Given the widespread use of all drugs in sport...and the monetary reward structure at the professional level, the choice to use drugs is logical" (Figone 1988 p. 31).

The use of drugs plays an increasingly large part in sport. Apart from the inherent short/long term dangers and issues of cheating all of which contradict understandings of embodiment about the person, about the sport, about the position of sports in the world, such substances offer the competitor a temporary way to transcend limitations, to disregard the 'stuff' which is
their life, to find the answer within, to become whole, to chart the course to an embodiment which actually may lie at the point of truth of our personification, realisation and identification and not in a short cut. The individual whose undetected substance abuse results in victory may well enjoy the same fame and material rewards as those who 'genuinely' win. However in terms of the more intangible benefits of winning such as fulfilment, sense of success, breaking through barriers to achievement, culmination of training, wholeness, completeness and respect from others, all of which factors constitute an 'embodiment', I contend that the seeking of advantage through artificial means brings 'false' embodiment. These embodiment-indicative elements might paradoxically come through not taking the easy way out, through the risk of failure, where the 'rewards' may come through making patterns and connections which require patience, honesty and integrity226. Such a paradox is well-recognised as a facet of religious experience where that experience may be all the more enriching where the 'negative' is positively harnessed227.

Physical damage

It is an obvious and accepted fact that participation in sport carries the risk of injury. Participants may be particularly susceptible because of the mismatch between actual levels of fitness and sudden fitness requirements228. Amateur and professional sportspeople risk injuries, ranging from the minor to career and possibly life threatening, whenever they compete. Some activities such as motor racing carry a particular risk which is inherent within the sport itself, other injuries may be more common to participants in a particular sport, and in game situations there is the ever-present risk of injury through collision with an object such as a hard ball or encounter with other participants. Jack Buckner sums up the paradox of training and the fine, dividing line between illness and fitness thus:

226 Pizarro and Schott (1988 p. 52) detail the possible objectives for drug programmes which include therapy as opposed to punishment, and counselling and education
227 Notable example here would be found in the reflections of John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila.
228 Activities such as beach cricket and the parents race at sports day create situations where this mis-match occurs between actual fitness and fitness levels.
"The training is so demanding that the body is constantly under stress. Push yourself too hard and you break down. Don't push yourself too hard and you never make it". (Buckner cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 228)

Dance and gymnastics are amongst those physical activities that are most aesthetically pleasing to participate in or spectate, and include under these general categories a whole range of competitive and recreational activities popular with participants and spectators. They are also activities about which claims are made in relation to inherent spiritual/interior characteristics apparently arising from the aesthetic dimension. On the shadow side these same activities are linked with evidence of serious, far-reaching and long term implications of over-training which occur when an individual exceeds a level of training suitable for his/her age, physique or needs. Many gymnastic exercises involve the forcing of the body into unnatural positions for which it was not intended; this is also true of ballet which holds a particularly revered position in a cultural sense (see Blue 1987 pp. 162). Other areas of concern in relation to participants include the suppression of puberty (see Riordan 1975 p. 8), and undernourishment as a result of weight restriction (Blue 1987 p. 158)

Additionally and particularly of concern was evidence unearthed during the research which was presented in a positive context but which conversely provided material for this consideration of factors threatening embodiment. Syer and Connolly detail how through attunement a Scottish gymnast found an exercise to put discomfort in a 'black box', so effective that she was able to ignore blisters on hands (Syer and Connolly 1984 p. 15). I interpret this as a possible encouragement for individuals to ignore warning signals provided autonomously by the body, where the body engages in dialogue with itself. Whilst there is every reason to take note of all such signals, be they emotional, psychological or spiritual that may arise as a result of participation in physical activities, it must be particularly dangerous to ignore the physical pointer of pain. This pointer is undoubtedly the body's way of conveying the deleterious effects of an action or series of actions to an individual. We must find this particularly alarming where children and adolescents are concerned. This notion of the

227 Also see Griffin and Harris (1996 pp. 180-186)
ignoring of the body's signals was 'celebrated' in the adage 'no pain, no gain' arising from the aerobics/exercise boom of the '80's. This adage contains a fundamental problem for notions of embodiment — of suffering glorified in pursuit of a goal, namely 'fitness', which paradoxically can move further away the closer you get to it. The state of fitness is an ultimately relative state — and one that I identify through this research to occupy a particular place within a construct of physical activity. By the very fact that many fitness activities are undertaken as an 'end' in themselves, and are not contextualised within an overall training purpose for a specific event I would suggest that taken to extreme they can represent a particular challenge to any notion of embodiment which arises from human physical activity. Such a focus deceives the individual into believing that self-acceptance is at the end of this road at the point of achievement of a certain body form. Whilst enjoyment through participation brings the earlier well documented effects, it can also spiral into patterns of behaviour most commonly witnessed in overtly physical activities such as weightlifting. Such dangers are especially potent where they become bound up with other patterns of addictive behaviour such as slimming and substance abuse. The all pervasive issue of the 'appropriate' body image is relevant here with people convinced that through diet and exercise they will become a certain shape regardless of their inherent somatotype. From a feminist standpoint, Elisabeth Schüßler-Fiorenza details various disciplining practices:

"...which seek to produce the feminine body as a 'subjected', docile, sexualised body, on which an inferior status has been inscribed.

The first assemblage of disciplining practices seeks to produce the ideal feminine body as a body of a certain size and general configuration. Its regimes are obsessive dieting in order to produce the slender, boyish body, as well as forms of exercise that shape the 'ideal' feminine body form". (Schüßler-Fiorenza cited in Manazar ed. 1996 p. 46)

The account of Allan McGraw a footballer with the Scottish club, Morton, during the 1960's (Duncanson cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 98) extends the exploration of these physical adaptations.

230 For a feminist angle on aerobics see Illarvon (1995 pp. 23-44).
231 Somatotyping is a way of classifying the body according to its physical characteristics such as height and bone structure.
dangers and is a fitting balance to the stories of sport being 'life-enhancing' both temporally and in a more enduring manner. Indeed for our purposes it is one example of how the experience arising from human physical activity brought the antithesis of embodiment for this particular individual. We read that: "...his readiness to go in where it hurt too often left him nursing injuries" (Duncanson cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 98), and in order to continue playing and training, he was given injections of cortisone, an anti-inflammatory drug. This started him on a 'downward spiral' and resulted in his receiving a cumulative excess of the drug, (once every two weeks). In order to cover the tracks for the amount he was receiving he was taken to different hospitals and clinics. In time he could not manage to train so he was given an injection in order to play in competitive matches. The club did not have a physiotherapist, hence the only warnings came from other players who sensed that McGraw was receiving too much of the drug. Nobody seemed to know of the consequences and ultimately, after retirement at the relatively early age for footballers of twenty-eight, he had the first of thirteen operations. Upon investigation it transpired that his right knee joint had calcified, he was told that he had the legs of a seventy year old and would suffer increasing pain for rest of his life:

"...McGraw has twice undergone replacements of both knees and the joints are a scarred assembly of metal and nylon.....He takes the strongest painkillers to get through the day and sleep is a problem. Two or three times a day the plastic and metal will lock and the joints have to be manually forced back together". (Duncanson cited in Longmore ed. 1991. p. 100)

The reflections of Lerch act as a suitable summary to this sub-section. He shows that during their active career, athletes are treated with:

"...an adulation that approaches reverence. We invest millions of dollars in their equipment, facilities, travel, and 'development' — not to mention salaries. Sports organisations would do well to make similar investments in both efforts to prevent athletic injuries and attempts to promote the rehabilitation from and

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212 "Injected in to the wrong place or used too often, cortisone can lead to the complete disintegration of tissue, tendons, ligaments and joints. Current medical expertise considers more than one injection of cortisone in the same area — more than one in a lifetime, that is — to be a danger" (Duncanson cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 99).
adjustment to disability when athletic careers are suddenly and tragically cut short by serious injuries". (Lerch 1984 p. 65)

In this situation it is difficult to see how such negative experiences might integrate into a framework of spirituality similar to that postulated in this study. How can a sense of transcendence be experienced in the face of such adversity. A Christian religious approach might point to the central paradox of life through death. Furthermore incarnational body theology might posit embodied spiritual experience where the individual might find a way of integrating life-changing situations within a positive view of self.

The economic context — sponsorship, advertising, the role of television

These are deliberately brought together here for consideration because of the clear interrelationship between the media, advertising, sponsorship and in fact a range of economic concerns allied to the 'world' of sport. Lonsdale (1991 pp. 226-227) alludes to this when he says that sport in the northern hemisphere is in the hands of money-makers, media and entertainment industries and to a lesser extent the politicians. All of this threatens the original play spirit which Lonsdale feels to be almost extinct and he goes on to show that money dictates the picture with commercialisation and take-overs influencing the relationship between ends and means.

We can question the potential for sport itself to be embodied when its very structures in the form of its rules have been, and continue to be, so largely dominated by the concerns of the media, especially with the on-going increase in dominance of the extra-terrestrial channels. There is no better example of 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'. Also embodiment seems to offer a way of interpretation for the apparently paradoxical experience of such activities as the Americas' Cup. Dennis shows that in some sports you can make a fortune whereas, in America's Cup sailing you need a fortune to start and will almost certainly lose it (Dennis cited in Herd 1993 p. 160). Barnett (1990 pp. 121 ff.) conducts a helpful and illuminating

211 The interrelationship of these factors and their perceived effect is seen in the fact that media moguls such as Kerry Packer, Rupert Murdoch, and Robert Maxwell all have had a close involvement with sport.
discussion of the manner in which the requirements of schedulers for sport on television have brought pressure to bear on sports governing bodies. He discusses the effect that the need for advertising has had on the character of sports. Those sports with their foundation very firmly in America, such as basketball and baseball were easy prey to the concerns of commercialism. Hockey which had 'roots' in other countries could not easily be changed in a unilateral fashion by its American managers (Barnett 1990 p. 125). The following illustrates the effects of the financial basis upon boxing:

"In the old days, there were eight divisions with one champion in each weight class. Now there are sixteen divisions and four different organisations. They sprang up because televisions wanted championship fights. Television has created a monster". (The Editor of Ring, America's premier boxing magazine cited in Barnett 1990 p. 205)

So the commercial pressure for viewers might indeed be such that sports governing bodies will accede to a change in the rules in order to attract money and coverage. Wilson (1988 p. 9) shows that television influences everything to do with sport, from the attire of the player through to the judges' decisions in the case of American football. He shows how videotape and colour television in the 1960's heralded change:

"For the established sports, television offered greater income; for minority sports, it offered projection. Nothing was too much to ask of sports desperate to catch television's eye. Traditions, even rules, were tossed aside at the merest hint that by doing so they would please the one-eyed god they had come to worship. Cricket created new one-day competitions for it, and played in pink shirts with a yellow ball under floodlights. Tennis introduced the tie-breaker into its scoring system and moved Wimbledon's men final to a Sunday. Golf dropped its random draw, and the International Olympic Committee moved the cycle of future Winter Olympics by two years. Squash even rebuilt its courts in glass and painted yellow stripes on its ball". (Wilson 1988 p. 9)

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234 See Howell et al. 'Committee of Enquiry Into Sports Sponsorship' (1983) which deals with the issue of the maintenance of jurisdiction over sport to try to prevent unhealthy dependence on individual benefactors.

235 Examples of this abound including the construction, by BSkyB of ten fights in unusually quick succession for Chris Eubank in 1995.

236 Further evidence of this also is found in Lonsdale (1991).
However, T.V. sports coverage can have an even more sinister 'disembodying' effect than this as Barnett's (1990) evidence shows. He suggests that not only did observers find distasteful the restructuring and retiming of events in order to conform to the requirements of American networks, there were also concerns regarding the nationalistic emphasis on camerawork and commentary when providing excerpts for international audiences:

"For countries which have the technical expertise and resources to provide their own equipment and personnel, this is less of a problem (although most broadcasters will rely on the host country for at least some event coverage). For less advanced countries, there can be almost complete dependence on host nations or American coverage which invariably exaggerates the achievements and prowess of American athletes at the expense of others". (Barnett 1990)

Here then, sport and its media coverage is metaphorical and indicative of a distortion of embodiment which is noted in other areas as a result of American political and economic dominance. Wilson touches on the ethical issues and shows that:

"Indeed, few people perceive the power of sport now. Coca-Cola used its influence with FIFA to send the World Youth Cup finals in 1985 to the Soviet Union. It was no coincidence that the same year its rival Pepsi Cola's exclusive contract in that country ended, and that Coca-Cola sells now in the Soviet Union. Sport was part of commercial trade". (Wilson 1988 p. 184)

We can only wonder at the continuing and accelerating dominating effect of commercial considerations on the character, nature and embodiment of sports. Writing in 1990, Barnett conducts a discussion of amateurism versus professionalism in sport and comments that the English Rugby Football Union is 'determined to keep money out of rugby' (Barnett 1990 p. 152). Less than six years on, there is discussion of the possible integration of the two hitherto opposing codes of League and Union on account of commercial interests. A huge and controversial debate about the rights of one group within the Five Nations has also taken place. As with discussion between and amongst different religious groups, such debates can lead to an enriched mutual experience or might result in deeper division.

\[217\] For a further discussion of the effect of the media on sport see Goldlust (1988).
We looked earlier at the role of spectators, at their intense involvement with the object of their interest. Closer examination of football from the fans perspective indicates the possibility for commercial 'exploitation' in many areas of their allegiance. Noteworthy are the over-inflated prices of refreshments at games; exploitation of fans in the very locations where they, according to earlier definitions, might find embodied experience; cynical merchandising of sportswear manifested in the frequent change of official home/away strips — particularly exploitative of young fans who are keen to emulate their heroes; tickets to some matches open to credit card callers only, making the fan without this means of payment more susceptible to the tout than ever before; the appropriation of live Premier League matches by BSkyB making television viewing of such events only possible through the purchase of a 'dish' or by an evening spent in a venue such as a pub where there is an associated financial outlay; and finally the cost of tickets and moreover the difficulty for loyal fans to obtain entrance to important matches when the 'hospitality' sector has such financial resources to buy tickets for corporate hospitality tents which are: "...essentially treats for big customers in the hope of winning business...Centre-court tickets for the Wimbledon Men's Final — face value £52 each are legitimately being bought by hospitality corporations from debenture holders for up to £3,000 a pair" (Ellen and Barwick 1996 p3).

As indicated across a range of sports expensive products are aggressively and deliberately marketed to fans who wish to conform by expressing allegiance to their team through the wearing of their colours, whether home or away. Sporting equipment attains status symbol proportions and, it could be argued, at one extreme, puts sportspeople in the position of prostituting their bodies by being emblazoned with brand names. According to such an

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218 Huge sums of money are involved in the marketing of individual players and teams. In the Premier Division of English football Manchester United's receipts from the sale of match programmes exceeded Southampton's gate receipts on a given Saturday in April 1996.
240 On the day of England's semi-final against Germany in Euro '96 the front page of the Guardian (26th June 1996) provided interesting statistics in relation to the number of tickets bought up by agencies offering hospitality for business purposes.
analogy, the marketing managers could be characterised as the pimps, exploiting the relationship between the idol and the child fan who aspires to be like his idol, whether that be Giggs, Shearer, or Redknapp. Sponsors are apparently even prepared to contravene the attempts, by governing bodies, to encourage appropriate behaviour by players. Fabrizio Ravanelli of Middlesborough adopts a headless chicken pose as a goal-scoring celebration which involves pulling his shirt, inside out, over his head. Cellnet, Middlesborough’s sponsors, plan to have a special shirt made for him with the company logo imprinted into the inside of the shirt so that when he scores and celebrates, their name will be splashed across the nation’s television screens. The interrelationship of sponsorship as part of the socio/economic/political milieu is not of central concern to this point, it is simply a case of sport here not being free. Theologians have called for the liberation of institutions, of the rich; a similar need can be increasingly identified for the liberation of the structures surrounding sport. Where an institution is not free we have to question the degree of freedom of those involved. Where there is oppression, embodiment is threatened — the embodiment of individuals, groups, nations and particular sports as well as sport in general.

There are also gender issues to do with this exploitation. Wallis indicates the links between advertising and sexism and illustrates the relationship between the use of women and sexual imagery to sell beer to men. The sponsor seemingly needs to be comfortable with the image of those at the receiving end of their favours. As if to confirm this point Gabriella Sabatini is perhaps more famous for her face and figure than for her tennis (Wallis 1995 pp. 110-111). Moreover interest surrounded the dress worn at the 1996 Paris Open by Mary Pierce whilst there was little talk of the quality of her game. Female tennis players are under huge pressure to wear dresses teasingly balanced between the demure and alluring\textsuperscript{241}.

\textsuperscript{241} It should be noted that sportsmen are under a pressure of similar intensity to conform to images of masculinity.
"So, before the women of tennis go on court to do battle, they don those little skirts that show their underwear". (Blue 1987 p. 13)

**Sport as a religious and socio-political tool**

It is interesting to bring together selected instances which indicate the recognition of the possible use of sport as a catalyst to be used in an influential manner. Amongst different groups in focus here, the mainstream Christian Church has harnessed sport for its own ends which have had both positive and negative outcomes. Some sectors of the church were instrumental in establishing many soccer teams which are still popular today. Some of this interest has had a positive foundation as Matthew Graham (1986 p. 14) shows in relation to Everton F.C.243, originally known as St. Domingo’s Football Club, and founded by the Reverend B.S Chambers on the strength of his convictions regarding the positive influence of sport. The churches were keen to proselytise in urban areas bustling with industry by the 1880’s and saw soccer as an able friend in this regard. Cashmore cites Hargreaves who sees the interest here to have an additional function. He argues that the churches’ efforts in building football clubs had the effect of controlling the working class so that it would be more pliant for working groups (Hargreaves cited in Cashmore 1990 p. 62). Industry too sensed the advantages:

"It was a very deliberate policy pursued by factory owners in much the same way as their European counterparts of the day and contemporary Japanese industries. In some ways, sport was a foil for industrial order; a potent instrument for instilling order in the workforce". (Cashmore 1990 p. 62)

Evidence of sport being used deliberately either as an agent of social or religious control is found elsewhere. Cashmore shows how a ‘physically tough and toughening’ version of football practised at Rugby School found a level of acceptance in many public schools, whose concern was to produce ‘great men’:

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242 I locate the struggle of sportswomen for fully-embodied experience alongside that of some women in sectors of the Christian Church who have explored avenues of ordained and lay ministry as the fullest expression of their being.

243 By way of demonstration of how far Everton have come since the days of St. Domingo’s, Everton’s shares currently trade at £9000 each (Source — Everton Football Club, July 1996).
"Its toughness was useful in sorting out those fit enough to survive and perhaps later prosper in positions of power. The frail would either strengthen or perish". (Cashmore 1990 p. 61)

The religious sphere also reflects a concern. Certain right-wing groups in the Catholic church call for a return to basics, built upon a premise of the transfer of learning from different areas of children's education. A governor of a new school in Surrey, founded upon the philosophies of the Opus Dei movement commented:

"The core of the schooling will be to instil virtues in the character of children from an early age to make them good, honourable citizens who want to do a good, honest day's work". (Mr. Phillips The Guardian 10th April 1996)

Scott (1970 pp. 134-144) advances the notion that for a certain type of Christian, part of the moral ideal was a chivalrous code of games-playing within a chivalrous code of life, whilst Tozer shows that: "At home, a series of youth movements, beginning with the boys brigade and the boy scouts and including national elementary education, sought to inculcate the desired traits through military drill and athletic sports" (Tozer 1993 p.134).

Like Scarry who sees that: "The political identity of the body is usually learned unconsciously: (Scarry 1985 p. 109), Bourdieu speaks of the control of the body, of the way that we come to know through the body, and clearly shows that the principles 'em-bodied' in this manner are beyond the reach of consciousness:

"... nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and therefore, more precious, than the values given body, made body by the transubstantiation achieved by the hidden pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy, through injunctions as insignificant as 'stand up straight' or 'don't hold your knife in your left hand". (Bourdieu cited in Scarry 1985 pp. 110-111)

There is a significant degree of literature around the interweaving of sport and religion ranging from earlier mentioned discussion of whether sport is a religion to the identification of religious motifs within sport and analysis of it is how used.
Aitken (1989 pp. 391-405) records the fact that the last two decades have seen growth of the symbiotic link between evangelical Christianity and high level sport in North America, with organisations such as the 'Fellowship of Christian Athletes' and 'Athletes in Action' being significant. The author claims that they inflate their statistics, are preoccupied with evangelism at the expense of pastoral concerns, affirm traditional values such as subordination of women, and reduce religion to magic. Much of the critical insight into such groups has an amusing but nevertheless effective ironic quality244. John O'Reilly's treatment of Tom Lehman's victory response in the July 1996 British Open is typical: "When Tom Lehman gave thanks to the big fella up there he wasn't talking about Craig Stadler" (O'Reilly 1996 p. 24). Moreover:

"Christians are the sporting elect, and on God's scorecard of life the heathen is a loser. Take the England football team. How could they possibly win with the sinner Venables as coach? With the godly Glenn Hoddle England will be truly born again. They will forsake the materialistic tactics of the Christmas tree formation". (O'Reilly 1996 p. 24)

As Rotenberk shows: "Sceptics question players who claim a great hit was an act of God. And wonder how God decides whether he's for the hitter or pitcher that particular day" (Rotenberk cited in Hoffman ed. 1992 p. 178). Shirl J. Hoffman identifies the characteristics of this type of religious movement in a manner which sums up my own on-going reflection in relation to a British version of these American groups called Christians in Sport, into whose ethos and practices I have conducted research via their publications:

"In a desperate attempt to harmonise these disjunctive elements of ritual, evangelicals have concocted a locker-room religion not so much orthodox evangelicalism as a hodgepodge of biblical truths, worn out coaching slogans, Old Testament allusions to religious wars and interpretations of St. Paul's metaphors that would drive the most straight laced theologian to drink". (Hoffman 1992 p. 117).

244 See Proudfoot's article in this vein, 'Jocks for Jesus: onward Christian athletes marching off to score' (1973 pp. 46-48).
There are clearly unresolved contradictions in this type of evangelism. Los Angeles Ram Rich Saul once warned his Christian opponents: "I'm going to hit you guys with all the love I have in me". (Saul cited in Hoffman 1992 p. 118). Hoffman himself comments:

"Beating another person around on a football field may seem an odd way to express your love to him or to the Almighty, but when sport frames the totality of one's social and religious lives the incongruities are scarcely perceptible". (Hoffman 1992 p. 118)

In terms of embodiment, what can we usefully say about such an attitude towards the relationship between the spiritual and the physical? We cannot speculate as to the degree to which such a position might give rise to embodied experience — although it is probably fair to assume a deep level of conviction amongst adherents. It would seem likely however that such a self-justifying system perpetuates a separatism between what could be described as the spiritual have and have nots which may well prove antithetical to a recognition and celebration of our embodiment.

This evidence indicates a deliberate 'harnessing' of the 'power' inherent within and arising from sport, where its ability to influence the thinking and feelings of individuals and groups is utilised and in some cases manipulated. Further evidence can be provided of the recognition of the potential of sport to be a socio-political tool to assist the process of change. Early this century the Suffragette Movement marked itself indelibly in time by harnessing the public profile of a major sporting event — The Derby. Emily Davidson's literal 'disembodiment', her death, took place at a moment of national/international significance. According to a feminist reading of events, this episode could be reinterpreted as a symbol of opposition to the dominant forces of oppression institutionalised deep within the traditions and mores of Edwardian society — for instance the role of the King's horse can be recovered as a symbol of the struggle between patriarchy and feminism. My experience is that such significant moments

245 Indeed this has been recognised by different groups with sometimes disastrous ends "The Munich Olympics of 1972 will always be remembered for the savage act of terrorism which defiled them" (Dennis cited in Herd 1993 p. 97).
form a foundational paradigm for girls in terms of the emerging consciousness, and unconsciousness, of what it has been, is, and might be to be woman. Looking at this from an educational angle this indicates the need to constantly recognise and harness 'connected knowing' as an integral facet of our curriculum planning.

In many ways this example is not quite in line with a consideration of the distortion of embodiment, for whilst history records the oppression under which women lived in such times it also takes account of the fortitude and conviction of such women. It finds a place within this analysis however to indicate that there is a positive role for sport in a socio-political context other than that which is based in the rather saccharin claims that can be made in relation to sport as a route of harmony amongst and between nations and as an avenue of opportunity for all to which all have equal access. Evidence submitted elsewhere in this chapter clearly indicates that this is the not the case and that in fact such claims could be just as easily evaluated as indicative of an impediment to and distortion of embodiment. Writing with particular reference to the Irish context, but with reflections that are apposite to a wider setting, Sugden and Bainer (1993) claim that apart from war or the rumour of war, there is no aspect of modern, mass society that arouses nationalism, racism, ethnocentrism and sectarianism to a greater degree. Whilst recognising the positive possibilities, they advance our consciousness of the political construct of sport:

"It may help to strengthen affection between friends, even build bridges between those who see mutual advantage in establishing lines of communication and trade, but between enemies, sport reinforces the basis of enmity and creates new sources of antagonism. Furthermore, we believe that because of its deeply social nature and its flexible capacity to mobilise popular sentiment, the culture surrounding sport is often terrain contested between competing elements of civil society and of the politically constituted state. Consequently as the state has assumed enlarged significance in the twentieth century, sport and affiliated activities have become increasingly politicized". (Sugden and Bainer 1993 p. 136)

The question of the role of sport within a political philosophy can be further illumined. Carol Flake illustrates that:
"During the Vietnam War, sports events were often the occasion for patriotic gestures. While flags were burning on campuses, they were being waved on football fields". (Flake cited in Hoffman ed. 1992 p. 175)

We can further illustrate the point by reference to two of the most 'powerful' politicians of recent times and the manner in which they considered it expedient to use sport according to their own ideological agenda246. Monnington indicates how Ronald Reagan used sporting rhetoric to elicit a supportive response for the 'Reagan Revolution'. Although 'allies' on many fronts Margaret Thatcher preferred to employ sport to assist the implementation of foreign policy objectives and social policy (Monnington cited in Allison ed. 1993 p. 23). My own abiding image of their togetherness is one which significantly contains a sports motif — it is that of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher riding together in a golf buggy under the gaze of the world's media. On a more serious note and in a manner which echoes some of the earlier reflections about the deliberate use of advertising media within sporting events Monnington reminds us that:

"...spectators and participants are potential voters who can be subject to overt and covert political indoctrination, a process that can be reinforced by the use of nationalistic symbols. Politicians universally use sporting contests as a means of communicating political messages to particular groups, drafting in international sportsmen and women to lend credence to their arguments". (Monnington cited in Allison ed. 1993 p. 128)

Boxing as metaphorical of some contradictions arising from sport

The case of boxing serves an almost metaphorical function within this particular analysis which seeks to give equal weighting to this embodiment/distortion paradox through sport and is representative of what is quite clearly a huge sweep of debate247.

Boxing presents an interesting case for consideration. Some campaign for the prohibition and abolition of boxing, being fuelled in their argument whenever a fatality or serious injury

246 Ideological agenda here may refer to the overriding philosophy of a politician. In practice I also intend it to refer to the fickleness with which politicians approach certain key issues 'around' sport, eg. riots in football matches, the speedy granting of nationality to Zola Budd in order to be able to compete for Great Britain, and the history of boycotts used for political expedience.

247 See Wacquaint (1992) who works towards a sociology of pugilism.
occurs\textsuperscript{248}. At the other end of the scale some seek to defend it on the grounds of free-will — the boxer chooses to enter the ring — and argue that other sports are just as dangerous. For example few called for the abolition of Grand Prix motor racing when the Brazilian legend, Ayrton Senna died in a horrific crash at Imola in the same week as a German driver had also been killed\textsuperscript{249}.

It is widely recognised that there are those who might benefit from the increased social mobility that success in boxing might bring. Such benefits have been used as defensive tools for dangerous sports such as boxing, with the notion of the 'East End boy made good' attaining legendary status. Undoubtedly for many such as Henry Cooper and Frank Bruno benefits have resulted from participation, regardless of whether victory has been attained. Barnett has his own view of the function of such individuals:

"Britain has become adept at making martyrs of its losing challengers, and even the most committed detractors of a much-reviled sport have grudgingly welcomed Bruno as the acceptable face of pugilism". (Barnett 1990 p. 95)\textsuperscript{250}

Undoubtedly for many boxers and other sportspeople there are examples of where sport has been the passport out of poverty. It may be a springboard because sport propels the individual across otherwise unresolved issues of class, creed, colour or gender\textsuperscript{251}. However I identify here a deep paradox in so far as the springboard to carry individuals from oppression into acceptance is constructed by the very society that causes its oppression. Particularly in the USA, sport is a 'meal ticket' to education for those who might not otherwise be able to afford it and therefore perhaps subsequently a passport to better opportunities in relation to a career

\textsuperscript{248} Boxing is described in Wilson (1988 p. 140) as 'showbusiness with blood'.
\textsuperscript{249} To refer back to consideration of 'sacred place' it is interesting to note that the race track at Imola has become something of a shrine to Senna.
\textsuperscript{250} This quotation has to be now qualified in the light of Frank Bruno's eventual accession to the heavyweight title of the world.
\textsuperscript{251} I see parallels with the institutional church here, where the secular priesthood appears to offer similar springboards to material benefit and social status — for those of the male gender.
and all attendant benefits. However for all boxers and basketball players that succeed and gain educational, social and financial benefits, many fall by the wayside with shattered dreams. Moreover, having spent so much of their formative years dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in their chosen sport, academic studies can be neglected — this can result in a closing down of alternative sources of employment and extreme disillusionment which must form an antithesis of embodiment unless resolved. Such inducements, and so much dependent on one’s talents, can bring enormous pressures with one’s ability to play a particular game being perhaps the only opportunity to be had for self-improvement. The pressure to succeed, the importance of avoiding injury are all too plain to see. The paradox is that the very thing which might offer eventual embodiment if all goes according to plan could also bring a distortion of embodiment through the realisation that one is not necessarily valued for one’s personhood, for one’s being. This point is well summarised by Hahn:

"In a world of limited opportunity and inadequate educational resources, many young people in the ghettos and barrios of America have concentrated on the almost unattainable dream of becoming a professional athlete to the exclusion of other goals in life". (Hahn 1984 p. 5)

Conscious of the problem identified, Brian Clough as manager of Nottingham Forest Football Club, used to insist that all his soccer apprentices had parallel training in skills as varied as carpentry or accounting in order to equip them for life beyond football, thereby recognising their embodiment in a context wider than the sporting.

It must also be noted that there are interested parties who surround the fledgling talent in an attempt to take responsibility for certain areas of the individual’s career. This might take the form of American universities eager to sign up the talented adolescent basketball player; publicists such as Max Clifford who seek to give advice as to how best to manage the media; agents such as Barry Hearne who have under their auspices sportspersons from different

252 The much acclaimed documentary 'I Loop Dreams' (transmitted on Channel 4, December 1993) charted the fortunes of two black teenagers who were offered educational, social and financial inducements to sign up as basketball players with certain American universities.
sports such as boxing and snooker, and promoters such as Frank Warren, Mickey Duff and Don King who arrange boxing events. It is easy to appreciate how the individual might struggle to retain his/her identity. For whom does the experience result in embodiment?

The distortion of self and the factor of disillusionment

I include this area briefly in order to record evidence of some reflection in relation to the distortion not only of one's hopes and dreams but also the challenge to the fact of one's embodiment in terms of personhood, dignity and stature, or personification, identification and realisation according to our earlier criteria.

For the high-profile sportsperson impediments to, and the distortion of, the fact of embodiment might not only occur in and be made apparent through the effects on their bodies. The psychological and social pressures brought to bear on sportspeople, just like high profile celebrities from other areas of public life, seemingly make it difficult to be oneself, to celebrate oneself, and not to wish one were somewhere, something, and somebody else.

In a telling passage which seems to be the complete antithesis of embodiment Duncanson says of the famous footballer, Paul Gascoigne:

"Often, Gazza has said that he wishes it were possible that he could spend a day, a week, a month, not being Gazza". (Duncanson cited in Longmore ed. 1991 p. 79)

It is interesting that this quotation was written five years ago. In the run-up to and during the course of Euro '96 Paul Gascoigne received his severest press yet where aspects of his behaviour seemed to be used as justification for all-out character assassination. Coincidentally at the same time I was reading Miller's *Cup Magic* (1981) where he records that during the World Cup of 1970 the Mexican Press, in search of a villain, chose to portray Nobby Stiles as a 'diminutive vampire' (Miller 1981 p.118). This evidence seems to indicate

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233 I use this word here in a positive sense.
the need for the media to hone in on any characteristic of a player that can be caricatured if this process fits their requirements, challenging the very being in their bodies of the players concerned.

Sportspersons might become used to heightened experiences gained through sport and therefore might find it difficult to remain fulfilled once their competitive days are over. By way of an illustration of the difficulty of sustaining motivation in life after not only high profile involvement and success in sport, but particularly these repeated moments of exhilaration, Mick Dennis focuses on Franz Klammer, the Austrian skier. Dennis writes that after Klammer's victory on Mount Paterscherkofel in the Innsbruck Winter Olympics:

"Life was never the same for him. The fame, glory and wealth were very acceptable to him, but in some ways everything after Innsbruck had to be an anti-climax. In pursuit of similar emotional highs, Klammer kept skiing, even when his powers were waning and even after his 16 year old brother, Klaus was paralysed from the waist down in a ski-racing accident. Then, in eventual but reluctant retirement, Klammer took up saloon car racing but demolished too many expensive Mercedes. And, anyway, it was not the same". (Dennis cited in Herd 1993 p. 157)

Image

The pursuit of a certain 'image' may be a strong motive for participation in sport and may revolve around perceptions in relation to one's social status, peer acceptance, popularity and so on. Whilst undoubtedly a positive image does arise for certain individuals as a result of involvement engagement in physical activity with this as the sole motivation puts an enormous pressure on the individual to sustain interest without the necessary pre-requisite commitment to the activity itself. Such a route inevitably leads to frustration, disappointment and self-rejection — the very antithesis of what was being sought and possibly the antithesis of embodiment. However a sense of embodiment may result from the confrontation and self-knowledge that might arise from a working through of one's motivation, and what is actually hoped that participation will bring about.
Ecological concerns

Amongst environmental groups concern has been expressed in recent times about the effects of certain types of physical activity on the countryside and the environment where there is evidence to support claims that damage is done to local eco-systems and that there is widespread plundering of the countryside for the construction of leisure facilities. Lincoln Allison shows that writers from a long tradition of ecologically-oriented thought:

"...have expressed a hostility to sport in general, at least as far as it is competitive or commercial. To writers in this tradition, sport is a corollary of, and a metaphor for, the worst of industrial capitalism and represents values which are debased, trivial, destructive of possible harmony between people and nature". (Allison 1993 p. 228)

He also lyrically indicates that a conflict of values between sport and conservation is something like a clash of ghosts, a battle between the mystical and the ethereal but is nevertheless important:

"In many cases, of course, the very demand for sporting activity incorporates a totemistic valuation of the place and the 'naturalness' of its contexts and challenges. What people seek in the pursuit of post-industrial sports is a sense of involvement and prowess which relates them to nature and tradition. If such sport were allowed to be environmentally destructive we would be guilty of throwing out the baby with the bath-water". (Allison 1993 p. 230)

The distortion of the experience of spectators and embodiment:

A note of caution is sounded by O'Shea where in a theological context he details how, on a retreat, some free dance is planned. He shows that no spectators are allowed:

"To be a spectator is to be involved only passively, on one's own terms and without risks. Spectators are given an inexplicable authority; so the self-critic within each dancer would identify instantly with the spectators by the wall, and we would see ourselves only through their eyes". (O'Shea 1992 p. 113)

To further and effectively illustrate this distinction he recounts the story of David who:

"danced before the Lord with all his might" (2 Samuel 6:14). In the course of the research I
came across this story in most references that were found to sacred dance. O'Shea's use is refreshing and far more effective in so far as it helps to illustrate the possible shortcomings and limitations of a by-stander's view. Watching from the window, David's wife, said to him upon his return:

"What a fine reputation the king of Israel has won himself today...displaying himself under the eyes of his servants' maids, as any buffoon might display himself. David answered: 'I was dancing for the Lord, not for them'. (2 Samuel 6)

The point here is that there was a mismatch between the experience of the spectator and the actual experience itself. I believe that this mismatch occurs in a sporting context where recorded highlights often bear little resemblance to the actual substance of the competitions they seek to describe.

I would also like to raise a further point by way of balance that I believe threatens not embodiment as a key, but rather our experience to be free, unfettered and liberated in the experience and celebration of the fact of our embodiment. I identify this as being found in the influence which is had upon the independent thought of spectators, through the printed and visual media. I believe this represents a distortion of our embodiment, an impediment to its recognition. Bly illustrates this point, in a manner which incidentally refers us back to the strength of theologies of embodiment in terms of their interest in the 'ordinary':

"Projection without personal contact is dangerous. Thousands, even millions of American men projected their internal feminine onto Marilyn Monroe". (Bly 1992 p. 23)

The earlier section on the experience of the spectator identified it to be one where an individual might find identification, realisation and personification. An interesting

234 I would just like to mention here the research of Shingler (1993) into the ambiguities of gender surrounding Bette Davis. Her appeal for gay men raises issue of gendered spectatorship. This seemed to me an interesting point for further development and the fact that there might be disparities between gay/straight and male/female readings of the same film.
counterpoint to this is the insight shared by Carr (1991). He reflects that the means of the affirmation of individuality as a sports spectator might also be the cause of the destruction of belief in that individuality. He poses an existential question which speaks of his reflection upon embodiment, most notably his personification as a spectator: "Who am I when I discover that I am one of that half of the world's population who were reported to have watched the 1990 World Cup?" and further reflects that the modern media represent:

"...a view of the world which seems to be individual (the authority of the viewer, the producer, etc.) and which seems to see the world as a collection of individuals. The authority of the personal story or the attributable quote is well-known. But as the media create their own environment, that individualism also decays". (Carr 1991 p. 113)

Summative points for 6.1

Earlier chapters have provided significant evidence in support of the use of embodiment as an interpretive key for sport and, as stated in the introduction, such an approach was characterised by a positive outlook — as typified by Lonsdale who sees sport to have provided:

"...the opportunity for greater physical health and fitness; a context for the exercise of skills, for self-discovery and self-expression in forms that combine excitement, grace and artistry; creative use of leisure; opportunities for 'sheer play' as a balance to the struggle to make ends meet or the pressures of the workplace, and finally the companionship and social recognition that comes about through playing". (Lonsdale 1991 p. 227)

We have also noted a significant degree of evidence to suggest that human physical activity can give rise to experiences that ignore, deny, exploit, and threaten the recognition and celebration of embodiment. It finds articulation in the view of Blue (1987) who identifies many negative aspects of sport through her feminist analysis:

"Sport was created for men. Its story is usually told as the triumphs of men, with a nod, and occasionally even a bow to the ladies. Most of the books by those of us who love sport ignore the anabolic steroids, the outright cheating, the role of sport as a pawn in world politics. They stick to chronicling the
stereotype: sportsmen who are dedicated, defiant, assertive and utterly fearless 'He-men' (Blue 1987 p. xiv)

Additionally, Levin presents a desolate picture of sport. He hoped that the threatened cancellation of the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Auckland would take place and that this would be:

"the end of all international sporting events, productive as they now are of nothing but cheating, drug-taking, money-grabbing, racial hatred, political statements, advertising, hooliganism, envy, litter, selfishness, vanity, corruption, intolerance, defamation, sexual excess, robbery, drunkenness and from time to time, murder". (Levin cited in Barnett 1990 p. 153)

Levin's comments might seem rather extreme, and indeed most probably convey something of the flair for which his writing is popularly known. They serve the purpose here however of highlighting aspects of disembodiment, which evidence from sporting events of the last twenty-five years would support. The massacre of members of the Israeli team in the 1972 Munich Olympics and the bomb in Centennial Park Atlanta (July 1996) indicate that sporting occasions are not immune from such terrorism and indeed may well be the target for it.

Thus can identification be made of contradictions within sport and the possibilities for embodiment in what we might broadly term a socio-economic and political context. We might also note the contradictions which arise from sport where it is used in a religious context specifically as a tool of evangelism. Hoffman (1992) identifies that there is an inevitable contradiction for those Christian athletes who compete to the glory of God. The contradiction lies in the fact that sport celebrates myths of meritocracy, self-reliance, success, whereas theology often stresses losing grace and unworthiness. Hoffman suggests that to counter contradictions a new sports ethic is required (Hoffmann 1992 pp. 220-221). The view of embodiment underpinning this study would seem to offer possibilities for such an ethic.

Ultimately for analytical purposes we have to do more than simply recognise both sides of the story of what lies at opposing ends of the spectrum. Upon reflection it would appear that to
expect socio-economic evidence to provide the ultimate and decisive benchmark as to whether
the experience through sport is one that embodies is perhaps to limit our understanding of the
more religious/spiritual aspects of the relationship, those which are of concern to this thesis.
This begs a question however in relation to evidence that does point to and indicate the types
of experience arising from sport that this thesis is keen to explore. Journeying back takes us
to a piece of evidence which concerned the simplicity of childhood so much of which is lived
out through the physical — through natural and spontaneous play, in playground games, and
subsequently in organised physical activities. Certainly in the early stages of childhood the
experience of wonder and awe is found in the physical world, in small examples of nature, in
the freedom of open spaces. The following particularly appeals as it captures so succinctly
and unusually the experience of wonder in and through the wonders of nature:

"It is through the wondrous eyes of childhood that most of us are captivated by
this delightful torment. And once we're caught the mystery and enchantment of
fish-filled waters never dies. Angling takes us to another world, a more
beautiful peaceful place. And having parents that care means that we can learn
not only how to catch but how to enjoy. Angling takes us all closer to nature.
To explore more deeply this magical world. A world where time stands still.
A place to feel the drama and suspense of secret places, where we can live out
our childhood dreams and even catch our childhood dreams. For once you're
fired by a passion for angling, who knows the next cast.....the next day.
(transcript of part of 'Passion for Angling' Wildwise BBC2 1993).

I identify within this a very important point — it is not necessarily the experience of the actual
activity that is important — it is the quality of the experience attendant to the activity. This
quotation speaks so much of embodiment — the recognition of the interior element, a sense of
liberation, groundedness, oneness with nature.

"The whole point about solving the monster myths is not really solving the
mystery but being aware of it. The important thing is that monsters exist, if
only in our dreams...the dream of a monster lives with you forever". (transcript
of part of Passion for Angling Wildwise BBC2 1993)235.

235 For reference 'monster' here refers to the carp in Redmere Lake.
Comments such as this also serve to reinforce the notion of interior experience and even spiritual experience being found in the ordinary. The sense of awe, of intrigue of mystery seems very strong in the available anecdotal accounts. The idea of being somehow 'taken to another world' is interesting from the point of view of embodiment — the very fact is that this being taken to another world is tethered by the physicality from which it arises and which makes it possible. The sense of oneness with nature which seems to occur as a facet of the fishing experience would also seem significant here. What stronger echo of 'timeless moment' do we need than the reference to 'a world where time stands still', but not in the rootless manner which 'timeless' might suggest? Perhaps the greatest contribution of embodiment to sport is the way it is most powerfully paves the way of seeing God in the ordinary and brings out and illumines this experiential dimension.

The initial statement clarifying 'disembodiment' has been fleshed out in and through this chapter. By way of summary it is necessary to synthesise the balance of argument in this study that whilst the experience arising in and through sport may be indicative of and open to interpretation by embodiment, there is sufficient evidence of negative experiences of being in the body, caused in and through sports structures, so as to threaten any cosy, over-idealised notions about embodiment. The challenge would appear to be as to how we might integrate the positive and negative aspects within a framework of religious experience?

Through the pain and paradox that may come through defeat, injury or vilification the sportsperson makes contact with finitude, with the fact that nothing lasts forever. They have to face the resolution of the 'ultimate questions' which Tillich (1962) identified. They have to face issues of mortality: some live through these contradictions and face up to it in a painful sense when they realise that the exercise regime has not resulted in the fulfilment of their goal, or that reaching the goal does not necessarily bring the hoped for sense of self. They perhaps

236 Indeed it has to be noted that many fishing associations also see it as part of their remit to care for and preserve river banks, with the attendant concerns regarding the welfare of flora and fauna. One such is the Maidstone Victory Angling Society and Medway Preservation Society. Such ecological and preservation concerns acts as a balance to claims of fishing being a blood sport and ecologically destructive.
have to experience these paradoxes as the ascetic in search of ever more profound religious experience would.

I believe that it is ultimately precisely in apparent contradictions where embodiment is paradoxically at its strongest. Particularly in relation to human physical activity, (and therefore perhaps in relation to other areas of life) embodiment is an interpretive key which is wider in its use and possibilities than merely the description of the experience itself in so far as it allows for the ramifications, implications, and enduring significance of the all 'moments' whether negative or positive in character.

6.2 Impediments to, and the distortion of, embodiment in a religious context

Above, reference has been made to 'disembodiment' as a spiritual concept and evidence discussed relating to its meaning within the physical context of sports. Some comments will now be offered on the religious dimension for 'disembodiment' implied / applied in main parts of the chapter.

Institutionalised religion can be a power for good, an agent for healing and reconciliation, supportive of individuals and groups in their quest and struggle for self-determination and self-realisation. It can encourage our groundedness, liberation, our relationship with God, can help us celebrate our bodies and our senses, it can help us meditate upon and grow through the paradoxes in our lives, and can lead by example in supporting us in a response to contemporary concerns. Thus an individual’s religious experience can be interpreted as an experience of embodiment, an experience which embodies.

Institutionalised religion can however be the antithesis of these positive aspects. Love of the institution can bring out people’s desire to build and contribute; it can also blind some individuals to issues of justice in the local and wider context. In Christianity the power of the preached word, of kerygmatic proclamation, can be used to inspire and inform us to the
characteristics of the Kingdom of God. It can also be manipulated or misinterpreted to put people down, to prevent growth.

The ‘rules’ within a Christian community can provide a rootedness, a groundedness, a sense of being part of a spiritual event which has its own power of embodiment. Or they can be used (abused) to fail to face up to pastoral issues that need to be faced, to apply the spirit rather than the letter of the law, to excuse unwillingness to deal with difficult issues on the basis of something being in line with the tradition of the community, to fail to embody the disembodied.

Christian teachings can be used to inspire a fundamental option for the poor, they can also be misused to institutionalise injustice and oppression of the ‘voiceless’. Recent proclamations regarding the position of coeliacs\textsuperscript{237} in the Eucharistic community within Roman Catholicism is testimony to this, along with instructions in relation to the admission to communion for the divorced and remarried. As Basil Loftus shows such laws separate: "...from the Bread of Life those who may well be most in need of it" (Loftus 1996 p. 786). Evidence provided by those such as Chopp (1989) and Eiseland (1994) indicate that there are many disabled people who feel alienated within Christian denominations. In order for these people to find embodiment, Christians must face their responsibilities and as Eiseland shows live out Christianity’s liberating action in the world:

"The church finds its identity as the body of Christ only by being a community of faith and witness, a coalition of struggle and justice, and a fellowship of hope. This mission necessitates that people with disabilities be incorporated into all levels of participation and decision making". (Eiseland 1994 pp. 104)

Christian leaders have the potential to lead by example and to be a metaphor for the discernment of truth; they can also be the Lord Chief Justice that sit in judgement, and all this

\textsuperscript{237} Protocol 89/78 from The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences.
done in the name of a Christianity in which the institution is greater than the sum of its parts and the thing to be protected at all costs. Certain groups within the Christian tradition in Britain are keen to uphold a legalistic pattern of conduct, for example of particular interest here are 'Opus Dei' and the 'Neo-catechumenate' within the Catholic Church and the 'Forward in Faith' movement in the Anglican Church amongst many others.

In Christianity the power of the Spirit of God can heal, convert, inspire, draw out commitment, and encourage the display of charismatic gifts. It can also be 'used' in a way that causes concern. The power of the preacher can be used to inspire, clarify, and inform, it can also be used in ways that seem manipulative. Where a 'buzz experience' through worship is the focus, the contradictions of an individual's life, any difficulties experienced in the totality of their being, can be swept away on a tide of euphoria. What happens when the euphoria is gone?

We would also do well to consider some of the celebrated Christian 'virtues' of piety, devotion, holiness, sanctity, purity — I suspect that the holding up of these as something for which to strive has had the function of contributing towards the maintenance of fixed roles within Christian communities between minister/lay person, man/woman, and adult/child. On a level of spirituality a danger is perceived that some interpretations of these virtues can tend to make God distanced from us and therefore difficult to find and recognise in the complexities, difficulties, and paradoxes of life. This point could also be made of some traditional modes of Christian prayer.

In another instance of embodiment, the story of Jesus' mother offers a model which can both 'embody' or 'disembody' Christian women today. Sarah Dunant alludes to the problem that

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259 Religious services which contain a strong element of auto-suggestion and crowd behaviour manipulation are of interest here. The so-called Toronto Blessing has caused much concern.
260 This point links 'back' to an earlier part of the chapter when 'disembodiment' experienced in and through human physical activity was being considered. Attention was paid to the possible effects of a demise in talents and status, especially in relation to the self-esteem of an individual.
Christianity has always had with the power and sexuality of women, since if we accept Mary's suffering we might have to accept her power. Christian writers have sometimes argued that the 'curse' on Eve (Gen. 3), namely pain in child-bearing, was avoided by Mary in the Virgin birth of Christ. But this model accepts the idea that women's sexuality is a negative reality.

Dunant argues this denial of the possibility of Mary's pain is remarkable since as anyone: "who has ever been present at a birth can testify, childbirth is one of the few times... when the connection between suffering and life is so meaningfully and exquisitely drawn". It is precisely the suffering that:

"...makes it a transcendental experience, one where, against all the odds, the physical gives way to the spiritual. And that is exactly why it is tragic that it should have been so assiduously expunged from the story of the Nativity. One can only assume that had Mary been a man, the founding fathers of the Church would have taken a different attitude to what went on in that lowly cattle shed". (Dunant 1990 p. 26)

In a manner which appears to call for Mary as a Christian model of humanity to be embodied within the reality of our experience and us embodied within her reality, Josef Neuner S.J. shows that Mary must be welcomed: "...from her glorious exile in heavenly splendour into her real home, the heart of the Church. She is with us, not looking down on our world from ethereal heights but treading with us the dusty and tiring roads of the earth" (Neuner 1995 p. 438). This led me to focus on God who in and through Jesus needs to be 're-placed' in our experience, his incarnation in ours, ours in his. Moreover it reminded me of the powerful contemporary song by Joan Osborne in which she poses the question:

"What if God was one of us, just a slob like one of us, just a stranger on a bus trying to make his way home". (Joan Osborne One of Us Polydor Records)

261 Here Dunant shows that: "The whole association of labour and sin was later given form in the Church of England ceremony of churching, whereby a woman who has given birth has to kneel at the church entrance to be made clean; a service that for centuries was common practice" (Dunant 1990 p. 26). This custom was also common in Roman Catholic churches.

262 Maceri (1987) portrays Mary as a model of justice. This is just one of the contemporary interpretations of the significance of her embodiment. Such images have precipitated an intense debate about how we should view her. At the time of writing this debate is embodied in the controversy surrounding the views of Fr. Tissa Balasuriya. See Hebblethwaite (1996).
It is also of interest to discuss the extent to which the devotional trappings of religion bring embodiment, help us to be embodied — or are unwitting and unintended agents of a distortion of our embodiment. Christian tradition is that St. Dominic instituted the practice of ‘saying’ the rosary where prayer is achieved through the physical movement on the rosary chain. There seems to be great potential for this powerful, and yet often mechanistic, expression of devotion to be seen afresh as an point of synthesis for the physical and spiritual aspects of being.

From a feminist perspective traditional motifs and methods of prayer are in urgent need of reconstruction as a focus on Mary and the story of her faith, as opposed to the vicarious, mediatory role to which she has been reduced by traditional models of holiness. Interestingly, though in this submissive traditional role she may be the ultimate symbol of women’s distorted experience of embodiment, representative of women’s experience and thus her reclamation strongly parallels women’s contemporary quest to reclaim themselves. This needs to be qualified however — not all women feel the same urgency for what could be a re-creation.

Among Roman Catholic women figures such as Brígide McKenna (a preacher in popular western catholicism) and Sister Angelica (TV evangelist from the ultra-right wing of American conservative catholicism) appear to represent a trend to exhort women to value their traditional roles in what feminist theologians would regard as a culture of patriarchy and andocentrism. I have long believed that there exist ‘women of patriarchy’ who uphold a

263 I was interested in the research of Renchan (1993) who sought to 'make connections' through the exploration of two distinct theological disciplines and in the hope of finding conciliatory mediation between them, the Roman Catholic church on one side and Christian feminism on the other. Despite difficulties Renchan looks for certain theological aspects common to normally opposing patriarchal and feminist disciplines in relation to church, Mary and womanhood. Also worthy of note is the work of Boss (1994) who examines the cult of the virgin and its evolution — finding that the presentation of Mary in Christian devotion expresses an actual and idealised relationship of the natural world to humanity under technological and social circumstances in which devotion is practised. Thus in the Middle Ages Mary shown to be immensely authoritative through predominant symbols in Marian devotion whilst in the modern period she is characterised by high degree of rationalisation. Mary is presented largely as a figure of uncompromising humility.

264 One woman clearly does not feel the same. Elizabeth Achtemeier (1993) in her article 'Why God is Not Mother' makes a response to feminist God-talk in the church, criticising feminism as ideological and identifying as disturbing the claim of radical feminists' to embody the deity within themselves — to be divine.

265 I find there is a tendency to make blanket condemnations of feminism disregarding the fact that as Messner and Sabo shows: "The term feminism resists handy definition. There is no single feminist school of thought
system that enables men to continue to oppress women in the Church, and found articulation of this in the words of Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza where she describes this phenomenon as: "women's self-surveillance and collusion in the disciplining of other women". (Schüssler-Fiorenza cited in Manazan ed. 1996 p. 48).

Wilfrid McGreal shows in *Guilt and Healing* (1994) that Roman Catholic women have no institutional power in the church and therefore they cannot abuse institutional power: "If a woman speaks, her authority has to be based on its clarity and faithfulness to Christ's teaching...because the ministry of women has never been ritualised, it has the personal quality that is so important if liturgy is to speak to people...the effect of being on the margin is a greater identification with Jesus. Jesus was not recognised, he was dismissed as being only the carpenter's son, the one who ate with the sinners and the poor" (McGreal 1994 pp. 55).

Despite restricted power he shows that women are increasingly of significance in church communities as organisers of parish programmes and in a variety of professional roles:

"And yet they are still invisible and for much of their activity they depend on the say-so of the Church authorities. Initiatives can be refused or sidelined, and little is done to enable the overall community to accept that these women have a valuable role to play in the life and future of the Church". (McGreal 1994 p. 55).

Finally, public worship can embody within it a sense of our individual and corporate identity, our trials and successes, our growth and brokenness. It can also be staid, inappropriate and exclusive, and so offers another example of the tension between embodiment and

but rather a multifaceted mosaic of feminist visions and practices" (Messner and Sabo 1990 p. 1). They cite Josephine Donovan who identifies six distinct schools of feminist theory: liberal feminist, cultural feminism, socialist feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, existentialist feminism and radical feminism and note Tong's addition of postmodern feminism. They argue that whilst there are areas of overlap, there are important differences between the perspectives and see feminist sports studies falling between liberal feminism and variant of radical or socialist feminism. They call for a broad critical feminist theory in which to locate the need for athletic reforms and experiment with new structures (see Messner and Sabo 1990 pp. 3-6).

What a contrast this is to the call of Reinhild Trault-Espiritu who calling on Gerda Lerner's concept of self-authorization says: "Women must become their own authorities on matters concerning their lives, and grant authority to each other and to their claims" (Trault-Espiritu cited in Manazan ed. 1996 pp. 75-76).
disembodiment. It can be distanced and expressive not of our whole selves but of those parts of us that are perceived to be higher such as our spirits, emotions and intellect:

"Thus we have a kind of liturgy which becomes increasingly devoid of spontaneous physical appeal. The body, if not actually rejected, is certainly not addressed. The body, has to be accommodated, because the human being is of necessity embodied — but it is not celebrated, enjoyed". (Sahi 1995 p. 12)

Summative points for 6.2
Clearly, in the religious context, various factors, attitudes, and philosophies have impeded our ownership of our embodiment, its recognition, and celebration. It would appear that there is an urgent task to recover, reclaim, and redeem what it is 'our bodies know' as embodying of self and others, recognising the effects of agents of distortion or impediment, whether they be found in the fabric of the Christian community; the effects of patriarchy on gendered ways of knowing and experiencing, especially in and through the physical; or in the brokenness and suffering inherent within the human condition and subject to exploitation, abuse and oppression. If embodiment is to be fully celebrated for all, Christians have no alternative but to take the lead, inspired by a radical call that as 'incarnational church' there is no better starting point than the recognition of our individual and corporate 'being in our body'.

We have found that:

a) negative experiences in sport exist and have spiritual/religious dimensions. This constitutes an area we can label 'disembodiment' — so sport can create a positive religious experience and appear to contradict this through the paradox of meeting the negative and overcoming it as a form of embodiment through disembodiment;

b) the roots of this view take us back to the specifically religious dimension of embodiment. Here, too, contemporary Christian experience can contribute to religious experiences which are 'disemboding';

247 Adapted from The Body Knows (May 1995).
c) across both aspects, then, the religious experience involved is the threat to a person's integrity, freedom and self-worth and the ability to express this in daily life. This can be a secular threat but here is described as a matter for religious consideration. The challenge in sport and in Christian communities is to 'own' and 'name' the issues and to work for an embodiment which comes through these challenges to an incarnational Christian ideology.
CONCLUSIONS

It is important:

a) to re-state the critical question:

To what extent can the spiritual/interior experiences arising from specific examples of human physical activity be interpreted/clarified through the use of the concept of embodiment (informed and enriched by insights arising from religious studies) as an interpretive key.

b) to re-state that 'body' is the very context in which religious experience happens and the experience of the transcendent is a physically spiritual reality. 'Embodiment is the umbrella term, parallel to 'religious experience' which links to physical activity in the sporting and religious areas of human experience.

Throughout the study its inter-disciplinary nature was recognised, as was the way in which my own experience might inform the eyes through which information was gathered, reflection undertaken, and opinion formed.

The introduction included a working definition of 'embodiment', in relation to human physical activity and to religious experience. It also clarified the particular methodology chosen for this study, highlighting key themes to be the 'piecing of the quilt' in a manner which 'journeyed back and forth' between the particular pieces of evidence. It is deemed worthwhile to revisit early perceptions and observations and to point towards avenues of future employment of the term embodiment.

Contextualising embodiment — its development in and through this study

In the introduction it was noted that the body is the subject of much attention across a range of academic disciplines, that some authors are been keen to focus on how our experiencing in
and through our body is mediated by considerations pertaining to our *sitz im leben*. Different meanings and possible uses of the term 'embodiment' were examined, and my own understanding and intentions in relation to this term were established. I then went on to detail embodiment as I had experienced and identified it within growth-giving encounters springing from personal, professional and practical contexts. This laid the foundations for later attention to negative experiences and to an examination of the possibility that the 'shadow side' does not necessarily threaten embodiment but may actually fortify understandings if one can accept that embodiment and embodiment experienced in distorted forms may be inextricably linked. Themes developed from Moltmann-Wendel (1994) were informed and enriched by the presentation of material drawn from a survey, primarily of religious sources. A brief survey of established terms for the description of significant experience took place, as did the provision of some 'cameos'. These spoke to the type of experiences and range of settings from which growth-giving encounters, experienced from a 'total sport context', might arise. It was with confidence then that fortified understandings of embodiment were carried forward to the specific consideration of embodiment as an interpretive key for human physical activity, both in terms of sport and sacred dance.

**Contextualising human physical activity - its development in and through this study**

At the start of the study I documented how the choice of human physical activity reflected my conviction that valuable experiences can be gained in and through human physical activity which can be interpreted as 'growth giving encounters'. Such a view was founded in my own experience and that which I observed in others, which I had reflected upon and was keen to document. I indicated the particular 'types' of human physical activity that had been selected for specific attention. In Chapter 2, reference was made to human physical activity where appropriate. Subsequently definitions of both 'physical' and 'human physical activity' were provided as well as brief accounts of experiences from sportspersons. This turned the focus of the study toward the examination of human physical activity in the light of embodiment. Experiences arising from what I termed the 'total sport context' were examined, and thereafter
consideration was made of sacred dance. Finally, some evidence was provided of negative aspects of human physical activity.

The development of a connected context for embodiment and human physical activity
In the introduction a context was developed conducive to the 'making of connections'. Contextualisation took place of this study's focus in the light of other research. I indicated the possibilities which embodiment seemed to offer in relation to human physical activity, out of which it had been possible to formulate a critical question. The connected context was then developed through an interweaving of factors which formed and contributed to the background to the study, an account of how a deep point of connection between the spiritual and the physical was found in my own experiences of brokenness, and how a process could be developed which accommodated the inter-disciplinary nature of the study, liberating its vision.

In what was primarily intended to be the enhancement and enrichment of embodiment through religious understandings connection was made where appropriate between the two key elements within the critical question. In Chapter 3, points of 'power in relation' began to be found in the descriptions of experiences arising from human physical activity, and this paved the way for a comprehensive application of embodiment as an interpretive key for sport and subsequently the use of embodiment in relation to sacred dance. Distorted forms and experiences of embodiment, arising from both settings, were examined as well as challenges to the idealised notion of embodiment presented by apparent contradictions evident in human experience and the human condition. This entire process of connection provided on-going deepening of the context between embodiment and human physical activity.

Thus, to what extent had the critical question been resolved? In what ways and with what effect was embodiment shown to be an interpretive key?

264 The use of 'power in relation' in found in Grey (1989) and Heyward (1989).
In relation to sport, classification was undertaken through embodiment in its relationship to competitive, recreational, spectative, and socio-political considerations and also in regard to embodiment as a key for some areas of similarity between sport and religion. Whilst recognising that there are other possible keys for the interpretation of the experience arising from human physical activity, embodiment was found to offer a key which speaks across a range of experiences found in and through physical activity. It was deemed to be illustrative of the less-temporally focused experiences, often gained through recreational activity, whilst certainly acting as an effective key for the heightened type of experience — especially where this has the dimension of a connection/encounter with some deep point of 'being'. It can also serve to interpret calmer types of moments. It was seen to form a particularly effective key for the total, on-going tapestry of experience of the physical which is formed as a result of involvement either as a participant or spectator thus ratifying my own pre-conceived but untested assumptions. As an interpretive key embodiment also allows for a wider understanding of physical activities and situations through which the experience might come — not only through activities which lend themselves to exhilarating moments, or through levels of performance which involve a high level of skill, but through a range of activities which seem to offer an enhancement of experience to the individual, a greater sense of being in the body. I identify the experience of the sports person as allegorical of the manner in which facets of our being can affect our embodied states — an athlete can be subject to physical, emotional, and psychological factors which can influence not only his/her performance but also his/her self-perception. In terms of another aspect of disembodiment, athletes might paradoxically have to face physical decay on account of the very participation which has brought them embodiment. They also have to consider issues of 'retirement', and change of life-style whether by a natural process of being less effective or enforced by injury, perhaps earlier than if they had worked in another field of human endeavour.

By way of contrast and to further 'test' the critical question, sacred dance was examined and found to present problems of description, explanation and interpretation. Embodiment was here seen to have a vital interpretive role for the actual and possible experience to be found in
and through sacred dance, and to offer possibilities as a useful 'benchmark' by which to assess the manner in which, and efficacy with which, the body is/might be/should be used in worship. Tensions concerning the relationship of body and spirit have actually been an impediment to a truthful understanding of what happens in human physical activity. Referencing across, human physical activity in the sporting context has also suffered on account of views, which are perpetuated by a negative approach to bodies, and false notions of appropriate modes of participation and behaviour for men and women, young and old, able-bodied and disabled.

On a separate level we could discuss the role of the physical trappings of 'church', like statues, which present a fascinating contrast to a sense of our embodiment that comes through active physical means. I recognise the way that such models are a focus for faith in Jesus. However it could be argued that the plaster-cast or stone-cold models present a 'disembodied' image of the people whose very humanity was their sanctity. I contend that in prayer and worship settings, inert physical 'things' have more reverence and respect accorded to them than the bodies which we have been given. I believe that such attitudes and practices make it difficult for us to 'move' within liturgy, and thus minimise the potential for sacred dance to be used, as and where appropriate, as expressive of our embodiment as individuals and as Christian community.

The major finding and its perceived contribution arises from embodiment and human physical activity, in their connected context, their 'power in relation'.

I have pursued the resolution of the critical question through the use of insights from religious studies, harnessed and applied, to inform another context where individuals seek to express themselves, namely through human physical activity. This endeavour has been conducted in the inherent recognition of problems encountered in relating experiences arising from different contexts. Elements of Moltmann-Wendel's (1994) analysis — recovery, the senses, the celebration of the body/sacred place and the recognition of God in human experience — were recognised as of significance not only by reference to writing but in and through the tradition of literature and the actual lived experience of those who comprise the 'sporting community of
faith'. It is perceived that religious understandings have informed a range of problems encountered in the interpretation of physical activity.

However in reflecting upon what has been achieved I have realised that the process has not been 'one way', indeed I observe that the consideration of human physical activity has strengthened and fortified the understanding of embodiment, taking embodiment away from abstract concepts and constructs. This is a pleasing outcome of the work — I have indicated how embodiment, informed and enriched from contemporary theological thought, is an effective interpretive key for the experience arising from human physical activity, and in the process found that human physical activity has much to say that enlightens, illuminates, encolours and perhaps 'embodies' religious experience. This indicates a 'power in relation' (Grey 1989 and Heyward 1989) which could be a title retrospectively imposed on this work.

Avenues of possible future work

On account of its embracing, unitive, synthesising, and harmonising characteristics, embodiment must be seen as offering implications as an interpretive key not only in areas of theological enquiry but in other areas of human interest. I wish to offer some brief observations in relation to possible avenues deemed worthy of attention in the light of embodiment.

In a practical applied context, reflected upon via my own experience, there could be a role for embodiment as a theme, point of inspiration, integral feature of school mission statements in relation to aims, ethos, curricula and policy. On an empirical level, all schools and not only those of a denominational/voluntary aided status are legally obliged to carry out a 'daily act of worship'. If embodiment was used as an interpretive key for what should take place, educators would be helped to ensure that attention was paid to the integrity of all, mindful of the pupils' own personal faith or adherence to a religion. The worship required must be 'embodying' and not offensive, judgmental, stereotypical or exclusive (whether that be on the grounds of belief, gender, race, or 'able' bodiedness). It would also provide an impetus for the
provision of experiences through physical means which help to celebrate our bodiedness, (through music, dance, art, music, reflection).  

Embodiment would seem to offer various possibilities for further enquiry in the theological realm. When used as an interpretive key embodiment might have a useful application in the regeneration of sacraments and symbols of reconciliation. As Loades so aptly illustrates:

"By sacramentalism I do not mean simply the seven or two sacraments, but recovering or imagining or experiencing what is to be embodied persons in relation to space, time, rhythm, dance, buildings and all that we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, eat, celebrate, make ceremonies of, decorate make jokes about - joie de vivre, grace, conviviality - living with others". (Loades 1983)

Embodiment could be used as a vision to be strived for, as the point of inspiration for a radical social ethic which informs our understanding about, and inspires our action on behalf of, those who are impeded in their embodiment including refugees, asylum seekers, displaced peoples, homeless people, those living in bed and breakfast accommodation, those subject to physical, emotional, institutionalised abuse, and those who find it hard to recognise themselves as embodied through other factors such as addiction, loneliness, and a lack of understanding on the part of others. Embodiment as a 'benchmark' appears to offer huge possibilities to the resolution of ethical issues whether they be political, sexual, medical, or environmental.

It would seem to be that the climate is right for more reflection into models of spirituality which embody and which are embodying which help us grow in an awareness of who and what we are. This consciousness would be based on a paradigm of religious experience which in itself is embodied since it enshrines the earlier stated themes of embodiment — but which also allows for distorted experiences of embodiment. The recognition of God in 'human

269 A BBC INSET TV programme (March 1996) showed Addington School (Surrey) grappling with this responsibility for assemblies and daily acts of worship. So as not to compromise children's own faith position, pupils are encouraged to pray in their own way. Arguably there is more of an opportunity to explore spirituality than in denominational schools - where the absence of the confessional/denominational responsibilities provides the opportunity to focus on and develop an interiority which dares to have 'nothing' to do with religion.
experience' requires a view of God in which the deity is seen to engage in 'physicality' – a God
duly encountered in human existence. Simplistic notions of what makes an individual holy or
what constitutes piety must also render it difficult to work through and locate times of pain
(used in the widest sense) within the context of our lives, in other words to grow in and
through the paradoxes that we have no alternative but to confront. I would see that
traditional models of spirituality deemed unhelpful by those such as Eiseland (1994) could
usefully be reviewed in relation to models of holiness which help us to recognise and celebrate
our embodiment.

The process of the study

It is hoped that the heuristic style of the research method has accommodated the
interdisciplinary nature of this work and permitted the effective utilisation of information
arising from research, theoretical understandings and the insights arising from personal,
practical and professional contexts which were outlined earlier in the study. I found great
assistance in the identification of theological methods which allow for the 'piecing of the quilt'
(Furlong 1988 p. 2) and a 'back and forth' method (Chopp in foreword to Eiseland 1994 p.
12) which were carried through the study alongside more traditional approaches.

In line with the desire to look onwards and outwards from this study (perceived avenues of
further work have already been identified and proposed), I wish briefly to propose that
subjective elements within academic work might be seen as having most strength where they
can be regarded as part of a spectrum of possible approaches - and equally valid for their role.
The greatest contribution of such elements may lie in the bridge they provide for possible
dialogue between and across different traditions of academic process. This facet is deemed to
be vital if we recognise along with Bakhtin that: "...dialogue is the only sphere possible for the
life of language" (Bakhtin cited in Moi ed. 1986 pp. 38-39) and that perhaps all approaches
in religious investigation should be recognised in: "...a quiet humility and submissiveness
toward all that which encompasses and bears the world and things, as well as the 'I' and ourselves, within itself" (Otto in introduction to Schleiermacher 1958 p. xvi.)\textsuperscript{270}.

A strong contention of this work, in its content and style, has been that often the most important thing is asking the right questions at the right time. Developed from this is the consciousness that an awareness of possibilities, of being open to new paths, is the task and perhaps even the responsibility of all disciplines\textsuperscript{271}, but is seen to be particularly of importance in Religious Studies which seeks to make continual sense of the ontological search for meaning. There has always been the need to recognise new ways of knowing, understanding and redeeming, indeed whatever description of our attempt to make deeper and wider connections we might choose. This study, in seeking to bring together two realities, commonly viewed as disparate, calls for the authenticity of such research endeavours to be recognised and celebrated. This must be part of the wider search for meaning and an attempt for each person to discern what it is to be human. Surely this is one of the strengths of contextual models of theology\textsuperscript{272}.

The inter-disciplinary nature of this study has meant that there have been many overlapping themes. I have had to ensure that it has been written in the recognition of the danger that when you try to capture something you risk losing its value and beauty. To employ a metaphorical analysis, the tangled mass of threads in a ball has its own beauty, however an untangling of threads needs to take place in order to make the tapestry. The pursuit of a

\textsuperscript{270} Otto also says of Schleiermacher's work that the tremendous significance lay in: "...its use of original intuitions, analogies, and fantasy-filled combinations in place of rigorous methods, concepts, and proofs". (Otto in introduction to Schleiermacher 1958 p.xi).

\textsuperscript{271} Hampson's words seem relevant here: "Beethoven picked up what he wished to from the tradition, yet he created something essentially new. He was free to draw on the past and to express reality as it seemed to him to be. But he did not have to measure what he wanted to write against some benchmark of truth placed in the past. It is not the case that, for music, one point of history is held to have been a revelation. So each age may gather what it wishes from the past and discard what it wishes. In the case of either science or music, it is we who decide what it is that we believe 'truth' to be and how we shall express it...theology is in the same position as are other disciplines...in which it is taken for granted that all ages, potentially, equally have access to the truth" (Hampson 1993 pp. 29-30).

\textsuperscript{272} The possibilities for the development of a context are very wide. Coleman (1994) researches into the ways that chaplains are working toward the most appropriate models of ministry for the service environment, where appropriateness is about the search for relevance.
resolution to the critical question has been a process similar to weaving this tapestry — the teasing of the threads from the ball, the selection of the threads and pattern, the design and execution, and even the reflection upon the finished work. As with any piece of work the need has been to keep close to the process, even at times when areas worthy of attention were difficult to describe and interpret such as spirituality, creativity, aesthetic awareness, emotional response, and a range of experiences arising from physical activity.

A critical insight gained through the work has been that the strength and relevance of a pursuit lies in the very grappling for the language and tools with which to describe concerns and interests. The intention and critical question held in focus act as a driving force to find continuous points of reference. The challenge was also to find a method that would not stifle or impede any conclusions, or set up its own fundamentalism by claiming that in itself and of itself it was the answer.

Much academic work, and certainly much theological writing, can be seen as part of a descriptive process which seeks to account for and make sense of profound, defining, consciousness-expanding experiences. I identify a challenge in finding descriptions which 'speak across' different traditions, academic disciplines and ways of knowing. The existence of interpretive keys like interiority, peak experience, timeless moment, and embodiment suggest the existence and necessity of this 'descriptive process' as part of the pursuit of identifying and naming human experience, and spring out of our fundamental desire to make sense of our reality. However, descriptions of any kind, but perhaps especially where they relate to human experience, subjective in its characteristics, can delimit the phenomena we seek to describe. Do they ever help us fully understand the events of the past when we stand distanced from them — do they help us interpret glimpses of the future in the here and now. We need terms that allow for the linear, cyclical and inter-weaving facets of our experience and our wonderings about eternity, our meetings with the Being without being within, the Being of the mystical paradox, encounters that Peter Berger might term "...windows on transcendence"
"Perhaps the glimmer of an answer — through the glass darkish — is offered in the odd moment of heaven given to us here on earth. Such a moment may take us with a surprise, a suddenness, both in its coming and going. When we name it 'of heaven' we reach for a metaphor, for analogy, but we reach for more". (Rice 1996 p. 1016)

Closing reflections

Peter Berger, in his introduction to his updated *A Rumour of Angels* commented: "Contrary to the Latin adage, *both* life and art are short; mostly one only gets to practice *a single* art in a lifetime" (Berger 1990 p. x). Adapting this by way of a metaphor relevant to my endeavour, this study has afforded the opportunity to explore and connect two 'arts' and thus has been the fulfilment of a long-standing desire to delve deeper into areas of the physical and spiritual — a desire engendered through equally fervent interest in both realms. At an early stage it was perceived that work within the context of a theology of sport in the light of concepts of wholeness was the key to the resolution of this desire. This was just one of the stages of the development of the critical question. In the process the study moved on and through different themes which acted as individual points of interest in the course of research. Like all research some of these themes were investigated but then discarded, whilst others came together subsequently as a total. There has been an openness to all sources of interest which have helped to shed light on the task at hand, resulting in insights and knowledge gained from roads only briefly travelled. Sometimes it felt as if: "...all the roads that lead you there are winding" (Wonderwall Oasis Creation Records 1995) and yet these winding roads had a purpose, for they all helped to shape the research in the light of the critical question.

In the end I realised that I had come full circle, indeed perhaps closed the circle, that embodiment had been the crucial point, the overall interpretive key for the study and that I had

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273 Again, here we refer to definitions of holism where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This, for me, is part of the mystical nature of research - part of the on-going journey of growth that research gives rise to. It becomes a metaphor for life.
ended up actually fulfilling in part what I had at a very early stage intended to do, the difference being that this fulfilment had taken place in a language and process unknown at the start. In the recognition of the responsibility involved in describing spiritual/interior experience it has been a priority to retain integrity.

The development of a germ of an idea took place gradually. Its coming to speech came about through the employment of descriptive, analytical, and interpretative modes conducive dealing with the data effectively. The harmonisation of the content and these modes implies a 'mystical connectedness'. Not least in this process is the harmonisation of personal elements which reflect and journey with the wider process. This for me is part of the spiritual nature of research — part of the on-going journey of growth that research gives rise to. The process of research becomes allegorical for the cycle of conviction, hope, self-doubt which occurs in the wider context of life. My own research was powerful in this regard — journeying with me through moments of self-belief and times where I was 'swamped' by self-doubt and brokenness. Its actual completion will always remain for me a powerful symbol of wholeness, of coming full circle. In research, as in life, the cycle occurs within the cycle, to increasingly smaller concentric circles where the end of the process become a microcosm of the wider process — the cycle of conviction, hope and self-doubt becomes ever more distilled in powerful concentration like the process of production of homeopathic medicine. At the end, this is expressed in the desperate feeling of having so much to say as time ebbs away and in the stark decisions that have to be made about what can be usefully included.

Those such as Fox (1983) called for a paradigm shift. We need to always hold in tension the need for an on-going, dynamic shift (one that is audacious, that constantly believes that one and one might be three!) to prevent us from holding a theological position where we stand still and think the answer has been found. Embodiment as a theological concept is a term which must not be taken to be once and for all the same in the way it is used. Its existence and

274 An adaptation of the notion of being heard into speech (see Grey 1989 p. 158).
validity as a concept must be seen to be reviewed and modified in the light of the different and changing ways we experience ourselves, our bodies, our possibilities from age to age — and the different notions as to what might constitute an embodied spirituality. This is vital if our theologising is to take place in a way which respects our own integrity and that of the people on whose behalf we might presume to do theology.

It must be a fundamental human need to exercise our rights and abilities to reinterpret key terms of our existence as authentic according to our experiences and insights arising. Nothing will remain the same except for the quest to understand and re-define our essence, our realities and the manifestations of the same through our structures. This may be seen as one of the few common facets of human living which remains constant over the ages, which ultimately is about personhood, about embodiment, about being in the body. The recognition and celebration of this revolves around:

"...a process of searching and studying, of being open to significant dimensions of experience in which comprehension and compassion mingle; in which intellect, emotion and spirit are integrated; in which intuition, spontaneity, and self-exploration are seen as components of unified experience; in which both discovery and creation are reflections of creative research into human ventures, human processes, and human experiences" (Moustakas cited in Reason and Rowan 1981 p. 216)

275 In the process of the re-shaping of embodiment in this way it seems important to carry forward: "The passion to make and make again where such unmaking reigns" (Rich p. 64).
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