# From the Abbey to the Academy: The He*art*ful Autoethnography of a lost and Lonely-Looking Self Indulgent Sport Tourist

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# Abstract

This is anything but an average doctoral thesis. It takes both the author and his audience on a socially-constructed journey of self discovery. It explores the emotional world of evocative 'he*art*ful' sociological introspection. I aim to target your imagination from the outset. I attempt to illustrate the unmistakeable influence that our memories inevitably have on the way we subsequently (re)interpret our sense of personal and public belonging to the present. In doing so, I explore the multiple ways in which we all continually (re)establish and socially categorise our much-needed self esteem. More specifically, I look at our unique attachment and emotional affiliation to the various cultural societies within which are all located. This is my attempt to not only locate, but legitimise my personal involvement in the field of special interest tourism. This is my autoethnography.

My thesis explores the potential of embracing, not ignoring, our emotional subjectivity. I look openly at the powerful influence that our cultural identities, both personal and professional, have on our professional behaviour. It is a tale about the socio-psychological importance of finding the right balance between 'being there' and 'being elsewhere'. It is all about me accepting my self indulgent personality. It is not, however, a personal tribute. I could not have done this alone. My autobiographical story has been influenced by the inspirational work of many likeminded individuals. This is not just an honest academic reflection on who, or what, I discovered during my three ethnographic excursions to Melbourne, Auckland and Wellington. It is not just a candid analysis of why being there was deemed to mean absolutely everything. It offers an emotional reinterpretation of the impact and implications of allowing a little self indulgence, and a lot of sociological imagination, into our ever-changing academic identities.

I will never forget the things what I have discovered during the construction of this thesis. I found an alternative path to follow. I found a place in which I now wish to inhabit. I found that the findings are *always* waiting for us at the end of the day. The biggest challenge, however, is discovering the time to stop. It is only once we finish what we are doing that we can truly re-interpret, everywhere we have been and everything we have seen. Having done it myself, I call for every ethnographer to stop and fully familiarise themselves with the person they see in the mirror.

To Melanie and my fabulous family;
without whom I would forever be lost
and lonely-looking.

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# Preface

The date was May 16th. The year was 2003. It was a Friday. The author of this thesis stepped off the 7.15am bus and into the cold morning air. He crossed the road and slowly made his way along the same piece of pavement that he had walked so many times before. The early summer sun was already shining. It was going to be a fine day in the historic city of Cambridge, England. But, then again, the sun always shone on his Birthday.

'Only one more day to go', he thought as he entered Parkside Leisure Centre. He couldn't wait for the weekend. He had worked the last twelve consecutive days. He wanted to celebrate by spending the weekend lying on the sofa, watching whatever sport he could find on the five channels available at his parents house. He wanted to see if Southampton could beat Arsenal in Cardiff's Millennium Stadium. He didn't think they could, but loved the fact that no one in the world knew what the final outcome would be. That unique piece of history was yet to be written.

The author of this thesis had a lot of things running through his mind as he set about completing his daily 54 lengths of the city's public swimming pool. The result of the 2003 F.A. Cup final, however, was probably the least important of them all. He was desperate to start planning the next twelve months of his life. He didn't feel any older, wiser or slower in the water. He knew he had some tough choices to make that later day. But they could at least wait until he was sat down at his desk.

Four hours later, he found himself staring blankly at the computer screen directly in front of him. He knew that he should have been doing something. He knew that he needed to prepare the vouchers for the walking tours of Kings College Chapel. His thoughts, however, were preoccupied by the three promises that he had made to his undergraduate dissertation supervisor tvelve months earlier. He had promised to consider returning to academia. He had promised that he would look at living somewhere (anywhere) overseas. He had promised that he wouldn't settle for an average existence.

I loved my life. I enjoyed my job. I worshipped my football team. I also knew that something wasn't right. Something was missing. I wasn't happy. I could feel myself growing more and more frustrated with my daily routine. I didn't want my life becoming predictable. I didn't want it to be average. I wanted to be challenged. I

wanted excitement. I wanted to do something different. I needed to escape.

So what of today? What about the 16th of May 2009? Well, it is a graduation day here in Dunedin. I am about to turn my computer off after another morning of nausea, nostalgia, fear and fantasy. I am about to go and watch some of my former students parade down the city's main street in front of their family and friends. I never expected to be graduating today. I am, however, still hugely disappointed that I won't be walking across the Town Hall stage in a few hours time. I had secretly hoped to be celebrating the long-overdue submission of my he*art*ful autoethnography. Instead, however, I find myself sitting alone in my office, reminiscing about everything that led me here. I find myself struggling to write a preface that I hope will complement my abstract and provide the reader with a much better introduction of what is to come.

As revealed in my abstract, this is anything but an average doctoral thesis. Likewise, my journey of discovery has been anything but predictable. It has been challenging. It has been exciting. It has allowed me to escape into a world that I never previously knew existed. It was seven years ago today that I first promised to avoid the safe option of surrounding myself with family and friends and living my entire life in Cambridge. It was six years ago that I sat in the Cambridge Tourist Information Centre and typed 'University of Otago' into Google for the very first time. It is four years to the day that I first stood in front of twenty-two University of Otago undergraduates and proceeded to give a guest lecture on sport tourism, and exactly two years since I sat on my bed and completed an Ethical Approval Application for my proposed PhD research.

The thesis is split into four acts, each told over two uneven halves that I have named: Part One: From the Abbey and Part Two: To the Academy. The first half identifies the power of our past and introduces the author of this text. It reveals the formation of several personal identities, including the sports fan and the scholar. The second half narrows the sociological lens and reveals its potential for challenging our present and changing our future. It introduces the evocative autoethnographer.

Act One sets the scene, providing a snapshot into the multiple identities of your narrator, and chronicling some of the memorable, milestone, moments that have undoubtedly made him the man he sees in his bathroom mirror each morning. Act Two offers the reader an authentic backstage pass into my unpredictable world, highlighting my transformation from a passionate sports junkie, whose life revolved around the Abbey, to an equally partisan sports event researcher whose life now revolves around the blurred boundaries of the Academy. It reveals the real reasons why this thesis was

written.

Act Three shows, as opposed to tells, the tale of my eventful excursion into the world of trans-Tasman sport tourism. It reveals where, when and how I became the lost and lonely looking, self indulgent, sport tourist captured forever in the title of my thesis. I finally find my self in a position to answer the questions 'so what?' and 'why bother?'. Act Four explores the professional value and validity of my personal narrative. It reveals my unique, culturally-inspired, contribution to our knowledge of evocative he*art*ful autoethngraphy. My ultimate aim is to offer you an alternative, as opposed to a better, way of designing and delivering contemporary ethnography. I want to evoke some form of lasting connection between the subjective and the objective.

I have tried to make it an easy and entertaining read. My footnotes offer us the theoretical platform required to make this journey. They literally support the personal narrative found directly above them. They include the characters that have provided me with the confidence and conviction to continue down this unconventional, highly contested, pathway. I could not have done it without them. I have, therefore, included some of their wise words of wisdom in a manner that hopefully inspires you to go and seek them out yourself. I genuinely want to facilitate your learning.

Before I let you get started, however, I would like to acknowledge the continual support and guidance offered by everyone within the Department of Tourism at the University of Otago. Special thanks must go to my Supervisors Professor James Higham and Dr Richard Mitchell, both of whom have shown an incredible amount of faith and self belief. I realise that my final offering is not exactly what either of you signed up for, but I hope you have at least enjoyed the ride. It has been eventful. I would also like to thank Dave and Tara for the many lifts to and from the airport, as well as everything else you two have done for me over the duration of this study.

Finally, and saving the most important person to last, I would like to fully acknowledge the amazing patience and perseverance of my partner Melanie Cara Paterson. I told you that I would get there in the end, even if I never knew where 'there' was going to be. I couldn't have done it without you, and promise to never *ever* put you through this again. Thank you for everything. I would be lost without you.

# Part One:
# From the Abbey

## Act One: The Prologue




## Chapters 1-6

# Chapter 1: Setting the scene

*Welcome to my world*

I hate feeling lost (or out of place). I have to pick a side to support (or a position in which to stand). And I'm far too competitive-minded to be 'a neutral' or ever consider 'sitting on the fence'. I enjoy pushing myself (and those around me). But I'm no adrenaline junkie. I am no thrill-seeker. I thrive under pressure. But will try my hardest to avoid it. I am willing to take the occasional risk. But I like to consider my options. And I don't like being rushed into making a decision.

I am not afraid to ask for help. But I would rather avoid it (*if possible*). I like being Mr (W)right. I *hate* failing and/or the feeling that I've let someone else down. I *adore* winning. And I *despise* coming second (let alone third or fourth). I prefer doing things my way. But I am still a team player. If asked to follow, for example, I will follow. If asked to lead, I will do so (to the best of my ability).

I am a *terrible* liar. And I honestly believe that honesty is *always* the best policy. I rate loyalty very highly. I don't *always* seek perfection. But I know exactly 'what practise makes'. I love the power of a good cliché, metaphor, movie line and music lyric. I love the drama of not knowing what happens next. Too much uncertainty, however, still causes my stomach to knot, body to sweat (and mouth to dry). I like to feel in control.

I am my biggest critic. I am guilty of over-analysing *everything* I see, smell, hear, touch and taste. I find it impossible to switch off (especially at night). I have always been highly conscious of what others think (of me). I want to be liked and accepted. I know I can be mellow-dramatic (and a bit of a drama-

queen). I fully accept that I am a mummy's boy. I accept the fact that I can be as subtle as a falling slab of concrete.

I strive to be seen as self confident and self-assured. But it is often just an act. I am often self-indulgent. I can be self-centred, sarcastic, arrogant and egotistical. But I am rarely narcissistic (at least *never* in public). I will always be there for a friend or family member (when asked). I *love* helping others. I love entertaining people and 'playing the fool'. I've always enjoyed making people laugh. My biggest fear, however, remains being laughed at.

I have made plenty of mistakes. I have made plenty of bad decisions. I have taken the wrong route on far too many occasions. I am only human. I take nothing and no-one for granted. I know that I've got a lot to learn. But I also think that I've also got a lot to give. I know I will never stop asking questions. I look forward to (day) dreaming about where I may be heading almost as much as I enjoy remembering where I've been.

I have few major regrets (and even fewer skeletons hidden away in my closet). I love who I see in the mirror. I know exactly who I am. I am me. I am who I am. And it's all my fault. I take full responsibility. As Bon Jovi's just kindly reminded me: "It's my life, it's now or never, I ain't going to live forever. I just want to live while I'm alive. *It's my life!"*[1]

[1] This reflective extract has been taken straight from a page in my personal diary. It is an authentic autobiographical assessment of who I think I am. At least, it was who I thought I was on the day in which I finally sat down and started to create this personal narrative. To give it some additional context, it was written in the evening of the 16th of May 2008 (my 28th Birthday). I wasn't looking in the mirror as I wrote it, but I like to think that it paints an accurate portrait of the individual that I may have seen if I were to have done so. Bon Jovi's hit 'It's My Life' was the last song that I had heard before heading to bed that evening. Though I've chosen not to include it above, the next line of the song's chorus features an unforgettable reference to both my idol Frank Sinatra. Jon Bon Jovi sings that "Life is like an open highway. Like Frankie said, I did it my way. I just want to live while I'm alive. It's my life!". The lyrics are never too far away from either my heart or head. I have always been able to personally identify with them. I am aware of the socially constructed highway in which I am currently travelling along, but I have tried my hardest to ensure that I always do things my way. This is *my* life. No one else can live it for me. This is my thesis. No one else could write it for me. These are my Footnotes. They are here to help us both. They provide the perfect platform upon which to place my personal story.

*Whose life is it anyway?*

Welcome to my he*art*ful autoethnography[2]. As stated from the very outset, it's evocative and literary-inspired contents have been designed, developed and delivered entirely by my academic self[3]. It is my social identity under the microscope[4]. The unique setting in which this thesis is subsequently deconstructed, however, will be dictated by somebody else. I am fully aware of the fact that my contribution to knowledge will not be to everyone's taste, especially those who are more at home with the more traditional positivist notions of academic objectivity and/or the search for scientific truth(s). I am not trying to change the world, or challenge the way things have been done in the past. I am simply trying to offer a different, as opposed to a better, way of looking at how we currently (re/de)construct our multiple social identities[5].

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[2] Over the past decade, autoethnography has emerged as one of the most popular methods of not only embracing the researcher's self, but turning it into the primary feature (or character) of the entire investigation. Carolyn Ellis' noteworthy distinction between constructing he*art*ful, as opposed to 'heartfelt' autoethnography arguably lies at the very forefront of this entire thesis. In 1999, she claimed it to be; "…a form of ethnography that includes researchers' vulnerable selves, emotions, bodies, and spirits; produces evocative stories that create the effect of reality; celebrates concrete experience and intimate detail; examines how human experience is endowed with meaning; is concerned with moral, ethical, and political consequences; encourages compassion and empathy; helps us know how to live and cope; features multiple voices and repositions readers and "subjects" as co-participants in dialogue; seeks a fusion between social science and literature in which, as Gregory Bateson says, "you are partly blown by the winds of reality and partly an artist creating a composite out of the inner and outer events"; and connects the practices of social science with the living of life". To Ellis there is clearly a noteworthy distinction between writing *from* the heart and writing *for* the heart. More importantly, she acknowledges the overlap between the arts and sciences. My goal is simply to follow her lead. In **Carolyn Ellis (1999)** He*art*ful autoethnography, *Qualitative Health Research* 9, pp. 669-683 (p. 669).

[3] Evocative autoethnography allows the author sufficient space to both create and consume an autobiographical story. Furthermore, it is not so much the cold hard facts that matter, but the articulation of their cultural significance with regards to the meanings that can be associated with the lived experience being discussed. According to Carolyn Ellis, a story's validity can be judged by whether it evokes "a feeling that the experience described is authentic and lifelike, believable and possible; the story's generalisability can be judged by whether it speaks to readers about their experiences". I hope to ensure you find yourself relating your own experiences to mine. In **Carolyn Ellis (1997)** 'Evocative Autoethnography: Writing Emotionally about Our Lives', in William Tierney and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Representation and the Text* (pp. 115-139) (New York: SUNY Press) (p.133).

[4] Evocative autoethnography essentially provides the bridge between autobiography and ethnography. While the latter gazes outwards (looking at the other), however, the former focuses almost entirely on what's inside (i.e. the self). For a separate assessment of the value and validity of embracing an autoethnographic-based approach to understanding the notion of identity formation see **Laurel Richardson (2001)** Getting Personal, *Qualitative Studies in Education* 14 (1), pp. 33-38.

[5] John Turner and Henri Tajfel have both written extensively on the social psychological theory of social identity formation, especially the willingness of the individual to adopt the behavioural characteristic of the group in which they find themselves trying/wanting to join. Their development of the Social Identity Theory successfully advanced earlier European social psychological studies on individual perception and, to a lesser degree, inter-group discrimination. In an attempt to explain the diverse features of inter-group behaviour and collective identity, it fully incorporates both self comparison and self categorisation processes, along with more motivational elements of self-enhancement. See either **John C. Turner (1975)** Social Comparison and Social Identity: Some Prospects for Inter-group Behaviour, *European Journal of Social Psychology* 5, pp. 5-34; **Henri Tajfel (1981)** *Human Groups and Social Categories* (Cambridge:

If my interpretation of the social psychological literature is correct, your own interpretation and self assessment of my contribution to the social identity debate will almost certainly involve the systematic creation of contextualised categories and the application of numerous, overlapping, personal attributes[6]. The extract that I have chosen to open this life-changing personal narrative with, for example, should therefore not be seen purely as an author's subjective attempt to reveal or reflect upon his self identity. Neither is it merely another example of an individual struggling to answer the million-dollar question of *'just who do you think you are?'*.

My decision to move this particular piece of self assessment to the start of my thesis illustrates my desire to highlight a couple of questions, both of which I would like my audience to be asking themselves from the beginning of this journey. First, I want you asking yourself; *'who do you think that I want you to think that I am?*'. Second, I want you asking: *'how do you think that I am going to be able to convince you that I am the individual that I so desperately want you to think I am (i.e. the character introduced above)?'.* Ultimately, we cannot ignore the power and influence of our past experiences and/or the many social identities we encounter every single day of our lives.

Henri Tajfel and John Turner, along with an array of social identity theory advocates, have spent a great deal of their professional lives convincing others (such as myself) that social categorisation and identity formation remains the most fundamental of all cognitive-based human thought processes[7]. Together, they argue that we *all* require someone and/or something to help us distinguish ourselves from everyone else[8]. How

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CUP); **Henri Tajfel (1982)** Social Psychology of Inter-group Relations, *Annual Review of Psychology* 33, pp. 1-39.

[6] According to Michael Hogg, Social Categorisation Theory (SCT) provokes increased self-evaluation through specific processes of comparison. Likewise, Turner and Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (SIT) emphasises that categorisation involves differentiation of others and ourselves into meaningful distinctive categories. The process is both inductive and deductive and involves both the application of stereotypes to others, and the depersonalisation of self. See **Michael Hogg (2004)** 'Social Categorisation, Depersonalisation and Group Behaviour', in Marilyn Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and Social Identity* (pp. 203-231) (Oxon: Willey-Blackwell). For further discussion, see also **Henri Tajfel (1986)** The Social Identity Theory of Inter-group Behaviour, in Stephen Worchel, and William G. Austin (Eds.) *Psychology of Inter-group Relations* (pp. 7-24) (Chicago: Nelson Hall).

[7] Despite the steady growth of social identity, social cognition and inter-group relations research, however, the study of group processes still remains more popular outside mainstream social psychological. The fields of organisational and behavioural psychology, for example, are still largely considered as being responsible for the progressive development of research into the collective abilities and personalities of individual group members See, for example, **Nicholas Emler and Nicholas Hopkins (1990)** 'Reputation, Social Identity and the Self', in Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg (Eds.) *Social Identity Theory: constructive and critical advances* (pp. 113-130) (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf).

[8] According to Marilyn Brewer's (1991) theory of optimal distinctiveness (ODT), the proposed the need for inclusion (assimilation) and the need for distinctiveness (differentiation) can be satisfied simultaneously through identification with social groups and subsequent comparisons between one's in-

else would we locate our own optimal self and social identities?[9]. And, more importantly, how else would we be able to categorise the thoughts and actions of others?[10]

In 2004, Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg acknowledged the critical importance of exploring the notion of self identity within the realms of social psychology, describing it as a central reflection of 'the importance of the individual in modern society as a target for social influence and a unit of economic activity'[11]. Michael Hogg's closely-related theory of self conception, including his exploration of in-group/out-group prototypes, offers a rather fitting representation of the self in it's unavoidable collective context (i.e. the qualities one inevitably shares with others)[12]. My interpretation of these studies have undoubtedly influenced my belief that the self (i.e. our personal identity) cannot exist, let alone evolve, without the ability to continually compare and categorise the role played by others (i.e. the social).

Cultural sociologists interested in the concept of self and social identity have also opted to focus their gaze upon the noticeable temporal dimension of one's personality, incorporating not only one's past (personal history/heritage) and future (possible selves),

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group and the multiplicity of out-groups located within society. See **Marilynn B. Brewer (1991)** The social self: On being the same and different at the same time, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17, pp. 475-482.

[9] Optimal Distinctiveness Theory builds on the principles of the social identity perspective, including the depersonalisation and variability of the individual self. The crucial difference between the approaches relates to their emphasis on the processes thought to determine this social variability. ODT also stipulates that social categorisation emerges from the desire to bring together the conflicting individual needs for assimilation and differentiation. See **Marilynn B. Brewer and Cynthia L. Pickett (1999)** 'Distinctiveness Motives as a Source of the Social Self', in Tom R. Tyler, Roderick M. Kramer and Oliver P. John (Eds.) *The psychology of the social self* (pp. 71-90) (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates); **Cynthia L. Pickett, Michael D. Silver and Marilynn B. Brewer (2002)** The Impact of Assimilation and Differentiation Needs on Perceived Group Importance and Judgments of In-group Size, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 28 (4), pp. 546-558; **Cynthia L. Pickett and Geoffrey J. Leonardelli (2006)** 'Using Collective Identities for Assimilation and Differentiation' in Tom Postmes and Jolanda Jetten (Eds.) *Individuality and the Group* (pp. 56-74) (London: Sage).

[10] According to Marilynn Brewer and Wendi Gardner, if self-categorisation becomes salient at one level, it generally becomes less obvious at another. Self Categorisation Theory (SCT) is therefore seen to have unambiguously advanced the analysis of both social comparison and social identity, defining both personal and social identifications as being functionally antagonistic. See **Marilynn B. Brewer and Samuel L. Gaertner (2004)** 'Toward Reduction of Prejudices: Inter-group Contact and Social Categorisation', in Marilyn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and Social Identity* (pp. 298-318) (Oxon: Wiley-Blackwell); **Marilynn B. Brewer and Wendi Gardner (2004)** 'Who is this 'We'? Levels of Collective Identity and Self Representation' in Mary J. Hatch and Majken Schultz (Eds.) *Organisational identity* (pp. 66-88) (Oxon: OUP).

[11] In **Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg (2004)** 'Collective Identity: Group Membership and Self-conception', in Marilynn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and social identity* (pp.147-181) (Oxon: Wiley-Blackwell) (p. 148).

[12] Michael Hogg argued that depersonalisation occurs when "a social field comprising of multifaceted and unique individuals is perceptually transformed into a social field containing people who, to varying degrees, match the relevant group prototype". Prototype-based depersonalisation of self is the process that makes group behaviour possible. In **Michael Hogg (2004) '**Social Categorisation, Depersonalisation and Group Behaviour', in Marilynn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and Social Identity* (pp. 203-231) (Oxon: Wiley-Blackwell) (p. 208).

but also their present representations[13]. Erving Goffman, for example, discussed the interrelations between embodiment, self, socialisation and practical research techniques, arguing that we inevitably create and sustain our multiple identities in a contextual and dramaturgical 'production of everyday life'. To him, the body is no external thing, but intrinsic to composing self-identities and relationships with the outside world[14]. And, as if it wasn't hard enough already, he also reminded us of the fact that our multiple identities are continuously evolving and never (*ever*) static[15].

The sport tourist that stumbled upon the theories and thoughts of Dominic Abrams, Marilynn Brewer, Erving Goffman, Michael Hogg, Henri Tajfel and John Turner was always perceived to be very different to the one captured at Carisbrook in the photograph placed at the start of this opening Act. Likewise, the multiple identities that gave me the self confidence to compose this autobiographical story will undoubtedly be different from those who will eventually help me to conclude it.

According to the foundations established by Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln, my thesis is arguably located somewhere between the fifth and sixth moments of social research[16]. It's a highly subjective narrative, involving intense emotional reflection. It has been constructed from a personal epiphany that emerged unexpectedly from my longstanding suspicion that no interpretation is privileged[17]. My opening questions are

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[13] For a sociological-situated approach to understanding the complex notion of identity, see **Charles Taylor (1989)** *Sources of the Self: the making of modern identity* (Cambridge: CUP); **Kenneth Gergen (1991)** *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (New York; Basic); **Art P. Bochner (1997)** It's about time: narrative and the divided self, *Qualitative Inquiry* 3, pp. 418-438; **Donald Polkinghorne (2000)** The unconstructed self, *Culture and Psychology* 6 (2), pp. 264-272.

[14] For arguably one of the most comprehensive, and subsequently most cited, pieces of literature on the philosophy of social constructionism, refer to **Erving Goffman (1959)** *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday).

[15] According to Erving Goffman, we all have multiple identities that are formed and transformed in social interaction and expressed in terms of networks of interdependencies, with aspects of identity intersecting across time and space. See **Erving Goffman (2004)** 'The Arts of Impression Management', in Mary J. Hatch and Majken Schultz (Eds.) *Organisational identity* (pp. 35-55) (Oxon: OUP).

[16] Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln proposed that, "in north America, qualitative research operates in a complex historical field that crosscuts at least eight historical moments". The phases that they identified were said to both "overlap and simultaneously operate in the present". They labelled them: the traditional (1900-1950); the modernist, or golden age (1950-1970); blurred genres (1970-1986); the crisis of representation (1986-1990); the postmodern (1995-2000); the methodologically contested present (2000-2004); and the fractured future, which is now (2005-). The fifth moment was subsequently "defined in part by a concern for literary and rhetorical tropes and the narrative turn, a concern for storytelling, for composing ethnographies in new ways". It was also referred to as the post-experimental phase that according to Laurel Richardson, "was shaped by a new sensibility, by doubt, by refusal to privilege any method or theory". In **Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (2000)** 'Introduction: the discipline and practice of qualitative research', in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-32) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage) (p. 3); In **Laurel Richardson (1997)** *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press) (p. 137).

[17] An evocative autoethnographer is concerned only with writing a truthful account through systematic introspection. They are committed to writing from the heart as well as the head, and the

merely participant observations based on my contextualised interpretation of what I have experienced over the course of my life (to date). This is my (re)interpretation of the lost, lonely-looking, sports fanatic that I have been observing for nearly three decades.

As stated in the prelude, I see my thesis as a reflection which utilises sociological introspection and the socially constructed concept of emotional subjectivity[18]. The reflexive component comes from the fact that I'm looking inward from multiple directions[19]. My reflection is merely the image that I see in the mirror. The personal narrative that I hope to create essentially represents my attempt to record both the visuals I see when I shut my eyes. To me, an evocative autoethnography should hit a few nerves, strike a few chords and raise the odd eyebrow. This is exactly what Leon Anderson achieved in 2006 via the Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, and it is also what I hope to achieve through the construction of my thesis[20].

While some appear reluctant to accept and/or acknowledge Leon Anderson's more analytical approach to producing autoethnography, I have found myself in serious danger of having to sit on the fence. I have no intention of incorporating his ideals, but I fail to

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narratives they construct often reveal the vulnerabilities and insecurities that most try to keep hidden from those around them. For further information, refer to **Carolyn Ellis (1991)** Sociological Introspection and Emotional Experience, *Symbolic Interaction* 14, pp. 23-50.

[18] See **Carolyn Ellis and Art P. Bochner (1992)** 'Telling and performing personal stories', in Carolyn Ellis and Michael Flaherty (Eds.) *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience* (pp. 79-101) (London: Sage).

[19] According to Pierre Bourdieu, sociologists can't help but reflect upon the socio-historical conditions behind their knowledge production, to objectify their objectifications. He also notes how sociologists can reduce biases by turning their tools back onto themselves and suggests that reflexivity is not confined to postmodernism or post structuralism paradigms. Sociologists must incorporate some form of reflexivity in order to make meaningful connections between what their see/experience in the field and the specific social structures they are exploring at the time. See **Steven J. Bartlett (1987)** 'Varieties of self-reference', in Steven J. Bartlett and Peter Suber (Eds.) *Self-Reference: Reflections on Reflexivity* (pp. 5–28) (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff); **Malcolm Ashmore (1989)** *The Reflexive Thesis: Wrighting the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press); **Pierre Bourdieu (1990)** *In other words: Essay towards a Reflexive Sociology* (M. Adamson, Trans.) (Cambridge: Polity Press).

[20] Volume 35, Issue 4 of the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* is dominated by Leon Anderson's argument for the potential of Analytic Autoethnography and an essential read for anyone interested by this style of sociological research. Anderson presents two cases, one of which is a direct response to those who are quick to dismiss his idea. His suggestion that autoethnographers needed to incorporate some form of analytical component to their work proved a tough pill for some people to shallow. Some simply spat it out without even trying to digest it. While his first article focused on his justification and conceptualisation of the term 'Analytic' Autoethnography, the response concentrated more on the contextualisation of the concept, rejecting the oxymorononic claims of Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner and trying to reduce the fear revealed by Norman Denzin. For discussion, see **Leon Anderson (2006)** Analytic Autoethnography, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35 (4), pp. 373-395; **Leon Anderson (2006)** On Apples, Oranges, and Autopsies: A Response to Commentators, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnogra*phy, 35 (4), pp. 450-465. See also **Scott A. Hunt and Natalia Ruiz Junco (2006)** Introduction to Two Thematic Issues: Defective Memory and Analytical Autoethnography, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35 (4), pp. 371-372; **Kevin D. Vryan (2006)** Expanding Analytic Autoethnography and Enhancing its Potential, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35 (4), pp.405-409.

see it as either a step backwards, or a step in the wrong direction[21]. Likewise, I am not going to dismiss it as easily as Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner were able to do[22]. I do not think that Anderson is necessarily against the creation of evocative autoethnography. He merely implies that there is also room for a much more 'scientific' approach to autoethnography. He is simply positioning his concept at the other end of the continuum. He was not dismissing the value or validity of existing literary-inspired autoethnography, merely pointing to the fact that people can't help but search for meanings and truths, regardless of how we collect and present our data. We will always want answers, even when we claim that we are not looking.

Like it or not, Leon Anderson was successful in getting a reaction from his audience. He got people talking. He got people thinking. He also got them writing. Whether this was his aim or not, however, remains to be seen. I like to think that he knew exactly what he was doing. I like to think that he would have been happy to counter the critical response that his initial article generated. Personally, I think that it was a great piece of evocative writing. It may have been different to that typically associated with autoethnography, but that doesn't make it a threat. It doesn't make it any less valid. It was merely his interpretation. He certainly didn't deserve the backlash/barrage he received. I just hope that it made him stronger.

My goal is not to offer you an analytical autoethnography, but I would love to evoke a similar level of response to that generated by Leon Anderson's proposal. While there will be some critical analysis incorporated along the way, my primary goal is to offer you an open and honest account that reveals my continued search for a 'new' place/position within the socio-cultural field of sport and/or tourism research. To move forward, however, I must start by turning around and going back the way I came. I must retrace my steps. I must revisit places I have been, and, more importantly, reinterpret the things I have seen. I must relive my past in a manner that only I could ever do. But this

[21] Norman Denzin's reply to Leon Anderson's notion of analytical autoethnography focused on the genre's strong 'historical' links with the crisis of representation. He suggests that analysing autoethnography could prove detrimental, damaging and counter-productive, arguing that Anderson's idea's represent a step backward (or at least in the wrong direction). See **Norman K. Denzin (2006)** Analytic Autoethnography, or Déjà Vu all Over Again, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35 (4), pp. 419-428

[22] Both Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner have argued on numerous occasions that the aim of an autoethnographer is not to present a passive text and then 'sit back' as the knowledge is subsequently consumed. Their 'autopsy' of Leon Anderson's approach to constructing Autoethnography, however, was not only critical, but bordered on brutal. They certainly didn't sit back. They appeared suspicious and sceptical about his desire to both analyse and evaluate the 'findings' extracted from personal narratives, arguing that the search for generalisations and meaningful 'truth' represents the polar opposite of what most autoethnographers try to achieve. See **Carolyn Ellis and Art P. Bochner (2006)** Analyzing Analytic Autoethnography: An Autopsy, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35 (4), pp. 429-449.

is not just a physical journey. This is a psychological excursion into my present day memories of milestone 'life-changing' social experiences[23]. I may be covering old ground, but I'm doing it for the first time. Our memories never age[24].

In keeping with the 'new' academic position in which I have found myself standing, everything I include in this story is a socially constructed interpretation of the 'subject', 'reality' or 'truth' that I wish to study[25]. The subject is me. And the 'reality' or 'truth' of which I speak is mine (and mine alone). My goal was to adopted a literary-inspired genre of narrative enquiry that fully accepts that a 'self' identity that can never be fully detached or completely removed from the socially constructed parameters that inevitably surround what I do, regardless of whether I find myself wearing my academic hat or not[26].

Carolyn Ellis believes the crisis of representation witnessed throughout the social sciences over the past two decades was effectively provoked by postmodernism, and the

[23] While memories are said to present themselves in a number of various guises, including personal, social, cultural, collective, spatial and autobiographical, there is a surprising lack of consensus regarding the most suitable direction from which our own subjective reflections/recollections should be approached (i.e. accessed), (re)interpreted (i.e. assessed) and publicised. See **Mary Kelley (1999)** Making Memory: Design of the Present on the Past, in Mieke Bal, Jonathon Crewe and Leo Spitzer (Eds.) *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (pp. 218-230) (Hanover: University Press of New England); **Annette Kuhn (2000)** 'A Journey Through Memory, in Susan Radstone' (Ed.) *Memory and Methodology* (pp. 179-196) (Oxford: Berg); **Edward W. Said (2000)** Invention, memory, and place, *Critical Inquiry* 26, pp. 175-192; **Daniel L. Schacter (1996)** *Searching for Memory* (New York: Basic Books).

[24] Having dedicated over two decades to the study of cultural tourism, Edward Bruner attempted to incorporate reflexivity into his anthropological explorations, asking the tourists he encountered to put themselves into the shoes of the hosts and getting them to think about the experiences they encountered in terms of their authenticity. His ethnographies studied tourist behaviour and their consumption of tourism-based products/productions across Africa, Asia and America. His findings touch upon local and global issues from the personal perspectives of everyone involved, including himself. He was quick to note that our memories of past adventures are always reconstructed to relate specifically to the present. See **Edward M. Bruner (2005)** *Culture on Tour* (Chicago: The University of Chicago).

[25] Social constructionism incorporates a broad number of psychological notions, including Michael Foucault's seminal text on power and subjectivity. According to Mark Crossley, the social constructionist approach to psychology is particularly relevant to a narrative psychology perspective, regarding questions of self and identity. Furthermore, while Kenneth Gergen likes to talk about a strong/powerful and unified 'movement', Jonathon Potter argues that there is no one 'specialised' field of psychology which could be described as social constructionist. See **Michael Foucault (1980)** *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon); **Kenneth Gergen (1985)** The social constructionist movement in modern psychology, *American Psychologist* 40, pp. 266-275; **Jonathon Potter (1996)** *Representing reality: Discourse, rhetoric and social construction* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage); **Kenneth Gergen (1999)** *An invitation to social construction* (London: Sage); **Mark L. Crossley (2000)** Introducing narrative psychology: self, trauma and the construction of meaning, *Theory and Psychology*, 10 (4), pp. 527-54; **Kenneth Gergen (2001)** *Social construction in context* (London: Sage).

[26] See, for example, **Thomas Barone (1992)** On the demise of subjectivity in educational inquiry, *Curriculum Inquiry* 22 (1), pp. 25-37; **Deborah Lupton (1998)** *The Emotional Self: A Socio-cultural Exploration* (Sage: London).

manner in which it challenges notions of scientific structure, knowledge and truth[27]. I know that I regularly find myself wandering alone, lost and lonely, located somewhere between - or even amongst - the realms of realism and relativism[28]. I think that I am a symbolic interactionist[29]. I am certainly a social constructionist[30]. I think that I am a poststructuralist[31]. I am occasionally postmodern[32]. I am certainly pragmatic.

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[27] See **Carolyn Ellis (1997)** 'Evocative autoethnography: writing emotionally about our lives', in William G. Tierney and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Representation and the Text: Re-Framing the Narrative Voice* (pp.79-105) (Albany: SUNY Press).

[28] Both Derek Edwards and Jonathon Potter note how realism and relativism offer two opposing approaches to social constructionism (both of which have their strengths and weaknesses). According to their logic, realists hit trouble the minute "they represent", whilst the relativist's are compromised the second 'they argue." The development of an argument implies the relativist has found a position on which he/she 'believes' something to be true/false. A relativist should, however, treat everyone's opinion is as valid as the next. Having started out as a realist ethnographer, my lived experiences have definitely seen me leaning more towards relativist thought. See **Derek Edwards and Jonathon Potter (1992)** *Discursive Psychology* (London: Sage); **Derek Edwards (1997)** *Discourse and Cognition* (London: Sage).

[29] The founder of symbolic interactionism, George Herbert Mead, believed that social situations, including sports participation and observation, can suitably illustrate how we acquire our personality and become accepted members of our society. Mead's seminal interpretations certainly helped me to understand the inter-related role played by language, time and relationships in human 'order of meaning', particularly with regard to our sense of self and identity. His 'looking glass self' highlighted the extent to which the way I define myself has always been reliant upon the thoughts and opinions of those around me. According to Robert Prus, symbolic interactionists consider how language, symbols, clothing and non-verbal gestures all communicate meanings. They suggest that all interaction is typically structured by an ever-present collection of socially-constructed norms and values. The self automatically makes the necessary connections and joins up the dots for us. See **Robert Prus (1996)** *Symbolic interaction and ethnographic research: inter-subjectivity and the study of human lived experience* (Albany: SUNY Press); **George H. Mead (2004)** 'The Self: The 'I' and the 'Me', in Mary J. Hatch and Majken Schultz (Eds.) *Organisational identity* (pp. 30-34) (Oxon: OUP).

[30] A social constructionist stance, according to David Nightingale and John Cromby, is one that suggests our lived experiences are all essentially the 'product' of external social processes. Arguably, it is society that acts as the 'root of all experience'. Language is therefore central to our everyday life. It is also the primary media/medium of knowledge and identity creation. Discourse analysis, post-structuralist, post-modernist, and rhetorical approaches all fall within the social constructionist paradigm. Discursive Psychologists, including Jonathon Potter and Derek Edward, argue that there is no 'reality' beyond 'text'. Or, in other words, knowledge is unavoidable attached to human activity and social experience. See **Thomas A. Schwandt (1994)** 'Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry', in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 118-137) (California: Sage); **Jonathon Potter (1996)** 'Discourse analysis and constructionist approaches: Theoretical background', in John T. E. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of qualitative research methods for psychology and the social sciences* (pp. 125-140) (Leicester: BPS Books); **David Nightingale and John Cromby (1999)** *Social Constructionist Psychology: A Critical Analysis of Theory and Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press); **Thomas A. Schwandt (2000)** 'Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretism, Hermenuetics, and Social Constructionism', in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, 2nd Edition (pp. 292-331) (London: Sage).

[31] While structuralism analyses the structures of society (i.e. how they fit together and in turn how they influence our behaviour), Michael Foucault's post-structuralist theory (deconstructionism) has become increasingly popular across a range of social scientific disciplines and is seen as a viable way of deconstructing linguistic structures (and socio-historical narratives) in order to "find out what our knowledge is actually based on". Put another way, poststructuralism calls us to 'greater play, reflexivity, and ethical responsibility about our writing. To me, the notion that knowledge is no determined by logic or rationality, but by the unpredictable twists and turns of text and language played a major part in turning this pragmatist into the moonlighting, postmodern, post-structuralist responsible for this thesis. In **Mark L. Crossley (2000)** Introducing narrative psychology: self, trauma and the construction of meaning, *Theory and Psychology* 10 (4), pp. 527-546 (p. 527). See also **Michael Foucault (1980)** *Power/Knowledge* (New

Ultimately, we all allow the past to dictate our everyday existence? But no one actually lives in it. Likewise, no one lives in the future. We are all forced to live in the present (where-ever or what-ever that may be). Hopefully the storied presentation of my research process will not only allow me to tackle some of my many questions, but also integrate and justify the context-driven notions of my discoveries (i.e. within the diachronic perspective of research as practice)[33]. My toughest challenge, according to Laurel Richardson, is discovering what (or who) to include and/or exclude in my narrative[34]. I know that I cannot attempt to cover everything I wish to share. I also know that I have to try and give my thesis some socio-cultural perspective[35].

I want this to be judged as more than just another piece of academic literature[36]. I want to create a truly unique and equally inspiring piece of art[37]. I am - by no stretch of the sociological imagination - the first person to look at the social construction of the self or one's personal identity[38]. I am not the first to reveal their socially-constructed

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York: Pantheon); **Laurel Richardson (1997)** *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press).

[32] The social and cultural context of postmodernity has arguably changed the field of psychological exploration. Modernity, or 'the modern age' typically refers to the centuries that followed the middle-ages. That said, it is also used to distinguish between cultures and civilisations. According to Anthony Giddens, 'Modernisation' has often been used to denote the processes of 'individualisation, secularisation (i.e. decline of religion), commodification, urbanisation, bureaucratisation and rationalisation (the celebration of reason as the source of progress in knowledge and society)'. Post-modernity is literally what happened next. Giddens argued, however, that a more appropriate term would be 'high modernity'. While the technological advances witnessed during modernity were largely industrial, those used to signify postmodern society are generally communication and knowledge-based. Giddens posits the creation of a new sense of space and time, and new modes of experience and culture. See **Anthony Giddens (1991)** *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press)

[33] See **Thomas Barone (1995)** Persuasive Writings, Vigilant Readings, and Reconstructed Characters: The Paradox of Trust in Educational Story sharing, *Qualitative Studies in Education* 8, pp. 63-74; **Leslie R. Bloom (1996)** Stories of One's Own: Non-unitary Subjectivity in Narrative Representation, *Qualitative Inquiry* 2 (2), pp. 176-197.

[34] See **Laurel Richardson (1997)** *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press).

[35] See **Thomas Barone and Elliot W. Eisner (1997)** 'Arts-based educational research', in Richard M. Jaeger (Ed.) *Complementary Methods for Research in Education,* 2nd Edition (pp. 73-116) (New York: Macmillan); **Elliot W. Eisner (2003)** 'On the Art and Science of Qualitative Research in Psychology', in Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design* (pp.17-30) (Washington: American Psychological Association).

[36] According to Carolyn Ellis, autoethnography "overlaps art and science; it is part 'auto' or self and part 'ethno' or culture. It is also something different". It is a genre in itself. In **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press) (p. 31).

[37] See **Phillip Lopate (1994)** *The Art of the Personal Essay: An Anthology from the Classical Era to the Present* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday/Anchor Books).

[38] According to Norman Denzin, interpretive sociology is essentially driven by qualitative methodology, involving relatively open-ended interviewing and ethnography. See **Jonathon Smith (1992)** Interpretive inquiry: a practical and moral activity, *Theory into Practice* 31 (2), pp. 100-106; **David Altheide and John Johnson (1994)** 'Criteria for Assessing Interpretive Validity in Qualitative Research', in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 485-499) (California: Sage); **Norman K. Denzin (2002)** 'The Interpretive Process', in A. Michael Huberman and

interpretations through the medium of a narrative-inspired autoethnography[39]. I want to fully embrace the genre of creative non-fictional storytelling[40]. I want to offer the reader a unique narrative of self that attempts to juggle the many relationships that exist only in my head[41]. I'm not here to give you a lecture. I'm not here for confession. I just want you to hear my side of the story.

As noted in the preface, my personal adaptation of the footnote referencing style is my attempt at maintaining the flow I hope to establish. This thesis has not been written as piece of performance ethnography, but I cannot ignore the similarities[42]. I have certainly found myself standing on a stage. After numerous auditions, additions and alterations to the script, I have spent the past couple of years nervously learning my lines. I've experienced my fair share of stage fright and remain terrified by the thought of being

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Mathew B. Miles (Eds.) *The Qualitative Researchers Companion* (pp. 349-366) (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage).

[39] See **Paul Ricoeur (1992)** *Oneself as another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); **Patricia Burdell and Beth B. Swadener (1999)** Review: Critical Personal Narrative and Autoethnography in Education: Reflections on a Genre, *Educational Researcher* 28 (6), pp. 21-26; **Vasiliki Galani-Moutafi (2000)** The Self and Other: Traveler, Ethnographer and Tourist, *Annals of Tourism Research* 27 (1), pp. 203-224; **Kerion O'Conner and Richard Hallam (2000)** Sorcery of Self: The magic of you, *Theory and Psychology* 10 (2), pp. 238-264; **Toni Spry (2001)** Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis, *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 (6), pp. 706-732; **Nicola L. Holt (2003**) Representation, Legitimation, and Autoethnography: An Autoethnographic Writing Story, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 2 (1), pp. 1-22.

[40] The linkages between narrative analysis and non-fictional story telling have been made by numerous authors/academics over the past two decades. According to Stephen Crites and Phillip Abbott, narrating or telling stories is the way in which we all attempt to make sense of our lives, and understand the self in relation to others and wider social structures. See, for further discussion, **Stephen Crites (1986)** 'Storytime: Recollecting the past and projecting the future', in Theodore Sarbin (Ed.) *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct* (pp. 153-173) (New York: Praeger); **Paul Ricoeur (1991)** 'Life: a story in search of a narrator', in Mario J. Valdes (Ed.) *A Ricoeur reader: Reflection and Imagination* (pp. 137-155) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press); **Arthur Frank (1995)** *The Wounded Storyteller* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); **Laurel Richardson (1995)** Writing-stories: Co-authoring 'the sea monster,' a writing story, *Qualitative Inquiry* 1, pp. 189-203; **Phillip Abbott (1997)** 'Storytelling and Political Theory', in Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman (Eds.) *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences* (pp. 281-306) (Albany: SUNY Press); **Christine Kiesinger (1998)** From interview to story: writing "Abbies life", *Qualitative Inquiry* 4 (1), pp. 71-95.

[41] See **Clinton Sanders (1995)** Stranger than Fiction, *Studies of Symbolic Interaction* 7, pp. 89-104; **Art P. Bochner, Carolyn Ellis and Lisa Tillmann-Healy (1997)** 'Relationships as Stories', in Steve Duck (Ed.) *Handbook of Personal Relationships*, 2nd Edition (New York: Wiley); **Margaret Carlisle Duncan (1998)** Stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 15, pp. 95-108; **Art P. Bochner (2004)** 'Storytelling and the self in Everyday Life: Narrative Inquiry on the Cutting Edge, In Anon (Ed.) *Communication and Methodology* (pp. 183- 191) Available online at http://amrc.cuc.edu.cn/data/upload/download/PDF/04/04-17.pdf [Accessed 15 December 2008].

[42] According to Nancy Redfern-Vance, the narrative form is a literary performance with dramatic expression in its presentation. Heather Sykes, Jennifer Chapman and Anne Swedberg have also written on the similarities between performance ethnography and narrative-inspired autoethnography. See **Nancy Redfern-Vance (2007)** 'Analyzing Narrative Data', in Michael Angrosino (Ed.) *Doing Cultural Anthropology: projects in ethnographic data collection*, 2nd Edition (pp.45-62) (Long Grove,Il: Waveland Press); **Heather Sykes, Jennifer Chapman and Anne Swedberg (2005)** 'Performed Ethnography', in David L. Andrews, Daniel S. Mason and Michael L. Silk (Eds.) *Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies* (p. 185-202) (Oxford: Berg).

caught in the wrong place at the wrong time and/or saying the wrong thing. Ideally, I would like to take this opportunity to turn the spotlight round and let my audience present this production. I want you making all the noise.

# Chapter 2: First impressions (a*lways* last!)

> "Autoethnography is an autobiographical style of writing and research that connects personal and cultural experiences. Autoethnographers not only observe the world around them, but also examine their internal perceptions and feelings about their place in that world. Usually written in the first person voice, autoethnographic works can take various forms: poetry, short stories, fiction, novels, photographic essays, and social-science prose. These accounts include characters, action, dialogue, and emotional response. Autoethnographers ideally use all their senses, their bodies, movement, feeling, and their whole being to learn about others"[43].

Though it remains the biggest criticism of autoethnography[44], I hope you are beginning to see the irony of including a little 'self indulgence' in the title of my thesis. This is not all about me (or my life). This is about using and abusing the power of one's position to make a lasting 'memorable' impression on others. It's about the culture of the academy. Andrew Sparkes noted that a well crafted autoethnography can effectively challenge traditional disembodied ways of knowing. Furthermore, it can also enhance empathetic forms of understanding by seeing our "actual worlds" more clearly[45]. An autoethnography is said to be able to "inspire a different way of reading", by (re)emphasising a cultural world "beyond the self of the writer"[46]. It is seen as representing a safe environment for social scientists to "examine the [personal and

[43] In **Leigh Berger and Carolyn Ellis (2007)** 'Composing Autoethnographic Stories', in Michael V. Angrosino (Ed.) *Doing Cultural Anthropology: Projects in Ethnographic Data Collection*, 2nd Edition (pp.161-176) (Long Grove, Il: Waveland Press.) (p. 166).

[44] See **Kathryn Church (1995)** *Forbidden Narratives: critical autobiography as social science* (London: Gordon and Breach Publishers); **Eric Mykhalovskiy (1996)** Reconsidering Table Talk: Critical Thoughts on the Relationship between Sociology, Anthropology and Self-Indulgence, *Qualitative Sociology* 19, pp. 131-152; **Barbara Humberstone (1997)** 'Challenging dominant ideologies in the research process', in G. Clarke and Barbara Humberstone (Eds.) *Researching women and sport* (pp. 199-213) (London: Macmillan); **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** 'Autoethnography: Self-indulgence or something more?', in Art P. Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (Eds.) *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature, and aesthetics* (pp. 209-232) (New York: AltaMira).

[45] In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)***Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p. 100).

[46] In **Art P. Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (1996**) "Talking Over Ethnography", in Carolyn Ellis and Art P. Bochner (Eds.) *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (pp. 13-45) (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira) (p. 24).

professional] contradictions they experience" during their day-to-day lives[47]. I personally found that it supports my longstanding belief that academics only research the things they are personally interested in. And that is exactly what I have set out to do with my thesis.

I am always saying that 'I know' things, and that I have 'always' done things, but it is just the way that I write. I know, for example, that I also use the terms 'ultimately' and 'the fact' all the time. I am equally fond of the terms 'furthermore', 'likewise' and 'subsequently'. I say them all the time. I know that I can sometimes miss out the word 'that' entirely, and I am sure that it will happen on numerous occasions in this thesis. I will try to ensure that my proof-readers know what they need to look out for. I just write how I speak. My fingers merely dictate the voices that I hear in my head. I rarely include that in my sentences. That is just my way of using the language that I currently find at my disposal[48]. It will be different from yours. I will not be making any generalisations, and do not believe that we al need to follow the same script when it comes to how we write. I am not trying to be rebellious, or start a revolution. I am merely building my foundations.

To quote Friedrich Nietzsche, "the *only* seeing we have is seeing from a perspective; the *only* knowledge we have is knowledge from a perspective"[49]. Well, this is my perspective. This is my interpretation[50]. This is my attempt to contribute something new to the academy. As Elliot Eisner concluded, "One cannot describe or

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[47] In **Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner (2000)** 'Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject', in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd Edition (pp. 733-768) (London: Sage) (p. 738).

[48] According to Thomas Barone and Elliot Eisner, "The language of arts-based researchers is also speech that is directly associated with lived experiences". They argue that too many academics seek to hide themselves behind the narratives the produce, unwilling to acknowledge the one thing that makes us all different; our interpretation of language. In **Thomas Barone and Elliot W. Eisner (1997)** 'Arts-based educational research', in Richard M. Jaeger (Ed.) *Complementary Methods for Research in Education,* 2nd Edition (pp. 73-116) (New York: Macmillan) (p. 74).

[49] **Friedrich Nietzsche (1887/1967**): Essay 3:12, **cited in Carol Grbich 2004**. *'New Approaches in Social Research'* (London: Sage) (p. 11).

[50] Norman Denzin noted how authors of autoethnography are continuously moving between inward reflection and outward expression. In doing so, they inevitably evoke a similar reaction (i.e. an emotional experience) from the audience. He later added that "the researcher's goal in undertaking these activities is to create a body of materials that will furnish the foundations for interpretation and understanding. Interpretation clarifies the meaning of an experience. Interpretation lays the groundwork for understanding, which is the process of interpreting, knowing, and comprehending the meaning of an experience". Furthermore, according to Alain Decrop, the interpretive inquirer "watches, listens, feels, asks, records and examines"**.** In **Norman K. Denzin (2002)** 'The Interpretive Process', in A. Michael Huberman and Matthew B. Miles (Eds) *The Qualitative Researchers Companion* (pp. 349-366) (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage) (p. 360); In **Alain Decrop (2004)** 'Trustworthiness in Qualitative Tourism Research, in Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* (pp. 156-169) (London: Routledge) (p. 157). See for further discussion **Norman K. Denzin (1997)** *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century* (Thousand Oaks, Sage).

interpret what one has not seen or in some other way experienced"[51]. I see myself everyday. I know exactly what I have seen, and I know exactly what I have done. As the title suggested, I wanted my opening chapter to set the scene, in terms of both my thesis and the theory had has helped create my current academic identity.

The previous chapter revealed who I think that I am. That said, I will no doubt feel a lot different when I finally come to edit this manuscript. I know that my referencing is an unconventional way of revealing the places in which I've drawn both my ideas and inspiration from. We must not forget, however, that the individuals listed below are the real stars of this performance. They are the identities without whom this thesis would never have taken shape. They provide the platform on which I wish to present my personal narrative. They have all played their part in giving me the self confidence required to take this long and lonely path. I think it is only appropriate that they are located below my attempts to build upon their legacy.

Jane Elliot discussed reflexivity as a valid method of signifying an awareness of the unavoidable links between one's identity and the self[52]. With this in mind, I also want to get you comparing and categorising yourself, as the reader of this text, as much as I plan to compare and categorise myself, as the writer. I want you walking in my footsteps. I want to encourage you to forget all about the 'why'. I want you focusing solely upon the 'how', the 'who', the' when' and the 'where'. In fact, go back and replace the 'want' with 'hope'. For this is what I 'hope' to achieve through my autoethnography. I hope to both capture and captivate your (sociological) imagination[53].

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[51] In **Elliot W. Eisner (2003)** 'On the Art and Science of Qualitative Research in Psychology', in Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design* (pp.17-30) (Washington: American Psychological Association) (p. 23).

[52] According to Jane Elliot, "the notion of reflexivity is used more specifically to indicate an awareness of the identity, or self, of the researcher within the research process. Reflexivity means the tendency critically to examine and analytically to reflect upon the nature of research and th role of the researcher in carrying out and writing up empirical work". In **Jane Elliott (2005)** *Using Narrative in social research: qualitative and quantitative approaches* (London: Sage) (p. 153).

[53] Charles Wright Mill's (1959) work remains timeless and is something that I would strongly recommend everyone to read, regardless of your academic field or philosophical beliefs. John Harris' attempt to link Wright Mill's seminal work to the emerging field of sports tourism research truly captured my own imagination. It also convinced me to head straight to the library and get my hands on arguably one of the most inspiring sociological theories I have ever come across. While Harris conceded that his article would not be covering new ground in terms of advancing the concept, he did acknowledge his desire "to highlight the way(s) in which the sociological imagination can contribute to our understanding of research and the development of scholarship in sport and tourism". Harris argued that sociologists working both within and outside the realms of sport tourism typically concentrate on the management/control of research, rather than the empowerment or emancipation of the researcher. This can, according to Harris, lead to the unintentional marginalisation of the researched. Harris subsequently discussed the potential of a 'perspectival approach', acknowledging that the adoption of new perspectives would inevitably help the

Writing this narrative has helped me come to terms with the fact that, even after all these years, I am still able to surprise myself. I have, however, found myself listening a lot more intently to the various voices in my head. This is a story of new beginnings. The endings should emerge within your professional interpretations of the personal identities I discuss within my story. By the end of our relationship, for example, I hope to ensure that you are unlikely to ever forget my name (or the team I support). Curiosity has undeniably played a significant part in the construction of this thesis. And so, ironically, has a certain degree of 'irony'.

To quote one of my favourite lines from *the Matrix*; "I can only show you the door, I cannot open it for you"[54]. My task is to reveal the pathways along which I have walked to reach this unique moment in time. I cannot walk them with you. As *'Morpheus'* later states to *'Neo (i.e. the one)'*; "There is a difference between knowing the path, and walking it". I know that you are fully capable of thinking for yourself, but unlike the other academic dissertations I have read, I am actively encouraging you to go away and think only *about* yourself. I want you thinking about your unique place in the world. I want to encourage other academics to do exactly as I have done. I want to leave a lasting legacy.

John Van Maanen suggested that those "who wonder why confessional writers don't do their perverse, self-centred, anxiety work in private and simply come forward with an ethnographic fact or two are quite frankly missing the point"[55]. Having set the scene, I would now like to take your mind back to the photograph chosen to start this opening Act. That was me standing in Carisbrook Stadium, Dunedin, almost exactly five years ago (at 7.15pm the 12th of June 2004). It remains my favourite picture of Richard Keith Wright. It has never failed to warm the heart or make me wallow in a bit of welcomed nostalgia. More importantly, I still believe that it successfully encapsulates everything that I not only admire about myself, but also provides an accurate portrait of the image I want others to see when they think of me. It's the photo I'd want the police to

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continued development of a strong sport tourism knowledge base. Noting how the 'dogmatic application of theory or method' can restrict - as opposed to release - our sociological imagination, however, he simply asked his fellow academics 'to better acknowledge the specifics of time and place, and also of the studied individual/group themselves'. In **John Harris (2006)** The Science of Research in Sport and Tourism: Some Reflections upon the Promise of the Sociological Imagination, *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 11 (2), pp. 153-171. (pp. 153-155). See also **Charles Wright Mills (1959)** *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Grove).

[54] *The Matrix* is a 1999 science fiction-action film written and directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski.

[55] In **John Van Maanen (1988)** *Tales of the field: On Writing Ethnography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) (p. 93).

circulate should I ever go missing, and/or be killed in a manner that subsequently generated some media coverage. It says everything there is to say.

It'll be exactly five years ago at the end of this week that the photograph was taken, and in my mind I haven't aged a single day. It could have been taken this morning. I think that I might have to insist on having another photo taken in the very same spot when I go to watch another International Rugby Union Test Match at the same venue this coming weekend. The scarf and beanie I choose to wear will probably be the same. I will not, however, be wearing the same England shirt. I will be wearing my Otago Rugby shirt and cheering for the All Blacks. They are playing the French.

The photograph was taken by someone who, unlike me, had to be persuaded to come along for the unique cultural sporting experience. It was his first ever Test Match. He had, however, heard of the All Blacks, and he had also heard all about the 'Haka'[56]. To me, 'being there' meant absolutely everything. The fixture was arguably all I had thought about since seeing Carisbrook for the first time on my arrival into Dunedin on the 6th of February. Actually, it had been on my mind from the minute I discovered England were due to play the Test Match in the city to which I was soon to be moving. That particular discovery took place many months before I boarded the plane at Heathrow. I hardly slept the night before the tickets went on sale. I happily walked the three or four miles from my student flat to the stadium Box Office. And, having purchased a couple of tickets, I walked home even more excited. All I had to do was find someone willing to come with me. I didn't want to go by myself.

Before we go any further down memory lane, I wish to point out that I am actually wearing several layers of clothing under that England Rugby shirt. It was my first New Zealand winter. It was Graham Henry's first game in charge of the All Blacks. And we (i.e. the recently crowned world champions) lost 33-3. My country was taught a much needed lesson by the more professional, powerful and passionate team. But Johnny (Wilkinson) was injured. And (Martin) Johnson had recently retired.

It was the unrivalled passion of the 'home' supporters that truly captured my heart and my imagination that night. Moreover, the noise they generated both in and out of the

[56] Jason Tuck describes the All Black's 'Haka' as "…a Maori war dance which has become an institutionalized rugby ritual in New Zealand and the South Sea Islands. The 'Haka', traditionally performed before charging into battle, is now performed prior to kick-off at international rugby matches after the playing of the anthems. The words are chanted loudly in a menacing way accompanied by arm actions and foot stamping — it is the Maori way of laying down a challenge to the opposition". In **Jason Tuck (2003)** The Men in White: Reflections on Rugby Union, the Media and Englishness, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 38, 177-199 (p. 187).

stadium continues to dominate my memories of that cold winter night. Much like my first ever football match (back on the 22nd of April, 1989), the occasion proved an unforgettable lived experience. If my England rugby shirt looks in good condition, that's because it was purchased only hours before the photo was taken. Excluding the reversible tops that we were all made to wear at Sawston Village College (SVC), it was my first ever Rugby shirt. Furthermore, despite all the good-natured abuse and banter I was forced to accept after their pathetic performance that night, it remains one of my favourite pieces of clothing.

Buying the less commonly seen 'away' shirt seems equally as symbolic today as it did when I exited the sports shop with it under my arm (I didn't need a bag). My flat may have been within walking distance of the venue, but I was feeling about as far 'away' from 'home' as one could possibly be. I was feeling every centimetre of the approximate 18,000 kilometres that separated me from my one 'true' home back in Sawston, England. On my head in that photo is the 'lucky' Cambridge United Football Club (CUFC) beanie I have proudly owned for over a decade. It's not 'lucky' because it holds any special powers (i.e. it's never yet managed to influence our results on the field). Its luck comes purely from the fact that it *very* nearly got left behind in England. Worse still, it very nearly ended up in an airport lost property box.

I never saw it fall out of my backpack as I headed to Gate 23 on the 4th of February 2004. Luckily, it landed at the feet of the person walking behind and, as a result, was returned quicker than the time it has taken to write this sentence. On the 12th of June, however, I was feeling even luckier to have it at my disposal. It was doing a great job at keeping my big ears warm. The scarf I'm wearing was a Christmas present from 2002. It has also become a personal favourite and a permanent fixture during the winter months. Like the beanie, it fills me with pride every time I see it.

These items of clothing are no fashion accessories. These are statements of my identity. They display my fanatical allegiance to the only professional sporting organisation collective I will ever truly, madly, deeply love. They are the team that, at the time of writing, have just finished second in the English Blue Square Premier League for the second consecutive season. Worse still, they have just lost their second consecutive Play Off final at the new Wembley Stadium and, as a result, are now facing yet another season of conference exile (outside of the English football league).

CUFC represent the one thing I miss more than anything about the life I left behind, including my friends and family. While the team currently play their home

games at the Trade Recruitment Stadium, to me and my fellow fanatics, this sacred piece of land will always (and forever) be known as 'the Abbey'. Though the new away end is less than ten years old, the rest of the 9000 capacity stadium has remained largely untouched for almost half a century. And, personally, I wouldn't have it any other way. It's a venue in which that I have - to date - witnessed 363 very different football matches. I have 363 unique programmes to prove it.

Returning to the photograph and you may well be able to make out the official Test Match programme seen rolled up and sticking out of the pocket of my jeans. It cost $7. It stayed in the exact same place for much of the evening. It is now safely stored with all my other sporting memorabilia and remains largely unread. In my right hand is a steak sandwich. In my left is a piping hot portion of chips. Both were over-priced, but nothing compared to the six pack of Steinlager beer that I was on my way to purchase.

Five years ago, I was half way through studying a Post-Graduate Diploma in Tourism, and had completed a two-hour examination only hours before I went shopping to purchase the aforementioned Rugby shirt. I was also in the middle of writing a 15,000 word dissertation on the socio-economic impact of Lord of the Rings Tourism on two rural South Island (New Zealand) locations. I was yet to contemplate what I may include in the Masters proposal and I had certainly never heard of 'sports tourism'.

I left London on Wednesday the 4th of February 2004 and lost Thursday the 5th somewhere over the Pacific. I arrived on Friday the 6th, having not slept at all on the journey. I had two 30kg suitcases crammed full of my favourite 'must take' belongings. Each case was at least five kilograms overweight and had Heathrow's bright orange 'heavy' stickers to prove it. My carry-on luggage included a backpack (weighing in at 7.6kg), and a laptop bag (recording 9.4kg on the scales in my parent's bathroom).

The cricket match being shown on the Television in the airport helped me take my mind off the reality of the 'new' position and hemisphere in which I had found myself in. It also helped me forget about the fact that I had no idea how I was going to get from Dunedin Airport to my new 'home'. I had arrived on a public holiday (Waitangi Day) and a lot of places, including the University of Otago, were closed up for a long weekend. Having very nearly missed my first domestic connection from Auckland to Christchurch, I was cursing the fact that I had opted against paying the extra money required for one of the two direct Auckland to Dunedin flights offered to me by the travel agent back in Cambridge. I was also feeling particularly fragile.

Imagine, if you can, the faces of the domestic check-in staff when I arrived half asleep, wheeling two overweight suitcases behind me. That last thing I wanted to hear at this point was that the flight had a maximum baggage allowance of 20kg per person and that anything in excess of this amount would have to be flown down on another day. Worse still, I would be expected to pay for every Kilo that I was found to be over the 20kg limit. Apparently, my final flight of the day was on a twin propelled plane with a maximum capacity of only nineteen passengers.

Looking back, my childhood memories of crying in public are all related to either playing or watching sport, especially football. To date, however, I can only recall a handful of isolated incidents where I have been unable to hold back my tears in front of complete strangers. Three separate incidents happened on this one day alone. The first occurred only minutes after I said goodbye to my parents and walked through security at Heathrow. The worst, however, happened several hours later as I took my seat on the aircraft and the reality of what I was doing finally hit home. The thought of having to leave on of my suitcases in Christchurch was the third and final time I cried that year. In fact, I am struggling to think of another time since then that I have needed someone I don't know to offer me a tissue for my tears. I don't think it's happened since.

The reaction my tears evoked from the three middle-aged women located behind the check-in desk was incredible. Whether it was through empathy or sympathy, they not only agreed to overlook the excess baggage penalty, but also promised to do their best to get both my suitcases down to Dunedin as soon as possible. They couldn't guarantee that they would both be on the flight that I was due to take later that afternoon, but suggested the odds were in my favour. The flight was less than half full. They offered me a glass of water, some tissues and, more significantly, a much-needed hug. I couldn't believe how understanding they were all being. I certainly couldn't imagine the same thing happening within any UK airport.

I can't recall what I was wearing or exactly how long I had been in transit by this stage of the journey, but I can assure you that the cricket match was a State Shield match between the Northern Knights and the Central Stags. It was Jacob Oram who played the impressive drive through deep extra cover which saw him and his team-mate reach their century partnership. The game was being played in unbroken sunshine in a town called Napier and at a ground called McLean Park. The cameras kept showing how close they were to the coast. The sea was as blue as the cloudless sky. It looked beautiful. It looked tropical. I was tempted to forget Dunedin and find my way to Napier.

# Chapter 3: There's no place like 'home'!

I currently live in a one bedroom apartment in a fashionable suburb of Dunedin. I can be at the beach in less than five minutes. The Pacific Ocean dominates the horizon seen from every window. When I think about the house that I grew up in, it's about as different as you could possibly imagine. I live with the New Zealander who I have loved for all but two of the sixty-two months that I have been based in Dunedin. In fact, as I edit this chapter for the hundredth time I feel compelled to add in that it's our five year anniversary tomorrow. She is the girl to whom I dedicate my life (and my life's story). For, along with my family and supervisors, I literally could not have done any of this without her. She is the marvellous, equally magnificent, Melanie Cara Paterson. The woman I can't wait to make my wife.

Now that I have told you about the moment that I first landed in New Zealand, I want to transport you back up to the Northern Hemisphere and introduce some of the other key characters in the ever-changing story that is my life. More specifically, I want to tell you about those directly responsible for not only making me who I am today, but encouraging me to always put my aspirations ahead of everything and everyone else. I want to introduce you to both the Wrights of Sawston and the Hendersons of Fulbourn. It was my family that inspired me to always try and live my dreams. It was my family who offered me the support and guidance required to do exactly what I wanted to do. More specifically, it was my parents who, both physically and emotionally, got me to Heathrow Airport on Wednesday the 4$^{th}$ of February 2004.

While the extensive renovations make it barely recognisable from the house in which my older brother and I both grew up in, they have lived in the same end terrace for approaching 35 years. The extension, built by my father over a period of nearly a decade, effectively transformed it both inside and out. It has also doubled its value. My brother and I used to spend hours in the play room he built for us. Located in the attic, it was accessed via a retractable ladder and a hole in the ceiling of the corridor outside our two equal-sized first-floor bedrooms. The rest of my childhood was spent kicking a football somewhere (anywhere).

My parents have been married for nearly four decades. My father is a maintenance officer at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. A skilled tradesman all his life, he has always been very conservative in his beliefs and a strong advocate of traditional family values. He hates having to be politically correct and refuses to give up his cars or motorbikes in favour of any form of public transport. He spent the majority of my childhood earning the money that allowed us to escape to the French Riviera for at least a week every summer.

For as long as I can remember, my father has been battling Ulcerative Colitis. I have been informed on several occasions that it is not a hereditary disease, but I would be lying if I said that I wasn't convinced that I am either going to get it or already have it. Something is definitely not right inside my body. I'm just too scared to get tested. As a child I was equally terrified of my father. My mother certainly used him as a very effective weapon. It was her method of keeping both my brother and I under control. 'Just you wait until your father finds out' are words that still send a shiver down the spine to this day.

The fact that we never knew exactly when that moment would arrive made it even more daunting. Before being employed by the University of Cambridge, he used to have his own business and would regularly accept work all over the South of England. As a result, we never knew what time he was going to come walking down the garden. I cannot speak for my brother but I certainly spent many a sleepless night pondering my fate and thinking carefully about the possible consequences of my actions. I can recall waiting anxiously for him to get home and trying in vain to listen in as my mother gave him a blow by blow account of all the day's activities. Not that I was in trouble very often. I was a good boy. Well, I was good at getting away with it.

As you'll soon discover, my brother has never been quite as lucky as me. As a living case study, however, he was certainly never boring. Being four years his junior, we were never competing on a level playing field. But that rarely stopped me trying. I soon discovered how far I could push my luck, and his patience. I not only loved being the youngest, but revelled in being able to use it to my advantage, especially during my own eventful adolescence. My brother's misadventures allowed me to take a back seat and (re)assess exactly where he went wrong. I used to note how he got caught, how my parents reacted and how he tried to justify his behaviour/actions. I will never forget the day I found out he was going to be a dad at seventeen. Our mother couldn't stop crying.

I immediately jumped to the wrong conclusion, thinking there had been a serious, if not fatal, accident.

While he was never forced out, my brother decided to move out before his son was born. Admittedly, he only moved a few miles away down the road, and continued to work as my father's apprentice, but things were never the same once he left home. I effectively became an only child for the next couple of years. I would see him once or twice a month, but our relationship was never the same again. It got so much better. We became so much closer. Unfortunately, however, the relative freedom that I had enjoyed up until then was also threatened for several months after the arrival of my first and only nephew. The whole experience provided me with the ultimate lesson in never taking anything for granted, but I always missed having someone to study.

My mother opted to play the loving house-wife for the first ten years of my life, helping with all the administration and paperwork that went with my father's business and making sure that we were all fed, cleaned and clothed appropriately. She only returned to nursing when my brother and I were both at secondary school. She's a lot smaller than my father and also a lot more affectionate. While my brother took after our father, I am most definitely a mummy's boy. Like my father, my brother left school at the earliest possible opportunity. He opted for an apprenticeship, as opposed to further education. What's more, like my father, he has always lived less than an hour's drive away from the house in which we both grew up.

My brother is now happily married with two daughters, a dog and a Volvo estate car. He is going grey and getting more domesticated by the minute. The caravan is surely coming next. While he has repeatedly expressed an interest in packing up and moving out to Australia, it's a move that I just cannot see him making any time in the immediate future. He has his children's future to consider, including the teenage son that he sees every other weekend.

Sawston is a large village roughly five miles south of Cambridge. It's actually closer to Essex, Suffolk and Hertfordshire than it is the famous city, but we have always had a Cambridge Post Code. The local accent, however, is more Eastenders than it is Oxbridge. Much to my father's annoyance, for example, my 'three' sometimes sounds like his 'free'. I am also guilty of occasionally overlooking the 't' in 'water'. I have always, however, drunk my water from a 'gl*arse*' [sic] and not a 'gl*ass*". What's more, while my mother and brother both take 'baffs' [sic], I have always preferred a 'barff' [sic]. My father is the only one of the Wright household to opt for a 'barrth' [sic].

Both my father's parents were born and raised in Cambridge. My grandfather lives in the same semi-detached house that my father and his younger sister spent their entire childhood. My Auntie lives less than ten minutes walk away from my parents. My two cousins both attended the same Sawston primary and secondary schools as myself and my brother. Both married boys from our village. My youngest cousin has just given birth to her first child and now lives on the same street as her parents. Her older sister, who is the same age as myself and currently pregnant with her first child, has at least managed to escape the clutches of Sawston and now works as a secondary school teacher in Suffolk. Her house is about a 45 minute drive from the village. Together, we share the prestigious honour of being the first and only family members to experience both Further and Higher Education.

My mother's family, the Hendersons, may not have originated from Cambridge but have now lived on it's outskirts for approaching half a century. My grandfather is of Scottish decent, but was born and raised in Liverpool. He sounds like Ringo Starr. My grandmother was born in the Welsh Rhonda Valleys but was adopted by her Liverpool-based uncle after my great grandfather was killed in the First World War. My mum and her older brother were both born in Liverpool but moved to Cambridge when they were teenagers. They spent a couple of years living in Northern Rhodesia (and now called Zambia).

My only uncle lived with my grandparents for most of my childhood before he gained custody of his son and was offered a state home in another neighbouring village. He died unexpectedly a couple of years ago, leaving both my grandparents and my only male cousin heartbroken. None of us saw it coming, and they have never really recovered. My cousin has learning disabilities and was subsequently offered a state-funded apartment in Cambridge. He was recently branded unemployable by the local authority and is living off a mixture of welfare and his inheritance. He is a year older than me, but you would never know it by looking at him. The two of us spent a lot of time together as a result of all the weekends that I had at my grandparents. I have always thought of him as the younger brother that I always wanted. I have also always tried to look out for him.

My family may all live in close proximity to each other but we are not particularly close-knit. We have always abided by the 'no news is good news' mantra. I have adopted the same stance in my teaching. I have always assumed that my students know what they're supposed to be doing. I assume that they are doing it to the best of their

ability. I will not chase after them. I will not check up on them. I will merely inform them that I am always willing to help (if required). My parents have also been happy to let me dictate how often we communicate. It is usually once a month, depending on when and where the F1 races are scheduled.

To date, the vast majority of autoethnographers have opted to use their own traumatic and tragic lived experiences as the basis of their stories[57]. This is not, however, the path that I have specifically set out to follow. While there are highs and lows in everyone's life, I have drawn psychological strength, not too mention sociological inspiration, from Carolyn Ellis' more recent acknowledgement that personal narratives do not have to be constructed around loss, weakness or failure[58]. On the contrary, they can also be about survival, strength and success. I am not afraid to reveal the negatives encounter along the way, but I am equally determined to base this story around the many positives that I believe can be extracted from my past lived experiences.

I want to focus on the things that I have learned along the way. I want to focus on the things that have not only made me who I am, but have also led me to this particular place in space and time. I am not going to try and tug at your heartstrings. I am merely trying to produce something which comes directly from the one organ that drives us all. I am trying to incorporate the passion and emotion that I think is often missing from the professional narratives that we write. I want to celebrate the special interest that not only influences, but also inspires special interest tourism.

[57] See **Carolyn Ellis (1997)** 'Evocative Autoethnography: Writing Emotionally about Our Lives', in William Tierney and Yvonne Lincoln (Eds.) *Representation and the Text* (pp. 115-139) (New York: State University of New York Press).

[58] See **Carolyn Ellis (2009)** *Revision: autoethnographic reflections on life and work* (Walnut Creek, CA; Altimira).

# Chapter 4: (Re)introducing me, my-self and I

The initial decision to try and embrace reflexivity within my sports-related research was first inspired by the public calls for more tourism-inspired personal narratives[59]. It was also built around my desire to use the experiences of others to help me locate and extract my own position within my special interest, sports-related, tourism research. According to William Feighary, for example, "Reflexivity can be regarded as the act of making oneself the object of one's own observation, in an attempt to bring to the fore the assumptions embedded in one's perspectives and descriptions of the world"[60]. He also added that the term can be use to describe "the capacity of researchers to reflect upon their actions and values during research, whether in producing data or writing accounts"[61]. By the time that I had consumed the thoughts of several other reflexivity advocates, I was desperate to try and blur the traditional relationship that exists between the researcher/author and the researched/reader[62]. I was also able to appreciate what

[59] Michael Hall's observation that "modern societies have reached a position where not only are they forced to reflect on themselves but also they have the capability of reflecting back on themselves" provided me with one of those rare 'stop and think' moments that arguably provided the initial foundations for everything that has subsequently occurred in my academic life. Likewise, William Feighery not only helped me to contextual my personal curiosity, but also gave me the confidence to both re-assess and re-interpret the manner in which I wanted to tell my story. He was amongst the first academic I had discovered who was willing to acknowledge that they played a part in their research, noting how the study of tourism"encompasses the full spectrum of human existence. Therefore, for the field to fully realise its potential to aid our understandings of the ubiquitous global phenomenon of tourism, scholars working within qualitative paradigms will increasingly be confronted with the challenge of whether to, and how to, situate themselves in their texts". In **C. Michael Hall (2004)** 'Reflexivity and tourism research: Situating myself and/with others', in Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies* (pp. 137-154) (London: Routledge) (p. 137); In **William Feighery (2006)** Reflexivity and Tourism Research: Telling An (Other) Story, *Current Issues in Tourism* 9 (3), pp. 269-282 (p. 270).

[60] In **William Feighery (2006)** Reflexivity and Tourism Research: Telling An (Other) Story, *Current Issues in Tourism* 9 (3), pp. 269-282 (p. 270).

[61] In Ibid (p. 271).

[62] Sherry Dupius revealed her unease at hiding herself away from her leisure-based research and argued that "including the self more fully in our research endeavors and discussions about the location of the self in our reports is essential for contextualizing and grounding our understandings… and is critical if we are to present more faithful and less distorted accounts of the lives and experiences of those we study". She highlighted how those operating outside of her own subject area had helped her to see that, whilst we will always be able to omit ourselves from our research, we can never be completely removed from it. Her findings, however, still led her to conclude that "a more complete sense of the human self behind the researcher" is still missing from the vast majority of academic discourse. John Roberts and Teela Sanders support this, noting how most ethnographers fail to acknowledge the personal dilemmas and dramas that have almost certainly arisen at some point during their research journey. In **Sherry L. Dupuis (1999)** Naked truths: Towards a reflexive methodology in leisure research, *Leisure Sciences* 21, pp. 43-64 (p. 49);

Lauren Richardson meant when she said that it would be hard to I know what to exclude from the story[63].

Having introduced my family in the last chapter, I would now like to present the social identity that, until now, had been safely hidden from my friends in the academy. Whether it represents a good or bad idea for the future, however, remains to be seen. I've considered cutting this entire chapter on many occasions. I just can't bring myself to hit the delete button. Ultimately, the character I am about to introduce is as much a part of me - my past, present and future - as the individual seen in the England Rugby shirt at the start. And, as a result, I can't possible tell this story without him. His tale needs to be told. And I will just have to live with the consequences of my actions.

My name might be Richard Keith Wright but many of my best friends call me Pilch. In fact, I have been called 'Pilchard' or 'Pilch' for nearly two decades. It's an identity, or part of my life, that I spent the majority of my childhood developing, my adolescence defending, and subsequently most of my adult life trying to distance myself from. It has nothing to do with fish. The name was actually created by mixing the term 'Pillock' (a term affectionately aimed in my direction a lot by my father) and Richard (a name that I have always felt was too 'grown up' for any child to possess). While I was instrumental in shortening it to Pilch, my brother and next-door neighbour deserve the accolades for putting Pillock and Richard together to create 'Pilchard'. And, at the time, I absolutely hated them for doing so.

I hated it. But that was, of course, largely the point. They knew that I wanted to be called Rick, Ricky or even Tricky Dicky. Once they became convinced of my apparent disliking to the term, however, they set about sharing their new idea with as many people as possible. I was powerless to stop them. It spread around my primary

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in **John M. Roberts and Teela Sanders (2005)** Before, during and after: realism, reflexivity and ethnography, *The Sociological Review* 53 (2), pp. 295-313 (p. 295). For further debate, see **Steve Woolgar (1988)** *Knowledge and Reflexivity: New Frontiers in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Sage); **Kenneth Gergen and Margaret Gergen (1991)** 'Toward reflexive methodologies', in Frederick Steier (Ed.) *Research and Reflexivity* (pp. 76-95) (California: Sage); **Douglas Foley (1998)** 'On Writing Reflexive Realist Narratives', in Geoffrey Shacklock and John Smyth (Eds.) *Being Reflexive in Critical Educational and Social Research* (pp. 110-129) (London: Falmer Press); **Douglas Macbeth (2001)** On 'reflexivity' in qualitative research: Two readings, and a third, *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 (1), pp. 35–68; **Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet (2003)** Reflexive Accounts and Accounts of Reflexivity in Qualitative Data Analysis, *Sociology* 37 (3), pp. 413-431.

[63] Laurel Richardson has been a key player and one of the most influential characters in my initial adoption of a personal narrative-based pathway I was not only captivated by her views on the literary turn, but also her opinions on the adoption of alternative (poststructuralist) thought. What's more, with regards to reflexivity, she claimed to "believe, it will help us shape "better" ethnographies and better lives for ourselves and those who teach us about their lives". In **Laurel Richardson (1997)** *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press). (p. 107).

school like wild-fire. I despised the amount of pleasure that it appeared to bring to all those who chose to accept it, especially my friends. They were supposed to be on my side.

As far as I could see I had three options. I could find some new friends to play football with in the playground. I could try and convince them that I loved it in the hope that it would be forgotten when we all moved across the village (from primary) to secondary school. Alternately, I could try and use all my new found attention to my competitive advantage. I could start to answer back. I could become 'the boy called Pilchard'. Looking back, it was a decision that would go on to shape my entire childhood. It was certainly the biggest decision I had ever made at the time. After giving up on the first two scenarios, I decided to embrace this new social identity. I had after all always wanted an alter ego. What child doesn't dream of being someone else?

Initially, and having come to the conclusion that there were a lot worse things that a skinny ginger kid with freckles could be called, I tried to convince people it emerged from my passion for swimming. I soon, however, started to enjoy adding fuel to the fire that engulfed Pilchard's sudden arrival onto the scene. The move from a small primary school to a much larger secondary school meant that there were a lot more people to play with in the playground. I kept the real reason as close to my chest as possible. Fortunately, my brother and neighbour lost interest the minute I started enjoying all the attention. The more people asked, the more swore never to reveal the truth. I loved the mystery that surrounded it. It made my life seem more exciting, or at least less average. People appeared desperate to know the secret.

Arguably, one of my best decisions came on the 16th of May 1990. From that moment on, I began to embrace the shortened version that people had started to use, especially on the football field. Pilchard became 'Pilch'. And a new, improved, alter ego was born. My mum became 'Mrs Pilch' and my grandfather - who many of my friends had met more times than my father - went from being an OAP to an 'OMP' ('Old Man Pilch').

My parents were soon used to people coming round (or phoning) and asking for 'Pilch'. Most of my friends were surprised to discover the fact that everyone in my family still called me Richard. Thankfully, this just added to their curiosity and desire to find out more about it's origins. Many had simply assumed that it must have been a family-inspired nickname. By sixth form, even my tutors were using it. 'Pilch' had effectively become a valuable commodity. Some called me 'The' or 'Mr' Pilch, which I

admittedly tried to encourage at the time. One opted for 'Pilchardo', which was not my personal favourite, and several of my girlfriends called me 'Pilchy', which I always hated.

The many public faces of Pilch became a watertight protective blanket that allowed the more philosophical 'Richard Keith Wright' to comfortably remove himself from the scene. Perhaps a bullet-proof vest metaphor is more accurate. I was always content to pull away at the strings from behind the curtain (i.e. out of sight). Becoming 'Pilch', however, offered me the perfect smokescreen (or camouflage) during my teenage years. It allowed me to forget the irrational insecurities and chronic self doubt that still boil away below the surface. Furthermore, the strategic maintenance of this confident, outgoing, social identity undoubtedly played a significant part in the sustained protection of my 'other' everyday self. As Pilch, I had all the confidence in the world. I could self indulge as much as I liked. I often found myself revelling in all the attention.

In hindsight, only my desire to make my family proud helped to ensure I never did anything too damaging, dangerous or destructive. Several half-hearted attempts were made to create some distance between 'Richard' (the eighteen-year old undergraduate and part-time Catering Assistant) and Pilch (the care-free, socialising student). None of which were successful. Only my relocation to New Zealand has allowed me to fully separate the two identities on a more permanent basis. That said, my most recent visit 'home' only reconfirmed my suspicions that there remains a loyal band of 'Pilch' supporters spread across the entire UK.

Though he is far from deceased, my days of being Pilch are now largely restricted to the occasional comment on Facebook. Public appearances are even less common. I'm not saying I've outgrown him, but I'm no longer reluctant to introduce myself by the name I was given at birth. I think Richard is a lot more suitable for a lecturer, than it was for an image conscious eleven year old. Ultimately, the 'happy-go-lucky' persona I first began creating in my bedroom on May the 16$^{th}$ 1990 is never too far away from the surface.

Looking back I have to admit I am scared by the number of times I pushed my luck to the limit. The drink, drugs and shoplifting are things that not only make me cringe, they leave me feeling physically sick inside. I can't escape the guilt of my past wrongdoings and still get an uncomfortable lump in the throat when I sit and think back about how my life could have easily ended up different. That said, I actually harbour few regrets. On the contrary, I would prefer to think of these incidents as being character building. Rather than wish (or pretend) that they never took place, I would much prefer

to believe that each and every one has inevitably helped me become the person I will happily check out in the mirror this evening.

While I have spent a lot of time looking back and trying to learn from Pilch's past mistakes, I have spent just as much time thinking about all the occasions when I was able to be Richard. Most of these memories involve me being around my family (and on holiday). Our vacations were arguably the only time that my brother and I really got to see the less intimidating side of my father. Like me, he became a completely different person every time we crossed the English Channel. He became a lot funnier (and a lot less frightening). Pilch was always left behind in Sawston. I can close my eyes and picture us playing together on the beaches of Romney Sands, Kent (when I can only have been five or six). Within an instance, I can picture us Ferrari spotting in Monte-Carlo (where I know for a fact that I had just turned nine). We holidayed on the Cote d' Azur for eight consecutive years between 1987 and 1993, before trying the Costa del Sol in 1994 an 1995, and returning to France again in 1996 and 1997 (the latter of which was my last summer holiday with my parents).

I loved the numerous day excursions and eventful adventures we would have whilst away from home. And, as much as we used to antagonise each other, I even loved spending some quality time with my brother. I certainly don't think I was the only person making the most of being away and acting differently. His last holiday with the three of usmy mum was in the summer 1993. It was never the same without him. I know my parents tried to compensate by going to different places, but it just never felt right sitting alone in the back of the car or having a room all to myself. It certainly made me sit up and open my eyes to a great number of things, including the value of having a loving family behind you.

Apart from my family holidays, the only other social activity that was far too powerful for even Pilch to monopolise was watching Cambridge United (both home and away). I've never once felt the need to hide myself or my emotions at the Abbey. As a proud member of the Junior U's (between the ages of 10 and 15), I was only ever known as Richard. Officially, it was a supporter's team that we all knew any child could join. Unofficially, we were by far the coolest kids in the Abbey Stadium on a match day, and we all took our duties very seriously. We saw ourselves as important representees of Cambridge United Football Club. If Cambridge were playing Colchester, for example, we would go and play against a Colchester side in the morning. Likewise, if our team went to Swansea, we needed to be in Swansea.

Playing for the Junior U's, I was often watched (or even officiated) by players, coaches and other VIP members of the club I adored (and dreamed of playing for the second I turned 16). Best of all, I was the only member of the team from Sawston. For the five years I was a member, I got to travel the country playing and watching the sport I loved more than anything. I regularly got to meet my heroes and go behind the scenes at the Abbey Stadium. I even got to play a couple of games on the hallowed turf. Whilst I never got the call from the Manager I so desperately wanted, I did get to play alongside a couple of people who made the transition from Junior onto Apprentice, and subsequently on to Professional.

From 1989 to 2003, my social life was dominated by my fanaticism for all things CUFC. As an adult, I could be found singing and shouting alongside my friends on the Newmarket Road Terraces. As a child and early teenager, I could be found sitting next to my grandfather at the back of the Mainstand (Block C, Row 27, No. 19). We didn't miss a game for five consecutive seasons between 1993 and 1998. Before that we spent a couple of seasons sitting beside the touchline with the other Junior Us'. The 1989/90 season, however, saw us moving from block to block, looking for the best vantage point for a small child and his equally short grandfather.

My first season ticket arrived in time for the following season. By the time I turned 18, and headed away to university, I had made the highly anticipated rite of passage from the top of the Mainstand onto the terraces. My grandfather, grandmother and mother, however, continued to occupy the same seats in my absence. They had them now for over fifteen years. What's more, I think they've just purchased their season-tickets for the 2009/2010 season.

My own CUFC fanaticism and Junior Us' membership offered me the same release from everyday reality as my annual holidays away with my parents. Whilst one offered only the briefest of escapes, the other was able to offer me so much more. Overall, I had a fantastic childhood and some great adventures as both Pilch and Richard. Many of the 'new' identities that I've either established or maintained since my move to New Zealand have definitely incorporated a little bit of Pilch into the mix, especially on a Saturday night during the varsity football season. My parents offered me a lot of freedom and generally left me to my own devices. They usually had their hands full dealing with my brother.

My mum loves telling people how, before I became Pilch, my school teachers used to think I was shy and introverted. In reality, she has always argued I simply used to

prefer “staying under the radar” until I had “weighed up all the potential outcomes”. As highlighted in the previous chapter, I have never tried to hide (or been ashamed of) the fact that I have always been a ‘mummy’s boy’. And, while I’m no Sigmund Freud, I think this was certainly affected by the fact that I was the younger of my parent’s two male siblings. Though my brother and father have both admitted they were not entirely sure about my sexuality, I have certainly never suffered any confusion or doubt.

The men that covered my bedroom walls when I was growing up were all sporting heroes who I aspired to be like. Most were footballers. Ironically, it is my mother that has always shared my love of football. My dad and brother have never shown any interest. It was my mother who used to travel to football games as a teenager, and, in terms of shaping who I am today, it was my mother who actively encouraged my fanatical obsession for Cambridge United.

# Chapter 5: Smarter than the average bear

Dahna Oyserman regards the self to be a cognitive construction, containing an ever-changing collection of content, largely fashioned during salient occasions of social interaction, and experiences as a group member[64]. My PhD won't change our world. It will not win me "the Nobel Peace Prize"[65]. It should, however, cause you to stop and think about yourself for a second. It should make you think about our world, and our current place within it. It should make you think about the groups to which you currently belong, as well as those that you either used to belong or are hoping to join in the future. I fail to see the point in dedicating so much energy and enthusiasm on something that is destined to merely collect dust in an academic library. It is crucial that the reader (you) can fully relate to the author (me).

According to Leigh Berger and Carolyn Ellis, "it is the job of readers to determine if they think the story is honest and if it rings true to their experiences. The whole idea of an autoethnography is to show readers ways they are similar to and different from others in the world"[66]. I wanted Act One to give you a taste of what is still to come. As a result, I have gone back and started from the beginning. I have shut my eyes, opened my heart and let my subjectivity fill the pages of my thesis. I hoped to get you thinking about your family. I have revealed secrets and shared memories that I had previously kept hidden. You may well question their direct relevance to the academy? You may well be asking yourself 'so what?', or 'so where is he going with this?'. I would be worried if there were no thoughts running through your head.

I hope to get you thinking about what your friends called you at school. I want you thinking about the influence that your family has had on your life, especially your choice of profession. Did you know someone like me? Was it you? What was your

[64] Dahna Oyserman suggests that the links between our self and our social identities are beyond question. The self is merely another socially constructed phenomenon that enables us to distinguish similarities and identify difference(s). See **Dahna Oyserman (2004)** 'Self-concept and Identity' in Marilynn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and Social Identity* (Oxon: Willey-Blackwell) (pp. 5-25).

[65] See **Gerry Mullins and Margaret Kiley (2002**) "It's a PhD, not a Nobel Prize" how experienced examiners assess research theses, *Studies in Higher Education* 27 (4), pp. 269-386.

[66] In **Leigh Berger and Carolyn Ellis (2007)** 'Composing Autoethnographic Stories', in Michael V. Angrosino (Ed.) *Doing Cultural Anthropology: Projects in Ethnographic Data Collection*, 2nd Edition, (pp.161-176) (Long Grove, Il: Waveland Press.) (p. 163).

escape mechanism? What was your way of dealing with, or perhaps even hiding from, all the realities that accompany the progression from toddler to teenager? What did you want to be when you grew up? My earliest ambition was to be an Olympic swimmer. This dream, however, was willingly sacrificed around the time that I started going to watch Cambridge United Football Club (CUFC). Come to think of it, a lot of my major 'milestones' occurred in 1989. It was also the same year that I first became Pilchard. It was also the year that I first fell in love with Formula One. It was the same year as the Hillsborough Tragedy in Sheffield.

The Hillsborough disaster occurred the weekend before my first visit to the Abbey Stadium. My father had thought that it might put me off. He was wrong. If anything, the tragic events only strengthened my desire and determination to experience/embrace live football. I cannot tell you who Cambridge United played that fateful weekend. I didn't support them back then. I supported Liverpool. I remember crying myself to sleep that night. It did not, however, stop me wanting to watch the replay several days later. Liverpool won 3-1.

In 1989, the days were never long enough to allow me to do everything I wanted, especially with school continually getting in my way. I was never going to make it as a professional in any of the sports I adored playing. I was never anywhere near good enough. More significantly, I was never sufficiently committed enough to dedicate the hours of repetitive practice required to make me good enough. It was always just a dream. Playing and watching sport allowed me to temporarily forget about the less exotic realities of my everyday life. Likewise, escaping the country on holiday was always another highly anticipated childhood activity.

It wasn't until the age of fifteen that my casual approach to my 'real' life finally caught up with me. Suddenly, a whole host of potential life-changing decisions needed making. Suddenly, I was forced to think about something other than the next football match. Suddenly, I was made only too aware of the fact that I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do once I left school. Suddenly, I had to sit down and think seriously about the (my) future. Suddenly people, my parents and grandparents included, wanted answers to questions that I had never even thought about asking. I didn't know what I wanted to be.

It was bad enough that I would have to leave the Junior Us at the end of the 1995/96 season. The last thing that I wanted to think about was leaving school. I wanted to be a Cambridge United football player. Failing that, I dreamt of being a rock star, actor

or stand-up comedian. I wanted to be rich, famous and able to retire as early as possible. Working seemed like a lot of hard work. My parents rarely had anything positive to say about it. Unfortunately, I knew that I was incapable of ever sitting down long enough to successfully master a musical instrument, or learn the lines to any form of stage production or comedy show. I am also tone deaf.

According to my uninspiring guidance councillor, I appeared to be facing a much bigger challenge than I had ever imagined. I always thought that I had the ability to be anything I wanted. The teacher, Miss Bell, appeared a lot less convinced. Being a sports physiotherapist was one of my first ideas. This was quickly curtailed, however, by the realisation that it would involve studying medicine for five years at University. It wouls also involve me passing science. I had no intention of ever going to 'Uni'. I had no interest in passing science. The thought had never crossed my mind. I had yet to meet anyone who had actually been to university, was at university, or ever wanted to attend university.

My subsequent desire to be a sports journalist, allowing me to be paid to follow Cambridge United, was also casually dismissed by my less than sympathetic English teacher. I swear that he actually gained pleasure from telling me that I would also require a university degree to achieve such a goal. He made no attempt to hide the fact that he thought that I would be lucky to be accepted into sixth form, let alone on to university. He wasn't alone. Collectively, my teacher's appear to have thought that I would struggle to leave Sawston Village College (SVC) with anything better than a few average GCSE grades to show for my five average years at their better than average educational institution.

Looking back, and having recently reviewed some of my old school reports, the majority of them had clearly made up their mind when it came to how well, or should I say badly, I was going to do in my final examinations. To them, I must have seemed like any other average school boy. To me, it suddenly all became crystal clear. It was official. According to my teachers, all that I had to look forward to was some average grades, which would inevitably lead to an average job, paying an average wage that with any luck would allow me to take my average family on an average holiday in our equally average car. My teachers, of course, were perfectly entitled to come up with the conclusions they created. My academic performance up to that point was indeed, for want of a better word, average. Being made fully aware of your personal failings, however, is never a pleasant experience.

Unlike my brother, I actually enjoyed going to school. Admittedly, the highlight of the day was usually the break time football, but I also loved learning new facts and figures. I adored the element of competition that came with testing myself against others. I always tried to beat my friends, especially in the subjects that I enjoyed. My biggest problem was trying to sit still or work on anything by myself. I hated the sound of silence. I still do. I hated having to sit and listen to other people, without being allowed to ask questions and contribute to the discussion. I'm not claiming to have suffered from Attention Deficit Disorder. I don't think that it officially existed at that time. I have, however, always been easily distracted. I have always liked asking questions, regardless of whether they are appropriate or not. My mind is always in hyper-drive. It loves to go a wondering. It loves to wander.

I have always felt the need to share my thoughts with those around me in a more visual or verbal manner, as oppose to writing things down. I often speak before spoken to and am guilty of saying things without thoroughly thinking them, or the likely consequence of my actions, through beforehand. The fact that we all played football during our break times meant that we needed the class time to discuss the plans for after school. The football field is not the right time for such behaviour. The fact that I was asked to go and stand outside a lot, however, suggests that the classrooms were also not deemed to be the best place for such conversations.

My strongest subjects were somewhat predictably the ones where I got on well with my teacher. I loved geography, history and physical education. Unfortunately, my average performance up to that point had subsequently resulted in some average predictions when it came to my final exams. My 'mock' exams hadn't been kind to me. The implications, however, appeared to seriously hamper any hope that I had of continuing to learn about any of my favourite subjects. I cannot recall why I did so badly. I can, however, remember that Cambridge United got relegated for the second time in three years on the last day of the 1994/95 season and that I cried the whole way home from our away match against West Ham. I can also tell you that it was the first, and perhaps only, time five clubs had been relegated from one of the top four English leagues. We finished 5$^{th}$ from bottom and only two points from safety.

My father was quick to blame the amount of time that I spent playing, watching, listening to and talking about football. He often described the game as being a "pointless" activity played only by 'Pillocks'. My mother, however, was as philosophical as ever. She knew how important my football was to me, but made no attempt to hide the

disappointment that lay behind her eyes. I could feel her frustration. She knew that I was capable of doing better. Rather than threaten to take my football away, however, she pointed out that I would have to start paying for it myself if I was no longer a student. She also noted out how many parties I was likely to miss if I had to go to work the next morning.

I promised to do anything I could. I admitted that, up to that point, I had always focused on enjoying each day as it arrived. The future always seemed too far away to concern myself with. One of the biggest surprises of the time was the amount of thought and consideration that my friends had clearly put into where there immediate future lay. We only ever spoke about sport, music, television and our growing admiration of the opposite sex. I had never given any consideration to what they wanted to do in life, or what they talked about at home with their parents.

After attending the open days offered by the three local sixth form colleges, I was instantly attracted to the Advanced General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in Leisure and Tourism. It was a subject that I had never heard of before. It certainly wasn't taught at SVC. My initial curiosity only turned to attraction, however, when I was introduced to the two girls sitting behind the relevant desk at Long Road Sixth Form College. Their names were Wendy and Rebecca. They were both gorgeous. They were clearly in love with their course. They also appeared to love their college. Needless-to-say they did a great job persuading me that I wanted to join them the following September.

I had always been intrigued by the strange behaviour of the tourists seen walking around the streets of Cambridge every year. I had watched in amazement as they queued for hours just to look inside Kings College Chapel. I couldn't believe that Wendy had called 'tourism' the world's largest industry. I had only ever heard my father blaming the tourists for everything that was wrong with our beautiful city. Not only did they always get in his way, but he was also paying to clear up their mess. He looked equally surprised when Rebecca agreed with Wendy's estimation as to roughly how much tourism was worth to the local economy. He looked sceptical when Rebecca added that Cambridge was visited by around three million 'tourists' every year.

I loved idea of studying 'leisure' a lot more than I did the thought of studying an A Level in Geography or History. By the end of the Open Day, I felt like it wouldn't take much for me to become an expert in the subject of tourism management. In fact, I wanted to start my learning right there and then. I didn't want to go back to SVC the following

day. Secondary school suddenly seemed completely inadequate. I suddenly knew what I wanted to do when I grew up. I wanted to manage the leisure and tourism facilities in my city. I quickly realised that this would no doubt involve some close liaison with the city's only professional football club.

Before reaching the car park I had already promised anyone within earshot that I would get myself a place on that course. I looked my father in the eyes and promised that I would knuckle down and do anything it took. I turned to my mother and swore on my season-ticket's life that I would study harder than ever before. I effectively had five months to ensure that I achieved the first phase in my new master plan. Lying in bed that night, I couldn't imagine anything more perfect. I started to imagine what life would be like as a Long Road student. I wondered how many of my friends would have seen the course and how many others would be lying in bed thinking the exact same thoughts. I knew where I wanted to go. What I didn't know, however, was whether I was clever enough to actually get there. I hadn't even considered an alternative.

Up to the open day, I had only cared about following my friends into which ever Sixth Form they entered. Fortunately, on returning to school the following day, my friends had also been convinced that their next two years needed to be spent at Long Road. Unlike me, however, they had all found a selection of A Levels that they wanted to study. Subjects such as English, Geography, History and Music were all mentioned, along with Politics, Business and Media Studies. They planned to party for two years before studying hard at the end for the all-or-nothing final examinations.

None of my friends had seen me at the open day. Many hadn't even entered the building where Wendy and Rebecca had been sitting. A couple of them suggested that I may have been making the whole thing up. One was convinced that I had spent my evening in front of the TV. The other questioned why I had bothered going along to the Long Road open day, joking that they "didn't let dummies [like me] in". As harmless as his comment may have been, he clearly had a point. I knew that I had a number of mountains to climb. First, I had to somehow convince them to interview me.

The course's minimum entrance requirement was five A-C grades. Rebecca, however, had suggested that I may need six or seven to be certain of a place. The letter that I had recently received in the post predicted that the best that I could hope for would be four C's, a lot of D's and a couple of E's. It was nowhere near good enough. I spent several days trying to convince my teachers that they were being unreasonable and should to change their predictions. I started by asking those that I liked, regardless of the

predicted grade they had already awarded me. By the end of the week I was begging those who I hated. I appealed for forgiveness. I pleaded for sympathy. I pleaded for mercy. I no longer cared about the potential damage I was doing to Pilch's hard-earned reputation. I just wanted their help.

As much as I hated coming across so desperate, and as much as I hated the 'I told you so' look on a couple of my teacher's faces, I knew that I had nothing to lose. 'They were *only* predictions', I kept saying to those I approached. I didn't think it was fair that their 'guess' could potentially doom me to decades of average mediocrity. I even sacrificed my lunch time football in an attempt to prove my commitment. I can still recall the look on the face of my Chemistry teacher, Mrs Holt, when she promised to change my D and E grades to a couple of Cs. On stressing the major difference that this would have on my future, she even said that she'd go and do it straight away.

I didn't care when she did it. I just wanted to kiss her. Out of all the subjects, this was the one that I knew I would struggle to improve. I actually thought that they were right to predict me those grades. I hated Science. I especially hated Chemistry. I hadn't understood a thing that we had covered all year. I had no idea how I had made the water in the test tube change colour, or why we had been made to do it in the first place. I did, however, walk home a very happy boy that afternoon. I replayed the entire day in my head. I'd answered questions left, right and centre, regardless of whether I knew the correct answer or not. I knew that I had a bit of explaining to do to my friends the next day. They were almost certain to enquire where I was at lunchtime, and why I was acting so weird in class.

I headed into Cambridge earlier than usual the weekend before my highly anticipated Long Road interview. I wanted a new shirt for the occasion. I even bought a tie. The shirt was a dark red/maroon colour. The tie was navy and matched the colour of the suit that I had bought the previous weekend. It came from the recently opened *Disney Store* and had small pictures of the Tasmanian Devil on it. The tie, that is, not the suit. The suit came from Moss Bros. It was my first ever suit. It may not have made the trip to New Zealand, but I still have the shirt and the tie in my wardrobe. Cambridge played Torquay that afternoon, and I needed to get myself to the ground early enough to meet my grandfather. He always kept hold of my season ticket. We lost 2-1. I remember thinking that it could have been a bad omen as we trudged back to the car. We were winning at half time.

# Chapter 6: Becoming self-disciplined

I'd never been so nervous about something non football-related. I spent hours in front of the mirror that week. I carefully rehearsed everything that I wanted to say. This was unchartered territory. I needed to ensure that I left a lasting impression. I wanted to offer them something different. I wanted to change the assessment criteria on which I was expecting to be judged. 'Just wait till they here all my tourism-related stories', I said as I left my mother in the car park. She couldn't believe how relaxed I appeared.

I was back by her side in less than half an hour. The interview itself lasted ten minutes. It was certainly unforgettable. It was certainly character building. You could say that it was another one of those milestone moments that have made me who I am today. Personally, I have always regarded it as one of the worst experiences of my life. In hindsight, however, I may need to re-evaluate that thought. I certainly entered the room with a spring in my step and a beaming, confident, smile on my face. The smile was maintained throughout. Its authenticity, however, lasted only a few seconds. There was soon nothing natural about it at all.

I had no idea how else to react. I didn't want them to see the pain they had just inflicted. I opted to simply clench my teeth and smile. Within less than sixty seconds, I found myself looking up at the clock and counting down the seconds until they would let stand up and me leave. Apparently, according the pieces of paper that they had in front of them, I didn't appear to have the necessary predicted grades to warrant a place on their provisional list. Denial came first. I simply refused to believe what I had just heard. It couldn't be true. This couldn't be happening.

Anger came next. 'She said she would sort it straight away!', Pilch thought as I tried hard to maintain my smile. 'Those were definitely the exact words she said', Pilch continued as I replayed us walking out of the Chemistry classroom together. Looking at my predicted grades, my three interviewers asked how I thought that I would cope with the increased work load and pressure of their Advanced GNVQ. They reminded me on three separate occasions that it was the equivalent of three and a half A Levels and that it shouldn't be seen as an easy alternative option. I think that they thought they were doing me a favour by trying to warn me off. Surprisingly, they raised the subject of the similar,

yet much less intensive, two-year Intermediate Leisure and Tourism GNVQ being offered at Cambridge Regional College (CRC). We called it Cambridge Reject College.

My anger soon turned to shame. I was actually ashamed to be on the premises, let alone in the same room as them. Next came guilt. I felt guilty for wasting their time and taking up a valuable time slot on their busy interview schedule. I had gone in there wanting to leave a lasting impression. I wanted them to know how badly I needed this chance to prove myself. I explained how I had done my homework and knew all there was to know about the course. I explained how I knew that it was going to be challenging, but stressed my belief that Sixth Form and further education was all about challenging yourself and discovering your potential. I emphasised the fact that if I could get the entrée grades required then I should have no problem coping with whatever they decide to throw at me.

I could feel the sweat building under my collar and beneath each arm. Why was my new tie trying to strangle me? Pilch wanted to rip it off there and then. It had also got a lot warmer in the room. I needed water. I needed some fresh air. Pilch wanted one of the Benson and Hedges sitting in the yet-to-be-opened packet that was located in his jacket pocket. Why were they prolonging the torture? Why were they tormenting me with tales of how great their two-year course was? 'Just don't let the bastards break you!', thought Pilch as I saw that my time was very nearly up. It had felt like an hour had passed already. My self confidence had been well and truly trampled and I was relieved that I didn't have to go back to school that afternoon.

Even my well-rehearsed speech about my various family holidays in France hadn't reduced my craving to dig a big hole to either escape through or curl up and hide within. When added to my pre-rehearsed stories of watching Cambridge United, my memories of trips to St Tropez did, however, prove enough to see me through to the point where my interviewers finally stood up and thanked me for coming along and showing so much interest and enthusiasm for their course. "I hope to see you again in September!", I said with all the conviction that I could muster as I walked out of the classroom. I wanted them to know that they hadn't beaten me and that, despite their obvious reservations, I hadn't given up on my dream just yet. I wanted them to know that, despite everything, I still believed that I fully deserved a place at this college.

I'll never know the reaction that my parting shot received, however, as I couldn't bring myself to turn around and find out. Having reached the door, I simply wanted to get out of their as fast as physically possible. I also purposely avoided eye contact with

the two girls waiting nervously for their turn in the dragons den. I just wanted to get back to the car. I refused to accept that I was destined for CRC or the average life that it would probably lead to. I just wanted to go home to bed, and was crying by the time I put my seatbelt on. I couldn't look my mother in the eye. I felt completely useless.

I never uttered a single word during the ten minute drive back to Sawston. I just sat in silence and listened to the advice and re-assuring thoughts coming from my chauffeur. She kept repeating that it "couldn't have been that bad". She told me to "look for positives", and more importantly "learn from the experience". 'They had never said I had no chance', I thought to myself as I replayed edited highlights. They had simply told me what they expected. In doing so, they had effectively just raised the bar and set me an even bigger challenge. Meeting the minimum grade requirement and sneaking in through the back-door was clearly no longer an option. I knew that I would have to make it impossible for them to turn me down.

I somehow managed to convince myself that my interviewers' were only testing to see if I could handle the pressure. Likewise, I assured myself that they must have wanted me to go and prove them all wrong. They hadn't shut the door completely. They must have seen some potential. 'Why else would they have invited me along', I said to myself as we pulled into the gravel drive in front of our house. I was certainly feeling a lot better by the time I got out of the car. Rather than face my father's questions, however, I opted to head straight past the television and upstairs into my room. I wanted to draw up an action plan as soon as possible. I was still angry. I was still ashamed. I still felt as though I had been humiliated.

'Why hadn't I seen it coming earlier?', I thought as I began to construct a suitable story to tell my friends in the playground the following day. As much as I wanted someone else to blame, I knew that blaming others wasn't going to achieve anything. I knew what needed to be done. I knew that my interviewers had placed the ball back on my side of court. I was desperate to prove them wrong. I wanted to prove that I was better than average. I wanted to show my parents that I could achieve the goals that I had set myself. I wanted to make my entire family proud. I promised to dedicate even more time to study. I even swore that I would start taking my revision notes on the away trips that I simply couldn't miss.

There were only a handful of home games left so I felt that it would be necessary to stop my fortnightly pilgrimages to the Abbey. I managed to convince myself that it could prove counter-productive to miss the homes games that had already been paid for

via my season ticket. I explained to my father that I would only sit at home listening to the commentary on the radio and almost certainly wouldn't be able to concentrate on anything else, let alone revision. Thankfully, my decision to sacrifice the final two away games of the season was also made a lot easier by the fact that we had recently dropped into mid-table obscurity. We had lost our last eleven games. I would never have missed these matches had Cambridge still been fighting for promotion.

I dedicated every spare second to my revision. I bought several study guides and gave special attention to those I either hated or failed to understand, particularly Chemistry. I did, however, continue to turn down the chance to study with others. I didn't mind people knowing that I was studying, but I was still very conscious of the fact that I didn't want to be seen as a 'swot'. I tried hard to prevent anyone from knowing how much effort was being put in behind closed doors. This included my parents. It wasn't just to save reputation. This was all about salvaging some pride should it all prove to be a total waste of time. I didn't want anyone to know how hard I was trying. I didn't want them knowing that I had started to smoke a lot more in an attempt to relax my ever-growing nerves. I definitely didn't want them worrying about all the sleepless nights it was beginning to cause. There were voices in my head telling me to accept the fact that I could well be one of the smartest kids at CRC. There were voices that told me to go outside and have a kick-about with my friends.

Thankfully I found the exams a lot easier than the revision. Some had seemed a little too straightforward. I had finished a couple of them with over an hour to spare at the end. That said, I was refusing to get my hopes up. I had no intention of walking into SVC as an optimist on the day that the results were made available. I was quietly confident that I had done better than initially predicted, but I knew that even this didn't guarantee me a place. I couldn't afford to scrape in. I needed daylight between my marks and the entry requirements. I thought that the LRSFC decision-makers were bound to remember the sweaty kid in the red shirt who talked about Cambridge United and the Cote d'Azur for over half the interview. I felt confident that I had left a lasting impression.

Living only a couple of minutes walk from SVC, I didn't have far to go to either sit my exams or to collect my results. I still, however, managed to consume a couple of cigarettes between my house and the school's front gates. I didn't care who saw me. I was joined by two of my best friends. One had long accepted the fact that he was destined for CRC. The other, who remains my best mate to this day, was confident that

we would both get the grades that we needed and be heading to Long Road together at the end of the summer.

I can still see the faces of my secondary school teachers as I showed them what I had discovered inside the three envelopes waiting for me on results day. It was by far the greatest day of my life. It is also my greatest ever personal achievement. I hugged just about everybody and anybody that dared come near, including Mrs Holt. I had more than met my target. I couldn't have asked for more. More importantly, I no longer felt like an average student. I swore to my parents that I would never put myself, or them, in that position again. I couldn't wait for my first day at Long Road. I wanted to prove that I could do better than merely cope with the pressure. I wanted to do everything that I could to be near the top of my class. The five months of hard work gave me some much needed confidence when it came to my education and I found myself looking to the future with unprecedented hope, optimism and excitement.

In terms of overcoming the odds, I still place it higher than any of the subsequently qualifications that I have gained over the past decade. I knew that the highest grades I could achieve were B and C's, meaning for me to have secured two Bs and seven Cs that I must have consistently scored over 80% in almost every exam I sat. Annoyingly, my only D came in the one subject that I was actually capable of achieving an A grade. Upon reflection, however, it was the subject that I prepared for the least. I thought it was the one subject in which I was guaranteed to get at least a C grade. I didn't think it was possible for me to get any lower.

It turns out that my three interviewers all remembered the first time they met me. That is what they said, at least, when I walked through the door for my first day as an Advanced GNVQ Leisure and Tourism student. They were also very impressed to hear how I was able to turn my predicted grades into those now shown on their records. It felt just as good as I had hoped that it would. I had a new motivation and my instant fascination with the tourism industry made it all seem a lot easier than I had expected. Two years later and, having never missed a single class, I had a choice of four universities to pick from. I was upset that Bournemouth rejected my application, but quickly narrowed my options to either Westminster or Brighton. Ultimately, however, the chance to fulfil my life-long dream of living by the sea proved stronger than the lure of Central London.

I am not writing this story, or revealing these personal memories in order to either show off, or say "hey, look how great I am". I am not self indulging at this moment in

time. Far from it, I'm reflecting upon the birth of several social identities, including my academic self. I know that I would never have made it to university had I not have earned my place at Long Road Sixth Form College. What's more, without that unforgettable interview experience, I would never have been able to travel down to Eastbourne and confidently talk myself into an unconditional place at the University of Brighton.

I used my memories of my first ever interview to ensure that history didn't repeat itself. I listed everything that went well, as well as those things that didn't. The memory of what it felt like to be in that interview room continues to help me to this day. It was truly character building. As Act One comes to an end, as opposed to a conclusion, I would like to leave you with another question to ponder as you turn the page and prepare yourself for the next part of this story. It's a question that I have found myself asking on a daily, if not hourly, basis. Furthermore, it is a question that sits at the core of my entire thesis. I promise that I shall do my very best to tackle it at a much later point in this journey, but it is a question that I would like my audience to be considering as they not only reflect upon the personal stories that I have chosen to share in my prologue, but also as they read, reinterpret and reconstruct those that follow within the proposal. My question is this:

Why are academics so concerned about being self-indulgent?

# Part One:
# From the Abbey

## Act Two: The Proposal

Planning the Sports Tourism Experience

What does the sports tourist want?






Tour 216 Sports Tourism, Lecture 21

## Chapters 7-10

# Chapter 7: Pleading innocence (over ignorance)

As I sit at my desk and contemplate the many overlapping aspects of today's global sport and tourism industries, I am unable to ignore the fact that they both appear to have been built around a cultural phenomenon that can be linked to the socially-constructed formation of various self identities[67]. According to Richard Giulianotti, for example, sport is fully capable of improving self identity by generating an enhanced sense/state of embodiment[68]. Likewise, Otmar Weiss noted that 'Sport enables social actors to construct distinctive social identities within specific role systems'[69]. As for tourism, one could easily argue that the whole concept of destination management revolves around ones ability to (re)create a state of optimal distinctiveness[70].

Turning my thoughts specifically towards the realms of sports-related event travel, however, the subject of self or social identity appears to have received relatively little

[67] Sport is essentially a socially construction cultural phenomenon that means different things within different settings. It has no inherently fixed or static state and must always be situated within broader social contexts. According to Jay Coakley, for example, the very definition of 'sport', along with the distinguishing features that make something 'a sport', contains an unavoidable link to both the social and the self. Sports are seen as "institutionalised competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of a relatively complex physical skill by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of personal enjoyment and external rewards" He also suggests that a sociological approach to studying sport "may help us to understand that an individual's personal experience of sport is ultimately connected to broader public issues". Peter Donnelly and Karen Young examined the various ways in which new members of a sporting subculture construct their sporting identities, noting the adoption of mannerisms, attitudes, dress, speech and behaviour they perceive to be characteristic of established members. In **Jay Coakley (2003)** *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies*, 8th Edition (Singapore: McGraw-Hill) (p.20) For further Discussion, see **Peter Donnelly and Karen Young (1988)** The Construction and Confirmation of Identity in Sport Subcultures, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 5, pp. 223-240. **Joseph Maguire (1999)** *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

[68] See **Richard Giulianotti (2005)** *Sport: A Critical Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

[69] In **Otmar Weiss (2001)** Identity reinforcement in sport: revisiting the symbolic interactionist legacy, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 36 (4), pp. 393-405. (p. 400).

[70] The tourism industry is fundamentally built around the creation and consumption of daydreams selling daydreams. Traditionally, it has also been motivated by societies desire to explore and explain the relevance of the 'other', especially when compared back to our everyday. The link to identity formation and the theory of optimal distinctiveness is arguably unmistakeable (Refer to Act One: Footnote 8). Destination marketers are constantly competing to offer tourists a taste of something different (exotic), whilst always trying to re-assure the client that the host population are not that different and will do everything they can to make you feel at home. For discussion, see **Zygmunt Bauman (1996)** 'From Pilgrim to Tourist: Or a Short History of Identity', in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (Eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity* (pp. 18-36) (London: Sage); **Hazel Tucker (2003)** *Living with Tourism: Negotiating Identities in a Turkish Village* (London: Routledge); **Annette Pritchard and Nigel Morgan (2004)** Mythic Geographies of Representation and Identity: Contemporary Postcards of Wales, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 1 (2), pp. 111-130; **Peter M. Burns and Marina Novelli (Eds.) (2006)** *Tourism and Social Identities; Global Frameworks and Local Realities* (Oxon: Elsevier).

attention[71]. Despite the increased calls for an increased focus on sport tourist behaviours, there remains a distinct lack of interest in adopting a narrative-inspired, or sociological-situated, approach to sports-related tourism research[72]. Brett Smith and Mike Weed's conclusion, however, that a narrative approach to sport tourism research offers a "very different" (if not better) method of exploring sport fan behaviour certainly gave me a great deal of food for thought when it came to the design, development and delivery of my own research proposal[73].

My academic interest in sports tourism began less than five years ago. It was April 2005, and I was unexpectedly offered the opportunity to give a guest lecture in a new special interest paper being offered by the Department of Tourism at the University of Otago. I was only a couple of months into the Masters that I had travelled to the other side of the world to complete. My topic was the socio-cultural impact of New Zealand's Themed Highways. I had been away from home for just over a year, but was still finding my feet in the world of tourism academia.

The image chosen to start the second act was the opening slide to my first ever academic lecture. I love the two photographs used. And I can't help but smile at the appropriateness of the question asked. Having tutored during my first twelve months in Dunedin, I was offered a full-year Teaching Assistant (TA) position for the duration of

[71] See **Ian Jones (1998)** 'Football Fandom: Football Fan Identity and Identification at Luton Town Football Club', *An unpublished thesis* submitted to Luton Business School, University of Luton, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; **Christine Green (2001)** Leveraging Subculture and Identity to Promote Sport Events, *Sports Management Review* 4 (1), pp. 1-19; **Christine B. Green and Ian Jones (2005)** Serious Leisure, Social Identity and Sport Tourism, *Sport in Society* 8 (2), pp. 164-181; **James Higham and Tom Hinch (2009)** *Sport and Tourism: Globalisation, Mobility and Identity* (Oxford: Elsevier).

[72] See **Heather J. Gibson (2004)** Moving beyond the 'what is and who' of sport tourism to understanding 'why', *Journal of Sport Tourism* 9 (3), pp. 247–265; **Paul Downward (2005)** Critical (realist) reflection on policy and management research in sport, tourism and sports tourism, *European Sport Management Quarterly* 5 (3), pp. 303–320; **Mike Weed (2005)** Sports tourism theory and method: concepts, issues and epistemologies, *European Sport Management Quarterly* 5 (3), pp. 229–242; **John Harris (2006)** The science of research in sport and tourism: some reflections upon the promise of the sociological imagination, *Journal of Sport &Tourism* 11 (2), pp. 153–171.

[73] Brett Smith and Mike Weed argued, at the time of writing their article, that despite the growth in interpretive methodologies, the relationship between sport and tourism had not be explored via the use of narrative enquiry. Their own, albeit modest, overview of such alternative approaches to gathering data on the sport tourist highlighted both a dearth of understanding and a sizable void in the sport event tourism literature. The fact that they conclusion is dominated by the acknowledgement that more research is required illustrates their desire to get their audience thinking of ways to reduce/remove this gap. They end their review stating: "Clearly, then, there is much work to be done in relation to narrative. Of course, none of this is easy or straightforward. However, it is not impossible. For us, the effort and risks involved are worth taking because when narrative inquiry is done well and does work it provides a powerful means of understanding sports tourism in new, different, and exciting ways. It is a vocation ripe with possibilities. Our hope is that this article acts as a theoretical springboard for others to take up narrative research and stimulates dialogue". In **Brett Smith and Mike Weed (2007)** The Potential of Narrative Research in Sports Tourism, *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 12 (3), pp. 249-269 (p. 265).

my second. The opportunity to add Guest Lecturer to the Curriculum Vitae was too good to turn down. The fact that it fell on my 25th birthday seemed, to me, like fate. As revealed in the Preface, I use the 16th of May as time to stop, reflect and re-assess the past. It's also a time to think about the future.

The lecture topic was 'Planning the Sport Tourist Experience' and, with the British and Irish Lions Tour about to arrive on New Zealand shores, I decided to focus my students gaze upon this highly anticipated occasion. I made the Central Library my first port of call. Several slides were emailed to me by the Course Co-ordinator, including some broader theoretical themes which he felt that I needed to cover. I'd never heard of sports tourism. But I loved the sound of it. I spent an entire day getting myself up to speed on the key players, reading everything I could find on the existing theories and typologies. I wanted to discover all the definitions. I wanted to find out who said what, where and when. I wanted to cover all my bases. I kept going until my eyes were sore and my stomach could take no more neglect.

After a brief dinner break back in the flat, I headed straight back. I stayed till closing time. I wanted to create the perfect lecture. I got up early the next day and set about focusing my attention on the numerous online references that I had printed out the day before. I was obsessed. I spent over a decade chasing Cambridge United Football Club (CUFC) all around England. I'd even followed them into Wales. But I'd never once thought of it as tourism. I never saw myself as a tourist. I was merely doing what thousands of other people did during the football season. As an undergraduate I would regularly catch a London-bound train from Eastbourne on a Saturday morning. What's more, I usually dragged a group of my varsity mates along for the experience.

I simply had to be there to watch CUFC lose 0-1 to Brentford on Saturday May 8th 1999, in the Division Three Championship decider (in Cambridge), and 1-4 to Blackpool on Sunday 24th March 2002 in the LDV Vans Trophy Cup Final (in Cardiff). It meant everything. But it wasn't seen as sports-related tourism. I'd never even heard of such a concept. It wasn't what I was learning about in lectures. Sure, we always spent a bit of our student loan on the local hospitality. But we were never on holiday. We were merely going to support my team. To my knowledge, there were never any pictures taken. The only tangible evidence that I ever collected was my official match-day programme. My friends preferred to borrow mine during the game. The only thing they were willing to spend their money on was the match day ticket, some food (both in and out of the ground) and some liquid refreshment (mostly alcohol).

The pre- and post-match experience often appeared more important, and subsequently more memorable, than the ninety minutes of football that we watched from the away end of several stadiums, including Barnet's Underhill, Leyton Orient's Brisbane Road and Brentford's Griffin Park and Brighton's Withdean Stadium. The various train rides, for example, always involved a bit of impromptu singing, the reading of tabloid newspapers and the creation of pop quizzes to help pass the time. As I lay in bed on the night of May 15th 2005, I found myself lost in an ocean of nostalgia. Suddenly, I kept thinking about all the football-focused excursions that I had been on over the past fifteen years.

What about the week spent watching Tim Henman progress to yet another Wimbledon Semi-Final in June 2003?. I was holidaying in Tenerife. When not sitting in the bar watching five-setters at Wimbledon, I spent the rest of my days playing table tennis, pool, water polo and poker. 'Was that a form of casual sport tourism?', I asked myself, thinking about the various typologies I was due to present the following afternoon. I soon found myself travelling back even further in time, trying to count the hours spent on motorways on a Saturday morning during the football season. I thought about all the different places, and faces, I had seen out of the coach window on my way to and from various football fixtures. I thought about my first ever Cambridge United away trip. We beat Chesterfield United in the first ever Play Off Final to be played at Wembley Stadium on May 26th,1990. It's a day I hope I'll never forget.

I made a mental tally of which destinations involved me playing sport, which involved me watching sport and which involved a combination of both. Sadly I fell asleep before I could finish. The following morning, however, I started the count all over again. I couldn't believe the numbers I was coming up with. The memories were just as poignant as those of the day before. And they're just as vivid today. Looking at Sean Gammon and Tom Robinson's sport tourist classification I was happy to label myself as somewhere between the 'hard' and 'soft' sport tourist[74]. I had never taken a holiday specifically to play or watch sport, and yet I certainly played and watched a lot of sport whilst away on holiday.

[74] Sean Gammon and Tom Robinson produced one of the earliest sport tourist typologies, classifying those who 'specifically travel for either active or passive involvement in competitive sport' as being 'hard' sport tourists, while those who were 'primarily involved in recreational participation in sporting/leisure interest' while on holiday were judged to fall into the 'soft' sport tourism category. See **Sean Gammon and Tom Robinson (2003)** Sport and Tourism: A Conceptual Framework, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 8 (1), pp. 21-26.

Likewise, according to my initial calculations, I wasn't quite the passive 'Connoisseur' that Joy Standeven and Paul De Knop described in their seminal text on sport tourism[75]. But, that said, my desire to observe CUFC was anything but 'Casual'[76]. When it came to Cambridge United I was definitely a 'Junkee'[77]. I still am. I remain as addicted now as I was then. Unfortunately, travelling to watch them every week is currently not an option. Now I have to listen to their home and away games on digital radio, in the middle of the night, and via the help of the internet.

Back in 2005, I had no problem relating to a large number of the personal characteristics of the 'Avid Spectator/Fan' introduced by Brent Ritchie, Lisa Mosedale and Jill King after some small-scale Rugby-based sport event tourism research in

[75] Joy Standeven and Paul de Knop produced the first dedicated sport tourism text, in which they illustrated both the supply and demand characteristics of the sector. They were not the first to try and define the concept of sport tourism, but their attempt does seem to cover most aspects deemed applicable to this thesis. The fact that they saw neither sport, nor tourism to be industries is also worthy of a mention. On the contrary, they refer to them as activities that individuals experience. Sport was defined as an experience of physical activity and tourism was labelled an experience of travel and place. They define sport tourism as being an activity that "comprises all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organised way for non-commercial or business/commercial reasons that necessitate travel away from home and work locality". Though their definition does little more than combine existing definitions of sport and tourism, it undoubtedly established a platform upon which others have subsequently built. Their framework not only separated the business market from the active and passive holiday market, but also made further distinctions between the casual and the connoisseur observer. The latter was described as someone who has 'extensive passive involvement' and actively discriminates in the 'sporting activity they watch as spectators or officiators'. They travel specifically to watch sports events and/or visit other sports-related attractions. Unlike the other sport tourists, the connoisseur was seen as being someone unlike to spent their time or money doing activities that were unrelated to the sporting fixture they travelled to watch. Their knowledge of the host destination is also likely to be dominated by sports-related trivia. In **Joy Standeven and Paul De Knop (1999)** *Sport Tourism* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (pp. 13-39).

[76] Joy Standeven and Paul de Knop's notion of the casual observer was someone who - unlike the connoisseur - would not travel specifically to watch a sporting fixture; they would happily observe sporting fixtures whilst away from home. They described them as those who 'simply enjoy watching an event and who usually happen across it rather than plan their visit to attend it'. In **Joy Standeven and Paul De Knop (1999)** *Sport Tourism* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p. 111).

[77] Bill Faulkner and Carman Tideswell warned in their research on leveraging business opportunity through the hosting of the Sydney Olympics that travelling sports fans are not always guaranteed to visit or partake in traditional tourism activities whilst located within a host city. In fact, they suggested that sport 'junkees' would have little interest in spending their time and money on anything other than watching the sports they had travelled specifically to watch. Lori Pennington-Gray, Heather Gibson, and Charles W. Lane effectively continued this theme within a 2002 conference presentation on the tourism-related behaviour of those travelling to follow College sport in the USA. More recently, Heather Gibson and Lori Pennington-Gray teamed up to explore the various tourist roles adopted by those travelling on golf-related holidays. Once again, they concluded that the sports 'junkie' or sport 'lover' leaves little time for any other form of tourism activities whilst away from home. See **Bill Faulkner and Carman Tideswell (2000)** Leveraging Tourism Benefits from the Sydney 2000 Olympics, *Pacific Tourism Review* 4 (3), pp. 227-238; **Lori Pennington-Gray, Heather Gibson, and Charles W. Lane (2002)** "Sports Junkees" or Tourists? What College Sports Fans "Do" when attending a game, Paper Presented at the Tenth Canadian Congress on Leisure Research, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, Alberta, Canada, May 22-25; **Heather Gibson and Lori Pennington-Gray (2005)** Insights from Role Theory: Understanding Golf Tourism *European Sport Management Quarterly* 5 (4), pp. 443-468.

Australia[78]. Likewise, I considered myself to have a lot in common with the 'Excursionist' identified during a study of the Japanese sport tourist[79], and explored in further detail within Heather Gibson's research on American Sport Tourists[80].

As I made my way into work that morning, I started to consider the difference between being a fan, a follower, and observer and a spectator. I also started to count the number of times I had chosen to visit a friend due to their close proximity to an away fixture. Rather than dwelling to much on my many memories of following CUFC on a Saturday, however, I would like to fast-forward a couple of years and discuss some of the most recent excursions that have occurred since embarking on this enlightening journey of discovery (i.e. since I started to question both my professional position and personal place within the world of sports tourism).

In January 2007, for example, Melanie and I took a self-guided tour around Barcelona's Camp Nou (home to AFC Barcelona). Several days earlier, we had been shown around Rome's equally inspiring Coliseum. On my most recent trip home to the

[78] Ritchie's profiling of sports spectators at two rugby matches in Canberra included the use of three different categorisations; the avid spectator/fan, the frequent spectator/fan and the casual spectator/fan. The first of these groups were deemed comparable to both the hard sport tourist identified by Gammon and Robinson in 1997 and the connoisseur observer identified by Standeven and de Knop in 1999. The Avid spectator was seen as someone who listed watching sport as their prime motivation for travel. The Frequent spectators shared many of the personal characteristics of the Avid fan, but lacked their enthusiasm when it came to travelling away from home for fixtures. Finally, Ritchie's notion of a casual sport tourist spectator was much in line with that of Standeven and de Knop's idea of the casual observer. These were deemed to be fans that had a much lower level of interest, involvement and knowledge in sports travel. See **Brent W. Ritchie, Lisa Mosedale and Jill King (2002)** Profiling Sport Tourists: The Case of Super 12 Rugby Union in the Australian Capital Territory, Australia, *Current Issues in Tourism* 5 (1), pp. 33-44; **Brent Ritchie (2004)** Exploring Small-Scale Sport Event Tourism: the Case of Rugby Union and the Super 12 Competition, in Brent W. Ritchie and Daryl Adair (Eds.) *Sport Tourism: interrelationships, impacts and issues* (pp. 135-154) (Clevedon: Channel View).

[79] In 1996, Haruo Nogawa, Yasuo Yamguchi, and Yumiko Hagi segregated those attending two Japanese sport-for-all events by the length of time they stayed in the host destination. They labelled those staying less than 24 hours as 'excursionists' and those staying overnight as 'tourists'. While the former were found to have little contact with the host community or local tourism industry, the later contributed to the local economy through their spending within the local accommodation, hospitality and entertainment sectors. **Haruo Nogawa, Yasuo Yamguchi and Yumiko Hagi** (1996) An empirical research study on Japanese sport tourism in Sport-for-All events: case studies of a single-night event and a multiple night event, *Journal of Travel Research* 35 (2), pp. 46-54.

[80] Heather Gibson (et al) noted that "one of the challenges for sport and tourism associate with travelling fans may be understanding their motivations and recognising that, for some, their primary motivation is to watch the sporting competition". While Gibson has written extensively on the subject of sports tourism, and was responsible for one of the most frequently cited sport tourist typologies, her two studies into those that follow college soccer in the USA led her to conclude that small-scale sport events represent an untapped market for community-based tourism development. When it came to comparing the behaviour of 'sport excursionists' with that of 'sport tourists', their research discovered that the former spent a lot less on 'dining out, attending other sports events, night life, and shopping'. In **Heather J. Gibson, Cynthia Willming and Andrew Holdnak (2002)** 'Small-scale Event Sport Tourism: College Sport as a Tourist Attraction', in Sean Gammon and Joseph Kurtzman (Eds.) *Sport Tourism: Principles and Practice* (pp. 3-18) (Eastbourne: LSA) (pp. 3-5).

UK, I skipped the final afternoon of the 2008 LSA Conference to make a long-overdue pilgrimage to Anfield (home to arguably the world's most famous football team).

I say 'long overdue' for two reasons. First, it remains one of only three venues that CUFC have never played a match in. So it is a ground in which, to date, I have never seen a fixture being played. Second, being the football club supported by virtually everyone else on my mother's side of the family, Liverpool somewhat inevitably became my first real love. And, as a result, it will always hold a special place in my heart. I supported them long before I discovered my home town had its own professional club. My two hours at the ground, including the hour tour, the 45 minutes spent in the museum and the very emotional fifteen minutes that I spent standing alone by the Hillsborough memorial, really tugged at the heartstrings in a manner which I had never expected.

I guess some bonds can never truly be broken. I certainly didn't feel the same emotional connection, or get the same sense of attachment and personal belonging, the following day whilst being shown around Everton's Goodison Park. That said, from a purely professional viewpoint, I couldn't help but rate the visitor experience offered by the self-proclaimed 'People's Club' higher than that offered across Stanley Park by their much more famous neighbours. Another noteworthy inclusion from this 2008 excursion was the final One Day International (ODI) between England and New Zealand at Lords (the home of Cricket). But that probably deserves a chapter all to itself.

Our tickets for the ODI were obtained via an online ballot system entered months before we left Dunedin. Being poor students we were forced to settle for the cheapest seats available. Our view of the action was, therefore, less than ideal. We actually spent most of the game sitting on the grass out the back watching the game on the big screen. I knew more about the New Zealand players than I did the English. And I wasn't too disappointed to see my girlfriend's nation end victorious. I was more interested in watching the interaction between the English and New Zealanders. A bunch of fans tried unsuccessfully for over an hour to get a Mexican wave going within the members stand. It remains one of the most entertaining things I have ever witnessed amongst the crowd at any cricket match.

Returning back to May 16th 2005, I found myself continuously thinking of more and more examples to use in my lecture. 'If only I had taken some photos', I thought, as I sat in my office and went through the slides for one final time. From nowhere, I also started to think about all the holiday-makers I used to help find tickets and venues during their visit to the Cambridge Tourist Office. Where they sport tourists? The majority of

enquiries came from international tourists wanting me to help them find FA Premier League tickets. Others wanted to know how they could attend major events such as the Grand National, Wimbledon, the British Grand Prix or, one on occasion, an Ashes Test. Most were bitterly disappointed when I informed them that their chances of getting tickets at such short notice were not great, especially those wanting to watch Manchester United or Arsenal play the following day. I also dealt with hundreds of other enquiries about the Varsity Boat Race (on the Thames), the Varsity Test Match (at Twickenham) and the nearby Newmarket Races.

As I walked across the Otago Campus towards the building which housed the lecture theatre I was due to present in, I tried to remember the names of the two Canadian conference delegates I had taken along to the Abbey for an evening match in January 2002. Shane Tudor and Dave Kitson scored one in each half as we came from behind to beat Mansfield Town side 2-1. I think my guests enjoyed the evening as much as I did. I recalled the difficulty I had trying to teach them a couple of the songs being sung by those around us in the Newmarket Road End. I recalled the fact that they seemed fascinated by how close we were able to stand to the field, and that they seemed a little nervous when those around us began to bounce around (an Abbey tradition). Finally, on remembering that they had both promised to return the compliment anytime I find myself in Vancouver, I tried picture the last time I saw the business cards given to me at the end of their conference.

While the Liverpool and Lords examples are deemed obvious additions to my personal sport tourist portfolio, the following three have proven a lot harder for me to categorise. The first occurred the night before the Lords ODI. Along with my partner and a small group of friends, I was in another part of London, singing along to the sounds of Bon Jovi. *But that can't be sport tourism, right?* Well, what if I said that one of the major reasons I wanted to 'be there' was the venue. It was Twickenham. The second and third examples relate to the only two Cambridge United fixtures I've seen at the Abbey since I relocated to New Zealand in 2004. I was staying with my parents. The first was a pre-season friendly against West Ham (a 0-0 draw). The second was an early season league fixture against Wrexham (a 2-0 win).

Sadly, my nephew - who I took along to the highly anticipated pre-season friendly for a belated birthday present - was only interested in watching those selected to represent West Ham. It was, however, the first time that he had been allowed to stand behind the goal. The Wrexham fixture occurred the day before I was due to fly back to Dunedin and

represented my last opportunity of the eventful two-month trip. I wanted to reminisce and had a great feeling that we would see a Cambridge win that afternoon. Seeing Mark Beesley bundle the ball across the goal line right in front of us was one of the best experiences of the entire trip. It sealed not only secured the three-points, but gave me something to replay again and again during the long journey back to Dunedin.

I was probably further from home than anyone else in the stadium that day. There were times, however, when it felt like I'd never left. That said, there were also a lot of faces that I didn't recognise (both on and off the field). Worse still, there were songs that I had never heard before. At times it was almost unbearable. I felt lost and lonely. I felt out of place. I found myself looking up towards my mother, grandmother and grandfather for some family support. I wished that I had taken a seat next to them in the grandstand. I also found myself regretting the fact that there hadn't been an away fixture that we could have all attend instead.

I'm always thinking back to the list I made on the morning of that guest lecture. Furthermore, I'm no longer able to attend any sporting fixture without spending the entire occasion thinking about how it relates to my research and/or current academic interests. Likewise, whilst it never made it to any other the games I attended prior to my discovery of sports tourism, my camera is now the first thing I pack before attending any sporting fixture. I often find myself making notes in the programmes. I just can't switch off. I find myself relating everything I see, hear, smell, touch and taste at such events to various principles and practices that I have researched, read about or heard discussed at conferences. As I stood on the terrace in 2008, I found myself thinking about Ian Jones' doctorate study of Luton Town Fanatics[81]. I was consciously trying to re-categorise everyone around me. I couldn't help it.

By the time my guest lecture arrived on the day of my 25th birthday, I had not only become obsessed with sport tourism but had also written a new Masters proposal. My background research into the forthcoming Lions Tour had revealed a host of questions I wanted to try and answer. Suddenly, there was no way that I could have enjoyed

[81] The abstract of Ian Jones' PhD states that his findings support his initial belief that Henri Tajfel and John Turner's Social Identity Theory provides a suitable theoretical platform on which one can 'explore the concept of football fan identification'. He concluded that having a strong sense of identification underpins the perceived social benefits of being a fan. Those lacking the same sense of attachment are likely to gain less personal satisfaction from simply 'being there' and, as a consequence, be more influenced by the social behaviour of those around them. See **Ian Jones (1998)** Football Fandom: Football Fan Identity and Identification at Luton Town Football Club, *An unpublished thesis* submitted to Luton Business School, University of Luton, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

watching the month-long event without finding out more about how it was being prepared and promoted by the various regions involved. Did these people, for example, know they were responsible for managing or marketing sports-related tourism? Moreover, did the thousands of people planning to attend the various fixtures know that they were sport tourists? I wanted to offer some advice to those involved. I wanted to make up for lost time.

My Masters was one of the most enjoyable studies I have ever completed. Every interview revealed new insights into the logistical difficulties facing those responsible for planning and promoting international sport events[82]. Finding a PhD topic to continue this journey was not a problem. There were so many paths I wanted to explore. According to several of the articles that I had uncovered during my initial literature review, there remained plenty of gaps that required filling. While several case studies dominated the discussions being held in Europe, North America and Australia[83], the New Zealand market appeared ripe (and potentially mine) for the taking. What's more, with the country coming from behind to pip South Africa and Japan for the rights to host the 2011 Rugby World Cup, my new specialised area of professional interest was also highly topical[84].

[82] My first journal publication followed a presentation given at my first academic conference. The article focused on the findings extracted from my Masters, including the uncertainty and inexperience that hampered many of those involved in the management and marketing of the 2005 British and Irish Lions Tour of New Zealand. The noticeable lack of information available to regional planners, and distinct lack of awareness regarding the behavioural characteristics of travelling sports fans proved to be the biggest challenge faced by my respondents, and subsequently caused them the most problems during the build up and during the event itself. For discussion, see **Richard Keith Wright (2007)** Planning for the Great Unknown: The Challenge of Promoting Spectator-driven Sports Event Tourism, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 9, pp. 345-359.

[83] While the majority of early case studies looked at the economic impact of hosting major events, it wasn't until the mid 1990s that researchers in Australia and the UK started to look at the social impacts, especially the perceptions and reactions of local residents. Barry Burgan and Trevor Mule's economic impact study of the Adelaide Grand Prix may have been produced almost two decades ago but it remains arguably one of the most cited pieces of early sports-related event literature. As a result, their conclusions that such occasions have an economic impact is now rarely contested and also largely taken for granted by those studying the impact of sporting events. That said, one person to contest the belief that that major sporting events will inevitable result in a positive economic impact is Calvin Jones. His case study of the 1999 Rugby World Cup argued the fact that the host Country saw little financial benefits, with most of the visitor spending taking place across the border in England. For further discussion, see **Barry Burgan and Trevor Mule (1992**) Economic impacts of sporting events, *Annals of Tourism Research* 19, pp. 700–710; **Elizabeth Fredline and Bill Faulkner (1998**) Residents Reactions to a Major Tourist Event: The Gold Coast Indy Car Race, *Festival Management and Event Tourism* 5, pp. 185-205; **Chris Gratton, Nigel Dobson and Simon Shibli (2000)** The economic impact of major sports events: a case study of six events, *Managing Leisure* 5 (1), pp. 17-28; **Calvin Jones (2001**) Mega-events and Host-region Impacts: Determining the True Worth of the 1999 Rugby World Cup, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 3, pp. 241-251.

[84] The only examples of New Zealand-based sports event tourism research that I had uncovered in 2005 were either based on the impact of hosting provincial rugby fixtures, or looking at the relationship

My PhD proposal was conceived on the 15th of May 2005. It wasn't born, however, until around 2.30am on a Monday morning in September of the same year. How can I be so specific? Well, knowing dates and remembering statistics are a major component of my personal addiction to sport. Should I ever forget one, for example, I know that there is always somewhere that I can check. I know that September 12th 2005 was the day I called my mother at 4.00am (New Zealand time) and told her all about my latest 'big' idea. I know that it happened several hours after I had witnessed Takumo Sato accidentally knock Michael Schumacher out of the 2005 Belgian Grand Prix. I know that this is a race that my hero had won six times previously. I know that it was the same round in which I had watched him make his debut back in 1992 (qualifying his Jordan in seventh place). It was also the track he won his first race the following year (and where, in 2001, he overtook Alain Prost's previous record of 52 victories).

To me, every sporting event represents a unique and equally important moment in history. Not only are the results always recorded (visually and/or verbally), but most accounts are subsequently archived in some shape or form. The amount of detail will inevitably vary, depending on the perceived importance of the event. It may, for example, only be a single sentence at the back of a local sports section (or a handwritten note on a club's notice-board). It could be a player. It could be an official. It could be a spectator. There will, however, always be someone present to record what happened. Most professional sports teams, and nearly all sporting events, have at least one web-site dedicated solely to it. Likewise, most sports have at least one magazine available for those who - like me - feel obliged to know all of the latest gossip, facts and figures.

My ability to recall sporting events and random trivia has both impressed and embarrassed people on many occasions over the course of the past two decades. I have never had any problem remembering how many goals Dion Dublin scored in 1990. Likewise, off the top of my head, I could reveal all the FA Cup Finalists, Wimbledon Winners or Formula One World Champions from the past twenty years. Having watched the three podium finishers give their thoughts on the race, I turned off the TV and

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between the nation and its national sport. See, for example, **Bill Garnham (1996)** Ranfurly Shield Rugby: An Investigation into the Impacts of a Sporting Event on a Provincial City, the Case of New Plymouth, *Festival and Event Tourism* 4, pp. 145-249; **James E. S. Higham and C. Michael Hall (2003**) Editorial: Sport Tourism in Australia and New Zealand: Responding to a Dynamic Interface, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 8 (3), pp. 131-143; **James E. S. Higham and Tom D. Hinch (2003**) Sport, space and time; effect of the Otago Highlanders franchise on tourism, *Journal of Sport Management* 17 (3), pp. 235-257; **Camilla Obel (2004**) Researching rugby in New Zealand: reflections on writing the self and the research problem, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 21, pp. 418-434.

proceeded to do what I did after almost every Formula One race. I picked up the phone and called my parents.

Since my move to New Zealand, and the realisation that I would have to watch the majority of Formula One races during the early hours of Monday morning, I have always tried to utilise these post-race moments to speak to my family. I know that my father, brother and both grandfathers are highly likely to have been sat somewhere watching the same sporting event. The length of our conversations is typically dependent upon how long we have gone without speaking (and how many incidents we had witnessed in the Grand Prix). The CUFC update that always came from my mother was much shorter than usual on the night of the 11th of September 2005 and I soon found myself saying my goodbyes, hanging up and heading up to bed.

I turned out my light and tried to fall asleep. My mind, however, had other ideas. I was wide awake. I had a million (and one) questions running through my head. Within ten minutes I had turned my bedside light back on. Within an hour I had written my PhD proposal. By the time the sun came up I had phoned home once more and spoken to the only person I knew who would fully understand why I wouldn't be able to get any sleep until I had discussed and defended my idea(s).

# Chapter 8: So what's the big idea?

> "Without question one of the greatest passions of the twentieth century has been sport. It has mattered to thousands of players and fans across the globe, with different sports playing a particular role in the cultural life of countries and people. While football is the global game, other sports such as baseball occupy a central position in American popular culture; cricket and Aussie Rules in Australian life; Gaelic games and football in Ireland; cricket and basketball in Caribbean culture, while rugby union is important in constructions of Welsh and New Zealand national identities"[85].

I could never live without sport. I need it. I think the world does to. I think a bit of healthy competition helps us all to release some of the stresses of 'everyday' routine. The physical activity is equally beneficial. In fact, I struggle to think of a more sustainable industry. Despite the clear links between sport and identity formation, to date, the social and cultural anthropologists investigating sport have been received better outside of their discipline than within it[86]. As discussed in my first chapter, this narrative of self is essentially a literary-inspired confessional tale that addresses my struggle to legitimise the personal-professional overlap that accompanies my fanatical interest in sports-related tourism research[87].

To me, sport is a socio-cultural phenomenon that I would argue involves billions, if not trillions, of individuals[88]. Ironically, however, at a time when the multi-national

[85] In **Raymond Boyle and Richard Haynes (2000)** *Power Play: Sport, the Media and Popular Culture* (Harlow: Pearson Education) (p. 1).

[86] Noel Dyck defines the anthropology of sport as 'a field of inquiry that comprises a wide range of recurring, complexly patterned activities, relationships, beliefs and purposes that revolve around competitive performances that combine physical, social and cultural elements'. He also acknowledges the role that both time and space can play on the continuity of various social activities occurring out in the field. In **Noel Dyck (Ed.) (2000)** *Games, Sports and Cultures: anthropological perspectives on sport* (Berg: Oxford) (p. 13). For a contextualised discussion, see **Joseph Maguire and Jason Tuck (1998)** Global Sports and Patriot Games: Rugby Union and National Identity in a United Sporting Kingdom since 1945, *Immigrants and Minorities* 17 (1), pp. 103-126.

[87] According to John Van Maanen, "the confessional becomes a self-reflexive meditation on the nature of ethnographic understanding; the reader comes away with a deeper sense of the problems posed by the enterprise itself". In **John Van Maanen (1988)** *Tales from the Field: On Writing Ethnography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) (p. 92).

[88] The study of sport, culture and society is by no means a new area of academic study and research. According to those that study the sports industry from a sociological perspective, for example, it is impossible to fully understand contemporary society and culture without acknowledging its permanent place at the table. Grant Jarvie noted how 'almost every government around the world commits public

media corporations appear to wield most, if not all, of the power regarding the location, time and date of most sporting occasions[89], travelling to attend these fixtures has never been more popular (or fashionable) amongst male and females of all ages, religions and socio-cultural backgrounds. Unlike many of the stadiums now required to showcase the mega sporting events, the social phenomenon of 'the sport-related pilgrimage' is anything but new[90].

Throughout history, sport has always provided societies with a popular arena for the construction, maintenance and preservation of various forms of identities[91]. As the world appears to grow ever smaller, sport has also proven itself to be a largely sustainable catalyst in terms of both uniting and dividing specific communities, countries and even continents[92].

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resources to sporting infrastructure because of sport's perceived benefits to improving health, education, creating jobs and preventing crime'. In **Grant Jarvie (2006)** *Sport, Culture & Society: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge) (p. 2).

[89] Evidence of research into the cultural overlap and continued interaction between media and sport can be found across a number of academic disciplines. While Lawrence A. Wenner was one of the first to collate a collection of academic writing on society's consumption of sports media, David Rowe was arguably one of the first to publish his explorations into the importance of the media in relation to sport as a cultural phenomenon. Rowe's first text not only examined the unprecedented manner in which sports-related media has managed to established itself in contemporary everyday life, but also how the two industries have effectively made themselves mutually dependent. His follow up, published five years later, provided an update on both the 'unruly trinity' that is the overlapping relationship between sport, culture and the media. See **Lawrence A. Wenner (Ed.) (1989)** *Media, sports, & society* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage); **David Rowe (2004)** *Sport, Culture and the Media. 2nd Edition* (Maidenhead: McGraw Hill). For further discussion, also see **Raymond Boyle and Richard Haynes (2000)** *Power Play: Sport, the Media and Popular Culture* (Harlow: Pearson Education); **Alina Bernstein and Neil Blain (Eds.) (2003)** *Sport, media, culture: global and local dimensions* (London: Frank Cass).

[90] Sean Gammon believes that our understanding and utilisation of the term 'pilgrimage' has itself changed a great deal over the course of the last couple of centuries. He describes it's origins as being built around 'an arduous and fraught journey, endured in order to worship and/or pay respects to a site of special religious significance – the reward of which would be salvation or protection in the here and/or hereafter'. He acknowledges the 'clear parallels' that exist between sport and religion-motivated travel and comments on the similar functions and that both the sacred and the profane play within modern day society. See **Sean Gammon (2004)** 'Secular Pilgrimage and Sport Tourism', in Brent W. Ritchie and Daryl Adair (Eds.) *Sport tourism: interrelationships, impacts and issues* (pp. 30-45) (Clevedon: Channel View).

[91] Sport, sports organisations and sports practice are at the heart of a number of major social issues, of which group identity is only one. Similarly, as touched upon above (refer to Footnote 24), sporting venues not only act as zones of prestige, emulation and/or resistance, but also play a major role in establishing and maintaining a sense of identity. Despite Pierre Bourdieu describing the sociology of sport to be an area of academic interest 'disdained by sociologists and despised by sports people', the growth of the discipline can be traced back over half a century through the relatively distinct phases of reflection, reproduction and resistance. Many working within this area of academia have argued that it is impossible to fully understand contemporary society without acknowledging the sport and importance placed upon it. In **Pierre Bourdieu (1990)** *In other words: Essay towards a Reflexive Sociology* (M. Adamson, Trans.) (Cambridge: Polity) (p. 156). For further discussion see **Neil Blain, Raymond Boyle and Hugh O'Donnell (1993)** *Sport and National Identity in the European Media* (Leicester: Leicester University Press); **Barrie Houlihan (1997)** Sport, national identity and public policy, *Nations and Nationalism* 3 (1), pp. 113-137.

[92] Determining how and why sports are imbued with such social significance remains one of the most critical and complex issues found within any social scientific study of sport. Furthermore, according

In 1994, John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson cited sport as "both trivial and serious, inconsequential yet of symbolic significance"[93]. They go on to note how it can not only inform but also refuel "the popular memory of communities", offering "a source of collective identification and community expression"[94]. Sport is, in my opinion, the only true 'opium of the masses'[95]. Nothing else comes close (not even religion or war). Attending live sporting fixtures certainly offered everything I was looking for as both a child and adolescent, including community, belonging, passion, excitement, adversity, aggression, compassion, safety, danger and even education. But isn't that what we all want in life?

The importance of understanding the individual motivations and collective behaviour those who follow sports events has proven a subject of continued fascination within the closely-related realms of sports-related psychology and the sociology of sport. According to Daniel Wann (et al), for example, sports fans are simply those who follow a particular team and/or individual[96]. To sociologist Allan Guttmann, however, the sports spectator is 'anyone who views a sports event, either in situ or through visual media such as film or television'[97]. His attempt to draw an admittedly 'arbitrary' line between 'those

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to the literature linking sport to cultural identity construction, the development of a strong allegiance to a particular sports team can also strongly assist in the provision of group affiliation (however superficial or illusionary). Chris Rojek claims that "sport can become a symbolic extension of various collective identities". In **Chris Rojek (1992)** 'The Field of Play in Sport and Leisure Studies', in Eric Dunning and Chris Rojek (Eds.) *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (pp. 1-35) (London: Macmillan) (p. 1). See also **Michael Billig (1995)** *Banal Nationalism* (Sage: London); **Alan Bairner (2001)** *Sport, Nationalism and Globalisation: European and North American Perspectives* (Albany: SUNY Press).

[93] See **John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson (1994)** 'Soccer culture, national identity and the World Cup', in John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson (Eds.) *Hosts and champions: Soccer cultures, national identities and the USA World Cup* (pp. 3-12) (Aldershot: Arena).

[94] Ibid (p. 3).

[95] Karl Marx once said "Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. *It is the opium of the people*". Cited in Works of **Karl Marx (1843)** 'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right Introduction', available online at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm#n1 [accessed 3/1/08].

[96] Daniel Wann's 'scientific' definition may fit with his own motivational-based framework, but it clearly fails to acknowledge the multitude of social situations in which one is likely to follow a particular sports team and/or individual. See **Daniel L. Wann, Merrill J. Melnick, Gordon W. Russell and Dale G. Pease (2001**) *Sport Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators* (London: Routledge).

[97] In what was arguably one of the first pieces of spectator-focused literature, Allan Guttmann suggests that the supporters who regularly read about their team, and follow their progress on either the radio or television, share the exact same characteristics as those found sitting 'in the ballpark'. He opted to separate 'fans' and 'spectators' based on the amount of emotional attachment they had to the sports event and/or team being followed. He was happy to accept the fact that the two terms overlapped, but argued against treating them as the same. He concluded that, "in practice, most fans are spectators and most spectators are fans, but it is logically possible to be one and not the other. Some fans have never actually attended a sports event or watched one on television; some spectators stare absent-minded at televised sports without a flicker of interest, some allow themselves to be dragged to games that they then observe

who experience a sports event fully and those whose experience is partial' (i.e. 'those who can see an action taking place and those who cannot'), illustrates the challenge facing anyone who choose to try and pigeonhole, stereotype or categorise the individual sports supporter[98].

It may be a relatively young area of academic enquiry, but those committed to exploring the sports-related travel market have been both strategic and scientific in their research approach and publication activity to date[99]. More importantly, they have wasted little time in building upon the foundations that emerged during the early 1990s[100]. The past decade, for example, has seen the a noticeable uptake in attempts to gain a deeper theoretical and philosophical understanding with regards to 'why people travel to sports fixtures?'[101]. As a result, those looking to continue its noticeable advancement now have

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without any of the emotional involvement characteristic of the fan". In **Allan Guttmann (1986**) *Sports Spectators* (New York: Columbia University Press) (p. 6).

[98] Ibid (p. 6).

[99] Since it's arrival on the academic scene at the start of the 1990's, the special interest field of sports tourism has gone from being the simple consequence of when sport and tourism overlap, to being an area of study that critically debates the deeper psychological and sociological implications involved. The initial descriptive definitions have been replaced with critical discussions into the reasons why people travel for sport. The construction of a strong knowledge base, built from existing theoretical concepts borrowed from established academic disciplines, has seen the area of study more forward in terms of its validity and value. For discussion, see **Brent W. Ritchie and Daryl Adair (Eds.) (2004)** *Sport Tourism: Interrelationships, Impacts and Issues* (Clevedon: Channel View); **Mike Weed and Chris Bull (2004)** *Sports Tourism Participants, Policy and Providers* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann); **James E. S. Higham (Ed.) (2005)** *Sport Tourism Destinations: Issues, Opportunities and Analysis* (Oxford, Elsevier); **Heather J. Gibson (Ed.) (2006)** *Sport Tourism: Concepts and Theories* (London: Routledge); **Mike Weed (2006)** Undiscovered Public Knowledge: The Potential of Research Synthesis Approaches in Tourism Research, *Current Issues in Tourism* 9 (3), pp. 256-268.

[100] According to Joy Standeven and Paul de Knop, the first person to link sport and tourism together was Swede Victor Balck in 1887. The recent growth in the concept of sport tourism research, however, is generally considered to have started almost 100 years later. Sue Glyptis and Gerald Redmond, for example, are widely credited with having some of the earliest academic publications based solely around the symbiotic relationship that exists between the notions of 'sport' and 'tourism'. See **Sue A. Glyptis (1982)** *Sport and tourism in Western Europe* (London: British Travel Educational Trust); **Gerald Redmond (1990)** 'Points of increasing contact: Sport and tourism in the modern world', in Alan Tomlinson (Ed.) *Sport in society: Policy, politics and culture*, Conference papers No 43 (pp. 158-169) (Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association); **Sue A. Glyptis (1991)** 'Sport and Tourism', in Chris P. Cooper (Ed.) *Progress in Tourism, Recreation and Hospitality Management Volume 3* (pp. 165-183) (London: Belhaven Press); **Gerald Redmond (1991)** 'Changing styles of sports tourism: Industry, consumer interactions in Canada, the USA and Europe', in M. Thea Sinclair and Mike J. Stabler (Eds.) *The tourism industry: an international analysis* (pp. 107-120) (Wallingford: CAB International). See also **Hagi Nogawa (1992)** A study of sport tourism, *Annals of Fitness and Sport Sciences* 7, pp. 43-55; **C. Michael Hall (1992)** 'Adventure, sport and health', in C. Michael Hall and Betty Weiler (Eds.) *Special Interest Tourism* (pp. 141-158) (London: Belhaven Press); **Joy Standeven and Paul De Knop (1999)** *Sport Tourism* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics).

[101] See **Trevor H. B. Sofield (2003)** Sports Tourism: From Binary Division to Quadripartite Construct, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 8 (3), pp. 144-166; **Heather J. Gibson (2004)** Moving beyond the "what is and who" of sport tourism to understanding "why", *Journal of Sport Tourism* 9 (3), pp. 247–265; **Tom Robinson and Sean Gammon (2004)** A question of primary and secondary motives: revisiting and applying the sport tourism framework, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 9 (3), pp. 221–233; **Joseph Kurtzman (2005)** Sport tourism categories, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 10 (1), pp. 15-20.

a basic understanding of where they come from, when they travel and how (often) they travel. But, as they themselves would no doubt admit, together they've still only just touched the surface.

While those in the field seems to have moved beyond the initial fixation with trying to conceptualise the realm, or define the various types of 'sport tourist', we still know relatively little about them (i.e. who they are, what they want and why they are there?). In 2005, I found it hard to categorise myself within any of the typologies presented within the sport tourism literature. Two years later and I have to say that I am still struggling to pick a box to place myself within. I am yet to find a sport that I am able to walk away from without first discovering who is playing and where it is being played. I am still always searching for more facts and figures to (over)analyse and safely store away for future reference. Furthermore, it's not just sports witnessed from the stands or on the television. I am constantly replaying goals that I have scored or think that I should have scored, serves that I should have safely returned down the line and catches that I should have taken.

I have always picked my sporting fixtures on a mixture of criteria. The cost is always the ultimate factor, although it played les of an issue when it was my parents who were expected to pay. While it was not an issue during my days as a Junior U, I have subsequently opted against away trips due to the fact that I could find no one willing to travel with me. There will always be special sporting fixtures which carry extra meaning due to their historical importance. FA Cup matches or local derbies, for example, have always been a must. If I could (or can) get myself there then I have always done (will always do) everything within my power to ensure that I am there. I hate the thought of missing out on anything. The first and last games of any season were, and are still, always highly anticipated events. Their pulling power is always greater then that of a mid-season fixture. Likewise, the pull of a new event and/or event venue should never be under-estimated. I may no longer have the list of places that I have already been to, but I am constantly creating new ones that highlight the venues I still need to visit.

In my opinion, the spatial and temporal analysis of our increasingly mobile societies needs to remain at the forefront of 21st Century tourism research[102].

[102] According to C. Michael Hall, tourism-based academia is essentially the social science of mobility. It is about the temporary movement of people from one place to another. For discussion see **C. Michael Hall (2005)** Reconsidering the geography of tourism and contemporary mobility, *Geographical Research* 43 (2), pp. 125–39; **C. Michael Hall (2005)** Time, space, tourism and social physics, *Tourism Recreation Research* 30 (1), pp. 93–8.

Furthermore, the concepts first introduced by geographers during the early 1990s have undeniably had a major influence on the way in which both sport and tourism-focused researchers have chosen to structure their subsequent explorations into the behaviour of those travelling away from home (for either business or leisure)[103]. The distance decay model, for example, clearly remains as applicable and appropriate today as it did when it first emerged twenty years ago[104]. Its direct relevance to sports event tourism, however, has only recently been discussed and debated in any real detail[105].

Studies on the loyalty and motivations of sports spectators suggest that the key 'push' and 'pull' factors have actually changed very little over the course of time[106].

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[103] Alan Lew's suggestion that the concept of 'place' is merely 'space' that has been infused with some form of socio-cultural meaning may have been borrowed from the earlier work of Yves Tuan, but it adequately illustrates the importance of cultural geography on both sport and tourism research. James Higham and Tom Hinch go as far as to suggest that sport tourism's foundations have their roots firmly entrenched within economic and sports-related geography. See **Doug G. Pearce (1987)** *Tourism today: A geographical analysis* (Harlow: Longman Scientific and Technical); **Jonathon Bale (1989)** *Sports geography* (London: E & FN Spon); **Lisle S. Mitchell and Peter E. Murphy (1991)** Geography and tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 18 (1), pp. 57 - 70; **Jonathon Bale (1993)** *Sport, space and the city* (London: Routledge); **Jonathon Bale (1994)** *Landscapes of modern sport* (Leicester: Leicester University Press); **Brian G. Boniface and Chris C. Cooper (1994)** *The geography of travel and tourism*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann); **Alan A. Lew (2001)** Tourism and geography space, *Tourism Geographies* 3 (1), p. 1; **James E. S. Higham and Tom D. Hinch (2006)** Sport and Tourism Research: A Geographic Approach, *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 11 (1), pp. 31 – 49.

[104] The distance decay model implies that the number of visitors a destination (or event) attracts will always decrease in direct relation to the distance that the visitors are required to travel to get there. The primary reason behind this reduction in numbers is linked to both the increased cost of travel and the decreased amount of knowledge that the individual is likely to have with regards to the host destination. In addition, the concept of distance decay also acknowledges the potential impact of external socio-cultural variables that need to be taken into consideration. For further discussion see **Douglas Eldridge and John P. Jones (1991)** Warped Space: A Geography of Distance Decay, *Professional Geographer* 43 (4), pp. 500-511; **C. Michael Hall and Stephen J. Page (1999)** *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Place and Space* (London: Routledge). **Yi-Ping Li (2000)** Geographical Consciousness and Tourism Experience, *Annals of Tourism Research* 27 (4), pp. 863-883.

[105] James Higham and Tom Hinch highlight the applicability of the distance decay model, suggesting however that -when placed within a sport tourism context - it can be "mediated by such things as the quality of the opposition and the importance of the competition or, in terms of non-competitive sports, the accessibility, availability, and cost of engaging in chosen sports activities at a destination". They go on to argue that such emotional-based 'push' factors are currently "not well understood" and require further "academic attention", before concluding that "the potential for qualitative methods to provide more advanced, critical, and analytical insights into the travel patterns and experiences of those engaged in sport-related tourism is also considerable". In **James E. S. Higham and Tom D. Hinch (2006)** Sport and Tourism Research: A Geographic Approach, Journal of Sport and Tourism 11 (1), pp. 31 – 49 (p. 34).

[106] Pull factors represent the unique attractions that draw people to a particular destination and/or event. They can take the form of tangible objects (e.g. museums) and/or be linked to physical points of difference (e.g. climate or culture). Push factors are the emotional elements that make a destination seem irresistible to the traveller. The push factors are generally intangible and therefore much harder to accurately calculate (e.g. the personal motives, needs and interests of the individual traveller). These two 'factors' are commonly said to overlap and/or complement each other when it comes to determining why people choose to travel to certain destinations (i.e. ahead of others). While events such as sporting fixtures are seen as 'pull factors' (i.e. things that attract people to a location), the 'once-in-a-lifetime' experiences that they can offer their attendees can undoubtedly act as a significant 'push factor', especially to those who believe that being there is everything. For general discussion see **Muzaffer Uysal and Claudia Jurowski (1994)** Testing the Push and Pull Factors, *Annals of Tourism Research* 21 (4), pp. 844–846; **Seong-Seop**

According to Nam-Su Kim and Lawrence Chalip, for example, the perceived distance between the supporter's place of origin and the host destination is still likely to act as a major mediating factor when it comes to the critical "should I stay or should I go?" question. The perceived risks attached to travelling internationally to attend a sports event are unsurprisingly regarded as being greater than those attached to domestic sports travel[107]. Their much cited, yet rarely critiqued, study into the motivations of attendees at the 2002 FIFA World Cup not only advanced my understanding of why I continued to place so much importance of 'being there', but also got me thinking about all of the mediating factors that have influenced my sports-related travel behaviour[108].

When it came to justifying my decision to focus my attention on the realm sports tourism, I soon found that Mike Weed provided me with more than enough ammunition to fight off the doubts being thrown my way on a regular basis by 'concerned' friends and

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**Kim and Choong-Ki Lee (2002)** Push and Pull Relationships, *Annals of Tourism Research* 29, 1, pp. 257–260. In terms of their relevance to sports-related travel, however, see **Rachna Gandhi-Arora and Robin N. Shaw (2002**) Visitor Loyalty in Sport Tourism: An Empirical Investigation, *Current Issues in Tourism* 5 (1), pp. 45-53; **Zheljko Bjelac and Milan Radovanovic (2003)** Sports Events as a form of Tourist Product, Relating Volume and Character of Demand, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 8 (4), pp. 260-269; **Nam-Su Kim and Lawrence Chalip (2004)** Why travel to the FIFA World Cup? Effects of motives, background, interest, and constraints, *Tourism Management* 25, pp. 695–707; **Tom Robinson and Sean Gammon (2004)** A question of primary and secondary motives: revisiting and applying the sport tourism framework, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 9 (3), pp. 221–233.

[107] Nam-Su Kim and Lawrence Chalip's extensive review of the existing literature on the motivational 'push' factors, within a wider sport and tourism context, enabled them to develop their own conceptual framework into event interest and intent to attend. By dividing the factors into those that focused on the individual's demographics, their motives as a sports fan, and their motivation to travel, the researchers attempted to delve deeper than many of the existing motivational-focused sport tourism studies. The 'fan motives', for example, incorporated categories that looked at the perceived notions of vicarious achievement, the importance of the events aesthetics, the desire to support their nation and/or particular players, and the importance of achieving a sense of emotional pleasure/arousal (referred to as 'eustress') via 'being there'. Likewise, the travel motives included the desire to escape, learn about the host destination and socialise with others at the event. Several mediating factors were incorporated within the framework, including a couple of potential barriers related to the perceived risk of attending (both physical and financial). These socially-constructed variables were considered alongside the individual's interest/attraction in attending the event and then placed directly between the aforementioned list of potential push factors and the expected outcome (i.e. the desire to 'be there' and the feasibility of being able to get there). For further discussion see **Nam-Su Kim and Lawrence Chalip (2004)** Why travel to the FIFA World Cup? Effects of motives, background, interest, and constraints, *Tourism Management* 25, pp. 695–707.

[108] Nam-Su Kim and Lawrence Chalip's motivational framework was tested in related to those in attendance at the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Japan and South Korea. They concluded that "The desire to travel internationally to attend a sport event and the perception that it would be feasible to do so are complexly determined". Their findings suggest that a fans perceived ability to attend will always carry more weight than their desire to 'be there'. Therefore, rather than simply selling the benefits of attending an event such as the FIFIA World Cup (i.e. something that *all* football fans will *always* wish to do), it is actually the reduction of the associated risks (physical and financial) that posits the biggest challenge for event managers and destination marketers. The feasibility of attending will always take precedent over our desire to be there. In Ibid (p. 705).

family members[109]. Several of my friends suggested that it wasn't a real area of academic investigation. My parents, however, were both clearly worried that I may end up being an expert in a field that either no one took seriously, or no one was remotely interested in. The (re)emergence of a peer-reviewed journal, however, also had a significant role in re-assuring me that the faith that I had in the fledgling field of sport tourism was fully justified[110]. I was clearly not the only one who could see the potential back in 2006 and 2007. Those already committed to the development of sports tourism research had mapped out a promising future within which I wanted to actively participate[111].

[109] Mike Weed's influence and continual involvement in expanding the study of sports-related tourism has been immense, and arguably unrivalled over the past decade. While his most recent focus has been on the theoretical methods used to explore our understanding of sport tourist behaviour, he has also investigated the policies and procedures used to plan and promote sports tourism from a supply side perspective. Along with Chris Bull, he has argued on several occasions that the concept of sports tourism, and the notion of the sport tourism link, can be defined as the 'social, economic and cultural phenomenon arising from the unique interaction of activity, people and place'. His critical assessment of the early sport tourism explorations certainly struck a chord in my mind and helped me to focus my attention towards the socio-cultural aspects of travelling for sports. Likewise, the acknowledgement of the importance of place helped stir up a lot of memories regarding my own sense of belonging and the sports-related attachment that I have to particular locations. See, for example, **Mike Weed and Chris Bull (1997)** Integrating Sport and Tourism: A Review of Regional Policies in England, *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research* 3 (2), 129-48; **Mike Weed (2002)** 'Football Hooligans as Undesirable Sport Tourists: Some Meta-Analytical Speculation', in Sean Gammon and Joseph Kurtzman (Eds.) *Sport Tourism: Principle and Practice* (pp. 35-52) (Eastbourne: LSA); **Mike Weed and Chris Bull (2004)** *Sports Tourism Participants, Policy and Providers* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann**)**; **Mike Weed (2005)** A Grounded Theory of the Policy Process for Sport and Tourism, *Sport in Society* 8 (2), pp. 356-377; **Mike Weed (2005)** Sports tourism theory and method: concepts, issues and epistemologies. *European Sport Management Quarterly* 5 (3), pp. 229–242; **Mike Weed (2006)** Undiscovered Public Knowledge: The Potential of Research Synthesis Approaches in Tourism Research, *Current Issues in Tourism* 9 (3), pp. 256-268; **Mike Weed (2006)** Sports Tourism and the Development of Sports Events, Published on the Internet, www.idrottsforum.org (ISSN 1652–7224), 13th December. [Accessed 13th April 2009].

[110] In 2006, the *Journal of Sport and Tourism* (JS&T) emerged out of the shadows of its more industry focused predecessor the *Journal of Sport Tourism***.** The earlier addition was launched in 1993 as a forum for members of the newly formed Sports Tourism International Council. Its aims were to increase awareness, generate debate and promote the benefits of sport tourism. Under the careful stewardship of Mike Weed, JS&T is described as **"**a multidisciplinary publication featuring high quality articles on all aspects of the relationship between sport and tourism". The publisher, Taylor and Francis, note that the journal "…welcomes submissions from all relevant subject areas, such as sport, leisure, physical education and tourism, and from a wide range of disciplines including, but not confined to: sociology, psychology, geography, policy studies, management studies, economics and marketing. Submissions may be empirical or conceptual, but should have a clearly articulated theoretical basis". It claims to offer "an inclusive and wide-ranging view of the definitions of both sport and tourism, and therefore considers professional and amateur, competitive and non-competitive, social, recreational, and informal activities, as well as leisure, business, and day-trip tourism, to fall within its scope". Furthermore, the journal "…is interested in tourism incorporating any form of sporting interest, not just tourism to actively participate in sport". Clearly, for the study of sports tourism to be taken seriously, those conducting research within the area need an outlet to share their thoughts and findings. Thankfully, this journal provides such an opportunity. Its popularity suggests that I am far from alone in my fascination and fixation with the study of those who travel for sports-related activities. For further information, see **Taylor and Francis Publications (2010)**, available at; http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/14775085.html [Accessed 13 April 2009].

[111] The early editorials found in the new-look *Journal of Sport and Tourism* were not only full of forward-thinking promise, but also forward-thinking potential. They asked the same questions that I had found myself asking. They touched on areas that I had found myself touching. They also provided me with some serious food for thought regarding what I wanted to explore, and how I may go about my

While Sean Gammon and Greg Ramshaw, deserve special recognition for inspiring my interest in the personal heritage aspects of sports travel and tourism activity[112], I would also like to acknowledge the significant role played by Heather Gibson, Lawrence Chalip, Tom Hinch and James Higham. Together with the work of Mike Weed, their insightful thoughts, inspiring theories and past explorations - not to mention their obvious personal passion for the subject - have helped me to formulate my own professional understanding, and strong personal affiliation, with regards to the special interest field of sports-related tourism research[113].

I may have changed my direction on several occasions over the course of this thesis but that does not mean that I am any less committed to the further advancement of sports tourism research. It has merely been put on hold as I try to answer the increasing calls for self-inclusion and/or sociological introspection beyond the traditional social sciences. I've always thought that there needs to be greater attention given to why academic choose their research topics, especially within special interest or niche areas such as sports-related tourism. My priorities have therefore shifted towards advancing special interest academia through the acknowledgement that those found exploring such areas are often, if not always, as much a part of the phenomenon as the people they

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investigations. See, for example, **Mike Weed (2006)** Editorial: Understanding Sports Tourism Participation: Complexities and Diversity, *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 11 (3-4), pp. 195–199; **Mike Weed (2007)** Editorial: Tensions and Paradoxes in Sports Tourism Research, *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 12 (2), pp. 59–61.

[112] See, for example, **Sean Gammon and Greg Ramshaw (2005**) Editorial: Planning heritage in sport tourism, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 10 (4), pp. 225-227; **Sheranne Fairley and Sean Gammon (2005)** Something Lived, Something Learned: Nostalgia's Expanding Role in Sport Tourism, *Sport in Society* 2 (8), pp. 182-197; **Greg Ramshaw and Tom Hinch (2006**) Place Identity and Sport Tourism: The Case of the Heritage Classic Ice Hockey Event, *Current Issues in Tourism* 9 (4&5), pp. 399-418; **Sean Gammon (2007)** 'Introduction: sport, heritage and the English. An opportunity missed?', in Sean Gammon and Greg Ramshaw (Eds.) *Heritage, Sport and Tourism: Sporting Pasts – Tourist Futures* (pp. 1-8) (Routledge: Oxon); **Greg Ramshaw and Sean Gammon (2007)** 'More than just Nostalgia? Exploring the Heritage/Sport Tourism Nexus', in Sean Gammon and Greg Ramshaw (Eds.) *Heritage, Sport and Tourism: Sporting Pasts – Tourist Futures* (pp. 9-22) (Routledge: Oxon).

[113] See, for example, **Heather J. Gibson (1998)** Active sport tourism: who participates?, *The Journal of Leisure Studies* 147 (2), pp. 155-7; **Tom D. Hinch and James E. S. Higham (2001)** Sport Tourism: a Framework for Research, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 3, pp. 45-58; **James E. S. Higham and Tom D. Hinch (2002)** Tourism, sport and seasons: the challenges and potential of overcoming seasonality in the sport and tourism sectors, *Tourism Management* 23, pp. 175-185; **Lawrence Chalip (2004)** 'Beyond Impact: A General Model for Sports Event Leverage', in Brent W. Ritchie and Daryl Adair (Eds.) *Sport tourism: interrelationships, impacts and* issues (pp.226-252) (Clevedon: Channel View); **Lawrence Chalip and Johanne McGuirty (2004**) Bundling sport events with the host destination, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 9 (3), pp. 267–282; **James E. S. Higham (2005)** Sport Tourism as an Attraction for Managing Seasonality, *Sport in Society* 8 (2), pp. 238-262; **Lawrence Chalip and Carla A. Costa (2005**) Sport Event Tourism and the Destination Brand: Towards a General Theory, *Sport in Society* 8 (2), pp. 218–237; **Tom D. Hinch and James E. S. Higham (2005)** Sport, Tourism and Authenticity, *European Sport Management Quarterly* 5 (3), pp. 243-256; **Heather J. Gibson (2006)** *Sport Tourism: Concepts and Theories* (London: Routledge); **James E. S. Higham and Tom D. Hinch (2006)** Sport and Tourism Research: A Geographic Approach, *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 11 (1), pp.31-49.

choose to observe. I am still fascinated by the behaviour of sport tourists. I am even more interested, however, in my own behaviour as a sport tourist.

Ultimately, I have started to ask myself the questions that I had planned to ask others. I haven't purposely put myself in their position, or within their shoes. I was there before they arrived. The vast majority of research that has already been conducted within the sports tourism domain also appears to be driven by more than just professional curiosity. The authors highlighted within this chapter all seem to have invested a fair amount of personal pride into their work. They may not have been writing about themselves, or publishing in the first person, but it is obviously an area that they enjoy/enjoyed exploring. They are, or at least were, clearly interested in the relationship that exists between sport and tourism and I took a significant amount of comfort in the fact that we clearly had this in common.

Most supervisors will actively encourage their students to pick a topic that interests them. So why don't we show it more often? Why do we hide ourselves away and focus our gaze on the other? Why do we ignore the voices in our head? Why don't we put our heart and soul into our work? Why are so many researchers still missing from their research? Ultimately, our subjective self identities can't help but play a significant role in our academic decision-making process[114]. I have grown up submerged in the competitive world of sport. I therefore know that every rule is inevitably open to individual (re)interpretation.

After attending both the ATLAS and LSA Conferences held in England in 2008, I was saddened by the continued lack of voice given to the participant observers found behind the camera lens of the photos they took out in the field. All of the delegates I met had clearly played some role in choosing their research area. Unfortunately, when it came to watching them present in the seminar rooms, all the amusing anecdotes and personal stories vanished without any visible trace. I was desperate for them to tell everyone else why they picked that particular topic/site/research method. I wanted them to reveal how their research experience has affected them. I wanted them to admit what went wrong. I wanted to know what they would do differently. I wanted to know why there is such a noticeable lack of autoethnography within tourism research?.

[114] For discussion see **Gollie Jansen and Alan Peshkin (1992**) 'Subjectivity in Qualitative Research', in Margaret Le Compte, Wendy Melroy and Judith Preissle (Eds.) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education* (pp.681-725) (San Diego: Academic Press); **Franz Breuer and Wolff-Michael Roth (2003)** 'Subjectivity and reflexivity in the social sciences: Epistemic windows and methodical consequences', *Qualitative Social Research* [Online Journal] 4 (2), Available on WWW at http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/2-03/2-03intro-3-e.htm, [Accessed on 18.06.08].

The only tourism-focused autoethnographies that I could find in 2007 focused on the language used to relive tourism experiences and the meanings that tourists attach to souvenirs purchased whilst on holiday[115]. Looking a little further, however, I can still recall the excitement I felt when I uncovered Ronald Pelias' article entitled the 'The Academic Tourist'[116]. While his excellent personal narrative actually has nothing to do with tourism, it does, however, remain one of my all time favourite pieces of academic literature. It is clever and completely believably. What's more, it often represents exactly how I feel as an academic trying to inspire a new generation of intellectuals. It offers a candid look into the life of an academic, struggling to maintain his motivation and his belief in an increasingly mobile society. He speaks of his desire to inspire, but also his struggle to juggle all of his personal and professional commitments. He left me with more questions than answers, and for that I shall always be grateful.

Arguably, of all the current areas of tourism-based investigation, the sports travel market offers storytellers a never-ending script of emotion-filled subjective material. As noted earlier, sport is everywhere in twenty-first century society. Its unpredictability increases its appeal to the consumers, ensuring you never know how things will eventuate or how you will be feeling at its conclusion. All you know is that it will be emotional by the lorry load. The winners will walk away happy. The losers will not. Ultimately, my special interest in the exploration of self narratives and adoption of alternative ways of thinking, including the embracing of the emotional-filled literary turn, could not be overlooked, underestimated or conveniently brushed aside.

Why shouldn't we start sharing our socially constructed stories? My initial explorations certainly suggest that there is an audience dying to hear them. Why restrict them to the safety of our classroom and our corridors? Why not let complete strangers hear, interpret and compare our cultural experiences? Why not let them judge who they think we are, based on what we have done and how well we are able to articulate it through narrative? Why not?

[115] See **Nigel Morgan and Annette Pritchard (2005)** On souvenirs and metonymy: Narratives of memory, metaphor and materiality, Tourist Studies 5 (1), pp. 29-53; **Chaim Noy (2007)** 'The Language(s) of the Tourist Exeprience: An Autoethnography of the Poetic Tourist', in Irena Ateljevic, Annette Pritchard and Nigel Morgan (Eds.) *A Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Innovative Research Methodologies* (pp. 349-370) (Amsterdam: Elsevier)

[116]. Please see **Ronald J. Pelias (2003)** The Academic Tourist: An Autoethnography, *Qualitative Inquiry* 9 (3), pp. 369-373.

*Getting to grips with Richard*

Richard Giulianotti has probably been as visible in the advancement of football-related sociology, as Mike Weed has in the exploration of the sports-tourism link. Like all of the people mentioned within this chapter, his dedication to his area of special academic interest has played a significant role in getting me to where I find myself. Furthermore, of all the sociologists encountered during my never-ending quest for new knowledge, he appears to share my passion for exploring the untold stories of football fans from around the world.

Giulianotti's early work focused on the unruly, 'hooligan', characteristics of Scottish spectators, but he subsequently spent much of the 1990s conducting ethnographies in Europe, the Americas and Africa[117]. I couldn't help but find myself relating my personal experiences to his professional observations, and his influence is clearly evident in the proposal that I wrote back in the early hours of Monday September 12th 2005. More recently, his attention has shifted towards the consumption of sport and impact of globalisation[118]. I was inspired, for example, by his ability to link my favourite sport with the writings of previously unheard of social theorists[119].

[117] See, for example, **Richard Giulianotti (1991)** Scotland's Tartan Army in Italy: The Case for the Carnivalesque, *Sociological Review* 39 (3), pp. 503–27; **Richard Giulianotti (1994)** Scoring Away from Home: A Statistical Study of Scotland Football Fans at International Matches in Romania and Sweden, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 29 (2), pp. 171–200; **Richard Giulianotti (1995)** Football and the Politics of Carnival, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 30 (2), pp. 191–224; **Richard Giulianotti (1995)** Participant Observation and Research into Football Hooliganism: Some Reflections on the Problems of Entree and Everyday Risks from a Comparative Study. *Sociology of Sport* 12 (1), pp. 1-20; **Richard Giulianotti (1996)** Back to the future: An ethnography of Ireland's football fans at the 1994 World Cup finals in the USA, *International Review for the Sociology Sport* 31 (3), pp. 323-347; **Gerry P. T. Finn and Richard Giulianotti (1996)** 'Scottish Fans, Not English Hooligans! Scots, Scottishness, and Scottish Football', in Adam Brown (Ed.) *Fanatics! Power, Identity and Fandom in Football* (pp. 189–202) (London: Routledge); **Richard Giulianotti (1999**) Sport and Social Development in Africa: Some Major Human Rights Issues', available at http://fulltext.ausport.gov.au/fulltext/1999/nsw/p18-25.pdf [ accessed 29/5/06]; **Richard Giulianotti (2001)** Conducting Play: Youth, Violence and Governmentality within UK Football, *Youth and Policy* 73, pp. 45–65; **Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti (2001)** *Fear and loathing in world football* (Oxford: Berg); **Richard Giulianotti and Gary Armstrong (2002**) Avenues of contestation. Football hooligans running and ruling urban spaces, *Social Anthropology* 10 (2), pp. 211–238; **Richard Giulianotti (2003)** Forging Identities: Reviewing Key Studies in the Relations Between Gender, the State, and Globalization in Latin America, *Reviews in Anthropology* 32, pp. 345-358

[118] See, for example, **Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson (2004)** The globalization of football: a study in the glocalization of the 'serious life, *The British Journal of Sociology* 55 (4), pp. 545-568; **Richard Giulianotti (2005)** Sport Spectators and the Social Consequences of Commodification: Critical Perspectives from Scottish Football, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 29 (4), pp. 386-410; **Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson (2007)** Forms of Glocalization: Globalization and the Migration Strategies of Scottish Football Fans in North America, *Sociology* 41, pp. 133-153.

[119] See **Richard Giulianotti (2004)** 'Civilising games: Norbert Elias and the sociology of sport', in Richard Giulianotti (Ed.) *Sport and Modern Social Theorists* (pp.145-160) (Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan).

I loved the connections that Giulianotti continually made to the construction of multiple identities[120]. His passionate approach to the enhancement of football-inspired sociology provided me with the perfect platform for my original PhD proposal. I lost an entire Sunday afternoon trying to place not only myself, but also my friends and family within the four spectator identities he created in 2002[121]. I also saw a number of connections between his work and the sports-related tourism material that I had presented

[120] In 1996, Richard Giulianotti presented his interpretive ethnography of Irish football fans that travelled across the Atlantic for the 1994 FIFA World Cup Finals in the United States. The social activities of the supporter based in New York and Orlando were observed with particular interest given to their interaction with others, including the large Irish diaspora residing on the East Coast of America and supporters of other teams playing in the tournament. His concluding remarks note four areas in which he felt that the identities of the Irish supporter displayed "forms of maturation". These were: "internal fan criticisms of the team's style; critical commentaries on the tournament's organization; effective instances of evading profiteering during the tournament; and, most importantly, how the soccer culture helps to promote a fresh sense of Irish identity, as beyond nation-state boundaries or territorial claims". His study of the Irish in America effectively complemented a couple of earlier studies Giulianotti had produced on the social activities of Scottish fans in Genoa and Turin, during the 1990 World Cup, and the logistic, social structural and affective properties of Scotland football supporters attending two types of international fixture abroad: a high prestige tournament in Sweden and a low prestige qualifier in Romania. On both these occasions, he was able to draw on some key sociological concepts that enabled him to situate his ethnographies. For further discussion see **Richard Giulianotti (1991)** Scotland's Tartan Army in Italy: The Case for the Carnivalesque, *Sociological Review* 39 (3), pp. 503–27; **Richard Giulianotti (1994)** Scoring Away from Home: A Statistical Study of Scotland Football Fans at International Matches in Romania and Sweden, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 29 (2), pp. 171–200; **Richard Giulianotti (1996)** Back to the future: An ethnography of Ireland's football fans at the 1994 World Cup finals in the USA, *International Review for the Sociology Sport* 31 (3), pp. 323-347.

[121] According to Richard Giulianotti, the world of professional football has undergone some significant changes over the past couple of decades, all of which have had a dramatic impact on the individuals found in the stands and terraces of stadiums located from Cambridge to Carlisle, Cardiff to Cowdenbeath. In 2002, he complemented his extensive existing work on the sociological aspects of football with an examination into "the impact of football's commodification" on spectators in relation to their affiliation and association with individual football clubs. In doing so, he created "a model of four ideal-type spectator identities that may be found in the contemporary football world". Each identity was then discussed in terms of their personal motivation and relationship to the material world, including the attachment that they were perceived to have to their teams and their sense of belonging to the places in which they play. In terms of motive, Giulianotti concluded that his first identity (the supporter) feels somewhat obligated to show their allegiance to their team, gaining an element of personal and public identity in return. Likewise, in terms of their relationship to the material environment, the supporter was thought to have "inextricable biographical and emotional ties to the club's ground, which is a key cultural emblem of the surrounding community". His second identity (the Follower) was said to spread his/her bets by having allegiances to more than one club, gaining a broader sense of involvement in the sport itself (i.e. as opposed to one particular team). This individual was therefore said to be aware of the "symbolic significance" of the stadium, but unlike the supporter, this understanding was thought to have been generated by an external source such as the media. His third identity (the fan) is motivated by his/her desire to create a consumption-oriented identity based around non-reciprocal relationships with those from outside of his/her normal 'everyday' social environment. The Fan was thought to consume "a distant socio-spatial relationship to favoured clubs and their stars", but deemed unlike to experience the same level of attachment as the supporter due to the increased distance between them and the celebrities responsible for representing the team in question. Finally, his last identity (the flâneur) is driven by the desire to experience excitement and entertainment, and thus willing to transfer their allegiances across geographic and social boundaries as a when it suits them. As "a mobile cosmopolitan", the flâneur resides in "a cosmopolis of consumption" with "no capacity to secure personal alignment" with any one particular location and/or team. For further discussion, see **Richard Giulianotti (2002)** Supporters, followers, fans, and flaneurs: A Taxonomy of Spectator Identities in Football, *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 26 (1), pp. 25-46.

several months earlier during my inaugural sport tourism lecture. I felt that many of Giulianotti's findings were yet to be fully exploited within a sports tourism context, especially his spectator typology. In fact, despite several months of reading, I was yet to find anyone looking at the difference between the personal/self and collective/social identities of travelling (trans-Tasman) sports spectators.

This quickly became the gap that I wanted to fill. This was going to be my unique contribution to knowledge. The large extract found at the end of this chapter reveals what I wrote later that night. It has not been edited. It reveals precisely what I wanted to achieve with my PhD. That was the 'big' idea that I just had to share with someone as I lay wide awake in the middle of the night. This was the 'big' idea that I decided to take downstairs and reveal to my mother. It couldn't wait until the morning. I wanted to tell her about my decision to look at New Zealand and Australian sport tourists. I wanted to tell her about my desire to do it in both their home and away environments. I wanted to tell her about my desire to delve deeper than the sport tourism literature that I had been reading. I wanted to reveal my desire to explore both the sociological and the psychological aspects of sport studies. Finally, I wanted to impress her with my new knowledge of social theorists Georg Simmel and Norbert Elias[122].

[122] Georg Simmel claimed that the psychological activity of individuals responds directly to almost every impression that comes from another person. He also noted how the number of different social groups in which the individual participates is one of the earmarks of culture. Similarly, individuals have been found to adjust their self-evaluations based on comparisons made with other group members. It should also be noted that the challenge facing groups, regarding how it should manage those within it, is often closely related to the problem encountered by individual members left contemplating their own relationship within the constructs of the group's boundaries. For example, those given positions of power within the group are faced with the responsibility of treating all members equally, whilst at the same time, trying to encourage and provide the necessary opportunities for individuals to maximise their own potential. In addition, the social world is quite literally full of out-groups, directly or indirectly competing and, in some cases, even complementing with each other as they struggle to establish their own collective identity (or identities). Whilst Pierre Bourdieu popularised the term, Norbert Elias argued that 'habitus' was one of the conceptual keys to the dissolving of the false dichotomy between the individual and society within the social sciences. Collective identifications (such as national identity) can thus be described in terms of sets of behaviour, or habitus codes, which work to bind individuals together. The Eliasian use of 'habitus' is of central importance to the understanding of the process of identity and the multi-layered, dynamic nature of personal and national identity. For most sports fans, the nation that deserves their support is a given and in following their national team they underline their sense of identity while simultaneously reflecting its complex character. Elias makes the connection between issues of identity and national character in his introduction to the established and the outsiders. The multi-layered qualities of habitus, and the intertwining of the individual and society, can be more clearly understood by thinking in terms of what Elias called the "we-I balance". Put simply, there can be no 'I' without the 'we'. Elias claimed that 'the individual bears himself or herself the habitus of a group, and it is this habitus that he or she individualises to a greater or lesser extent'. See **Georg Simmel (1949)** The Sociology of Sociability (trans. E.C. Hughes), *American Journal of Sociology* 55 (3), pp. 254–61; **Georg Simmel (1950)** *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (trans. and ed. K.H. Wolff) (New York: Free Press); **Georg Simmel (1955)** *Conflict and the Web of Group-Affiliations* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press). **Norbert Elias and John Scotson (1965)** *The established and the outsiders: A sociological Inquiry into community problems* (London: Frank Cass); **Georg Simmel (1971)** *On*

Right now, I want to run the exact same idea past you. I want you thinking about my original plan of attack. I want you thinking about how and why my thesis ended up so different to the proposal that not only got me a place on the bus, but also paid for my ticket. I remember being told by a PhD student reaching the end of his own journey that the proposal he submitted had nothing to do with the thesis he had just finished. I also remember being told to avoid discussing my aims and objectives as they would undoubtedly change several times over the course of my first year.

In July 2006 I presented a department seminar entitled 'Getting to Grips with Richard'. I was less than six months onto my PhD journey but I was encouraged to stand up in front of my peers and explain where I thought my new found knowledge would eventually lead me. The Richard that I spoke about that day was Giulianotti (the sociologist from Scotland) and not Wright (the student from Sawston). The following extract provides a detailed rationale as to why I wanted to spend three years studying the sport tourist experience. What it doesn't say, however, is the fact that I wanted to continue teaching in the department. It also fails to mention the 'real' reason that I was so desperate to stay in Dunedin. Melanie still had at least three years of study left to complete. I didn't want to go anywhere else, least of all back to my parent's house in Sawston.

The extract below was never meant to be read by anyone other than those responsible for deciding my fate back in the November of 2005. I think that is what makes it so powerful. I, myself, hadn't looked at it for over two and a half years. I've opted to include everything I wrote that night. I didn't want to risk altering its context through the removal of a sentence here and there. The only things added after the 12th of September were the references that I spent the next couple of days gathering from my Masters. I wanted to impress my audience with the extent of my background knowledge on the subject I wished to explore (i.e. note how I have tried to avoid sourcing anyone twice).

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*Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings* (ed. D.N. Levine) (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press); **Pierre Bourdieu (1977)** *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: CUP); **Norbert Elias (1978)** *The Civilising Proces* (Oxford: Blackwell); **Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning (1986)** *Quest for Excitement* (Oxford: Blackwell); **Norbert Elias (1991)** *The Society of Individuals* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell); **Stephen Mennell (1992**) *Norbert Elias: An introduction* (Dublin: UCD Press); **Richard Giulianotti (2004)** 'Civilising games: Norbert Elias and the sociology of sport', in Richard Giulianotti (Ed.) *Sport and Modern Social Theorists* (pp.145-160) (Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan); **Richard Giulianotti (2005)** The Sociability of Sport, Scotland Football Supporters as Interpreted through the Sociology of Georg Simmel, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 40, 3, pp. 289–306.

The only thing missing from the proposal that I submitted several weeks later to the University of Otago are the title of my proposed study, my research question, aim and objectives and the reference list to accompany my overview of the literature. I love how I stated the desire to "fully acknowledge" myself and the "active role" I wanted to play in my research. This obviously came long before I had read anything about the use of personal narratives, or the existence of autoethnography. Note how I also acknowledge Michael Hall's assessment of reflexivity[123]. I had discovered it my accident the week before. The thought of embracing his interesting ideas or writing a first person PhD proposal, however, never once crossed my mind. I had always been taught the importance of maintaining distance and writing everything from the third person perspective.

*Wright, R. K. 2005. PhD Research Proposal*

> While travelling to sporting events is by no means a new phenomenon and can be traced back centuries (Delphy-Neirotti 2005; Glyptis 1991; Hinch & Higham 2004; Kurtzman & Zauhar 2005; Standeven & De Knop 1999), the behavioural characteristics of the sport event tourist or travelling sports spectator, as an interconnected sociological field of tourism enquiry remain, as yet, largely undeveloped (Bairner 2001; Crawford 2004; Douvis et al 1998; Francis & Murphy 2005; Getz 2003; Gibson et al 2003; Maguire et al. 2002; Ryan 2005). Despite the relationship between globalisation and culture, publications relating this to sport have tended to focus on individual case studies, examined from a distanced 'outsiders' perspective (Armstrong & Giulanotti 1999; Dyreson 2003; Fougere 1989. Jackson & Weed 2003; Jarvie 1993; Nauright 1997). It would also appear that little research has actually been conducted, utilising interpretive analysis or comparisons to explore domestic and international travelling spectators (Wann et al 2001; Weed & Bull 2004). In addition, few, if any, acknowledge the implications of increasing global spectator presence on the traditional social constructs of 'home' and 'away' identity, loyalty or image formation. In today's increasingly global society, the tourism and sport industries have effectively evolved, through industrialisation and democratisation, into prominent, highly competitive and profitably commercialised commodities (Daniels & Norman 2003; France & Roche 1998; Fraser & McMahon 2002;

[123] Michael Hall's chapter within Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson's excellent qualitative-focused research text noted the obvious lack of reflexivity within tourism-focused academia, despite the large amount of participant observation and special interest research taking place around the world. He openly discusses the pressures of publishing research and the difficulties of getting subjective studies passed the editorial boards of tourism-situated academic journals. His chapter was an eye-opener and I certainly admired his honesty. See **C. Michael Hall (2004)** 'Reflexivity and tourism research: Situating myself and/with others', in Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* (pp. 137-154) (London: Routledge).

Gratton & Henry 2001; Laidlaw 1999; Maguire 1994 McCartney 2005; Robinson 2003; Whitson & Macintosh 1996). Though the growth of both sectors has been followed closely by academics and governments alike (Stevens & van de Broek 1997), Williams (2003:119) notes

> "[T]he linkages between sport and tourism have been generally ignored, even though the range of potential linkages are extremely broad and despite the implicit travel dynamic in many areas of professional team sport that is embodied in the organisation of home and away matches".

Understanding the traditional constructs of 'home' and 'away' is also seen as a critical component within the exploration of both tourist behaviour (Ateljevic 2000; Crompton 1979; Dann 1981; Pearce 1982; Ross 1998). At the same time, there is an increasing amount of evidence to suggest that organised sport, at any level, is also founded on this dichotomy (Bale 1988, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1994; Carrington 1998; Crawford 2004). While the impact of internationalisation on sport, as a form of popular culture, has become a fashionable area of academic discussion, particularly in relation to media coverage (Boyles & Haynes 2000; Collins 2000; Rowe 1999, 2003, 2004; Schlesinger 1991), there appears to be a noticeable dearth of research acknowledging any interconnection with tourism mobility (Hall 2005a). In fact, with the exception of several sociological studies by Guilianotti (1991; 1995; 1996; 2000) the role of the domestic and international spectator (or passive sport tourist) has been largely overlooked in all fields of literature (Wann et al 2001; Gibson et al 2003; Bouchet et al. 2004; Saayman & Uys 2003; Weed & Bull 2004).

This study will provide a reflexive exploration of notions of 'home' and 'away' identity, loyalty and image formation from the perspective of the spectator, further examining their position within the global sport industry. In doing so, it will attempt to answer the following research question: Has globalisation deconstructed or re-enforced the sport tourist's notion of 'home' and 'away' identity? The research will provide an unparalleled interdisciplinary focus on the perception of globalisation within the sociology of cultural sport event tourism. Specific attention will be given to spectator relationships and notions of identity (personal and social), loyalty and the constructs of 'home' and/or 'away' image formulation.

The key outcomes of the study will therefore be of particular relevance and use to a broad spectrum of academic studies. The study will move away from the more traditional positivist approach and adopt an interpretive inquiry paradigm (Denzin 1999; Gaskins 1994; Henderson 1991), seeking a deeper understanding from a phenomenological perspective (Geertz 1973; Hayllar & Griffin. 2005; Masberg & Silverman 1996). Being a passionate sports fan the researcher intends to fully acknowledge his position and play an active part within this reflexive, naturalistic-based, ethnographical research study (Hall 2004; Lincoln & Guba1985; Palmer 2001; Schwandt 1997). Empirical data collection will take place at and around various sporting fixtures in New Zealand and Australia, including observations and

interactions made before and after the events (Denscombe 2002; Gans 1999).

In addition, the researcher will also incorporate observations and interactions with spectators that travel to sporting events purely to soak up the atmosphere. The analysis of narratives will be a continual comparative process, consisting of the sifting, charting and codification of recurring themes or trends within the qualitative material collected (Holiday 2002; Maykut, & Morehouse 1994; Patton 2002; Riley & Love 2000; Wolcott 1994, 2001). Follow up participant communication will be conducted, as a form of data triangulation, to increase the strength of the data collected (Decrop 1999; Maxwell 1992). The outcomes of the interpretive study will add to the number of interdisciplinary research studies being conducted that incorporate the field of tourism (Holden 2005; Przeclawski 1994; Tribe 1997, 2000, 2001) [124].

[124] Many of the references captured within this extract can be found elsewhere in my narrative. I have opted against listing them all within an extra long footnote as I do not believe it will add any value to my story. The sources of information used were extracted straight from the reference list of my Masters. See **Richard Keith Wright (2005)** Taming the Lions: An investigative study examining the impact and implications of the management policies adopted by New Zealand's Regional Tourism Organisations for the 2005 Lions Tour, *Unpublished Master's Thesis*: School of Business, University of Otago.

# Chapter 9: Picking *a* position

The inclusion of my PhD Proposal hopefully illustrates the stark contrast between the academic who started this journey and the autoethnographer who hopes to finish it in the not too distant future. I wanted to reveal my reliance on supporting my thoughts with the surnames of other people. I wanted to reveal the literature that I had been reading at the time. Homi Bhabha suggests that individuals regularly create and consume powerful narratives that establish "in-between spaces" that subsequently dominate/dictate our social identities[125]. The construction of this thesis has certainly seen me escape into a 'third space' of (un)consciousness on more than one occasion[126]. Rather than doing it purely through the words that I write and/or the daily debates that I have with others, I am also able to do it through the photographs that I have taken and the reflections that I regularly re-interpret while sitting by myself.

The photograph placed at the start of this Act still causes hairs to stand to attention on the back of my neck. It is more than just an image of a cultural sporting icon. It is the gateway to a host of powerful memories. It is the entrance to yet another equally complicated set of in-between spaces. As revealed in the previous chapter, the interpretive explorations of Richard Giulianotti gave me my first real taste of using ethnography within the sociology of sport (and football fandom in particular). The months that followed the creation of my research proposal, and my subsequent acceptance onto the PhD programme, were spent trying to satisfy my constant cravings

[125] Within his seminal text on the importance of culture and language within social interaction and the construction of meaning, Homi Bhabha argues that "What is theoretically innovative and politically crucial is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences". Such spaces result in room for alternative interpretations of 'truth'. He describes also communication as: "The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the 'I' and the 'You' designated in the statement. In **Homi Bhabha (1994)** *The location of culture* (London: Routledge) (pp. 1- 36).

[126] To Homi Bhabha, the communication of meaning requires that the author/speaker and the audience "be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot be conscious". He goes on to add that "What this unconscious relation introduces is ambivalence in the act of interpretation. The pronominal 'I' of the proposition cannot be made to address - in its own words - the subject of enunciation, for this is not personable, but remains a spatial relation with the schemata and strategies of the discourse. The meaning of the utterance is quite literally neither one nor the other". My continual referral to I 'want' and what I 'hope' to communicate (to you) over the course of this narrative of self regularly sees me enter this additional space of being. I am also searching for new meanings. In Ibid (p. 36).

for more information on the sociological implications of travelling to sports events. Thankfully I didn't have to look too hard. It was during this time, for example, that I discovered a number of academic journals that appeared to focus specifically on the long-established relationship between sport and society[127]. Can you imagine my delight when I stumbled across the *Soccer and Society* journal? Better still, I found '*Football Studies'* only a matter of seconds later[128].

The biggest surprise was not the amount of academic attention given to the importance of sport within western society, although I must admit that I was a little taken aback by both the volume of existing literature and the fact that some of the earliest material being quoted appeared to be older than me[129]. It was, however, the lack of attention given to those consuming sport from either the sidelines or the sofa that proved the most surprising outcome of my initial search. Almost all of the material that I found

[127] Whilst there were a number of journal titles that kept cropping up in 2005 and 2006 as I tried to get a better understanding of the sports fan identity, I have opted to highlight the two most influential in terms of helping me to construct my own academic position. Both are available on-line and contain a plethora of peer-reviewed inspiration when it comes to the socio-cultural significance of consuming sport within everyday life. Both stress their multi/inter-disciplinary status and both appear to be targeting the exact same academic audience. Previously called *Culture, Sport, Society*, Taylor and Francis describe the ***Sport in Society*** journal as being "a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary forum for academics to discuss the growing relationship of sport to these significant areas of modern life". They note the dramatic up-rise in research and writing coming from individuals situated "not only in sports studies but in business, economics, law, management, politics, and media and tourism studies". Similarly, ***The International Review for the Sociology of Sport***, according to its publishers, aims "to disseminate research and scholarship on sport throughout the international academic community" and "is not restricted to any theoretical or methodological perspective". On the contrary, it encourages "contributions from anthropology, cultural studies, geography, history, political economy, semiotics, sociology, women's studies, as well as interdisciplinary research" from "all regions of the world". See **Taylor and Francis Publications (2010)**, available at: http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles [Accessed 13th April 2009]; Sage Web-site, available at: http://www.uk.sagepub.com/journals [Accessed 13th April 2009].

[128]Started at the turn of century, ***Soccer and Society*** claims to be the "first international journal devoted to the world's most popular game". According to its publishers, it "covers all aspects of soccer globally from anthropological, cultural, economic, historical, political and sociological perspectives. Soccer and Society encourages and favours clearly written research, analysis and comment". ***Football Studies*** was founded in 1997 and said to be "the journal of the International Society of Football Scholars". According to its publishers, it "provides scholarly articles and reviews on the cultural, social, political and economic aspects of football in its various forms throughout the world". Unlike the other journals uncovered during my review of the literature, these football-focused publications emphasised the popularity of the studying my favourite past time from a number of different academic angles. Their very existence also re-assured me of the validity and creditability of my own research. See **Taylor and Francis Publications (2010)**, available at: http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/fsas [Accessed 13th April 2009]; **The LA84 Foundation (2010)**, available at: http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/footballstudies_frmst.htm [Accessed 13th April 2009].

[129] See, for example, **H. James Frey and D. Stanley Eitzen (1991**) Sport and Society, *Annual Review Sociology* 17, pp. 503-522; **Martin Polley (1998)** *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945* (London: Routledge); **Jay Coakley (2003)** *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies*, 8th Edition (Singapore: McGraw-Hill); **Barrie Houlihan (2003)** *Sport and Society: A Student Introduction* (London: Sage); **Garry Crawford (2004**) *Consuming sport: fans, sport, and culture* (London: Routledge); **Chris Collins (2007)** 'Studying Sport in Society', in Chris Collins and Steven Jackson (Eds.) *Sport in Aotearoa/New Zealand Society* (pp. 2-22) (Melbourne: Thomson).

myself reading was related to those travelling to actively participate in sports-related activity, both recreational and professional.

As my cravings continued, I soon found myself walking down different aisles in the university library and reading different interpretations, in different publications, from what appeared to be a completely different discipline. I found myself walking and talking within the realms of sports psychology, trying to (re)interpret over a decade's worth of investigations conducted by what appeared to be a relatively small band of researchers. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. While it was everything that I had admittedly been looking for, it also represented everything that I had secretly begun to hope didn't already exist. I saw it as representing both an opportunity and a threat to my research.

Daniel Wann appears to have made it his goal in life to discover everything there is to know and understanding about the psychological characteristics of the sports fan. In fact, I would go as far as suggesting that he appears to have spent his 1990s thinking of relatively little, if anything, other than the importance of sport[130]. Within only a couple of hours of my discovery that Daniel Wann and Nyla Branscombe had already created an established, and much cited, identification-based framework[131], I also found their numerous explorations into the self and social identities that sports fans created whilst watching sport and/or interacting with other sports fans[132]. As more and more articles

[130] See, for example, **Daniel L. Wann (1994)** The "noble" sports fan: The relationships between team identification, self-esteem, and aggression, *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 78, pp. 864-866; **Daniel L. Wann (1995)** Preliminary Validation of the Sport Fan Motivation Scale, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* November 1995, pp. 377-396; **Daniel L. Wann (1996)** Seasonal Changes in Spectators' Identification and Involvement with and Evaluations of College Basketball and Football Teams, *The Psychological Record* 46 (1), pp. 201 – 216; **Daniel L. Wann (1997)** *Sport psychology* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall); **Daniel L. Wann, Merrill J. Melnick, Gordon W. Russell and Dale G. Pease (2001**) *Sport Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators* (London: Routledge).

[131] Daniel Wann and Nyla Brancombe collaborative research on the factors that spectators use to relate to sports teams remains some of the most influential, and consequently most cited, work on the behavioural characteristics of the sports fan. Their frameworks suggested that fans consciously use their identification to a particular team as a means to vicariously boost their self esteem and either enhance (via attachment) or protect (via creating distance) their own ego. In their studies of American students, they found that spectators with a strong psychological attachment will attribute their favourite club's success to personal experiences, whilst blame any failure on external environmental factors that are perceived to be out of their direct control. For further discussion see **Daniel L. Wann and Nyla Branscombe (1990)** Die-hard and fair weather fans: effects of identification on BIRGing and CORFing tendencies. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 14 (2), pp. 103–117; **Nyla Branscombe and Daniel L. Wann (1991)** The positive social and self concept consequences of sports team identification, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 15 (1), pp. 115-127; **Daniel L. Wann and Nyla Branscombe (1993)** Sports fans: Measuring degree of identification with the team, International *Journal of Sport Psychology* 24, pp. 1-17; **Nyla Branscombe and Daniel L. Wann (1994)** Collective self-esteem consequences of out-group derogation when a valued social identity is on trial. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 24, pp. 641–57; **Daniel L. Wann and Nyla Branscombe (1995)** Influence of identification with a sports team on objective knowledge and subjective beliefs. *International Journal of Sports Psychology* 26, pp. 551–567.

[132] Daniel Wann's early research found that sport fans exhibited a certain degree bias when it came to their teams. Expanding this further, he has also conducted experiments into the amount of bias that fans

kept appearing, I found myself reading a statistic that effectively summed up everything that I had found (or not found) during the previous two or three weeks of my life. It came from a 1995 literature review conducted by Daniel Wann and Michael Hamlett[133]. It suggested that only 4% of the sociological and psychological studies of sport that they had accessed had focused on the sports fan[134]. I remember thinking at the time that if this surprising statistic was indeed true at the time, then primary author of that article appeared to represent at least 3.99 % of that total.

Much like Mike Weed and Richard Giulianotti before him, Daniel Wann was immediately labelled as an academic whose contribution to my ever-expanding sports fan knowledge base could not be ignored. Unlike the other two authors, however, Wann's research was almost entirely focused on the testing of American sport fans (most of whom were students at his university)[135]. His frameworks and findings may have been subsequently adopted and adapted by a number of academics located outside of the USA[136], but I was reluctant to consider his work as being as globally significant as that produced by either Weed or Giulianotti. Not at that early stage anyway.

Many of Daniel Wann's experiments appear to have come out of his early observations that it was the violent and aggressive sports fan that appeared to be attracting

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show towards their fellow spectators, looking at both those that support the same team and those that support rival teams. Together with his co-researchers, Wann argued that supporters of a poorly performing side would feel threatened by those of a more successful team. Likewise, the homes fans would also feel threatened by the invasion of away supporters. As a result, they suggested that fans who felt that their club's identity was at risk would subsequently increase their sense of belongingness and increase their level of identification towards their fellow supporters. See, for further discussion, **Daniel L Wann and Frederick G Grieve (2005)** Biased Evaluations of In-Group and Out-Group Spectator Behavior at Sporting Events: The Importance of Team Identification and Threats to Social Identity, *The Journal of Social Psychology* 145 (5), pp. 531-546.

[133] See **Daniel L. Wann and Michael A. Hamlet (1995**) Author and Subject Gender in Sport Research, *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 26, pp. 225-232.

[134] Ibid (p. 225).

[135] See, for example, **Daniel L. Wann and Thomas J. Dolan (1994)** Attributions of highly identified sport spectators, *The Journal of Social Psychology* 134, pp. 783-792; **Daniel L. Wann and Thomas J. Dolan (1994)** Influence of spectators' identification on evaluation of the past present and fixture performance of a sports team, *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 78, pp. 541-552; **Daniel L. Wann**, **Thomas J. Dolan, Kimbeley K. McGeorge and Julie A. Allison (1994)** Relationships between spectator identification and spectators perceptions of influence, spectators' emotions, and competition outcome', *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 16, pp. 347-364; **Daniel L. Wann, Kathleen B. Tucker and Michael P. Schrader (1996)** An exploratory examination of the factors influencing the origination, continuation, and cessation of identification with sports teams, *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 82, pp. 995-1101; **Daniel L. Wann and Michael P. Schrader (2000**) Controllability and stability in the self-serving attributions of sport spectators, *Journal of Social Psychology* 140, pp. 160-168; **Daniel L. Wann, Mardis D. Dunham, Mandy L. Byrd and Brian L. Keenan (2004)** The five-factor model of personality and the psychological health of highly identified sport fans, *International Sports Journal* 8 (2), pp. 28-36.

[136] See, for example, **Ian Jones (2000)** A model of serious leisure identification: the case of football fandom, *Leisure Studies* 19 (4), pp. 283-298; **Nam-Su Kim and Lawrence Chalip (2004)** Why travel to the FIFA World Cup? Effects of motives, background, interest, and constraints, *Tourism Management* 25, pp. 695–707.

most of the academic attention during the 1980s. He has subsequently argued on a number of occasions, and within a number of different publications, that his research into the individual characteristics of the sports spectator is important for a number of reasons, not just as a predictor of possible trouble and/or identifier of potential trouble-makers[137]. In 1995, for example, Wann suggested that his Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) could help identify issues of self achievement, accomplishment and positive social identity attribution, linking his studies to existing social psychological theories relating to both self esteem and social affiliation[138].

Daniel Wann's subsequent validation of the SFMS model involved the analysis of eight hypothesised motivational factors and a 23-item Likert Scale. The eight motives were 'Eutress' (a positive form of anxiety that mixes euphoria and stress to not only stimulates, but also (re)energises), 'self-esteem' (enhancement), 'escape' (from reality), 'entertainment', 'economic', 'aesthetic', 'group affiliation' and 'family'[139]. The last two represented the fans need to belong and desire to share his/her experiences with friends and family. His acknowledgement of the importance of family in the sport fan's motivational arsenal is clearly something that I have tried to demonstrate myself within the first Act of my research. Back in 2006, however, it was his more recent identification and discussion into the relevance of social identity theory and in/out-group behaviour that had me smiling and rubbing my hands together[140].

Wann's utilisation of the term 'Eustress' led me to revisit the Kim and Chalip study that I had used to such great affect within my first ever lecture[141]. Suddenly the pieces were all starting to fit together. I had never been comfortable with the thought of trying to construct something that no one else had done, especially if it was going to

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[137] **Daniel L. Wann, Michael P. Schrader and Anthony M. Wilson (1999)** Sport Fan Motivation: Questionnaire Validation, Comparisons by Sport, and Relationship to Athletic Motivation, *Journal of Sport Behavior* 22 (1), pp.114-139; **Daniel L. Wann, Joel Royalty and Angie Roberts (2000)** The Self-Presentation of Sport Fans: Investigating the Importance of Team Identification and Self-Esteem, *Journal of Sport Behavior* 23 (2), pp. 198-206; **Daniel L. Wann, Jamie L. Hunter, Jacob A. Ryan and Leigh Ann Wright (2001)** The Relationship between team identification and willingness of sports fans to consider illegally assisting their team, *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal* 29 (6), pp. 531-536.

[138] See **Daniel L. Wann (1995)** Preliminary Validation of the Sport Fan Motivation Scale, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* November 1995, pp. 377-396.

[139] Ibid (p. 378).

[140] See **Daniel L Wann and Frederick G Grieve (2005)** Biased Evaluations of In-Group and Out-Group Spectator Behavior at Sporting Events: The Importance of Team Identification and Threats to Social Identity, *The Journal of Social Psychology* 145 (5), pp. 531-546; **Daniel L. Wann (2006)** Examining the Potential Causal Relationship Between Sport Team Identification and Psychological well-being, *Journal of Sport Behavior* 29 (1), pp.79-95.

[141] See, for discussion, **Nam-Su Kim and Lawrence Chalip (2004)** Why travel to the FIFA World Cup? Effects of motives, background, interest, and constraints, *Tourism Management* 25, pp. 695–707.

prove difficult to access the information I wanted. Furthermore, I had no interest in wasting three years on a study that no one would ever want to read (or perhaps publish). I had promised Melanie that I would have it all completed within the duration of my scholarship. I wasn't planning to try and change the world.

My discovery of Daniel Wann was not the only boost in confidence that I received during the second half of 2006. Not long after giving my first PhD seminar on the inspirational ethnographies of Richard Giulianotti I had an abstract accepted for an international tourism conference. It was being hosting by the university that had been my first choice ten years earlier. It also conveniently coincided with the Christmas holiday that myself and Melanie had already booked. It was to be my first trip home since moving to New Zealand. It was going to be Melanie's first ever trip to the UK. We were going for two months and planned to travel around the country as much a possible. I had lots of places that I wanted to show her, and lots of people I wanted her to meet. I also had my eye on several Cambridge United fixtures, including the Boxing Day match at the Abbey.

As the conference got closer, I set about planning the best way to introduce myself to anyone who had done any previous work on sports-related tourism. I also wanted to make sure that my first conference presentation was even better than my first lecture. I was desperate to make a favourable first impression. I knew that Mike Weed was going to be in attendance and, having seen who I was due to be presenting alongside, I suspected that he would be amongst the audience of my session. I was equally excited about meeting Ian Jones. I had just finished reading a couple of studies that he had published over the past decade, including one that had incorporated the sports fan identification experiments conducted in America by Daniel Wann[142].

A quick glance at the back cover of Chris Gratton and Ian Jones' research methods was more than enough to convince me that I should extract it from the library at some point before I left for the conference[143]. By that stage I had expected to be in the

[142] See **Ian Jones (1997)** A further examination of the factors influencing current identification with a sports team, a response to Wann et al (1996) 1997, *Perpetual and Motor Skills* 85 (1), pp. 257-258; **Ian Jones (2000)** A model of serious leisure identification: the case of football fandom, *Leisure Studies* 19 (4), pp. 283-298; **Christine. B. Green and Ian Jones (2005)** Serious Leisure, Social Identity and Sport Tourism, *Sport in Society* 8 (2), pp. 164-181.

[143] Chris Gratton and Ian Jones offer their target audience an easy to follow narrative that explains and evaluates the value and validity of adopting either a qualitative or a quantitative approach to research, using contextualised case studies to illustrate their points and further emphasise the key characteristics of the different stages of the process. They introduce a number of conceptual Models and evaluate all of the existing ways in which it is possible to gather and analyse new or existing data, including material collected

position to begin the planning and initial implementation of my data collection and analysis process. I thought that I could take a copy to read at some point on over our Christmas vacation. My crash course in the social psychological aspect of sports fandom had already provided me with a wealth of new knowledge and a totally new outlook on the 'reality' of sport as a social phenomenon and I had no intention of basing my entire methodology on texts written by tourism researchers (for tourism researchers).

Before I knew it, I was writing down some of my own (re)interpretations of the material[144]. I was also being emailed interesting articles by colleagues who knew that I was always on the look out for more material[145]. One of these emails contained the article that directed me towards another easy-to-follow framework that immediately captured my imagination. It was called the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) and it actively encouraged the use of existing knowledge in the creation of a new direction for sports spectator research[146]. Many of Daniel Wann's experiments focused heavily on work that he and his colleagues had already conducted. His method of using scientific formulas and

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via the internet. See **Chris Gratton and Ian Jones (2004)** *Research Methods for Sport Studies* (London: Routledge).

[144] Unlike the sociology literature that I had accessed, the spectators were being described as a unique group of individuals. Despite the fact that psychologists have apparently been looking at the sports fan for several decades, a lack of research activity in terms of measuring levels of passive involvement, as opposed to active participation was immediately obvious. Thankfully, I did discover one such attempt by Matthew Shank and Fred Beasley. Together they looked at spectators attending professional golf tournament and concluded that a greater appreciation was required regarding both the 'perceived interest' and the 'personal importance' placed upon a sport by an individual. More importantly, they also highlight the need to study those happy to watch from the sidelines and, more importantly, from the comfort of their own home. They attempted to map a scale that measured various degrees of emotional involvement that a spectator can develop towards a sports team, examining the influence of social variables such as demographics, exercise habits, and media habits. See, for example, **Leon Mann and Phillip Pearce (1978)** 'Social psychology of the sports spectator', in Dennis. J. Glencross (Ed.), *Psychology and Sport* (NSW: McGraw-Hill); **Matthew D. Shank and Fred M. Beasley (1998)** Fan or Fanatic: Refining a Measure of Sports Involvement, *Journal of Sport Behavior* 21 (4), pp. 435-443.

[145] See, for example, **Robert Madrigal (1995)** Cognitive and Affective Determinants of Fan Satisfaction with Sporting Event Attendance, *Journal of Leisure Research* 27 (3), pp. 205-227; **James Redden and Carol J. Steiner (2000)** Fanatical consumers: towards a framework for research, *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 17 (4), pp.322 – 337; **Daniel C. Funk and Jeff James (2001)** The Psychological Continuum Model: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding an Individual's Psychological Connection to Sport, *Sport Management Review* 4, pp. 119-150; **Kevin Gwinner and Scott R. Swanson (2003)** A model of fan identification: antecedents and sponsorship outcomes', *Journal of Services Marketing* 17 (3), pp. 275-294; **Po- Ju Chen (2006)**The Attributes, Consequences, and Values Associated With Event Sport Tourists' Behavior: A Means-End Chain Approach, *Event Management* 10 (1), pp. 1-22.

[146] The Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) was introduced by Daniel Funk and Jeff James as a tool to help them conduct their research on the personal connections and changing relationships that spectators and fans experience with the teams that they follow, looking specifically at the factors that influence the strength of their allegiance. Their framework is built around the differences between awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance, suggesting that 'the psychological connections between an individual and a sport or team are governed by the complexity and strengthening of sport related mental associations'. For further discussion see **Daniel C. Funk and Jeff James (2001**) The Psychological Continuum Model: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding an Individual's Psychological Connection to Sport, *Sport Management Review* 4, pp. 119–150.

complicated equations to extract data gathered from university students was also something that I wanted to avoid.

I wanted to speak to real people about real experiences. I also wanted to observe my respondents. I didn't want to base my entire study on the development and distribution of a questionnaire. Po Lu Chen's phenomenological study of event sport tourist behaviour was, therefore, another article found in my inbox that immediately captured my imagination[147]. My preference for a qualitative-focused methodology was built around the fact that I wanted a tried and tested method, which was not too dissimilar to those that I had used on previous sports tourism study[148]. I have always searched for quality, as opposed to quantity. I therefore wanted to stick with the interpretive ethnographical methodology supported by Norman Denzin[149] and used by Richard Giulianotti[150].

Thankfully, in my attempts to find out a much as possible about the people that I hoped to impress during my first ever academic conference, I came across a copy of an article in which Ian Jones advocated the adoption of a mixed methods approach to sports-related research[151]. This, I thought at the time, was much more acceptable. I didn't mind doing a survey, as long as I also got to go and watch some sport. I wanted to participate. I wanted to observe. By May 16th 2007 I had given over fifty lectures, presented at an international conference and written a Journal article that was due to be published. More importantly, having made several valuable contacts at the conference, I was in the process of writing two additional book chapters (both based on my Masters). What I hadn't done, however, was written much on my PhD.

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[147] Po-Ju Chen used an interview-based laddering technique to discover the cognitive structures of fan club members and subsequently mapped the relationships between their attributes, consequences, and values in a means-end hierarchy. His study found that his participants were looking for a mixture of personal balance and socialization within their sport tourist experiences. See **Po-Ju Chen (2006)** The Attributes, Consequences, and Values Associated With Event Sport Tourists' Behavior: A Means-End Chain Approach, *Event Management* 10 (1), pp. 1-22.

[148] See **Richard Keith Wright (2005)** Taming the Lions: An investigative study examining the impact and implications of the management policies adopted by New Zealand's Regional Tourism Organisations for the 2005 Lions Tour, *Unpublished Masters Thesis*: School of Business, University of Otago.

[149] See **Norman K. Denzin (1997)** *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage).

[150] See, for example, **Richard Giulianotti (1996)** Back to the future: An ethnography of Ireland's football fans at the 1994 World Cup finals in the USA, *International Review for the Sociology Sport* 31 (3), pp. 323-347.

[151] See **Ian Jones (1997)** Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Sports Fan Research, *The Qualitative Report* [On-line serial], 3(4). Available: http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-4/jones.html, [Accessed 15, 12, 07].

I was more interested in reading the electronic draft of Ian Jones' (1998) doctoral thesis on the multiple identities of Luton Town football fans[152]. It was perfect. His search for relevant information had not only revealed a noticeable lack of sports-related research into non-violent fan identity, but also a feasible link between John Turner and Henri Tajfel's concept of Social Identity Theory and sports spectatorship[153]. It was also nice to see Daniel Wann's work being directly related to something other than American Football, Basketball or Baseball. Though I am happy to admit that I was able to draw some inspiration from reading the thesis, I was more appreciative of the fact that I was not the first person to explore this topic. It also reassured me that I had been looking in all the right places and reading all the right sources of information.

Ultimately, it was the way that Ian Jones had chosen to gather his data that I was most interested in. I had already seen his thoughts on the adoption of a mixed method approach and read the research methods text he produced alongside Chris Gratton, but this was the area in which I was still struggling to make any real progress[154]. I was never really concerned that I wouldn't have enough literature to critique or build myself a suitable platform for my study. I had gathered plenty since starting my Masters back in the February of 2005. Jones argued that the use of observation would complement the other methods implemented, noting the well-documented thoughts of both James Spradley and Michael Patton[155].

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[152] Having discussed my proposed PhD into the social identity of sport tourists with both Ian Jones and Mike Weed, I was very happy to accept Ian's offer to send me a draft copy of his PhD. I knew that his work had involved Daniel Wann's research but hadn't realised that he had also looked at social identity theory. See **Ian Jones (1998)** Football Fandom: Football Fan Identity and Identification at Luton Town Football Club, An *unpublished thesis* submitted to Luton Business School, University of Luton, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

[153] Ian Jones' review of Social Identity Theory (SIT) unsurprisingly highlighted many of the articles that I had uncovered the previous year, including that produced during the 1980s by John Turner and Henri Tajfel. Likewise, his (re)interpretation of their work was practically identical to that of my own. What his work demonstrated, however, was the direct link between the notion that we all draw strength from identifying with other people and the importance of showing our individual affiliation to a particular sports team (in this case Luton Town FC). He started his fourth chapter by concluding that "social identity theory seems to form an appropriate framework for the study of the football fan since it acknowledges the interrelated existence of the fan as both an individual (the "fan") and the "group" to which that individual belongs ("being a fan of the football club")". Whilst I had already come to similar conclusions, I was yet to turn my notes into something more solid and this proved a much needed confidence boost to my own social identity. I was also yet to test it on others. See **Ian Jones (1998)** Football Fandom: Football Fan Identity and Identification at Luton Town Football Club, An *unpublished thesis* submitted to Luton Business School, University of Luton, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

[154] See **Ian Jones (1997)** Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Sports Fan Research, *The Qualitative Report* [On-line serial], 3(4). Available: http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-4/jones.html, [Accessed 15, 12, 07]; **Chris Gratton and Ian Jones (2004)** *Research Methods for Sport Studies* (London: Routledge).

[155] Both James Spradley and Michael Patton have both published texts on the design and delivery

Having listed some of the main advantages of adopting an observational approach, Jones moved on to discuss the limitations and dangers, including a direct reference to the problems also highlighted by Richard Giulianotti during his football-focused ethnographies[156]. However, before I had reached the end of his equally convincing justification into his use of semi-structured interviews to complement both the surveys and his observations, I found myself once again lost in my memories of seeing Cambridge play at Kenilworth Road (the home of Luton Town and the 'field' in which Jones had entered). I recalled the match that I played on the artificial pitch they used to have. It was like a hockey turf and meant slide-tackling wasn't too enjoyable. We won 3-2. Sadly Cambridge couldn't do the same later that day. Worse still, my hero of the time Steve Claridge scored the only goal of the game against the club he would re-signed for weeks later.

'Why do all former Cambridge players always score the winning goals against us', I thought as I casually flicked through the pages of Jones' detailed methodological chapters and reached the thoughts and opinions of those who I would have no-doubt seen back in 1993 and 1995. I remember holding the thigh muscle that I tore whilst playing a cup match in Luton in 2002. The injury caused me to miss half a season. Coincidently, after almost a decade and a half spent in different divisions, Luton's recent financial troubles means the 2009/2010 season will see the two former rival teams playing in the same league once again. I'm sure no one would have predicted that when Jones was gathering his data back in the 1997.

I would love to see someone conduct an identical study to the one Jones did for his PhD research. Having witnessed what happened to Cambridge after they dropped out the league, I would be very interested to know how many of the 'fans' he identified are still attending every week. In hindsight, I could, perhaps should, have copied his entire study, replacing Luton Town Football Club, with either the Highlanders Super 14 Rugby Franchise or the Otago Provincial Rugby team (both based at Carisbrook). I'd certainly be lying if I said that the thought had never crossed my mind. While I was happy to have some much needed guidance in terms of structure and writing style, however, I had no intention of stealing someone else's idea, let alone someone who had offered me so much

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of participant observation-based ethnography, providing a valuable resource and valid toolbox with numerous examples and stories of good and bad practice. See **Michael Q. Patton (2002)** *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (London: Sage); **James P. Spradley (1980)** *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Reinehart & Winston).

[156] See **Richard Giulianotti (1995)** Football and the Politics of Carnival, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 30 (2), pp. 191–224.

support and encouragement. What's more, I had every intention of keeping in touch with him and some of his colleagues. I was already thinking about the future (i.e. post-doctorate).

Though I had never done it before, I had always liked the thought of 'going native' and trying to adapt/adopt a much more anthropological-based exploration of the sports fanatic[157]. I've always enjoyed reading the accounts of social and cultural anthropologists, especially those who have conducted tourism-related studies out in the field[158]. A significant part of me wanted to go out and observe sport tourists over a sustained period of time, in their everyday setting (i.e. at 'home' and 'away'). I thought this would offer me the most 'authentic' insight into the self and social identities that lie behind the individuals seen on the terraces of New Zealand and Australian stadiums. I wanted to know what goes on when they are preparing for their trips and when they are reporting back about their experiences away from home.

I didn't want to get lost (or hide) behind other people's formulas or rely on percentages gathered via a questionnaire survey. As stated earlier, I was desperate to maintain my focus on the individual lived experience. I always wanted to actively participate in my study. I spent weeks trying to justify my personal and professional ambitions to anyone that would listen. In hindsight, I should have spent this time writing them down. I should have paid more attention to the potential problems highlighted by Ian Jones and Richard Giulianotti. Instead, however, I allowed myself to focus on all the advantages. I allowed myself to dream about the fixtures that I wanted to attend. I not only found some exciting new sports-based anthropological texts, but also reacquainted myself with some of my favourite tourism-focused anthropologies, including some that I hadn't read in several years[159]

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[157] Anthropology's unique function, as a social scientific discipline, was traditionally to emphasis the cultural difference between self and other. See **Clifford Geertz (1988**) *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press).

[158] See **Nelson H. H. Graburn (1989)** 'Tourism: the Sacred Journey', in Valene L. Smith (Ed.) *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, 2nd Edition (pp.17-31) (University of Pennsylvania; **Dennison Nash (1996)** *Anthropology of Tourism* (Oxford: Pergamon); **Hazel Tucker (2003)** *Living with Tourism: Negotiating Identities in a Turkish Village* (London: Routledge).

[159] The diversity of what may be studied within the realm of anthropology is reflected in the different areas that now command anthropological attention, including development, tourism, visual anthropology, emotions and ethnicity. See, for example, **Tazim Jamal and Keith Hollinshead (2001**) Tourism and the forbidden zone: The undeserved power of qualitative inquiry, *Tourism Management* 22, pp. 63–82; **Kendall Blanchard (2002**) 'The anthropology of sport', in Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning (Eds.) *Handbook of Sports Studies* (pp. 144-156) (London: Sage); **Robert R. Sands (2002**) *Sport Ethnography* (Champaign, IL : Human Kinetics); **Noel Dyck (2004)** Getting into the Game: Anthropological Perspectives on Sport-Introduction, *Anthropologica* 46, pp. 3-4; **Keith Hollinshead (2004)** 'A primer in ontological craft: the creative capture of people and places through qualitative research', in

Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg argued that the self-conception of cultural anthropology relies on the much-debated belief that; "they" were supposed to be "there" and "we" were supposed to be "here"[160]. When you define it like that, the connotations are largely self explanatory. Ultimately, after months in the library/literature, I began formulating a plan and plotting my own pathway out into the field. Having accessed and assessed studies from across the social sciences, I wanted to mix the discursive concepts from (social) psychology, the interpretive rationale from sociology and the ethnographic methods from either the cultural anthropology of sport or tourism. I wanted to maintain my multiple positions and an inter-disciplinarian.

I spent hour after hour trying to manipulate and amalgamate the vast amount of literature I had collected over the course of my first year of study. While Jonathon Potter's discursive psychology offered an attractive alternative to the more mainstream cognitive concepts[161], Jonathon Smith's Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) seemed tailor made for what I wanted to achieve[162]. As a qualitative-based social psychological tool, IPA appeared to embrace several sociological elements without taking the focus away from the individual experience being explored[163]. It utilised narratives

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Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* (pp. 63-82) (London: Routledge); **Keith Hollinshead (2004)** 'Ontological craft in tourism studies: the productive mapping of identity and image in tourism settings', in Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Tourism; Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* (pp.83-101) (London: Routledge); **Phillip Moore (2004**) Scouting an Anthropology of Sport, *Anthropologica* 46, pp. 37-46.

[160] In **Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg (1996)** 'Introduction: Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity', in Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg (Eds.) *'Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity'* (pp. 1-26) (London: Duke University Press) (p. 1).

[161] See **Jonathon Potter and Margaret Wetherall (1994)** 'Analyzing discourse', in Alan Bryman and Robert Burgess (Eds.) *Analyzing qualitative data* (pp. 47-68) (London: Routledge); **Jonathon Potter (1996)** *Representing reality: Discourse, rhetoric and social construction* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).

[162] Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) recognises that a researcher's understanding of participant's thoughts is necessarily influenced by his own ways of thinking, assumptions and conceptions. However, These are not seen as bias to be eliminated; instead seen as necessary pre-conditions for making sense of another person's experience. A central premise of IPA consists of 'allowing participants to tell their story, in their own words, about the topic under investigation'. IPA is a social construction which, enables 'the exploration of the experiential reality of the self'. To date, it has largely been used by its creator, Jonathon Smith, to study psychological aspects of health and illness. For discussion see **Jonathon A. Smith (1996)** Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse: using interpretive phenomenological analysis in health psychology, *Psychology and Health* 11, pp. 261-271; **Jonathon A. Smith, Maria Jarman and Mike Osborn (1997)** 'Doing interpretive phenomenological analysis', in Michael Murray and Kerry Chamberlain (Eds.) *Qualitative health psychology: theories and methods* (pp. 218-240) (London: Sage); **Mark L. Crossley (2000)** Narrative psychology: Trauma and the Study of Self/Identity, *Theory & Psychology* 10 (4), pp. 527-546.

[163] According to Paul Flowers, Claire Marriot and Graham Hart, IPA draws upon the long standing traditions of phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, and is interested in the subjective meanings people ascribe to events rather than attempting to record or represent objective events. Rather than focusing upon the reasons why people *talk* about things in certain ways here we are more interested in the *meanings* people attach to things they talk about. See **Jonathon A. Smith, Paul Flowers and Mike Osborn (1997)**

from in-depth interviews and saw the participants or respondents as being more than just 'objects' or 'subjects'[164].

In theory it seemed perfect. My biggest concern was the fact that I had failed to find any examples of where it had been used to study either sport or tourism-related phenomenon. As much as I wanted to offer a unique contribution, and produce something original, I was still very wary of biting off more than I could chew. I was equally reluctant to make this study any harder than it needed to be. I wanted a smooth, stress-free run to the finish, and I wasn't afraid to admit it at the time either.

The other option that I had considered as a methodological framework was based around Frigga Haug's feminist-inspired 'memory-work' concept[165]. While I had never thought of myself as being a feminist, I couldn't exclude the fact that it had been used on several occasions to gather detailed narratives from a small group of likeminded respondents[166]. Better still, it had been used on several occasions within both a sport and

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'Interpretative phenomenological analysis and the psychology of health and illness', in Lisa Yardley (Ed.) *Material Discourse of Health and Illness* (pp.68-92) (London: Routledge); **Paul Flowers, Claire Marriot and Graham Hart (2000)** the bars, the bogs and the bushes: the impact of locale on sexual cultures, Culture, *Health and Sexuality* 2 (1) pp. 69-86.

[164] Whilst those using Discourse Analysis can be reluctant to rely on people's memories of emotional, experiences (i.e. preferring a more functional approach), IPA is concerned with cognitions and experiences (i.e. getting to grips with how a person thinks or feels about what is happening to them). According to Mark Crossley, phenomenological psychologists focus on the 'chain of connection' that 'exists between what a person says (verbal response) and how they think/feel about themselves, their bodies, other people and the world more generally (i.e. cognition and experience). Martha Augustinous and Iain Walker (1995:262) note that IPA operates within a 'realist epistemology'. Those who use it believe that there is 'a knowable domain of facts about human experience and consciousness that can be discovered through the application of certain methods'. I was keen to see if I could use it to explore the experiences of sport tourists. See **Martha Augustinous and Iain Walker (1995**) *Social Cognition: An integrated introduction* (London: Sage); **Mark L. Crossley (2000**) Narrative psychology: Trauma and the Study of Self/Identity, *Theory & Psychology* 10 (4), pp. 527-546.

[165] Memory is arguably one of the most important aspects of understanding the self and our multiple identities. Despite this, however, Marion Clawson and Jack Knetsch listed 'recollection' as being one of the most commonly overlooked phases of the tourist experience. The theoretical origins of memory-work evolved from German socialist Frigga Haug and her feminist beliefs that oppression could be directly related to the body, and a resistance to dominant cultural ideologies. She was concerned with the exclusion and subjugation of women and interested in 'how society as a whole recreates itself through the lives of the majority in their day-to-day activities'. Haug argued the existence of multiple contradictions linked to how we approach and recall lived experiences, focusing especially on the socialisation process. To her, 'everyday' events and activities, be them social or otherwise, are continually being restructured to reduce such obvious contradictions and avoid the threat of conflict. Her theoretical/methodological frame-work attempted to provide an avenue along which women could explore and compare their lives/lived experience. She saw memory-work as a potential vehicle for developing resistances to existing social practices and sought to use it as a way of initiating change. See, **Frigga Haug (1987)** *Female Sexualisation: A collective work of memory* (E. Carter, Trans.) (London: Verso); **Frigga Haug (1992)** *Beyond female masochism: Memory-work and politics* (R. Livingstone, Trans.) (London: Verso); **Marion Clawson and Jack L. Knetsch (1996)** *Economics of Outdoor Education* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press).

[166] Frigga Haug argues that the self is dependent on how social life is experienced; the way social life is experienced is dependent on the physical form. The methodological framework allows 'co-researchers' to relive past emotions and subsequently reinterpret the 'everyday' activities that helped shaped their self-identity. As a form of collective research, it allowed those involved to share ideas,

tourism context[167]. And, on top of all that, it also appeared to be a popular method for PhD students looking at extracting meaning from past experiences[168].

For at least a week during the May of 2007, Jenny Small's adaptation of the memory-work framework seemed ideal for a study of the individual sport tourism experience. It even enabled me to include myself in the process[169]. The only problem I could see was finding enough respondents to participate. I was also wary of the time it can take to produce a memory-work project[170]. Those that had used memory-work within their own doctorate studies had all highlighted the lengthy planning required to facilitate this social constructionist method[171]. I was well aware of the fact that my time was running out.

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knowledge and analysis. The first step sees the development of an agreed theme/topic. Next, each group member is expected to go away and construct a third-person narrative based on a personal memory related (in some way) to the chosen topic. The key is to be as detailed as possible, but avoid including interpretation, explanation or self-justification. Once done, the group meets up to collectively discuss these narratives, looking specifically for the gaps, absences, contradictions, inconsistencies, similarities and differences that will inevitably emerge in the stories being told. The fourth and final stage of the process sees the 'new' memories being rewritten and, once again, collectively (re)appraised. See **Frigga Haug (1987)** *Female Sexualisation: A collective work of memory* (E. Carter, Trans.) (London: Verso); **June Crawford, Susan Kippax, Jennie Onyx, Una Gault and Pam Benton (1992)** *Emotion and gender: Constructing meaning from memory* (London: Sage); **Jennie Onyx and Jenny Small (2001)** Memory-Work: The Method, *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 (6), pp. 773-786.

[167] While written memories are the main data source, the framework allows for the inclusion of the uncensored, and first-person, 'stories' that emerge within the group during their time together. See **Lorraine A. Friend and Amy Rummel (1995)** Memory-work: An alternative approach to investigating consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction of clothing retail encounters, *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior* 8, pp. 214-222; **Jenny Small (1999**) Memory-work: a method for researching women's tourist experiences, *Tourism Management* 20, pp. 25-35; **Mary Duquin (2000)** 'Sport and Emotions', in Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning (Eds.) *Handbook of Sport Studies* (pp. 477-489) (London: Sage); **Lorraine A. Friend and Shona M. Thompson (2000)** 'Using memory-work to give feminist voice to marketing research', in Miriam Catterall, Pauline Maclaran, and Lorna Stevens (Eds.) *Marketing and feminism: Current issues and research* (pp. 94-111) (London: Routledge); **Glenda Koutroulis (2001**) Soiled Identity: Memory-Work Narratives of Menstruation, *Health* 5 (2), pp. 187–205; **Lorraine A. Friend and Shona M. Thompson (2003)** Identity, ethnicity and gender: Using narratives to understand their meaning in retail shopping encounters, *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 6 (1), pp. 23-41.

[168] Adaptations of Haug's Memory-work method have been used on several occasions within doctoral research, including leisure and tourism-based 'experiential' studies. See, for example, **Lorraine A. Friend (1997)** Memory-work: Understanding consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction of clothing retail encounters. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation*, University of Otago.

[169] For discussion, see **Marriette Clare and Richard Johnson (2000)** 'Method in our Madness: Identity and Power in a Memory Work Method', in Susannah Radstone (Ed.) *Memory and Methodology* (pp. 197-224) (New York: Berg).

[170] See **Jennie Onyx and Jenny Small (2001)** Memory-Work: The Method, *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 (6), pp. 773-786.

[171] See, for example, **Jenny Small (2004)** 'Memory-work', in Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* (pp.255-272) (London: Routledge); **Pirko Markula and Lorraine A. Friend (2005)** Remember When… Memory-Work as an Interpretive Methodology for Sport Management, *Journal of Sport Management* 19, pp. 442-463.

Several memory-workers also discussed the issues they faced when it came to justifying their individual interpretations of the 'co-researcher's' collective discoveries[172]. While I have no regrets, I am a little disappointed that I dismissed this route due to the fact I thought it would be too hard to adopt. Looking back, I wish I had accepted the challenge and taken it a lot more seriously. In hindsight, I think I could have easily made this method work.

Despite my strong preference for a Richard Giulianotti style ethnographical approach to my data collection process, I soon found myself distracted (once again) and heading off in a completely different direction. It wasn't my fault. I was emailed four short tutorial abstracts written under the collective title of *'Why Your Favorite Team is "Your" Favorite Team?: The Psychology of Sports Fans.* How could I ignore such a question? They had been written the spring of 1998 by four authors I had never heard of, or seen referenced by anyone else. Their names were Sascha Hansen, Michael Perry, Merritt Posten and Jamie Schlabach, and the link I was given directed me straight to Miami University's 'Living in a Social World' PsyberSite[173].

Despite being desperate to focus on how I was going to gather my primary data, I was still intrigued by the online workshops I discovered on the 'Advanced Social Psychology' site[174]. It was, however, the work of Merritt Posten that both captured my

[172] See **Jenny Small (2004)** 'Memory-work', in Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* (pp.255-272) (London: Routledge).

[173] See **Sascha Hansen, Michael Perry, Merritt Posten and Jamie Schlabach (1998)** 'Why Your Favorite Team is "Your" Favorite Team?: The Psychology of Sports Fans', Living in a Social World, Psy 324: Advanced Social Psychology, Spring 1998, Miami University, available at http://www.units.muohio.edu/psybersite/fans/sit.shtml [Accessed 21 / 5 / 2008].

[174] Sascha Hansen's introduces the four workshops noting how "Like it or not, sports have become a part of our everyday lives. For some it is a job, a hobby, or a form of entertainment. For others sports are an obsession or an annoyance". He goes on to discuss the definition of a fan and their characteristics, including several references to social identity construction, inter-group behaviour and a process where people lose their self-awareness and have decreased concern for how others around them evaluate their actions called 'Deindividuation'. Despite the noticeable lack of a reference, much of his introduction complements the work of Daniel Wann, especially his acknowledgement of the way in which sports fans attempt to maintain, or even boost, self-esteem through their direct association/affiliation with a particular team. Finally, he highlights the notions of Basking In Reflective Glory (BIRGing) and Cutting Off Reflective Failures (CORFing) respectively. The baton is then passed over to his associates Mike Perry (who focuses on the topic 'Deindividuation'), Merritt Posten (who not only has a session on 'Basking in Glory and Cutting off Failure', but also a session on the concept of 'Social Identity Theory: Sports Affiliation and Self-Esteem') and finally Jamie Schlabach (who introduces the notion of 'In-group, Out-group Bias' within sports fan behaviour). The absence of Daniel Wann's name is somewhat surprising to say the least. Likewise, while Marilynn Brewer's work on inter-group behaviour does receive a mention, there is no formal acknowledgement of John Turner, and only one brief referral to that of Henri Tajfel. In **Sascha Hansen (1998)** Why Your Favorite Team is "Your" Favorite Team?: *The Psychology of Sports Fans': An Introduction*, available at: http://www.units.muohio.edu/psybersite/fans/index.shtml [Accessed 21 / 5 / 2008].

imagination the most[175]. Like the draft PhD thesis that I had been encouraged to read several months previously, Posten linked Social Identity Theory (SIT) with the phenomena of fandom, affiliation and self esteem[176]. It came just when I needed it. I knew that I needed to get something on paper. I knew that I had nothing to show for my first year of my research journey. I knew that I needed a strong and multi-layered theoretical platform.

Finally, I decided to stop reading and focus the next few weeks on the construction of my first 'identity-focused' PhD chapter. I wanted to show my supervisors what I had been doing since I started. My aim was to review all of my notes on the literature that I had read about the self and social identity perspective and demonstrate the obvious overlap between sports-related (social) psychology, sociology and cultural anthropology. I reluctantly put down the books and picked up the lap-top. The strong links to the social identity perspective dominated the chapter. Little attention was given to any of the sports-related tourism, or sport sociology that I had also been reading. After months of confusion, however, I finally began to feel I could actually achieve something with this study. Up to that point in the journey, I had felt as though I'd been running round in circles (getting nowhere).

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[175] Merritt Posten begins his workshop with a question I have asked myself, and others, on many an occasion. He asks; "Why do people become so fanatic about a sports team?", noting the rituals and routines that people fill put themselves through, as well as the vast amount of money that they will spend on their team. Posten then argues that "The Social Identity Theory (SIT), when applied to sports fans, helps to explain their behaviour", claiming that it works around the premise that people are fundamentally "motivated to behave in ways that maintain and boost their self esteem". Posten provided a list of activities that enable a fan to feel like an important part of the team that they follow, including the purchasing and displaying of team colours, attendance at every fixture (both home and away) and the learning of facts and figures related to their team. He touches upon notions of both vicarious enjoyment and in-group bias, suggesting that the fan's self esteem is directly linked to the performance of their team "as if they were playing the game themselves", before stating that: "the connection that fans develop towards their team is a type of in-group favouritism that helps a person develop a social identity by attaching themselves and attaining group membership in a group that has value and significance to them (Tajfel 1972). The fan then seeks to join and retain membership in those groups that have the most potential for contributing positively to his or her identity, and therefore strengthening their own self esteem" (emphasis in original). Surprisingly, this is his only reference to the work of Henri Tajfel. Having touched upon many of the conclusions made within the final chapters of Ian Jones' thesis (who also receives no mention), Posten concludes that "A "true" fan" will typically "find reason to explain the team's loss and place the blame everywhere besides the team itself". He ends his workshop with the following quote from a Packers Fan called Steve Gay; "The Packers are like your children. You don't love them because they're good. You love them because they're *yours*". In **Merritt Posten (1998)** *Social Identity Theory: Sports Affiliation and Self-Esteem*, available at http://www.units.muohio.edu/psybersite/fans/sit.shtml [Accessed 21 / 5 / 2008]

[176] As expected, Posten pays particular attention to the importance of maintaining one's self esteem, claiming that those lacking in this area are likely to feel isolated and anxious. More importantly, however, he also supports the findings of both Daniel Wann and Ian Jones by noting how sports "can work to increase self-esteem for a person by association and affiliation". He suggests that "having high self esteem is typically a perception of oneself as attractive, competent, likable and morally good person", which in turn "make the person more attractive to the outside social world". Ibid (np).

I was pleased to have some evidence for all those hours in the library. It didn't take very long to write and represented my first real milestone. Thankfully, the chapter received encouraging comments from both of my supervisors. In hindsight, I think that they were probably just relieved to see something from me before they both headed off on their separate sabbaticals. I, however, was more excited about taking the next step. I wanted to maintain the momentum. I wanted to put my doubts to bed and focus on the fun part of my research. I wanted to get started. I wanted to get out amongst my fellow sport tourists. While I still hadn't picked a side (or position), at least I had a theoretical base to build on. I was satisfied that, like Ian Jones and Merritt Posten, I could explore Social Identity Theory within the context of sport (tourism).

Within a day of receiving the feedback I had produced the following aim. I wanted to observe salient social identities amongst Trans Tasman sport tourists, examining their influence on collective in-group/out-group behaviour, and perceived implications regarding individual 'home' assimilation and/or 'host' differentiation. In order to achieve this goal I planned to assess the extent to which personal attributes (such as our various self and social identities) and contextual factors (such as our society and culture) influence the behaviour of the individual sport tourist. I also wanted to assess the importance of others on the sport tourist experience, including the host community.

Ultimately, writing my first chapter helped me to finally gain a sense of belonging to my thesis. It felt good to get things down on paper, even if it was far from the complete finished article. I still needed to address the questions asked by my supervisors, but at least I appeared to be heading in the right direction. I could see the goal posts and the try line looked just that little bit closer. All I needed now was to come up with a suitable game plan and the tactics to achieve my target. I needed to justify the method that lay behind my madness. I needed some major sporting fixtures to attend, and some memorable sports-related packages to join

# Chapter 10: The madness (behind my method)

> "One way of thinking about the difference - and complementarily - between quantitative and qualitative research is to consider quantitative research as the process of producing a map of a place and qualitative research as the process of producing a video of that place. A map is extremely useful; it conveys with economy and precision the location of a place and its relationship to other places in terms of proximity and direction. However, even the most detailed map is unable to convey an understanding of what it is like to be at that place. In contrast, a video conveys in vivid detail the constantly changing perspective of the observer. Although this perspective is selective and could not easily be used for navigation, it is able to communicate something of the subjective experience of being there"[177]

The first half of this thesis has largely focused on the importance of making an unforgettable first impression. Act One revealed my personal and social identities, whilst Act Two revealed my professional 'academic' identity. As half time approaches, however, it is time to move from the 'who' to the 'how'. This should set us up for the second half (i.e. Act Three and Act Four) where I plan to reveal the 'what', 'when', 'where' and 'why' of this personal narrative. The aim of this chapter is to present the qualitative ethnographical framework that was developed a matter of days and weeks, as opposed to months, before I entered 'the field' for the first time. In addition, I plan to show you the tools that I initially chose to plan and produce my video back in May 2007. Rather than critique them, however, my aim is to once again let you assess their relevance within the context in which I first (re)created them.

In 2005, Wayne Fife pointed out the importance of having a strong methodological framework, claiming that 'the cultural bricolage of one's own life experiences are not sufficient preparation for fieldwork'[178]. It was a warning that I honestly had no intention of taking lightly. Somehow however, as the trees began to lose their summer coats

[177] In **Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (2003)** 'Naming the Stars: Integrating Qualitative Methods Into Psychological Research', in Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design* (pp. 3-16) (Washington: American Psychological Association) (p. 10)

[178] In **Wayne Fife (2005)** *Doing Fieldwork: Ethnographic Methods for Research in Developing Countries and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan) (p. 7).

outside my North Dunedin house, I managed to do exactly that. Somehow I managed to completely underestimate the size of the challenge that awaited me. Somehow I managed to underestimate the amount of preparation required prior to entering the field of play. The problem was that I didn't know this at the time.

I genuinely thought that I was ready to go and get my respondents. I thought that I was ready to enter the field. I wouldn't have gone otherwise. I wouldn't have risked it. I would have booked myself on another package tour. I knew that the year's winter rugby tests were fast approaching and I knew that had little time to waste if I wanted to get myself a place on a package tour for both Bledisloe Cup Test Matches in Melbourne and Auckland. I knew that I needed a plan of attack, and I knew that it had to be a 'strong' one. Basically, I thought that I knew it all. Upon reflection, of course, I can see that I clearly had no idea what to expect. I thought, however, that a few days and nights in the library would be sufficient. I had already drawn up a list of sources I wanted.

Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson's edited text on tourism-situated qualitative methodological literature was the first piece of literature accessed, closely followed by Brent Ritchie, Peter Burns and Cathy Palmer's edited text on existing tourism research methods[179]. Likewise, Anthony Veal's guide to leisure and tourism research was also borrowed from the university's library, along with Mick Finn, Martin Elliott-White and Mike Walton's tourism and leisure research methods text[180]. Other research-focused texts

[179] Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson's publication represented one of the first tourism-focused pieces of literature to try and move beyond the more practical considerations of adopting qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis, incorporating holistic contributions that focus on the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings that influence the research process. They introduce qualitative research as being "something of an enigma" and is typically utilised to "collect data about activities, events, occurrences and behaviours and to seek an understanding of actions, problems and processes in their social context". In terms of "a strategy", they argue that it "can generate theory" which places the "emphasis on understanding the world from the perspective of its participants". To them it is all about social interaction and personal interpretations". The other textbook identified represents a response to the rapid growth in tourism research, providing several useful case-studies that demonstrate effective ways of planning, implementing and analysing data. While the former is aimed at those more advanced in their understanding of research epistemologies and ontology, the latter is targeting undergraduate students and incorporates case studies conducted by relatively new researchers, including several PhD students. In **Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (2004)** 'Progress in Qualitative Research in Tourism: Epistemology, Ontology and Methodology', in Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* (pp. 3-29) (London: Routledge). See also **Brent W. Ritchie, Peter Burns and Cathy Palmer (Eds.) (2005)** *Tourism Research Methods: Integrating theory with practice* (Cambridge, MA: CABI).

[180] Anthony Veal's text may also be targeting students conducting empirical research for the first time but it does so in a way that offers one of the most coherent, comprehensive and concise guides to conducting research within the fields of leisure and tourism, particularly studies exploring policy creation and evaluation. Mick Finn, Martin Elliott-White and Mike Walton's contribution is equally simplistic, and represents another publication that is admittedly aimed at undergraduate students, as opposed to more established/experienced graduate researchers, but nevertheless I have always found it one of the most accessible guides when it comes to explaining the pros and cons of picking either a qualitative or

gathered from the library during the third week of May 2007 included David Andrews, Daniel Mason and Michael Silk's edited text on qualitative methods in sport sciences[181], and Jonathon Long's 'essential' guide to researching sport, leisure and tourism[182].

As previously mentioned, Chris Gratton and Ian Jones' text on sports-related research methods was actually one of the first research texts that I had accessed from the university's library several months earlier. As with many of the textbooks on my shopping list, this publication had clearly been written for undergraduates and offered a similar step-by-step account of both the data collection and analysis process[183]. My justification for targeting such guides was that I still considered myself a new researcher. I may have been a graduate student, but I felt as though I needed to start from the beginning once again. I was also under the impression that even the most experienced researchers follow the same basic rules and guidelines as those conducting their first piece of empirical exploration. At least, that is the story that I have always told the students that I supervise.

'So far so good', I thought as I headed home from the library that evening. I had not only found all of the texts on my list but also obtained a copy ofJohn Creswell's text on research design[184] and Michael Huberman and Matthew Miles' qualitative research

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quantitative-focused approach to data collection. The authors not only evaluate the reliability of existing research methods, but they discuss the validity of techniques through the inclusion of both leisure and tourism-related case studies. See **Anthony Veal (1997)** *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism: A Practical Guide*, 2nd Edition (Harlow: Prentice Hall); **Mick Finn, Martin Elliott-White and Mike Walton (2000)** *Tourism and Leisure Research Methods: Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation* (Harlow: Longman).

[181] This edited text is clearly targeting graduates and researchers situated within the field of sports studies. It actually offers a similar contribution to that provided by Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson for those operating within the field of tourism research. The authors not only acknowledge the growth of sports studies-related research, but also the lack of understanding when it comes to the adoption of various qualitative methods. The book includes theoretical and philosophical discussions on the major issues, impacts and implications of selecting ethnographic and interview-based methodologies, contextualising best practice. See **Michael L. Silk, David L. Andrews and Daniel S. Mason (2005)** 'Encountering the Field: Sports Studies and Qualitative Research', in David L. Andrews, Daniel S. Mason and Michael L. Silk (Eds.) *Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies* (pp. 1-20) (Oxford: Berg).

[182] I have always rated Jonathon Long's contribution as one of the most engaging of all the research texts available to those located within the fields of leisure and tourism study. More importantly, I have made good use of his practical time-saving techniques on a number of occasions. See **Jonathon Long (2007)** *Researching Leisure, Sport and Tourism: the essential guide* (London: Sage).

[183] See **Chris Gratton and Ian Jones (2004)** *Research Methods for Sport Studies* (London: Routledge).

[184] Rather than focusing on one particular paradigm, John Creswell has opted to focus his attention on producing a comprehensive, yet user-friendly, comparison of the three most popular approaches to data collection and analysis (i.e. quantitative, qualitative and mixed). He starts with an identification of the various philosophical stances available to the researcher before concluding with an easy to understand overview of how to package and present data collected via both quantitative and qualitative procedures. See **John W. Cresswell (1994)** *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (London: Sage).

companion[185]. Likewise, I had put a request for Kathleen and Billie De Walt's seminal text on conducting participant observation, Michael Patton's equally important publication on evaluating qualitative research and a relatively new book about the cultural experience of conducting ethnography[186]. Having flicked through the contents pages, I was particularly interested in the chapters that focused on ethnography, participant observation and semi-structured interviewing[187].

The following day, I found myself back in the library looking at a number of other edited books, including several found gathering dust on the shelves found within the psychology section of the building. Paul Camic, Jean Rhodes and Lucy Yardley's edited text on qualitative methods within psychological research, for example, was quickly followed by introductory texts written by Ian Parker and Carla Willig[188]. Two additional texts by Marilynn Brewer and Jonathon Smith were also taken from the relatively small qualitative psychology section[189]. In addition, having forgotten to obtain them the previous day, I was quick to get my hands on a number of popular research guides edited by acclaimed methodologists Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln[190].

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[185] According to Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman, qualitative inquiry has become a fundamental component of social scientific research. Their companion guide has been compiled in a manner that offers its readers a comprehensive, structurally-sound platform upon which they are encouraged to critically assess the theoretical principles and philosophical paradigms deemed crucial to the practice of gathering rich, detailed, data. For further discussion see **Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman (2002)** 'Reflections and Advice', in A. Michael Huberman and Matthew B. Miles (Eds.) *The Qualitative Researchers Companion* (pp. 393-398) (Thousand Oaks: Sage).

[186] See **Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt (2002)** *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press); **Michael Q. Patton (2002)** *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (London: Sage); **David W. McCurdy, James P Spradley and Dianna J. Shandy (2005)** *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society*, 2nd Edition (Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc).

[187] See, for example, **John Amis (2005)** 'Interviewing for Case Study Research', in David L. Andrews, Daniel S. Mason and Michael L. Silk (Eds.) *'Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies'* (pp. 104-138) (Oxford: Berg); **Stroma Cole (2005)** 'Action Ethnography: Using Participant Observation', in Brent W. Ritchie, Peter Burns and Cathy Palmer (Eds.) *Tourism Research Methods: Integrating theory with practice* (pp. 63-72) (Cambridge, MA: CABI); **Gayle R. Jennings (2005)** 'Interviewing: A Focus on Qualitative Techniques', in Brent W. Ritchie, Peter Burns and Cathy Palmer (Eds.) *Tourism Research Methods: Integrating theory with practice* (pp. 99-118) (Cambridge, MA: CABI); **Michael L. Silk (2005)** 'Sporting Ethnography: Philosophy, Methodology and Reflection', in David L. Andrews, Daniel S. Mason and Michael L. Silk (Eds.) *'Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies'* (pp. 65-103) (Oxford: Berg).

[188] See **Carla Willig (2001)** *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Adventures in Theory and Method* (Buckingham: Open University Press); **Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (2003)** 'Naming the Stars: Integrating Qualitative Methods Into Psychological Research', in Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design* (pp. 3-16) (Washington: American Psychological Association); **Ian Parker (2005)** *Qualitative Psychology: introducing radical research* (Maidenhead: Open University Press).

[189] See **William D. Crano and Marilynn B. Brewer (2002)** *Principle Methods of Social Research*, 2nd Edition (New Jersey: LEA Publishers); **Jonathon Smith (Ed.) (2003)** *Qualitative psychology: a practical guide to research methods* (London: Sage).

[190] When it comes to the practice and principles of undertaking qualitative research, Norman

I planned to read as much on the subject of ethnographic exploration as possible[191]. I planned to have my methods chapter completed before I entered the field. I didn't want to leave anything to chance, and I was confident that I was going to be sufficiently prepared. Once I had collected and collated my many pages of hand written and word-processed notes, I started to look for some additional journal articles to complement the various textbooks that I now had sitting on my desk at work (and on the bedroom floor at home). Anything to do with participant observation techniques and tactics, interviewing and ethnography was deemed relevant, regardless of the subject area or date of the publication. I started out looking specifically for case studies related to either sport of tourism, but was happy to widen the search when necessary. I soon realised, however, that I would not be short of options[192].

To me, the most suitable method of attack also looked to be the most straightforward. I was simply going to go to Melbourne and Auckland and observe the thousands of likeminded individuals predicted to attend the two Tri-Nations Test Matches. I was also planning to engage and interact with them as much as physically possible. I had basically done a similar thing in 2001 when I watched tourists and spoke to tourism stakeholders in Eastbourne about the impact of Foot and Mouth in a seaside resort[193]. I did it again in 2004 when I watched tourists and spoke to local land owners about the implications of Lord of the Rings to New Zealand's South Island rural

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Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln are widely regarded as having produced the most critical, comprehensive and constructive collection of literature currently available. Their handbook, for example, has been updated on two occasions, and now includes 45 different contributions that take the reader on a personal journey through both time and space. It arguably covers every issue imaginable. See **Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) (2003)** *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Material* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage); **Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (2003)** *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage); **Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) (2005)** *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 3rd Edition (London, Sage).

[191] Ethnography is widely regarded as being the process of discovering and describing a culture. See, for example, **Paul Atkinson (1992)** *Understanding Ethnographic Texts* (Newbury Park, CA; Sage); **Phil Carspecken (1996)** *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide* (New York: Routledge).

[192] Participant Observation is arguably the central and defining method of research in cultural anthropology, as well as a common feature of qualitative research. See, for example, **Barbara Tedlock (1991)** From Participant Observation to the Observation of Participation: The Emergence of Narrative Ethnography, *Journal of Anthropological Research* 47 (1), pp. 69-94; **Catherine Palmer (2001)** Ethnography: A Research Method in Practice, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 3, pp. 301-312; **Rajni Palriwala (2005)** Fieldwork in a post-colonial anthropology. Experience and the comparative, *Social Anthropology*13 (2), pp. 151-170; **Evert Gummesson (2007)** Access to reality: observations on observational methods, *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* 10 (2), pp. 130-13.

[193] See **Richard Keith Wright (2002)** Crisis, What Crisis? An examination of the Foot and Mouth Outbreak in Eastbourne, UK, *Unpublished BA Honours Dissertation*: School of Service Sector Management, University of Brighton.

communities[194]. I had also done it in 2005 when observed a group of sport tourists and spoke to regional tourism planners about the potential of the British and Irish Lions Tour[195]. What I had never done, however, was to specifically target members of the general public. Moreover, I had never targeted people away from their everyday 'home' environment.

In hindsight, the alarm bells should probably have already been ringing by this stage. But they weren't. In fact, despite my inexperience, I was confident of my ability to go out and gather enough data. I truly believed that I had all the right tools for the job. I was equally content with my decision to focus on only a couple of trans-Tasman sporting contests. All I had to do was to get the green light from the university's ethics committee. 'No worries', I thought at the time. I honestly thought I had everything under control. I was more concerned about picking the best packages to join. I was surprised by how expensive they were, especially the domestic one that I wanted to do for the Auckland Test Match. It cost almost as much as the one that I had just booked myself on for the fixture in Melbourne.

Having selected the two Bledisloe Cup Test Matches, I was convinced that I would have little trouble gaining the trust and confidence of those I met in Melbourne and Auckland. I gave little thought or consideration to the itineraries offered by the various tour packages. After all, I was more than willing to use my own sporting experiences to initiate social interaction situations (via friendly and informal conversations). I thought that travelling alone, with no fixed itinerary, would allow me to go anywhere and anytime (with anyone). The thought that people wouldn't want to talk (to me) rarely crossed my mind. Any self doubts were quickly dismissed. I was confident that I would be able to overcome any problems if (and not when) they arrived. I thought I had covered all my bases.

I didn't want a script to follow. I wanted the flexible and open approach discussed by the DeWalts[196]. I didn't want to think about what may or may not happen. I wasn't testing any hypotheses. I was keen to encourage the development of multi-layered

[194] See **Richard Keith Wright (2004)** The Impact of Tourism in Rural Rohan: An Investigative Study into the Impacts of Lord Of The Rings Tourism on the communities of two remote New Zealand destinations, *Unpublished Post Graduate Diploma Dissertation*: School of Business, University of Otago.

[195] See **Richard Keith Wright (2005)** Taming the Lions: An investigative study examining the impact and implications of the management policies adopted by New Zealand's Regional Tourism Organisations for the 2005 Lions Tour, *Unpublished Masters Thesis:* School of Business, University of Otago.

[196] See, for example, **Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt (2002)** *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press).

interpretations[197]. I wanted to allow for multiple analyses, develop new explanations and/or relationships that related to the sport tourism experience. I wanted the freedom to think on my feet (and play by ear). I was happy to go with the flow. I was also willing to do whatever it took to secure enough respondents.

According to Fife, an unstructured interview 'occurs every time a researcher participates in a conversation and, on hearing a subject come up that interests her/him, decides to try and keep that particular conversation alive for a period of time'[198]. He goes on to add that 'one of the benefits of unstructured interviewing is that it can help lead us to topics that we might not have thought of before'[199]. This is exactly how I envisioned things working. Being an experienced sports fan, I was well aware of the importance of identifying and attaching myself to a small group of sport tourists. This belief was also supported by an interesting article that I had found that discussed Social Identity Theory in direct relation to the importance of fan-ship in Australia and New Zealand[200].

*Being an Ethical Ethnographer*

I planned to conduct the majority of my semi-structured interviews during the months that followed my two excursions into the field. The fact that I had earmarked an overseas trip to Australia meant I had to apply for ethical approval from the University's

[197] Ethnography encourages the researcher to approach a topic without firm preconceptions about what variables will be important or how they will be related and to gradually build a theory to explain the data that are collected. Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson argue that it is best understood as a reflexive process, and question the oversimplified definitions produced by those who see it as nothing more than a means to watch the behaviour of others. See, for discussion, **Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (1995)** *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 2nd Edition (London: Routledge); **David W. McCurdy, James P Spradley and Dianna J. Shandy (2005)** *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society*, 2nd Edition (Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc).

[198] In **Wayne Fife (2005)** *Doing Fieldwork: Ethnographic Methods for Research in Developing Countries and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan) (p.101).

[199] Ibid (p. 101).

[200] According to Jan Halberstadt, Robert P. O'Shea and Joseph Forgas, our personal allegiance to sports teams represents "one of the most common and powerful social experiences for many individuals". They supported the work of Daniel Wann, Ian Jones and Merritt Posten, claiming that the success of a fan's team can directly affect self-esteem. Likewise, they highlight the relevance of Social Identity Theory, citing how it "predicts that to the extent people see a sports teams as part of their in-group, the team's performance should have significant consequences not only for how they feel about the team, but also for their self-esteem and their sense of positive social identity". Rather than looking at how trans-Tasman supporters felt when their team won or lost against each other, this study looked at the reactions of supporters to fixtures that involved rival teams playing against other teams. They constructed and explored the hypothesis that "as a consequence of the asymmetrical relationship that exists between Australia and New Zealand, Australians will more consistently support New Zealand against third-party sports teams than will New Zealanders support Australia". Their results appeared to support their initial assumptions, not to mention my own conclusions, that New Zealanders had more polarised attitudes toward Australia than Australians did toward New Zealand. For further discussion see **Jan Halberstadt, Robert P. O'Shea and Joseph Forgas (2006)** Outgroup fanship in Australia and New Zealand, *Australian Journal of Psychology* 58 (3), pp. 159-165.

Ethnics Committee, as opposed to just my department and then head of the faculty. The application consisted of a sixteen page document outlining what I hoped to achieve while conducting my research in Melbourne and Auckland. I was also expected to produce a detailed health and safety plan, including a risk assessment for my research trips. Fortunately, having witnessed my roommate jumping through the same hoops, I was fully prepared and able to make the necessary adjustments to ensure it would receive the necessary approval.

Rather than give you a detailed account of the data collection strategy that I started to develop, I have opted to show the application that I submitted to the university's ethical committee. The large extract below shows exactly what I set out to achieve from my two trips into the field. More importantly, it also reveals exactly why I wanted to go and how I planned to meet my goals. As with the PhD proposal shown in Chapter Eight, I haven't tried to cover anything up or hide the truth in any way. It is neither a confession nor a post-experience (re)interpretation. It is a brief snapshot into my past.

Unlike my PhD proposal, I have not tried to bombard the reader with academic sources. They asked for a straightforward explanation and that is exactly what they were presented with. I have opted to include the generic questions that I was first made to answer. The most notable omission from the report relates to how I planned to analyse the data collected. I have, however, included the potential problems section. I wanted to illustrate that I was aware of the flaws, or at least the element of risk involved, in my strategy. The omission of my third and final trip to Wellington relates to the fact that it was an afterthought, resulting from my perceived failure to capture enough raw data during the first two excursions. Being a domestic trip, however, there was no need for me to seek the same approval from the Ethics Committee.

Looking back, I am still able to see why I wished to conduct the study the way that I did. I can still see the potential oozing out of my application. While I briefly covered my methodological intentions within the proposal written back in September 2005, I was forced to go into a lot more detail within my application for ethical approval. Some rough and rather vague interview questions were produced, without too much thought as to whether I would ever end up asking them. In addition, a generic participant information sheet and interview permission slip were also quickly produced and attached to the application. As requested, a total of sixteen copies were made and submitted the day before the May 2007 deadline.

*Wright, R. K. 2007. Application for Ethical Approval*

**Brief description (in lay terms)**

While there have been numerous studies into the socio-economic value/cost of hosting 'spectator driven' or 'elite' sporting competitions, to date, little investigative research has been conducted on the behavioural characteristics of the tourists who attend. There is a noticeable dearth of knowledge when it comes to understanding how the individual behaviour and/or collective actions of travelling sports spectators are influenced by various personal characteristics and/or contextual factors found at the host destination. The theoretical framework adopted for this study incorporates and amalgamates principles from within the disciplines of Sociology, Socio-Psychology and Anthropology, plus the more contemporary field of Culture Studies.

The purpose of the trans-disciplinary research is to examine the implications that social identity formation can have on the experiences and behavioural characteristics of individual sport tourists, especially with regards to the importance of their 'home' affiliation and/or 'away' differentiation. It focuses particularly on the extent, and manner, to which individuals assimilate and/or differentiate themselves from other attendees, including fellow tourists and members of the host community. The study will primarily observe the individual and collective behaviour of both domestic and international tourists who have travelled to the host destinations specifically to attend one (or both) of the 2007 Bledisloe Cup Tests Matches between New Zealand (the All Blacks) and Australia (the Wallabies). Having done that, the researcher will then aim to gain a deeper understanding of the sport tourist experiences through a series of informal and/or semi-structured interviews.

Potential participants for this follow up stage of data collection will be targeted throughout the weekend of the two sporting fixtures. The interviews will take place throughout 2007, exploring sport tourist perceptions towards individual behaviour and the extent to which the social identities established and/or encountered may have influenced, not only, their affiliation towards 'home' but also their feelings of differentiation, regarding the 'host' environment. The findings of the investigative study will help expand the existing knowledge and understanding, concerning the individual and collective behaviour of domestic and international sport tourists. Furthermore, it should more than complement the current growth of social-psychological literature on social identity theory.

**Participants & Population from which participants are drawn:**

The researcher will join two official sports tourism packages deals, to Melbourne and Auckland respectively, overtly observing and recording the individual and collective behaviour of all those in attendance. This trip will also be used as an opportunity to build social relationships and gain contact details from potential participants for the follow up interviewing campaign. Both private operators have provided

the researcher with written consent with regards to me joining the packages. Whilst the majority of the observational data collection is expected to take place at the host destination (i.e. in Melbourne and Auckland), the data collection periods will begin upon departure from Dunedin (on the Thursday before each game) and continue right through to the researcher's arrival back in Dunedin (the following Tuesday). This therefore allows for the inclusion of any relevant observations material gathered whilst in domestic and/or international transit.

**Specify inclusion and exclusion criteria:**

The study will not discriminate based on nationality, gender or ethnicity, but will avoid minors, prisoners, hospital patients or anyone whose capacity to give informed consent is compromised in anyway. The researcher will be observing and recording as many examples of social interaction and salient group behaviour as possible, especially those believed to directly involve domestic or international sport tourists. However, with regards to the follow up interviewing stages of the research, the researcher will only be directly targeting and seeking personal information from sport-motivated tourists that have travelled either domestically or internationally to attend the Rugby Tests. Therefore, members of the host community and/or other tourists encountered during the two weekends will be excluded from the remainder of the study.

**Number & Age range of participants:**

An accurate sample size estimate is not appropriate for this kind of ethnographical-based research study. However, for the follow up interviewing process, it is anticipated that the researcher will have gained at least twenty applicable, and willing, volunteers to take part. To ensure this number is reached, the aim of the two weekend trips will be to recruit as many potential respondents as possible. The age of the participants is expected to reflect the nature of the sports event and the experience offered by the two tour operators. A minimum age limit of 18 years will be set as boundary purely to avoid the risk of targeting minors but the researcher does not feel the need to set any maximum restriction and risk discriminating against the older sports fan.

**Method of recruitment:**

Respondents will be identified, observed and directly approached over the course of both Test Match field trips (Departing Dunedin on Thursday, returning Tuesday); with the necessary contact details and personal information being recorded only if they are willing to participate further in this investigation. Potential respondents will primarily be recruited, via informal face-to-face conversations and social networking conducted, during the two weekends. Café, bars, visitor attractions and the accommodation outlets utilised by the tour operators are seen as being the most likely places for initial contact to be made. The two Test matches may also prove a suitable location to recruit additional volunteers, during the build up, during and after the

games. In addition, the nature of the events may increase the chances of participant recruitment through snowballing (i.e. word of mouth between those targeted).

Whilst face-to-face interviews are the preferred method, at this stage, it is unclear as to whether this will be feasible due to time and budget constraints. This may ultimately depend upon the various 'home' locations of the respondents. Email, Internet (via Skype) and/or telephone interviews have all been identified as suitable alternative methods of interviewing, should it not be possible to meet with the participant in person. The follow up interviews will be guided by a set of general questions, themes or prompts, regarding the general sport tourist experience. The overall aim, however, will be to let the respondents create and develop personal narratives based on their own perceptions, behaviour and experiences without too much external interference from the researcher. All respondents will be given the necessary contact details, of both the researcher and relevant supervisors, plus informed about their chance to view, edit and withdraw their contributions at any given time. Before each interview the respondent will be advised to read the information sheet and then asked to sign the necessary permission slip, allowing the interview to be audio, and/or where possible visually, recorded. Finally, the researcher will highlight the fact that all relevant raw data gathered during this study will be securely stored (for 5 years maximum) within the Department of Tourism at the University of Otago and, after this point, subsequently destroyed.

**Please specify any payment or reward to be offered:**

The researcher will not offer any specific forms of rewards or payment for those who volunteer but it is expected that the researcher may have to buy refreshments to assist in the creation of an informal environment, not to mention a certain degree of trust/friendship.

**Potential problems**:

Whilst issues of personal and social identity may be covered, the general nature of enquiry covered within this study is not considered as being particularly sensitive or a subject that may cause any distress or discomfort amongst the participants. However, as outlined above, all respondents will be given the opportunity to withdraw their contribution at any stage. The major problem, and biggest threat, will be gaining the trust and cooperation of a sufficient number of willing respondents during the two weekends. For the study to be deemed viable, the researcher will need to contact at least twenty participants. Ultimately, the number of interviewees, however, will influence the amount of depth and detail sought after from those involved. A number of social activities will be undertaken by the researcher during the two weekends in order to maximise the number potential respondents encountered. Likewise, the potential for snowballing will be utilised (i.e. all willing contacts will be asked if they know of anyone else on the trip who may be willing to help).

It took about a month for me to be notified of my approval. Having already paid for my Melbourne trip, however, I had already informed my supervisors that I planned to be on that plane regardless of the decision made by the University's Ethics Committee. Everything appeared to be falling into place and I was more excited than I was nervous or cautious about the journey ahead. I couldn't wait to get started. I had never seen the All Blacks play Australia and could not ignore the importance of the Bledisloe Cup to rugby-loving New Zealanders. I was convinced I would be able to double the number of contacts that I had stipulated in my ethics application. The fact that the game was being played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) only added even more fuel to my fire. I wanted to be a sport tourist.

I would like to finish Act Two with a quotation extracted from the only book that I decided to take with me to Melbourne. It was supposed to be a bit of bedtime reading, and/or something to act as a cover for my notepad. The book is entitled 'Rules of Disorder'. It was written by Peter Marsh, Elizabeth Rosser and Rom Harre and published two years before I was born[201]. I have returned to it on several occasions since returning from Melbourne and have found myself thinking about it whenever I am in the company of other football supporters. It looks into the behaviour of soccer fans during the days of terracing and trouble. I found it the week before I was due to go on my first excursion into the field and it quickly reminded me of the importance of allowing for some degree of emotional involvement in participant observation. I found it hard to put down, and had finished it by the time the inter-city bus pulled up in central Christchurch at 15.30pm on Thursday June 27th.

The opening Acts were designed to give you a sense of attachment to the socially constructed individual who lies behind the heart of my thesis. If you recall, I started the journey by asking you a question. It was a question that I had found myself asking the man in the mirror earlier that day. My goal is to try and reveal who I want you to think that I am. I hope that I have given you sufficient food for thought for the interval. I hope that I have generated more questions than answers. I hope that you are just a little bit curious to know what happens next. I will once again let you draw your own conclusions to this chapter, this act and the first half of my he*art*ful autoethnography.

[201] See **Peter Marsh, Elizabeth Rosser and Ron Harre (1978)** *The rules of disorder* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

"Many people seem to equate this methodology [participant observation] with going along to events and simply looking at what goes on…

They seem to leave out the participation bit…

But an involvement, albeit a rather restrained one, in the action is a basic requirement.

One needs not only to observe what is happening but also ***feel*** what it is like to be in a particular social situation.

This experiential aspect does not come about by being a totally disinterested onlooker.

It comes through an attempt to share in the excitement and emotions which, for soccer fans, constitute the electric atmosphere which is seen as being the most important aspect of Saturday afternoons" (emphasis in original)[202].

[202] Ibid (p. 119).

# Part Two:
# ‘To the Academy’

## Act Three: The Excursion




## Chapters 11-30

# Chapter 11: Strangers (in the night)

I needed to be alert. I needed to be in peak condition. I needed to be fully fit, and on top of my game. In hindsight, however, I should have stayed in the lounge. I should have been more sociable. I should have continued telling my hosts about my goals for the weekend. It was only 8.10pm. Why did I think it best to leave them to their Friday evening television viewing? Why did I think it best to retire early to the spare room? Why did I want to be alone?

I wanted an early night. I had an early start the next day. A *very* early start. I wanted to be ready for anything. I couldn't afford to be tired before my excursion had even begun. I was staying in the guest room of Melanie's aunt and uncle's Christchurch house. They live less than five minutes drive from the airport, and their kind offer of dinner, bed and breakfast meant that I would only need to get up an hour before I was expected to check in at the international terminal. My phone alarm was set for 04.00am. The one on my wrist watch was set for 04.10am. If there had of been an alarm clock in the room I probably would have set that for 04.05am. I *really* didn't want to miss my flight.

I have always been overly paranoid about failing to wake up in the morning. The fear of oversleeping has successfully kept me awake all night on many occasions. It has also infiltrated my dreams. I had experienced three separate nightmares in which I had, for various reasons, missed my flight to Melbourne. The night before I left Dunedin, for example, I dreamt that I had made it to the airport but fallen asleep in the departure lounge. In my dream, I woke up in darkness, totally alone and unable to do anything to prevent my plane heading towards the runway. A couple of nights earlier I had dreamt that I had failed to make it to the airport at all. The night before that I had dreamt that my taxi driver had opted for a short-cut that ended up getting us lost.

I have always found falling asleep to be the hardest challenge of the day. I have always found it hard to switch off at night. It is usually when I feel the most awake. There is always something playing on my mind. I keep a note pad and pen next to the bed. I find that writing things down helps to put my mind at ease, which in turn enables

me to relax and eventually drift off to sleep. I usually end up making a list of things that need doing the next day.

After nearly two hours of lying motionless in the darkness in Christchurch, I turned over and rather reluctantly turned on the bedside light. Sitting up, I grabbed my pen and pad and began to construct another list of things that I wanted to experience during my time in Melbourne. It was the fifth that I had written that week. They all contained the same things. I saw it as a type of revision. I thought that the more I reminded myself, the less likely I was to forget what I was supposed to be doing. I wanted to fine-tune my memory[203]. I couldn't afford to be distracted. I had to stay focused. I wanted to reduce my fears of failure.

I had spent most of May and June reading examples of ethnographical principles and practice, looking specifically at the evolution of participant observation throughout the 20th Century and the emergence of personal narrative-based research across the social sciences[204]. Edward Bruner's thoughts on the subject, for example, had caught not only my eye, but also my ethnographic imagination[205]. His focus on the anthropological aspects of the personal ethnography experience left me questioning the reasons why I had

[203] Amanda Coffey suggests that our memories enable us "to reflect upon and locate our fieldwork experiences". Furthermore, she explains how we "rely upon our memories in the reconstruction and reproduction of the field and our place within it". Kathleen and Billie DeWalt not only support this but also advise their readers that "the only key to improving memory is to practice observing, making mental notes, and then writing detailed notes. Being conscious that we will be writing notes seems to make remembering a bit easier. Each one of us has a natural limit on the capacity and accuracy of our memory, and, unfortunately, the capacity appears to change with time". Having flicked through several pieces of participant observation-focused literature, I was aware of the importance in terms of remembering everything. In **Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt (2002)** *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira) (p. 76); In **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity* (London: Sage) (p. 110).

[204] In 1980, for example, James Spradley cited how the participant observer comes to a social situation to both "engage in activities appropriate to the situation", and "to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation". A decade later, Pierre Bourdieu recommended that sociologists practise participant observation during research, claiming that it necessitates a deeper understanding of the everyday, taken for granted, world of research subject. Barbara Tedlock argued the following year that ethnography is "both a product and a process" and, as ethnographers, our lives are "embedded within our field experience". She argued that "what we see or fail to see, reporting a particular misunderstanding or embarrassment, or ignoring it, all involve choices. Likewise, according to Tedlock, we also make a choice when we edit ourselves out of our final written ethnographic product". See **James P. Spradley (1980)** *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Reinehart & Winston); **Pierre Bourdieu (1990)** *In other words: Essay towards a Reflexive Sociology* (M. Adamson, Trans.) (Cambridge: Polity); **Barbara Tedlock (1991)** From Participant Observation to the Observation of Participation: The Emergence of Narrative Ethnography, *Journal of Anthropological Research* 47 (1), pp. 69-94.

[205] See, for example, **Edward M. Bruner (1986)** 'Ethnography as Narrative', in Victor Turner and Edward M. Bruner (Eds.) *The Anthropology of Experience* (pp. 139-155) (Urbana: University of Illinois Press); **Edward Bruner (1997)** 'Ethnography as Narrative', in Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman (Eds.) *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences* (pp. 264-280) (Albany: SUNY Press).

chosen to study the social identity of the package sport tourist[206]. He made me appreciate the importance of acknowledging my place and personal position within the ethnography I planned to produce.

I had jotted down a couple of personal observations while sitting on the five hour bus journey from Dunedin to Christchurch. I also recorded the one sports-related comment made by our coach driver during the journey. He may not have mentioned the weekend's big rugby match, but he had highlighted the fact that the champion race-horse 'Phar-lap' was actually born in New Zealand, as opposed to Australia. He pointed out the race-course named after the aforementioned animal as we made our way out of the South Island township of Timaru. Apparently he was born there, but taken across the Tasman at an early age. He went on to become one of the most successful horses ever, and there is an entire room dedicated to him in Melbourne's biggest Museum.

'Why did I bother to write all that down?', I thought as I looked over my notes for the fourth or fifth time that night. 'That'll never make it into the PhD', I added, as I turned the page to reveal another list of activities that I had compiled earlier that day. These, however, were not PhD-related excursions. They were personal activities that I wanted to try and fit in around my participant observation. I wanted, for example, to find out how long it would take me to walk around the Albert Park Formula One Circuit. The lap record was just under one and a half minutes. I guessed that it would take me closer to thirty-one and a half minutes to walk the entire two-mile route around the man-made lake.

I also wanted to attend an AFL game somewhere in the city, preferably at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). I doubted, however, that it would be hosting any games that weekend. It was, after all, hosting the Bledisloe Cup Test Match on the Saturday night. I had therefore noted the need to find out more about the city's other major AFL venue, the Telstra Dome. 'Why didn't you check online before you left', I thought as added something else to the list. I wanted to find Melanie something nice to make up for the fact that she had been left behind in Dunedin.

Confident that I had done enough to send me to sleep, I placed the pen and paper on the bedside cabinet and turned off the light for the second time. I immediately found myself creating a picture of the Albert Park circuit in my mind. I tried to visualise the

[206] See, for example, **Edward M. Bruner (1986)** 'Experiences and its Expressions', in Victor Turner and Edward Bruner (Eds.) *The Anthropology of Experience* (pp.3-10) (Urbana: University of Illinois Press); **Edward M. Bruner (1993)** 'Introduction: The Ethnographic Self and the Personal Self', in Paul Benson (Ed.), *Anthropology and Literature* (pp.1-26) (Urbana: University of Illinois Press).

optimal racing line down every straight and through every corner. I imagined what it must be like to approach the first corner at over 200mph. I replayed Martin Brundle's spectacular 1996 crash, which saw his Benson and Hedges-sponsored Jordan somersaulting several times into the gravel at turn three.

I felt my throat tighten up in the darkness as I briefly considered the last thoughts of the Marshal who was tragically killed at the 2001 race. He was struck by one of Jacque Villeneuve's front wheels. It was a freak accident. The detached wheel had managed to find the one and only gap in the safety fence. I thought about the pain that his poor family and friends must go through every time that Albert Park is transformed into a race-track. I thought about the worry that consumes me every time my father goes off to race around the mountain roads of Crete on a motorbike. I wondered how we would cope if he never came home again.

It was at that point that I tried to think of something else to occupy my mind. It didn't take long. Within only a matter of seconds I had started to think about that year's Australian Open Final between the defending champion Roger Federer, who went the entire tournament without dropping a set, and Fernando Gonzalez, who had not only overcome Rafa Nadal in the quarter finals but also thrashed Tommy Haas in the Semis. Next, I thought about the ease at which Serena Williams had beaten Maria Sharapova the day before in the women's final. The mental images of this match were, however, replaced just as quickly as they had arrived.

My next flashback saw me looking down on myself as I lay on the floor of my parents lounge. It was the middle of the night. I was fourteen, and fixated by the action being shown on the television. It was the 1995 Australian Open men's final. Andre Agassi battled back from a set down to beat the seemingly unbeatable 'Pistol' Pete Sampras. It was an epic encounter between the master of the serve-volley and the world's best returner, and, having not thought about that match for what must have been close to a decade, I soon found myself replaying the extended highlights of every major moment in the three hour match.

Not content with replaying two Australian Grand Prix's and three Australian Open Tennis Finals, I ended up thinking about a sport I know relatively nothing about. The focus of my attention shifted to the MCG. It wasn't, however, one of the Boxing Day Test Matches that I found myself struggling to visualise. I had seen enough of them to know what they looked and sounded like. The sport's channel that I was trying to tune

into was the one showing me highlights of the Aussie Rules Grand Final. I had heard from a friend that they were always a sell out. That's 100,000 people.

How could I even think about sleeping? In less than 48 hours I would be attending one of the most important sporting events of my life. It was easily the most highly anticipated fixture since Cambridge United had made it into the LDV Vans Trophy Final in Cardiff. I was only hours away from travelling to a city that I had dreamt about visiting since I was a child. I was going to the MCG. I was going to the Rod Laver Arena. I was going to Albert Park. I was going to Melbourne. This wasn't just an excursion into the field. It was a personal rite of passage[207]. It was a trip that surely all sports fans longed to make at some stage in their life.

A large part of me couldn't wait for the alarms to sound and for it all to begin. I'd been looking forward to it for months. Another part, however, already wanted it to be over. My excitement was easily being matched by my fears of the unknown. I was getting more and more anxious by the second. I was nervous on a number of levels. I couldn't ignore the fact that the success of my study depended upon my ability to gain the trust of those on my package tour. I knew that this was not a holiday. I had to be seen as one of the boys. I had to be accepted into the in-group[208]. I had to do what ever they expected me to do. I had to be willing to go where-ever they expected me to go[209].

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[207] Tourism is arguably a modern variety of the traditional pilgrimage. Nelson Graburn, for example, has compared 21st Century tourism activities to the "sacred journey" undertaken by pilgrims the world over. He also suggests that our lives are marked by a series of changes in our status that can act as a rite of passage. Within a sports-related tourism context, Sean Gammon was able to build a strong link between annual pilgrimages, and the secular rites of passage undertaken by tourists who place a significant degree of personal, if not spiritual, meaning to both the journey and the end destination (i.e. both the sights and the sites of sports). He falls short of describing sport as a form of religion, but discusses similar feelings of awe and wonderment that can be experienced by fans as they arrive at certain venues. See **Nelson H. H. Graburn (2001)** 'Secular ritual: a general theory of tourism', in Valene L. Smith and Maryann Brent (Eds.) *Hosts and guests revisited: tourism issues of the 21st century* (pp.42-50) (New York: Cognizant Communications Corporation); **Sean Gammon (2004)** 'Secular Pilgrimage and Sport Tourism', in Brent W. Ritchie and Daryl Adair (Eds.) *Sport tourism: interrelationships, impacts and issues* (pp. 30-45) (Clevedon: Channel View).

[208] Although SIT builds its base within the mind of the individual, it is largely concerned with inter-group relations. It is largely unidirectional, arguing that the well-spring of inter-group behaviour lies deep within the individuals concern with individual identity. See, for discussion, **Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (1986)** 'The Social Identity Theory of Inter-group Behaviour', in Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin, (Eds.) *Psychology of Inter-group Relations* (pp. 7-24) (Chicago: Nelson Hall); **John C. Turner and Katherine J. Reynolds (2004)** 'The Social Identity Perspective in Inter-group Relations: Theories, Themes, and Controversies', in Marilynn. B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and Social Identity* (pp. 259-277) (Oxon: Wiley-Blackwell); **Merritt Posten (1998)** Social Identity Theory: Sports Affiliation and Self-Esteem, available at http://www.units.muohio.edu/psybersite/fans/sit.shtml [Accessed 21 / 5 / 2008]; **Daniel L Wann and Frederick G Grieve (2005)** Biased Evaluations of In-Group and Out-Group Spectator Behavior at Sporting Events: The Importance of Team Identification and Threats to Social Identity, *The Journal of Social Psychology* 145 (5), pp. 531-546; **Jan Halberstadt, Robert P. O'Shea and Joseph Forgas (2006)** Outgroup fanship in Australia and New Zealand, *Australian Journal of Psychology* 58 (3), pp. 159-165; **Jolanda Jetten, Nyla Branscombe and Russel Spears (2006)** 'Living on the edge:

This wasn't about me, or my dreams of finally making it to Melbourne. I had a specific job to do, and my entire future depended upon it being done correctly. I lay in bed, waiting impatiently for the alarm to sound. My eyes closed. My body safely cocooned between the sheets. I'd been awake for hours. Suddenly I wished that I had an All Blacks shirt to wear. Suddenly I wished that my English accent wasn't so obvious. Suddenly I wished that the voices in my head would stop reminding me that my entire academic future was riding on the success of this one trip. Suddenly I wished that I could switch everything off and get some much needed sleep.

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Dynamics of inter-group rejection experiences', in Rupert Brown and Dora Caprozza (Eds.) *Social Identities: motivation, emotional, cultural influences*(pp. 91-108) (Hove: Psychology Press).

[209] Participant observation, according to Carla Willig, is the continued study of others located in their own territory, within naturally occurring settings or open systems where conditions continuously develop and interact with one another to give rise to a process of ongoing change. David McCurdy, James Spradley and Dianna Shandy refer to it as "'hanging out' with informants and interacting with them to ask questions, observe actions, and participate in activities". Wayne Fife supports this, describing it as the most basic of all ethnographic research methods. He warns, however, that "along with an eye for observation, it is necessary for an ethnographic researcher to develop an ear for interviewing". He also supports comments that it can be the most time consuming and expensive. See, for further discussion, **Carla Willig (2001)** *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Adventures in Theory and Method* (Buckingham: Open University Press); **Wayne Fife (2005)** *Doing Fieldwork: Ethnographic Methods for Research in Developing Countries and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan) (p. 93); **David W. McCurdy, James P Spradley and Dianna J. Shandy (2005)** *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society*, 2nd Edition (Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc) (p. 94).

# Chapter 12: Straighten up (and fly right)

I've always loved the power of a good refreshing shower. I love how it not only knocks the sleep off of the body but also removes the cobwebs from the mind. It gives me time to reflect upon everything that has happened since the previous shower. It also gives me time to consider what will, or should I say, might happen before the next one. Ultimately, the person who exits his morning shower is practically unrecognisable from the creature that tends to stumble his way from the bedroom into the bathroom. I hate seeing myself, let alone anyone else, before I have experienced my morning shower. It's not a pretty sight.

There was nothing remotely enjoyable about the shower I experienced at 4.15am, on the 29th of June 2007. The water was hot enough. The pressure was far better than anything I had waiting for me back in Dunedin. There was nothing wrong with the shower. In fact, as showers go, it was almost as good as the one my father installed in our house when the extension was finally finished. It was a very good shower. I just didn't want to be experiencing it at that precise moment in time. I didn't want to be there. I wanted to be back in bed. More specifically, I longed to be lying next to Melanie in the bed I had reluctantly left the day before.

It was too early. It was too dark outside. I had slept less than two and a half hours, and my morning shower wasn't working. It wasn't having any affect at all. It certainly wasn't waking me up. It wasn't slapping me in the face and preparing me for the day ahead. Neither was it re-assuring me that everything was going to be alright. I had cold feet. My mind was far too pre-occupied to let the rest of my body benefit. It wouldn't let me appreciate it. It had opened up an invisible umbrella.

I could see the water hitting my hands. I could taste the warm water on my lips. I just couldn't feel it hitting the sleep off of my tired, life-less, body. I couldn't feel it warming up my feet. While I was no longer worried about my alarms failing to wake me up in time, my latest fear was actually centred on the thought of me making my flight. I continued to question why I was going. Should I have listened to my friends and picked another fixture to focus on? Was this too much? Was it too soon? Did I need more time? What if no one wants to talk to me?

I began to doubt whether I was truly ready or able to achieve any of the objectives I had set myself. 'Could I really get people to accept me as one of them?', I asked the reflection that I could just about make out on the tiles of the shower cubicle. 'Was this is going to be a very embarrassing, not to mention very expensive, waste of time', I thought as I turned off the water flow and cleared the last remaining drops from around my eyes. 'Maybe missing the plane wouldn't be such a bad thing after all', said an equally paranoid voice in my head. 'Maybe you should just go back to bed and simply pretend you slept through your alarm', continued the voice, seizing on the doubt that had left me standing in a now relatively dry shower. It sounded surprisingly like something Pilch would have said when I was a teenager.

'Perhaps you're right?', I thought, knowing that people would probably believe that I missed my flight. 'It certainly felt much safer under the sheets', I continued, finally exiting the shower. 'Perhaps I could go and lie back down, shut my eyes and pretend I never woke up', I added whilst wiping the condensation away from the large mirror that made the en-suite bathroom look twice its size. I stood and took a long hard look at the individual framed in front of me. I knew that I was being ridiculous. I knew my fears were largely irrational. I knew it was just nerves and cold feet, not to mention the lack of sleep. I knew that I was never going to go back to bed or back to Dunedin that day. I just needed to pull myself together, get dressed and get myself to the airport.

I thought back to what my mother had said during that early morning phone call back on the 12th of September 2005. She told me to look at myself before I started to judge the actions of others. 'If only she were here now', I thought as the image in the mirror slowly became clearer through the mist. 'She'd soon knock me back into shape', I added, thinking of how jealous she was at the fact that I was going to visit the Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne. She'd no doubt tell me to ignore the voices in my head and focus on what my heart was saying. "Why wouldn't they want to accept me into their in-group", I said to my reflection with as much confidence and conviction as I could muster at the time. "Why wouldn't they want to talk to me?", I added as I left the bathroom and headed straight to the clothes that I had carefully laid out the night before.

I opted against making myself some breakfast and waiting inside for him to arrive. I didn't want to disturb my hosts, and I definitely didn't want the driver using his horn to announce his arrival outside. The taxi had been booked for 04.45am. I was out of the house by 04.40am. The ground was wet and the air was colder than I had anticipated. The road was also much busier than expected. I grabbed my scarf and gloves from my

bag. The beanie, however, remained stored away as the gel in my hair was yet to set, and I knew better than to try and cover it up when it was still wet.

Needless to say, despite my concerns, my taxi driver proved more than capable of finding the address that I had given his firm the evening before. He arrived with a minute to spare. "Don't these people have beds they should be attached to?", I asked, pointing to the convoy of cars that delayed us pulling away from the curb-side. Steve subsequently informed me that I was his last pick-up of the morning and that he couldn't wait to attach himself to his bed for the rest of that day. He'd also been awake all night, and was responsible for transporting several worse-for-wear looking students home several hours earlier. He looked as tired as I felt. He probably felt as tired as I looked.

I exited the taxi and dug out all the loose change from my wallet. I then held my palm out for him to dig around and take the necessary coins for his troubles. I knew that they lived close to the airport but we had only crossed three sets of traffic lights and two roundabouts. It had taken less than five minutes. It could only have been a couple of kilometres at the most. I could have walked it easily. I grabbed my bag from the back seat and smiled politely as he wished me both a "safe and successful trip". We'd spoken briefly about the popularity of early morning flights, and the fact that I was heading to Melbourne, but I didn't have the time to explain why I was going. I was just about to mention the Test Match when we pulled outside the departure terminal.

"I hope so", I replied with the mixture of anxiety and anticipation still racing around my body. Looking at my watch, it dawned on me that I could have booked the taxi to pick me up ten minutes later. I could have had an extra ten minutes in bed. My stomach grumbled at the thought that I could have made myself something to eat. It knew something wasn't right. Breakfast always came immediately after my morning shower. It has always been the most important meal of the day. I have always struggled to function without it.

I entered the terminal and was immediately aware of several equally tired-looking travellers. Some looked as though they had opted for breakfast instead of a shower. Arms hung heavy by their side. Their feet slid, as opposed to stepped, across the floor. The pace was much slower than that normally encountered in an airport. Everybody appeared to be heading roughly in the same direction, but no one was in a hurry to reach their destination. Likewise, it was much quieter than expected.

Two spiralling balloon columns stretched all the way from the floor to the ceiling. They had to be at least five metres high and stood roughly the same distance apart. They

appeared to mark the boundaries of an airlines check-in area. The one closest to me was an even mixture of yellow and green. The other was almost entirely black, with less than a handful of white balloons mixed in for effect. I liked what I saw. I also found myself beginning to wake up. 'This is it', I declared to all the other voices in my head. 'This is really happening', I added with the kind of enthusiasm that I had been lacking back in the bathroom. 'Time to get your act together', said an authoritative-sounding voice inside my head. 'Time to make some detailed observations', it added as I looked down and saw that the notepad and pen had already been extracted from my coat pocket.

'First things first', I said to myself as I reached into the opposite pocket to get out Melanie's digital camera. 'We can make plenty of field notes in a minute', I informed the ethnographer as I checked to see how much battery life was left. 'I've got to get a picture of those balloons', I said, keen to capture what I thought would be a great image to use in my next PhD seminar[210]. 'They have clearly been put there for a reason', I added, justifying my decision. 'I'm sure they won't be there when I return on Monday', I noted in the pad after putting the camera back in my pocket. Looking around, I quickly noticed that I was not the only one taking an interest in the balloons. I was also not the only one with a camera.

The airline responsible for the balloons had also marked out their territory with a mixture of Australian and All Black rugby flags. They had four desks open and were busy checking passengers for two flights to Sydney and Brisbane. A closer look revealed that their employees were wearing either Australian or All Blacks scarves. 'They're really going for it', I thought as I considered the possible consequences of taking a photo of the security guard that was now standing next to the balloons. He wasn't wearing any rugby clothing, but I thought it would make another good discussion point upon my return to Dunedin.

As I walked past the balloons, I started to count the number of people queuing to check in. I also made a few notes regarding what they were wearing. I thought about the importance of capturing as much evidence as possible[211]. I knew that it would no doubt

[210] Amanda Coffey reveals how "mementoes of fieldwork - such as audio tape recordings, video footage, still photography, visual or material artefacts and documents of the field" can all play a crucial role in helping our memories of being out in the field. **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity* (London: Sage) (p. 110).

[211] Kathleen and Billie DeWalts note the importance of being able to "attend to detail", and suggest that "effective observation means "seeing" as much a possible in any situation". To them "seeing" meant capturing everything within eye and ear-shot, including "the arrangement of physical space, the arrangement of people within that space, the specific activities and movement of people in a scene, the interaction among people in the scene (and with the researcher), the specific words spoken, and non-verbal

assist my re-interpretations when it came to making sense of my field notes[212]. Though the airline that I was travelling with also had four desks open, and were equally busy dealing with two trans-Tasman flights, they had clearly opted against showing any indication that they were aware of the weekend's Test Match. There were no balloons. There were no flags. The only allegiance shown by the staff was to their employer.

I wondered if the employees of this budget airline were envious of those doing the same job less than a hundred metres to their right. I knew I would be. I decided that I would ask once I got to the front of the queue I had just joined. I also wondered if those wearing the Australian scarves were actually Australians. 'Perhaps they were asked to bring their own for the day', I scribbled down in the note pad as I thought about the Cambridge United scarf that was keeping my neck warm at the time. I also thought about how much I would protest if my employer asked me to show allegiance to Peterborough. 'Surely they couldn't force a Kiwi to wear an Aussie scarf (or vice versa)', I thought as I looked back towards the desks I had passed only moments before. 'That would be wrong for so many reasons'.

Three young males stood ahead of me in the line I had picked. The rest of the queue, however, consisted almost entirely of middle-aged, grey-haired, gentlemen. There was a surprising lack of rugby-related clothing. 'Perhaps they're saving it all for tomorrow?', I thought as I continued to look around the terminal. I wanted to capture as much as possible. I wanted to remember everything seen and heard. I planned to test myself on it the minute I made it through security and into the departure lounge. My excitement was growing stronger by the second.

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interaction, including facial expression". In **Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt (2002)** *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira) (p. 69).

[212] According to the DeWalts, "… the writing of field notes is virtually the only way for the researcher to record observations of day-to-day events and behavior, overheard conversations, and informal interviews, which are the primary materials of participant observation". In Ibid (p. 141).

# Chapter 13: Capturing a captive audience

Only upon reaching the security check point did I remember that I had meant to ask the girl at the desk about her employer's lack of sports-related paraphernalia. My initial failure to locate my passport had caused me to completely forget. I had been too busy watching other people to notice that I hadn't got it out whilst in the queue. Worse still, it wasn't in the first couple of places that I looked once I was standing at the desk. I was certain that I had placed it with all my other important documents the night before. I had no memory of placing it in the inside pocket of my jacket.

The offer of an emergency exit seat with extra leg room had also come as a complete surprise. That had never happened before, despite me asking on several occasions. 'That's got to be a good sign', I said reassuringly as I happily made my way towards the departure lounge. 'I wonder why thy picked me?', I asked myself as I emptied my various pockets and placed my possessions into the box provided. 'Perhaps they only picked those travelling by themselves?', I added as I walked through the metal detector and passed the guards waiting for me the other side. 'I hope they are going to tell me what I have to do if an emergency happens!', I continued as I gathered up my belongings and made my way into the departure lounge.

I was keen to recall and (re)interpret as much as I could from the check-in experience. I couldn't stop thinking about the different approaches adopted by the two rival budget airlines flying trans-Tasman routes that morning. After purchasing a greasy bacon and egg muffin, piping hot hash brown and fresh orange juice, I found a seat in the food court that offered an almost unobstructed view of the entire lounge. I wanted to make a note of anything and everyone I saw walk past. I had already counted thirty-one people wearing at least one obvious item of All Blacks clothing. I had also begun the process of judging them based on the type of sports-related clothing they were (or were not) wearing.

Most of the men I saw appeared somewhere between the age of thirty and sixty. I had only noted half a dozen women wearing something rugby related. The most common accessory seen was the baseball cap. The All Blacks beanie was a close second. Looking over my notepad, I had thirteen little lines next to the word 'shirts', nine next to the word

'scarf' and seven next to the word 'coat'. I even noted the number of provincial rugby shirts being worn. I was thoroughly enjoying my research. I was enjoying being an active participant observer. What's more, I was finally beginning to relax and enjoy myself. I was convinced that these numbers would all come in useful at some stage. I was equally certain that they would give me something to talk about in my thesis.

There were only five rugby shirts that I had never seen before. I assumed they must have been local clubs from somewhere in the region. I can picture two of them today as clearly as I can taste that much-needed hash brown. There was one with large red and green rings running horizontally, and another with a mixture of sky and navy blue chequered square. 'I guess I'll see a lot of rugby shirts over the next 48 hours', I thought as I finished off my breakfast and decided to go for a walk around the terminal. I was keen to discover how fast the All Blacks items were selling in the shops that were located throughout the departure lounge. For me, it was far too early to consider buying anything other than breakfast.

I knew the shops would be trying to profit from the occasion. I knew that, for a few hours at lest, they had a captive audience. Walking around, however, I was unsure how many of the 'sport tourists' I could see would be interested in buying their souvenirs before they even arrived at their destination. I assumed that most of those willing to fly across the Tasman to watch a rugby match would already own most of the merchandise that I could see on sale. I assumed they would wait until they were in Melbourne. I knew that was where I was likely to be spending all my money.

I found myself thinking about all the money that I had spent on sports-related clothing and souvenirs. I thought about all of the programmes that I had stored away in my parent's attic. 'They'd better still be there', I added as I began to compare the prices of All Black memorabilia with that found in the sport shops on Dunedin's George Street. While items weren't exactly flying off the shelves, I guessed that the various shops were doing a much healthier trade than usual for 05.25am on a cold winter's morning. 'I doubt that they were this busy yesterday morning', I said to myself as I entered what appeared to be the most popular commercial outlet.

I wasn't too surprised to see that newspapers, magazines and other forms of reading material were clearly the most popular purchases. I looked specifically for anything that might have been produced just for the weekend's fixture. I thought about the All Blacks versus England Test Match t-shirt that I had won at a Dunedin pub quiz night and how it wouldn't have meant so much to me if I had not have attended that

fixture earlier in the year. I thought of the Cambridge United flag that I bought outside Cardiff's Millennium Stadium the day we lost to Blackpool. I recalled how it was different to any of the other CUFC memorabilia I already owned. It was also different to those being sold in the club shop. I knew at the time that it was something I would keep forever. I also thought about the rosette my mother bought for me on the 26th of May 1990 as I stood on the concrete concourse of the old Wembley Stadium.

'That's a missed opportunity if ever I saw one', I said, as my mind returned to the present. Looking around, I suspected some of the people purchasing the All Blacks merchandise may have simply forgotten to pack their lucky hat or favourite scarf. Others seemed to be using the occasion as an excuse to replace and/or up-grade the items they were already wearing. I thought about how the New Zealand rugby teams seemed to change their shirts ever year. I also thought about how difficult it was to tell a new All Black shirt apart from an old one and how great it was that they didn't have a sponsor across the chest. I took particular interest in those walking around in All Blacks clothing that appeared to be well over a decade old.

'Were they trying to optimally distinguish themselves from others?', I noted as I began to think about the linkages between the identity literature and the sociological importance of showing where you were from and who you sport[213]. I also thought about some of the articles that I had found on the nationalistic behaviour of sports fans, especially when they are in a group and located away from home[214].

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[213] The very concept of social belonging and attachment is multi-dimensional and includes a multitude of geographies that have long been the source for academic debate. Identity theory, for example, stipulates that it is much more than a simple cognitive process, and should be addressed as an accomplishment of social interaction. See, for discussion, **John Sugden and Alan Bairner (1994)** 'Ireland and the World Cup: Two teams in Ireland, there's only two teams in Ireland', in John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson (Eds.) *Hosts and champions: Soccer cultures, national identities and the USA World Cup* (pp. 119-139) (Aldershot: Arena); **Michael Lewis (2001)** Franchise Relocation and Fan Allegiance, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 25, pp. 6-19; **Gary Armstrong and Hans Hognestad (2003)** "We're Not From Norway": Football and Civic Pride in Bergen, Norway', Identities: *Global Studies in Culture and Power* 10, pp. 451–475; **Jason Tuck (2003)**The Men in White: Reflections on Rugby Union, the Media and Englishness, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 38 (2), pp. 177-199; **Matthew Parry and Dominic Malcolm (2004)** England's Barmy Army: Commercialization, Masculinity and Nationalism, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 9 (1), pp. 75–94; **Mike Morgan (2007)** 'We're not the Barmy Army!': Reflections on the Sports Tourist Experience, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 9, pp. 361–372.

[214] People's identities are constructed by a multi-faceted set of personal characteristics that have both territorial and non-territorial features. See, for example, **Alan Bairner and Paul Darby (1999)** 'Divided Sport in a Divided Society: Northern Ireland' in John Sugden and Alan Bairner (Eds.) *Sport in Divided Societies* (pp. 51-72) (Aachen: Meyer & Meyer); **Grant Jarvie and Irene A. Reid (1999)** Sport, Nationalism and Culture in Scotland, *The Sports Historian* 19 (1), pp. 97-124; **Gerry P. T. Finn and Richard Giulianotti (1996)** 'Scottish Fans, Not English Hooligans! Scots, Scottishness, and Scottish Football', in Andy Brown (Ed.) *Fanatics! Power, Identity and Fandom in Football* (pp. 189–202) (London: Routledge).

'Were they showing how long they've been supporting the All Blacks?', I questioned as I exited one shop and headed back towards the first one I had visited only moments earlier. 'Were they likely to treat those with the latest shirt different to those with the same shirt as them?', I continued as I began to think once again about Daniel Wann's various psychological studies with Nyla Branscombe, and the PhD that Ian Jones had written on Luton town supporters[215]. In addition, I found myself thinking about how close I was to losing my Cambridge United beanie back at Heathrow Airport. I then thought about all the Cambridge United shirts that I had put into storage the minute a new one arrived on the scene. I remembered the smell of a new shirt fresh out of the plastic packaging. I noted the unrivalled sense of attachment that I had experienced every time I had put a new CUFC shirt on for the very first time.

Reluctant to miss anything, I found myself trying to write down my thoughts, observe those around me and avoid walking into the back of those I was following. I thought about how I would spend the first few matches of the football season counting how many people were wearing the new Cambridge United shirt, before comparing it with how many were still wearing last years. I thought of the 'new' 2007 home shirt that I had got whilst in England earlier that year. It had 'Pilch' and my favourite number on the back. I also thought of the 2004 away shirt my parents had sent me in time for my first Christmas Day in New Zealand. 'I've been doing this kind of research since I was eleven', I noted in my pad as I tried to regain my focus.

Having filled four pages already, I gave up on the tally sheet approach and went looking for a blank diary to record all my thoughts. I thought about the need to record more than just numbers, questions and nostalgic memories from my past. In fact, as I crossed the departure lounge, I decided to use the remaining hour to try and find someone else to speak to. As I re-entered the airport's busiest store, however, my attention was immediately grabbed by the yellow and green scarf wrapped around the neck of the

[215] See, for example, **Daniel L. Wann and Nyla Branscombe (1990)** Die-hard and fair weather fans: effects of identification on BIRGing and CORFing tendencies, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 14 (2), pp. 103–117; **Nyla Branscombe and Daniel L. Wann (1991)** The positive social and self concept consequences of sports team identification, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 15 (1), pp. 115-127; **Daniel L. Wann and Nyla Branscombe (1993)** Sports fans: Measuring degree of identification with the team, International, *Journal of Sport Psychology* 24, pp. 1-17; **Nyla Branscombe and Daniel L. Wann (1994)** Collective self-esteem consequences of out-group derogation when a valued social identity is on trial, *European Journal of Social Psychology* 24, pp. 641–57; **Daniel L. Wann and Nyla Branscombe (1995)** Influence of identification with a sports team on objective knowledge and subjective beliefs, *International Journal of Sports Psychology* 26, pp. 551–567; **Ian Jones (1998)** 'Football Fandom: Football Fan Identity and Identification at Luton Town Football Club', An *unpublished thesis* submitted to Luton Business School, University of Luton, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

gentleman in front of me. 'Looks like you've found yourself an Australian', I said to myself as I looked around to see if he was there alone.

"He's brave", I jokingly whispered to the person standing beside me in the queue for the check-out. I was desperate to generate some form of conversation and saw this as a real opportunity. "But, hey, good on him I say", I added, noticing that I my initial comment had failed to evoke a response. I was certain he couldn't have been the only 'Aussie' in the airport. He was, however, the only one that I had seen who had decided to show his sporting allegiance to the Wallabies. The two women spotted on the check-in desk of the other airline were wearing the exact same scarf, but somehow this seemed a lot more genuine and noteworthy. I felt they were only doing it out of duty. I doubted that this gentleman was asked to wear his scarf, and I don't think he was wearing it because he was cold. I actually saw it as a premeditated show of defiance. And I liked it. I liked it a lot.

This was the kind of person that I wanted to introduce myself to and build my entire research around. This was the kind of person I wanted to interview. This was the kind of person I wished I had the courage or self-confidence to be. Unless you're in Peterborough, showing your allegiance to Cambridge United is a pretty safe activity. I know I can wear my shirt, scarf and beanie in most places without the fear I may find myself in physical danger. I may get laughed at, but that is something I got used to years ago. The biggest danger actually arrives in the form of mistaken identity. Some people see the amber and black on my CUFC scarf and think that I must be a Wolverhampton Wanderers or Hull City supporter. In New Zealand, however, rugby supporters see the colours and think that I must be a fan of either the Wellington-based Super 14 franchise or the Taranaki provincial side.

While 'the Aussie' that I had discovered appeared to be enjoying the attention he was receiving from those around him, my mind drifted back to the day that I first discovered the lack of segregation in New Zealand stadiums. It was my first Super 14 Rugby match at Carisbrook and I saw the Dunedin-based franchise lose a twenty-two point lead in the final fifteen minutes. "*Don't say that*", yelled the lecturer who had previously described this occasion as an authentic cultural experience for all the new international students in the tourism department. He was responding to a comment that I had just made, regarding the fact that even a pub team couldn't possibly throw away such an advantage. I thought they couldn't lose.

Nothing hurts more than watching your team snatch defeat from the hands of an almost certain victory, but I felt at home on the Carisbrook terraces that night. I also fell in love with my new home team. I found myself drawing comfort in the comparisons I couldn't help but make. The stadium was admittedly a lot bigger than the Abbey, and so was the crowd. The way the team lost, however, was strangely familiar. The passion, and ultimately disappointment of those standing around me, also brought back a flood of strangely comforting memories. The lack of an away end, however, proved a constant reminder that I was a long way from home. I had never attended a match where the two sets of supporters could sit and/or stand side by side. it didn't even happen in the local leagues that I used to play in on a Sunday.

Back in Christchurch, I started to wonder if I would have been so brave. 'I hope so', I said to myself as I caught the Australian's eye for the first time. I wondered if it was the yellow on my own scarf that caught his eye. 'Perhaps it was the fact you've been staring at him for the past five minutes', said a rather self-conscious sounding voice in my head. I instantly looked away. 'I hope he didn't see me staring at him', I said as I began to feel like a bit of a stalker. 'I hope he hadn't seen me making notes?', I added as I tried to fight my desire to turn back and see if he was still looking my way. I wanted to go over and introduce myself. I wanted to strike up a casual conversation. I wanted to ask him some of the questions that I had been writing in my notepad. I wanted to explain why I had been watching him. By the time I finally looked back, however, he was nowhere to be seen.

'He must have made a run for it the minute I turned away', I said as I cursed my decision to blank his initial acknowledgment. 'He's probably hiding round the corner', I added, playing on the paranoia slowly taking over my thoughts. I spent the next ten minutes desperately hoping that I would catch another glimpse of his yellow and green scarf. I wondered if he enjoyed being different. I wondered if he was travelling alone. I wondered if he lived in New Zealand or had been over here as a visitor. I wanted to know if he was disappointed by the fact he was the only one wearing an Australian scarf. I continued to curse the fact that I hadn't the courage to introduce myself.

'Was this how it was going to be for the next four days', I thought as I became overly conscious of the fact that my whole study was going to be based on me having the confidence to introduce myself to complete strangers. I found myself unable to shake the image of him smiling in my direction. 'Perhaps it wasn't a nervous smile at all', I said, replaying it in my mind. 'Perhaps he also wanted someone to talk to', I thought, trying to

(re)interpret the scene that had played itself out only minutes earlier. 'Perhaps I hurt his feelings by blatantly blanking him', I added as I realised that I had walked as far as I could in that particular direction. I knew he must have been on one of the trans-Tasman flights that I had seen on the departures board.

It was at this point that I first realised how little I could actually remember about his facial features. I had turned away the minute I saw him smiling in my direction. I would have found it difficult to pick him out of a lineout of people wearing yellow and green scarves. I thought that he looked middle aged. I thought that he had black hair. The only thing that made him different from the majority of people in the building, however, was the colour of his scarf. Returning to my note book in the hope that I had jotted down some more observations, I realised that I had made little attempt to describe any of the people I had been 'observing' for the past hour. All I had was the type of clothing they were wearing.

'Maybe I'm not cut out for this after all?', I thought, noting the fact that I hadn't seen those around me as anything other than potential participants. I hadn't seen them as people. 'Maybe I should have stuck to interviewing those in positions of authority?', I added, thinking about the ease to which I had gathered qualitative data for each of my three previous empirical research projects. 'Was targeting members of the public a stupid idea?', I wrote in my pad as I decided to give up the search and head to the boarding gate shown on the information screens above my head.

# Chapter 14: Looking lost (and lonely looking)

'Where were all the individual travellers?', I asked myself as I tried to make a mental note of all the new faces seen staring in my direction. The boarding gate was only a few minutes' walk from the departure lounge and, having given up hope of finding 'the Aussie', I decided to make my way there as soon as possible. I hoped that it may represent my best opportunity to socialise with those on my flight. 'At least everyone at the gate would have something in common', I said to myself, thinking specifically about in-group/out-group literature that much of my study was being based around[216]. I had always felt that the easiest and most effective way of initiating social interaction was by locating individuals in settings where they were unable to escape[217].

'Why am I the only person by myself?' I added, as I looked around for anyone sitting alone. 'Why is there a group of middle-aged men in fancy dress?' and, more importantly, 'Why are they so happy?'. Suddenly my nausea reached a new level. My stomach knotted and palms clammed up to the extent that I nearly dropped the notepad I had been holding for almost an hour. 'Why are they all looking at me?', said a chorus of

[216] The notion that people not only have a fundamental need to belong, but also seek individualism has gained significant momentum during the past couple of decades. Likewise, the study of social interaction and group behaviour has also become an area of particular interest across a number of academic fields. Ultimately, the degree to which the needs for inclusion and belonging are considered as determinants of identification and inter-group behaviour represent one of the major differences between the seminal work of Henri Tajfel and John Turner, and that of Marilynn Brewer. See, for example, **Marilynn B. Brewer and Joseph G. Weber (1994)** Self-Evaluation Effects of Interpersonal Versus Inter-group Social Comparison, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 66 (2), pp. 268-275; **Cynthia Pickett and Marilynn B. Brewer (2001)** Assimilation and Differentiation Needs as Motivational Determinants of Perceived In-group and Out-group Homogeneity, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 37, pp. 341-348; **Marilynn B. Brewer and Samuel L. Gaertner (2004)** 'Toward Reduction of Prejudices: Inter-group Contact and Social Categorisation', in Marilynn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and Social Identity* (pp. 298-318) (Oxon- Willey-Blackwell); **Marilynn B. Brewer and Wendy Gardner (2004)** 'Who is this 'We'? Levels of Collective Identity and Self Representation', in Mary J. Hatch and Majken Schultz (Eds.) *Organisational identity* (pp. 66-88) (Oxon: OUP).

[217] Social categorisation and comparison of self are amongst the most basic, yet arguably essential, of all human cognitive processes. Social categorisation, however, not only involves placing ourselves in categories, but also relates to the subsequent acquisition of attributes associated with the category in question. Once categorised, we are able to gain a much-needed sense of social identity from the groups in which 'we' are perceived to belong. In addition, it effectively provides an opportunity for individuals, and society as a whole, to produce forecasts based on the likelihood of future social behaviour. See, for further discussion, **Nyla Branscombe, Daniel L. Wann, Jeffrey Noel and Jason Coleman (1993)** In-Group or Out-Group Extremity: Importance of the Threatened Social Identity, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 19 (4), pp. 381-388; **Michael Hogg (1996)** 'Intra-group processes, group structure and social identity', in W. Peter Robinson (Ed.) *Social Groups and Identities* (pp. 65-93) (Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann).

voices inside my head. 'I'm the one supposed to be doing the observing', I added as I tried to hide my inner conflict. 'Why is nothing going right?'.

The gate was busy, but less than half full. And there were plenty of empty seats to choose from. If anything there were too many empty seats for my liking. The fact that almost half of the people had chosen to congregate in their groups made it much harder than I had hoped. 'You could just go up and stand next to them', I said as I assessed my options. 'Perhaps they'll start talking to you', I added. 'But why would they do that?', I argued back immediately. 'What if they just turn their back on me and ignore me like the person in the shop?', I continued. 'What if they carry on regardless?'.

'Well, you currently look a little lost and *very* lonely', said the ethnographer in my head, hoping that I may be able to gain some sympathy from my fellow sport tourists. 'They're probably trying to work out where my own group of friends are hiding', I thought, unable to shake the memories of attending that first cricket match at Carisbrook all alone. 'Worse still, they may think that I'm someone who enjoys travelling by myself', I added with enough authority to leave me wishing that I had gone back to bed that morning.

I thought about heading back to the departure lounge and the safety of a much larger crowd. 'Where are they all?' I asked, feeling both abandoned and heavily outnumbered. I knew that I couldn't just stand around on my own, hoping that someone would come over and invite me to join them. Likewise, I was not comfortable joining in, uninvited, on someone else's conversation. I knew that I would have to find a seat somewhere, and hope that the person sitting next to me decided to say something. I tried to avoid making any eye contact with those staring at me. I could feel their gaze hitting me from all angles. I could sense their curiosity. I could sense that they were also a little uneasy with the stranger in their midst. I was convinced that the room had a gone silent. I felt as though everyone was waiting to see where I sat down, and who I chose to sit down beside.

Having found a seat, a large part of me wanted it to open up and swallow me whole. I tried to convince myself that I was mistaken. I tried to re-assure myself that my entrance had gone unnoticed, and that everyone else was far too busy to care about where I sat down. I hoped that all the smaller, more accessible, groups were still eating their breakfasts, or queuing for their newspapers back in the departure lounge. 'I can't be the only one flying alone', I said to myself as I reached into my bag and removed the plastic

wrapper from around the diary I had just bought. I prayed that someone would soon come and sit next to me.

I grabbed my pen, opened my diary to the first blank page and began to set my multiple voices free. No longer were they trapped, competing for attention and acknowledgement inside my head. I wanted to transfer them onto the empty pages. I wanted them to escape the confines of my mind and experience life on the outside (in the real world). I hoped that it would make me feel a lot better about myself, and the situation in which I was located. I hid my smaller notebook from view, conscious of the fact that I was still attracting glances from those standing all around me. I wondered if they thought that I was writing about them.

'Maybe they'll think I'm a journalist', I thought as I decided to go back to the start of the day and base my first entry on the sleepless night that I had just endured. I also noted down all of the thoughts that I had experienced in the shower. I immersed myself within my own emotionally-driven opinions and highly subjective reflections of the past seven hours of my life. I was no longer obsessing or obsessed by the behaviour, motivations or perceptions of those around me. The more I wrote, the more my nerves and nausea appeared to retreat further from the surface. It didn't feel very scientific. It didn't feel academic, or particularly relevant to my ethnography. But it felt great. It felt natural. It felt appropriate. It felt like I was removing a massive weight, or chain, from around my neck. It felt right.

I replayed the entire incident with the guy in the yellow and green scarf, picturing his smile but still unable to see his face. Suddenly, he didn't seem nervous or overly concerned with my behaviour. Suddenly, it seemed acceptable that I had been looking in his direction when our eyes clashed for that brief moment. I thought about the rather rude way that I had immediately turned away. 'No wonder he wasn't there when I looked back', I said to myself as I suddenly became conscious of the movement occurring in my immediate vicinity. Looking up for the first time in over fifteen minutes, I was somewhat surprised to see that almost every seat in the room was now taken. Even those around me were now occupied.

Sitting directly to my left was a family of five that included a man and women of a similar age, two young children that also looked as though they could be twins and an older-looking child who was probably just entering his teenage years. To my right sat a young couple and their even younger baby. The fifty pairs of eyes that had first greeted me had probably trebled in number. Thankfully, however, they were no longer looking at

me. The arrival of some staff by the gate suggested that we would soon be asked to board our plane.

'Where had the time gone?', I wrote on my pad before closing my diary and looking around at all the new characters in my story. 'How had I missed their arrival?', I asked myself as I studied the faces and clothing of those around me. The multiple voices that I could hear were no longer coming from inside my head. On the contrary, I could hear snippets of several conversations taking place at various locations around the room. I could sense the excitement and anticipation. I could hear laughter and joking aplenty. I could hear people talking about their early start and their taxi rides to the airport. 'Surely, this couldn't have only started the minute I put my diary away?', I asked myself, trying to work out how I had been able to drown it out while I was writing.

'I wonder what else I have missed?', I added as I began to record my latest observations. The gentleman sitting behind me, for example, was deep in conversation with a similar-aged couple sitting with their bored-looking teenage daughter. They appeared to know each other and, from what I overheard, were all planning to watch the All Blacks beat the Aussies at the MCG that weekend. The family were staying in Melbourne for five days whilst the gentleman was planning to visit some friends but returning home the day after the Test Match. I wondered how long he had been sitting alone behind me.

'He definitely wasn't there when I arrived', I said to myself as I tried to think of a way to try and infiltrate their conversation. 'I hope this isn't going to be yet another missed opportunity', I added as I came to the conclusion that I couldn't just interrupt them, especially when it appeared as though they hadn't seen each other in quite a while. I waited and waited for a suitable break, or pause, to arrive. They just kept talking, and talking, and then talking some more. There was no way in. There was no indication that they were going to run out of things to say to each other. I just hoped that the people sitting next to me on the plane would give me more of a chance to introduce myself.

The announcement for those at the rear of the plane to start boarding actually came as a bit of a relief. Rather than ruin my chances of introducing myself, it helped me take my mind off the fact that I had just missed out on yet another potential respondent. "That's me" I said loud enough for those around me to hear. I am usually happy to sit back and stretch my legs out at the departure gate. I'll typically wait until the queue is only a few people long before I even think about standing up and joining it. But there

was nothing typical about Friday the 29th of June. On this occasion I actually wanted to be the first on board. I wanted to escape the departure gate.

Once on board the plane I started to notice a lot of people wearing jackets and hats promoting a number of different sports-related tour operators. The couple sitting two rows in front, for example, had matching tops with the name of a sports travel firm printed in big letters on the back. A group of fifteen males made their way towards the back of the plane dressed in matching rain jackets and beanies that also appeared to have been supplied by their tour operator. I found myself wondering how much these people had paid for their trip and whether anyone could have possibly paid less than me. I also found myself regretting the fact that I had opted for the cheapest package I could find.

While I was admittedly jealous of those with beanies, I also found myself questioning whether I would feel comfortable wearing anything with the All Blacks logo on it. I may have followed them, but I did not consider myself to be an All Blacks supporter. I still supported England. 'What's the difference between a follower and a supporter?', I asked myself as I continued to watch those boarding the plane. 'I support Cambridge United, but follow Tottenham Hotspur', I decided, thinking back to the number of New Zealanders who look bemused when I tell them which team I actually support. Supporting a team, to me, implies that you contribute to the club in a financial manner. You support their existence. It is possible to follow a team without them necessarily knowing about it, or gaining anything from it.

Having taken my window seat, I was keen to record my observations from within the departure gate. I wanted to get it out of the way before anyone came and sat down in either of the two vacant seats to my left. At the front of the plane was the group of fifteen guys all dressed in various costumes that ranged from a vampire to a priest. Several had gone for the white lab coat and stethoscope around the neck option, whilst others had opted for the military option. One was dressed in full jungle camouflage from head to foot, including face paint. There was a couple dressed as nuns and one who looked like an American traffic policeman.

'That's typical!', I thought as the plane quickly filled up. 'The first time I've ever wanted to be sitting next to strangers and it looks like I'm the only one on the entire plane with two empty seats next to me', I added, in a state of both disbelief and despondency. Looking across the aisle, I recognised those in the other emergency seats as being the family that had been talking to the gentleman next to me at the gate. I wondered how long it would be before a member of the cabin crew came and told us exactly what we

had to do in the case of an emergency. I wondered if the mother and child of the family would be allowed to exit the plane while the father and I had to stay back and help save some lives.

Before my imagination was allowed to get the better of me, I was finally joined by a middle-aged Maori gentleman who threw his bag into the overhead compartment and dropped like a dead weight into the aisle seat. The sound and obvious speed of his breathing implied that he may have had to run to our departure gate. Looking up to see if anyone else was behind him, and about to take the middle seat, I noticed that the front doors were now closed and the crew appeared to be preparing for our safety demonstration.

'He must have been the last one to board', I said keen to discover how he came so close to missing the flight. 'I wonder if he slept through his alarm', I thought as we made eye contact for the first time. 'I wondered how many 'final' calls they had given him', I added as I tried to think of something to say. 'I wondered if he had any idea how relieved I was to have somebody to talk to over the course of the three hour trans-Tasman flight', I continued, as the stewardess began to inform us of our role in the unlikely case of an emergency. 'I wondered if he had any idea of the questions I had spinning around my mind or if he knew what lay in store the moment he had got his breath back', I thought as I nodded to indicate I understood what they wanted me to do before I opened the emergency exit.

# Chapter 15: Come fly with me

Assuming we all survived the initial impact of a crash landing, my main responsibility was to check it was safe outside before pulling the large red handle and opening the over wing exit situated directly to the right of my seat. Should we land in water, the gentleman sitting in the aisle seats were to assist the cabin crew retrieve the life rafts from the overhead storage. Much to my relief, we were not expected to help the other passengers off the plane. In fact, once the door had been opened, we were told in no uncertain terms to look after ourselves and resist the temptation to be a hero.

'No problem' I thought upon hearing that piece of information. While I had listened intently to every word Nadine (our stewardess) said, I couldn't help but think of Tom Hanks talking to his volleyball friend called Wilson. 'Someone must have brought a rugby ball with them', I thought, as I gave another quick glance around the cabin. 'We'd have to call it Gilbert" I added, thinking of the famous brand of rugby ball. I briefly thought about sharing my joke with those around me in an attempt to break the ice and stimulate some form of social interaction. The thought that they may not find it as funny as I did, however, prevented me from taking the plunge. The last thing I wanted to do was upset those around me before we'd even left the ground. As a result, I simply noted it my pad and prepared myself for take off.

Having accepted the conditions that went with the extra leg room, I used this opportunity to introduce myself to the gentleman situated in the aisle seat. I could tell immediately from his demeanour, however, that he had hoped to be asleep by the time the seatbelt signs were turned off. I could also see he hadn't totally recovered from the fact that he nearly missed his flight. He looked exactly how I felt before my morning shower. After discovering his name was Eddie, and that he lived and worked in Christchurch, he revealed that he had somehow slept right through three different alarms that morning. He had arrived with less than five minutes to spare before they were due to close the check in desk.

"Yeah, I dreamt I missed it a couple of times", I said, struggling to think of a more sympathetic response to his tale or a better way to ensure our conversation continued. "I've been looking forward to this trip for so long that I was paranoid something would

go wrong", I added, trying to prevent him from shutting his eyes and going to sleep. I didn't want him to think that I was laughing at his morning's experience. "Bloody stupid time to be doing anything, let alone flying a plane", I joked, trying to evoke a lengthy response. Anything would do. I was just desperate for a conversation. Eddie's fidgety state and continued lack of response, however, was making me feel more and more self conscious by the second. I was desperate not to ruin the first meaningful communication of the day.

"But I can see you want to sleep", I said with a genuine mixture of sympathy and guilt. I didn't want to stop talking. I didn't want him to sleep. I just felt that there was only so much I could say without appearing too desperate. My plan was to put the ball in his court. I wanted him to decide what to do with it. I clearly wanted him to hit it straight back to me. Sadly, however, I could see that this was not going to happen. I knew that I had to leave him alone. I just hoped that he wouldn't sleep for too long. I hadn't finished with him yet. I had hardly even got started.

To further emphasise the fact that I had no intention of keeping him awake, I signalled over the stewardess and enquired about the cost of the movie players advertised over the speaker system. Having read the information card, I admittedly knew the answer to my question, but this was the first thing that came to mind. I felt like I needed to do something other than simply turn away and stare out the window into the darkness.

"They're twenty dollars sir", Nadine informed me, pointing to the fact that it clearly stated the cost in fairly large letters on the side of information card that she had seen me place on the empty middle seat only minutes earlier.

"Oh yeah, thanks", I responded, acting as though I had somehow managed to miss that part. "I'll have two!", I joked as she walked away, making a gesture that suggested I could watch one with each eye. 'That was pathetic', said a voice in my head, referring to my desperate attempt to generate a laugh from those sitting around me. Eddie simply re-adjusted his body into a sleeping position and shut his eyes. I waited for Nadine to reach the front of the plane before I picked up the card and took a much closer look at the choice of movies available. On seeing the cabin crew take their seats I was suddenly aware of the fact that we had reached the end of the runway and were about to take to the sky.

Eddie appeared to be asleep by the time the seatbelt sign was switched off and I began to assess my options as Nadine came round with the movie players. I thought about seeing how noisily I could set it up on my tray table. I even contemplated what

might happen if I "accidentally" dropped it onto Eddie's lap as I took it off the stewardess. The last thing I wanted to do, however, was to anger him. I was realised that it was probably in my best interest to let him sleep. I figured that he would be more likely to talk to me when he eventually woke up.

Having quietly set up my movie player, I took another moment to contemplate why I had just spent twenty dollars on something I didn't really want. I should have saved my money. I regretted the fact that I had opted against bringing more than one book with me. I had hoped to spend the entire three hours getting better acquainted with the sport tourists sitting next to me. It had never crossed my mind that the seat would be empty. I was also surprised by the number of people with their eyes firmly closed. I couldn't understand how they could all have fallen asleep so easily. I had hoped Eddie would try for a few moments, before coming to terms with the fact that our fake leather seats were really not designed with sleeping in mind.

My strategy for getting information was relatively simple. It had also proven effective on numerous occasions in the past. It is built around my ability to get other people interested in finding out more about me. It's about targeting their curiosity. It's about getting them to take the bait and ask the first question. To implement it successfully, you have to be a little cunning and very manipulative. It's a very strategic form of investigation that I have struggled to find in any of the methodological texts that I have read during my decade in the academy. I call it fishing.

I genuinely believed that I could make it work during my two excursions to Melbourne and Auckland. I had no intention of walking up to complete strangers and asking them to tell me why they were there. I always knew that I wouldn't be able to force anyone to talk to me. I was, however, determined to do everything I could do swing the odds in my favour. I wanted people asking me questions. My goal was to build trusting relationships that were based on them knowing everything about me, before I attempted to discover more about them. All I wanted to take back to Dunedin was a lot of field notes and at least a dozen business cards and/or email addresses from people who I knew would be willing to help out at a later date.

I had hoped that people would appreciate the fact that I didn't want to take up too much of their time. I had no intentions of spending my four days in Melbourne doing interviews. I wanted to be a participant observer. I wanted to observe as much as I participated. While it is easy to look back and criticise my lack of a detailed, tried and tested data collection method, I honestly thought that I would have little, if any, trouble

getting people to help. Likewise, I had definitely hoped to have secured my first couple of respondents by the time I disembarked my three hour trans-Tasman flight.

Having hopefully given Eddie some food for thought before he fell asleep, I was much more comfortable sitting back and waiting to see if he would take the bait upon his awakening. I was certain that he wouldn't be able to sleep through the entire flight. The plane wasn't that quiet, and the seats weren't that comfortable. Rather than start the movie, I started to play back everything that he had said before we left the ground. While our chat may have ended too soon for my liking, I had discovered more than just his name and current place of residence. He had also informed me that he originated from the Central Waikato region of New Zealand's North Island and that he was meeting up with three friends once he arrived in Melbourne.

'Not bad for less than a minute's work', I thought, as I jotted done a few questions onto my note pad. Eddie had also mentioned that he was only attending the weekend's Test Match thanks to the generosity of a friend living in Auckland. In fact, up to that point he hadn't actually had to pay for anything other than his taxi to the airport. All he knew was that he had to ring his mate when he arrived. He mentioned that one member of the group he was due to meet up with was flying across from Thailand, and suggested that he was expecting "a *big"* and "alcohol-fuelled" weekend.

As I sat and slowly replaying our initial conversation, I began to realise that I had actually extracted a lot more than I first thought, especially as I couldn't actually recall asking him any questions. All I had done was introduced myself and told him where I was from. He, on the other hand, had given me all of that in response. I thought about Wayne Fife's comments about every conversation being an unstructured interview situation[218]. As much as I wanted to record everything, as and when it had happened, I was conscious that I was yet to inform Eddie of my research. Now he was snoring away, however, I wanted to note his obvious concerns regarding his lack of involvement in the planning of this trip.

Eddie had admitted to being pretty uncomfortable with not knowing what to expect. He also felt like a bit of a "charity case", having not been asked to contribute financially. He usually liked to be "in control" and "organise his own itinerary". He had also touched briefly on the fact that he "hadn't seen one of his friends for over a decade". I frantically jotted down everything I could remember, looking up nervously every time

[218] See **Wayne Fife (2005)** *Doing Fieldwork: Ethnographic Methods for Research in Developing Countires and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

he moved in his seat[219]. I thought of a couple of questions that I hoped he would answer the next time we spoke. I wanted to know more about him. I wanted to know about his past, including any previous sports-related trips that he may have been on. I wanted to discuss my research as soon as possible. I wanted to see his reaction and whether he would be willing to participate in an interview at a later date.

I wondered what stories Eddie may have had hidden away inside his head. I also thought about my ethical responsibility, regarding the fact that I should inform him about my research. I started to (re)evaluate the social research literature that I had accessed, thinking specifically about those that had discussed the complicated issue of ethics within a qualitative-based data collection approach. I thought, for example, about how Mike Weed had conducted observations in various UK Pubs during the 2002 FIFA World Cup[220]. I recalled how he had spoken to a former colleague who had conducted similar research[221]. He wanted advice on how to record the data, making a joke of the fact that he wouldn't be able to stand there with a clipboard[222].

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[219] According to Kathleen and Billie DeWalt, "[E]ven in participant observation, as compared with informal interviews, the written record should contain as much verbatim conversation as possible. Realistically, however, unless the researcher is making rather detailed jot notes, or audio- or videotaping while interacting, reproducing much of the verbatim conversation will be difficult". In **Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt (2002)** *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira) (p. 74).

[220] Mike Weed has published two different articles based around his experiences of conducting ethnography on sports spectators watching the 2002 FIFA World Cup in several UK locations. Whilst one reveals his initial thoughts about the practicalities of his idea, including his uncertainty as to how he would be able to record his observations, the other focused more on the social implications of watching sport in a neutral, yet social, setting. Out of the two articles constructed, it is the first that I have found myself thinking about on numerous occasions. I also find myself going back to it for inspiration on an increasingly frequent basis. I like how he speaks about the difference between thinking about research and actually doing it. I like how, despite his confidence that "an ethnography watching football in the pub would not pose any problems", he still appeared a little cautious and opted to have a trial run. When assessing whether he would be able to blend in he makes several statements about his own self and social identity, noting how he considers himself to be a "young, white male who would have no problem being accepted into a pub football audience". He claims to be "aware of 'the culture'", having "spent many afternoons and evenings in the pub watching sport" and makes the assumption that "Pubs tend to become more sociable during and in the run up to football broadcasts, and people are more prepared to chat to people they don't know about the prospects of the game". In **Mike Weed (2006)** The Story of an Ethnography: The Experience of Watching the 2002 World Cup in the Pub, *Soccer & Society* 7 (1) pp. 76-95 (p. 80). See also **Mike Weed (2007)** The Pub as a Virtual Football Fandom Venue: An Alternative to 'Being there'?, *Soccer and Society* 8 (2), pp. 399-414.

[221] Weed reveals in his story that his former colleague had made notes "on the back of cigarette packets, beer mats and on newspapers when pretending to do the crossword". He was also "advised to develop a weak bladder", giving him the chance to spend a bit of time making notes in a toilet cubicle. During his trial run Weed notes how he opted to use a piece of toilet roll. More significantly, however, he spoke of the value of making mental notes, admitting that "in most cases my written-down reminders were superfluous", acting only as prompts that enabled him to remember things after the event. Ibid (p. 80).

[222] Weed cited that "recording any data would pose a problem, though. Inevitably I would be drinking alcohol, and I could hardly stand in the pub with a clipboard and dictaphone!". In Ibid (p. 80).

Looking over towards Eddie, I also found myself comparing Mike Weeds thoughts on how to record his observations with those of Peter Lugosi, whose articles had made it onto my desk only a matter of days before I was scheduled to leave Dunedin[223]. This comparison, along with some thoughts about whether I could feasible go the entire excursion without telling anybody about my research, was soon replaced with the thought that I could be sitting next to someone who may also have had some ulterior motives for travelling to Melbourne. I started to replay everything he had revealed before he started yawning. I thought about his "friend" flying in from Bangkok. I thought about the fact that his "friend" from Auckland that was paying for him to join them that weekend, and how he had no idea where he was staying or what these people had planned. My imagination was having a field day, and the voices in my head had no intention of being left behind.

'What if I'm sitting next to 'Big Eddie'?, I said to myself, thinking suddenly about the life and times of a former football hooligan named 'Big Tommy'[224]. I found myself trying to picture him and Eddie sitting around the table together, comparing stories about their past experiences and present day activities[225]. I wandered who had the bigger house

[223] Peter Lugosi effectively highlights the difficult moral and ethical negotiations that an ethnographer is required to conduct between themselves and the subject of their observational research, especially surrounding the sensitive issue of concealment and disclosure. His work has focused on social spaces within the commercial hospitality industry and explores the relationships that emerge between the observer and the observed. He discusses the value and validity of opting for covert forms of data collection, claiming it to be unavoidable in certain situations/environments. His studies of bar culture and both the consumption and production of such experiences are largely built around an ethnography that saw him working at a particular bar for over two years. He also included observations made during social visits, and data collected from a large number of interviews conducted during this period. Lugosi advocates the necessary use of concealment and covertness, acknowledging the change in behaviours noticed in those who knew they were being studied as opposed to just being observed. See, for discussion, **Peter Lugosi (2006)** Between Overt and Covert Research: Concealment and Disclosure in an Ethnographic Study of Commercial Hospitality, *Qualitative Inquiry* 12 (3), pp. 541-561; **Peter Lugosi (2007)** Consumer participation in commercial hospitality, *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 1 (3), pp. 227-236.

[224] In 2007, John Sugden wrote a powerful, equally poignant, narrative about a former football hooligan (named Big Tommy) who became an unofficial tour operator in Manchester. His article builds on both classic and more contemporary social anthropological, ethnographic, idiographic, and interpretative traditions, providing what appeared to be an honest, insider, account of "the ticket touting (scalping), fakery, forgery, and the murky independent travel business" that follows the football fuelled black market. His goal was to open a window on "the deviant occupational subculture, lives, and lifestyles of the "grafters"—those characters who inhabit and make their living in this underground world". Personally, I think that he achieved his aim. It touches upon issues of (sub)cultural identity and in/out-group relations. As expected, he concludes his ethnography by placing Big Tommy's behaviour and business activities within a wider social context. In **John Sugden (2007)** Inside the Grafters' Game: An Ethnographic Examination of Football's Underground Economy, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 31 (3), pp. 242-258. (p. 257).

[225] John Sugden's ethnography of Big Tommy, the ticket tout and very unofficial tour operator, concluded with the observation that this criminal now "craves respectability", and revealed that he presented himself as "the owner" of "the second largest independent football travel business in the

or fastest car[226]. I thought about the moral obligation of the ethnographer to report the criminal behaviour he observed. 'What if Eddie is a drug dealer ?', I thought as I took a much closer look at his clothes, his jewellery and what appeared to be evidence of a large tattoo sneaking out of his shirt collar. I hadn't noticed it earlier. I could see the veins twitching and throbbing on his neck. He definitely hadn't looked so strong when he boarded the plane.

I suddenly recalled the reflective article that Richard Giulianotti had written about his ethnographic research on domestic football hooligans in Scotland[227]. I could feel the fear returning. Worse still, the arrival of a nervous 'what if he's a gang member?' thought was immediately followed by a steady barrage of equally unpleasant 'what if' questions, few of which actually involved the Maori sleeping next to me. 'What if Eddie invites me to forget about my package tour group and hang around with him and his friends for the weekend?', I thought with a sudden sense of isolation. 'What if he is only pretending to be asleep so that he doesn't have to talk to me?, I added, turning to face my personal movie projector.

'What if I'm the only person who opts for his free drink upon arrival at the hotel?',. I added, trying to change the subject and think of something other than the thoughts currently running through Eddies head. 'How long should I stay at the bar in the hope that others would eventually come and join me?', I asked myself, desperate for one of the voices in my head to offer me an answer. 'How long can I feasibly make a pint of beer last?', I wrote on the pad that was now positioned on my lap and taking detailed

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country". According to Sugden, Big Tommy "is not the first and will not be the last to graft his way to wealth and status". He added that the observed had even been known to invite "a former Gooner (Arsenal) fan and one-time enemy hooligan gang leader" to matches at Old Trafford, claiming how "his guest and now friend" not only "runs the biggest independent football travel business in the United Kingdom", but also "owns luxury holiday homes in the Caribbean". Sugden attempts to paint the picture of the two men sitting "in their executive box trading fables about past hooligan wars and counting their money", before finally concluding that whilst "some might view them as petty criminals, others might see them as successful and shining examples of the kind of market-driven, self-interested, entrepreneurial opportunism that was the mantra of Thatcher's Britain in the 1980s". I found myself unable to move them out of the first category. To me they are both criminals that should be held accountably and punished for their crimes. In Ibid (p. 257).

[226] John Sugden also cited how Big Tommy lived "in a comfortable detached house with two cars in the driveway in a sought-after residential suburb in north Manchester". Apparently he is, at least was at the time, "a member of the local Round Table (charitable businessmen's club)". Talk about profiting from your crimes. How can that be accepted? Why can't the appropriate people act on this information? Sugden is not, after all, an undercover journalist and surely has no legal obligation to protect his source. Would it be unethical or immoral to provide the police with the tape-recorded confessions he extracted from Big Tommy? Who requires the most protection in these circumstances? In Ibid (p. 257).

[227] See **Richard Giulianotti (1995)** Participant Observation and Research into Football Hooliganism: Some Reflections on the Problems of Entree and Everyday Risks from a Comparative Study, *Sociology of Sport* 12 (1), pp. 1-20.

minutes of everything being discussed between my ears. 'What if it's just like the departure gate?', I added, remembering how lost and lonely I had felt back in Christchurch. 'What if I'm too afraid to make the first move?'

I started to question how much time, not to mention money, I could afford to allocate to social activities. I also started to question the effectiveness of going my own way and doing the things that I had listed on my notepad as I lay in bed the night before. 'What if no one wants to talk to me?', 'What if they are put off by my English accent or my lack of obvious allegiance to the All Blacks?', 'What if they are all too busy getting pissed like the guys up the front of the plane?', 'What if the fish just aren't biting, or worse still hate the bait that I have to offer them?',; 'What if the people that I meet on my package are only interested in spending their weekend stumbling from bar to bar?', 'What if I just forget about them and do my own thing?'.

I started to weigh up the potential advantages and disadvantages of finding myself a small group of 'sport tourists' who may be willing to adopt me for the duration of the trip. Likewise, I began assessing the risk of placing all my eggs in one basket. My mind drifted back to the ethnographies that I had read over the past twelve months. I tried to focus my mind on the apparent ease at which John Sugden and Richard Giulianotti both appeared to be accepted by their 'subjects' during their interpretive ethnographies[228]. I thought about Mike Weed and Peter Lugosi's decision to conceal their academic identities and conduct covert observations[229].

'Should I be drinking with the nuns, soldiers and doctors?', I asked myself, looking up at those situated by the front door through which we had all entered the aircraft. 'Would they even accept me into their group?', I asked myself. 'Should I have just bought myself an All Blacks jersey back in the departure lounge?', I added, thinking about all the merchandise I had looked at back in Christchurch. The nauseating feeling of

[228] See, for example, **Richard Giulianotti (1991)** Scotland's Tartan Army in Italy: The Case for the Carnivalesque, *Sociological Review* 39 (3) pp. 503–527; **Richard Giulianotti (1994)** Scoring Away from Home: A Statistical Study of Scotland Football Fans at International Matches in Romania and Sweden, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 29 (2), pp. 171–200; **Richard Giulianotti (1996)** Back to the future: An ethnography of Ireland's football fans at the 1994 World Cup finals in the USA, *International Review for the Sociology Sport* 31 (3), pp. 323-347; **John Sugden (2007)** Inside the Grafters' Game: An Ethnographic Examination of Football's Underground Economy, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 31 (3), pp. 242-258.

[229] See **Mike Weed (2006)** The Story of an Ethnography: The Experience of Watching the 2002 World Cup in the Pub, *Soccer & Society* 7 (1) pp. 76-95; **Peter Lugosi (2007)** Consumer participation in commercial hospitality, International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research 1 (3), pp. 227-236.

uncertainty grew with every question I found myself unable to answer. I tried to think back to the advice extracted from Carla Willig's qualitative research textbook[230].

I tried to think what Richard Giulianotti, Mike Weed or Peter Lugosi would do if they were sitting in the empty seat next to me. What would they say? How would they be feeling? I once again started to doubt the suitability of my rather 'ad hoc' approach to ethnographical research[231]. Like Mike Weed, I also couldn't ignore the potential problems of getting drunk whilst conducting my observations[232]. I thought it may help me all relax, but wasn't sure about the ethics behind it. 'What if… I got drunk and forgot everything they tell me?', I scribbled down at the top of yet another blank page. I thought that it could help me be accepted within the group, but was scared that it could also lead to more problems further down the line. 'What if… I made a total pillock of myself or, worse still, seriously offended someone that I was trying to impress?'

I was desperate to know what a proper anthropologist would do in my situation. 'How did they make it all sound so easy?', I thought once again. It was a question that I had found myself asking on several occasions already that morning, especially as I sat alone at the departure gate. 'How did they always seem to gain the trust and acceptance of those they observed and interviewed?', I said, thinking about all the useful things that were either missing, or that I had missed, within the ethnographies that I had studied. 'Why hadn't I made more notes?', I asked myself, unable to ignore the fact I could no longer see, let alone touch, the bottom of the imaginary pool that I found myself swimming in.

'Why didn't you bring your notes with you?', and, 'Why were you so confident back in Dunedin?', I asked myself as I once again began to question my motives for signing up on this package. I couldn't help but wish that I had spent less time looking for the perfect package tour, and more time planning how I was going to gather all the data I

[230] Carla Willig argues that "qualitative data collection needs to be participant-led, bottom-up in the sense that they allow the participant to be heard". To her, ethnography should "be open-ended and flexible enough to facilitate the emergence of new, and unanticipated, categories of meaning and experience". In **Carla Willig (2001)** *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Adventures in Theory and Method* (Buckingham: Open University Press) (p. 16).

[231] Carla Willig suggests that participant observers "need to be involved enough to understand what's going on, yet remain detached enough to be able to reflect on the phenomenon under investigation". She also writes about the non-standardised format that most ethnographies take, noting the importance of finding the correct balance between participating and observing. Unfortunately, I was feeling very off balance as i sat alone on that plane. I was certainly feeling detached. I was equally unsure of what was going on. All that I could do was observe what I saw, heard, thought and felt. I just had to hope that the participation part was still to come. In Ibid (p. 26).

[232] See **Mike Weed (2006)** The Story of an Ethnography: The Experience of Watching the 2002 World Cup in the Pub, *Soccer & Society* 7 (1) pp. 76-95.

planned to evaluate over the next year and a half of my life. I hated not being able to predict what the immediate future had in store. 'No regrets', I said to myself over and over again, as I started to imagine what it would be like if I could somehow convince the sleeping Maori next to me to let me join his group for the rest of the day (at least).

I wished that I had a couple of mates waiting for me at the airport. I thought about all the "big" sports-related weekends that I had already experienced in my life. I thought about some of the Cambridge United excursions undertaken during my time at university. I tried to calculate how many were fuelled by a mix of adrenaline and obsession, as opposed to alcohol. Most were never "alcohol fuelled" adventures. On the contrary, those types of 'away' trips were always kept distinctly separate. In fact, nearly all of my football-related away trips saw me return home at the end of the day. 'I wish that I was going home tonight', I thought to myself as the reality of my situation became even more apparent. 'I really don't want to be here', I added as I took yet another glance around the cabin. I just wanted to pull the red lever and escape through the emergency exit.

# Chapter 16: Tears over the Tasman

In hindsight, the choice to hire the romantic comedy option was probably not the greatest decision I've ever made. I wanted something light and easy. I wanted something to take my mind off the reality of where I was and what I was supposed to be doing. I wanted something to make me laugh. Sadly, all I succeeded in doing was to make myself cry. It not only made me realise how alone I felt, but also how much I wished that Melanie was sitting in the empty seat beside me. 'I can't believe that we haven't even made it to the Tasman', I thought as I took a look out of the window at the snow covered mountain tops below. Looking at my watch, I was shocked to see we had only been in the air fifteen minutes.

I found myself starting to cry. I missed my family. I missed my mates. I missed my trips to watch Cambridge United. I missed all the banter and bullshit we used to talk on the way to and from games. I missed having a close bunch of mates who I had not only grown up with, but who I knew would have loved to have travelled to Melbourne with me that weekend. I missed having a bunch of mates who understood the physical pain that I have felt every time I know that Cambridge United are playing at home without me there to support them. I missed the sense of belonging to a group of guys who would willingly get dressed up as nuns and start drinking at 5.00am.

I remembered how I cried for over thirty minutes as my plane left Heathrow back in on the 4th of February 2004. I remembered the tears that followed over 24 hours later in the domestic terminal of the same airport out of which I had just taken off from that morning. While the circumstances I currently found myself in were completely different to the day I arrived in New Zealand, the thoughts and images running through my mind as I tried to find some tissues were exactly the same. I hated being alone. I hated the uncertainty that dominated my immediate future. I hated the feeling of being lost, and completely out of my depth.

While Eddie and at least a third of the passengers were still fast asleep, the others were either deeply engrossed in the movie players or equally engrossed in conversation. I, however, didn't fit into any of those categories. I couldn't sleep. I couldn't really get into the movie, and I had no one to talk to. The next hour seemed to last a lifetime.

Those at the front of the plane were keeping all the three members of the cabin crew occupied with their requests for further refreshments. Unlike my first flight to New Zealand, where I didn't care who saw me cry, I found myself desperate to hide my tears from anyone who may have been looking in my direction. It was bad enough that I was on my own. The last thing I wanted was for people to think that I was mentally unstable.

Thankfully, looking to my left, I could see that Eddie appeared to be in the process of waking up. 'Great timing', I said to myself as the film came to a rather predictable end, and I used my sleeve to wipe the last traces of any moisture away from my eyes. 'I wonder if he remembers how or where our conversation had ended', I thought as I opted to keep my eyes firmly fixed on the movie player in front of me. I knew he wouldn't be able to see my screen and wanted him to think I was still fully engrossed in the film. I wanted to give him a few minutes to become re-acquainted with his surroundings. I also wanted to see if he was planning to close his eyes yet again.

I prayed to myself that this was more than just a temporary awakening. I even crossed my fingers. I was desperate to talk to him. On seeing him reach for the in-flight magazine, I immediately called for a stewardess to come and collect my movie player. In doing so, I was able to make some long-overdue eye contact and offer a smile that I hoped would evoke some form of response. I didn't care what he said. I just wanted him to say something. I didn't want him falling asleep again. I wanted to forget everything that had happened so far, and start to rebuilt my shattered confidence.

"Any good?", Eddie asked as I folded away my tray table and passed the movie player over his lap to Nadine.

'Got him!', shouted an excited sounding voice in my ear. 'That's all we need' added the ethnographer, keen for us to reel in our first catch of the day. 'Easy there!', I added cautiously, conscious of the fact that I still had a lot of hard work to do before I could start to celebrate anything. "Yeah, not bad", I replied. "Y'know, a typical Hugh Grant rom-com", I added, placing the ball back on his side of the court.

"Rom-com?", he replied with more than an obvious dose of confusion in his tone.

"Sorry", I said, wanting to clarify my terminology. "A typical romantic comedy", I added, hoping not to have put him off by the fact that I was not only travelling alone, but had just sat and watched a romantic comedy. I also became even more self conscious of the fact that I had clearly been crying whilst he was asleep. I could still feel the moisture on my sleeve, and was convinced that my eyes must have still been red.

"Oh right, yeah", he smiled as he stuttered his response. "I should probably know that", he added, looking more than a little uncomfortable. "My wife adores him", he continued, offering a re-assuring little chuckle of laughter that suggested he had seen a few Hugh Grant movies in his time. "You're English right", he said after a few seconds of unwanted silence. It wasn't a question.

"Yep, afraid so", I said, answering his statement and feeling more than a little relieved. I was desperate to use his observation to my advantage. "But please don't hold it against me", I added with a sly smile and a double-handed gesture that was meant to signify that I was guilty as charged.

"No worries", he replied, clearly understanding my actions. "So what you doing over here?", he added, before I could even begin to contemplate my next move.

"Well", I said, thinking of a suitable, yet relatively short, answer. "I've been studying tourism at Otago University for the past three years", I informed him as I continued to think of a way to turn the spotlight back onto him. "But I was actually born and raised in Cambridge", I added, keen to test his knowledge of my home town.

"Ah, from one student town to the other" he joked, clearly aware of the town's biggest and most famous attraction. I smiled and nodded, feeling particularly pleased with the direction that this conversation appeared to be going.

"That's right", I said, feeling equally safe to throw a question his way. "So what about you?", I asked. "Are you a Chiefs or Crusaders fan?", I added before he could answer. I wanted to show that I had been listening earlier, and that I had remembered that he had told me where he grew up. I didn't feel the need to tell him that I had actually written it all down when he was asleep.

"Chief's all the way mate", he confirmed without a moments hesitation. "I've only been in Christchurch since 2002", he continued as I sat back in my seat in a less than subtle attempt to show him that he had the stage all to himself. "They've not been able to turn me", he said, followed immediately by a convincing "and they never will!". He even shook his head to further emphasise his point. "So what about you?", he added in a much more relaxed sounding tone. "I assume you must be a rugby man or you'd be at home in bed right now", he continued, asking yet another question that sounded more like a statement. "So what's a pom doing on a flight full of Kiwis going to watch us smash the Aussies?", he asked with just a hint of suspicion creeping through into his voice. "You are going to the rugby right?", he concluded, before handing the imaginary microphone back across the empty middle seat.

"Sure am", I confirmed, hoping he wasn't going to follow this with a question related to my allegiance (or lack of it) to the All Blacks. I always knew that I would have to answer it eventually and I was not ashamed to reveal my position. I had, however, hoped that it would be on my terms. I had hoped it would arrive a little further down the road. I was still to be convinced that I had successfully landed my first catch of the day.

"I hope you will be supporting the right team tomorrow?", Eddie continued right on cue. "Or have you spent all this money just to be a neutral?", he added shortly after.

"No way", I said loud and clear with as much conviction as he had used only moments earlier to confirm he was still a support of the Waikato-based Super 14 Rugby franchise. "I've *never* been a neutral in my life!", I added keen to show him that I was no casual supporter. I also wanted to prove to him that I fully understood the importance of the weekend's fixture. I wanted him to know that I knew all about the trans-Tasman rivalry, and yet still indicate that I was not yet an All Blacks supporter. "But I've not been out here long enough to consider myself a true Kiwi yet", I said, hoping to generate a new line of conversation.

"So what does that mean?", he asked, sounding a little confused by my failure to fully answer his question. "You'd better not be going there to cheer for the Aussies!", he added in yet another one of his statement-styled questions. Thankfully the way his voice changed pitch at the end suggested that he already knew what my response would be.

"*No Chance!*", I responded adamantly. "*I'm English!"*, I stated in a manner that should have said all that needed to be said on the subject. "I could *never* want the Australians to win at *anything!*", I said, purposely adding extra emphasis on the third and final words of the statement. "I probably hate them more than you do!", I added, hoping to stoke the fire and get a bit of a heated debate going. I wanted to show that we had something in common. I could feel my confidence returning. "I won't sing your national anthem at the MCG tomorrow night, but I'll be dressed in black", I said with a smile, which hopefully re-assured him of which side of the fence I would be sitting on come 7.30pm on the 29th of June 2007.

That's when I decided to do it. That was the moment that I decided to reveal my reasons for being there. It wasn't as carefully planned as I had practised on the bus to Christchurch. It wasn't how I initial saw myself talking about my research, but the ethnographer saw his chance and I decided to go for the try line. "I'm actually here on research", I said carefully trying to judge the reaction my statement received. It was surprisingly easy to say. I had expected it to be much harder to admit. I thought that it

would probably be the last thing I told him before we disembarked and went our separate ways. Having already captured Eddies' curiosity, however, I wanted to reveal my hand and place my cards on the table.

"I'm writing a PhD on sports-related travel experiences and motivations", I added, deciding to leave out the social identity bit.

"*Really*?", he responded, clearly taken by surprise by my revelation. His tone of voice also suggested that he may have been a little unsure as to whether I was being entirely serious with him.

"Yep, basically, I'm interested in observing the social behaviour of those flying across the Tasman for the Test Match", I said pointing towards the beer-drinking nuns currently trying to chat up one of the cabin crew at the front of the plane. "I'm desperate to discover why that guy got up in the early hours of this morning and decided to put on a policeman's uniform", I added as our attention was grabbed by another one of the group slowly making his way up the aisle. He was dressed like an American Highway Patrol officer from the 1980s. Rather than continue with my justification, however, I opted to throw in a brief, yet strategically placed, pause for breath. Ideally, I wanted Eddie to make the next move.

The break also coincided with the aforementioned patrol officer reaching our row of seats. He gave Eddie a quick smile and a wink before tapping both him and the woman opposite a gentle tap on the top of the head. They weren't special. We had both watched him doing it to everyone he had passed so far. Looking round, I was interested to see if he skipped those sleeping. He didn't. "He's even doing it to those sleeping!", I pointed out to Eddie seconds later. His initial reaction was to shrug his shoulders and smile. This, however, turned to more of a frown as he appeared to give a second thought towards what he would have done if the guy had of walked by 30 minutes earlier and woken him up.

"That's what I'm here to observe", I confirmed as I shook my head, gave a little laugh and sat back in my seat. It felt great to have finally told someone why I was here by myself. It was such a relief to have found someone to talk to. All I needed to do now was to get him to give me a business card, or some form of contact details. I needed to reassure him that what I was doing wasn't going to hurt him, and convince him that he should be involved.

"And that's worthy of a PhD nowadays is it?", he asked, still trying to get his head around what had just happened. "And don't you mean… that's *who* you're observing!",

he added, pointing out the fact that I had referred to the drunken patrol officer as a 'what', as opposed to a "who". Suddenly, he was sounding like my father.

'Think Richard Think!', I said to myself, desperate to come up with something clever to reduce his perceived scepticism. "Well, I'm not a doctor yet", I joked nervously, trying to think of a way to avoid giving too much away about my research. "And technically there will never be such a thing as a doctor of sports tourism", I added, trying not to sound condescending. "I have to throw in some proper academic philosophy at some point", I said with a wry smile on my face. "So I am looking as much at the "what" as I am the "who", I said, feeling rather pleased with my response.

As much as I wanted to talk about the fact that I was trying to look at the broader socio-cultural phenomenon of sports-related travel, I was conscious of the fact that Eddie might not want to be thrown into the same box as the individual who had just passed us by. I also had no intention of lecturing him about the value of tourism as an academic field of study. I was more interested in getting the ball back onto his side of the court.

"Sorry if I sounded rude", he added as if he had just replayed his last comment and heard it differently. "I just didn't know you could even study something like tourism", he added, apparently concerned that he may have offended me. "Certainly not down at somewhere like Otago?", he added in a manner that immediately threatened to undo his attempts at an apology.

"Actually our tourism department is one of the best in the world", I stated proudly, regardless of whether I could support my claim with evidence or not. I certainly rated it as the best. "Well, certainly in Australasia" I added, just in case he felt the need to challenge my previous statement. "It's also the oldest in the country", I continued, showing it was by no means a new arrival on the academic scene. "We'll be celebrating our 20$^{th}$ birthday in a couple of years", I informed him, giving my last sentence some context. I know that 20 years isn't particularly a long time, especially when you consider the age of the subjects taught at Cambridge, but I still hoped that Eddie would be impressed.

Looking at my watch, I was pleased to discover that we still had at least another half an hour until we landed. I wanted to educate Eddie further about what I did and why I was so passionate about it. I couldn't believe how quickly I had gone from wanting to escape, to wishing we could circle our destination for a couple more hours. I found myself telling him about Adrian Franklin and Mike Crang's first editorial for the 'tourist studies' journal, in which they discussed the various implications of tourism's rapid

growth as an area of academic interest[233]. I went on to inform him about how I had always agreed with John Tribe's view that tourism is not worthy of disciplinary status and, as a result, should be approached as a field of investigation that requires researchers to utilise the theories and concepts from pre-existing disciplines, including those located within the social sciences, humanities and management faculties established at most academic institutions[234].

For some reason I decided to list a handful of key influences in my own approach to tourism research, despite knowing only too well that he would never have heard of them. I also tried to explain how Erik Cohen, Graham Dann, Dean MaCannell and John Urry had all influenced my early thinking towards the consumption and production of

[233] According to Adrian Franklin and Mike Crang, the primary aim of their tourist studies journal was to provide a direct response to those who perceived that the area of exploration had become "stale, tired, repetitive and lifeless". They questioned their readers to explain why the study of tourism was not widely regarded as "one of the most exciting and relevant topics' of the 21st Century. They also question which was actually growing faster; tourism or tourism-related research, implying that they felt that the quality of tourism research had suffered as a direct consequence of its own dramatic uptake and surge in popularity within the academic community. The argument that tourism academics are, or at least were, "dependent on a relatively small core of 'theorists' whose work has tended to become petrified in standardised explanations, accepted analyses and foundational ideas" certainly struck a chord in my mind. Franklin and Crang speak of the lack of tourism theory and the 'craze for classification' through the use of typologies and obsession with taxonomies. I admired their willingness to speak their mind and risk being ostracised from the tourism-situated academic community. In an attempt to tackle the problems they had identified they argue for the need for a journal that "provides a platform for the development of critical perspectives on the nature of tourism as a social phenomenon", as opposed to a series of individual events and localised activities/occurrences. Towards the end of their opening editorial, Franklin and Crang provide a guide to the type of research they hoped to present within their journal, listing their desire to enhance the body of knowledge that exists on the social structures that influence tourist behaviour and the consumption of tourism. For further discussion see **Adrian Franklin and Mike Crang (2001)** The trouble with tourism and travel theory? Editorial, *tourist studies* 1 (1), pp. 5-22.

[234] In 1997, John Tribe noted the problematic nature of tourism academia, describing it as nothing more than "the business of making generalizations about the phenomenal world of tourism and the packaging of theories". He went on to explore the epistemological characteristic of tourism research, using an early studies by Paul Hirst to critically evaluate an early claim that it could be worthy of disciplinary status. Such claims were subsequently rejected on the basis that tourism incorporates a vast number of different concepts, none of which are exclusive only to tourism or tourist activity. Though he was quick to acknowledge the fact that studying the business of tourism, as well as the leisure-based activities of tourist can certainly lead to the discovery of new bodies of knowledge, including alternative ways of conceptualising and contextualising the social phenomenon that is tourism, he was equally adamant in his belief that the actual production of the research itself, however, was too heavily reliant on pre-existing academic paradigms and philosophies to warrant independent disciplinary status. Tribe not only notes the lack of "a distinctive logical structure to tourism studies", caused in turn by the lack of "a cohesive theoretical framework", but also the lack of assessment criteria that applies only to tourism studies. Ultimately, he proposed that tourism studies should "recognise and celebrate its diversity" and be approached as two distinct object of study (i.e. a field) as opposed to an actual way of studying (i.e. a discipline). It is a stance that he has subsequently defended, and one that I found myself firmly supporting from the moment I first discovered it. For further discussion, see **John Tribe (1997)** The indiscipline of tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 24 (3), pp. 638–657; **John Tribe (2000)** Indisciplined and unsubstantiated, *Annals of Tourism Research* 27 (3), pp. 809–813.

tourism[235]. I'm not sure how much Eddie really understood, or even cared, but he at least he was courteous enough to pretend that he was interested. He nodded and smiled in all the right places, waiting patiently for his turn to respond. His body language certainly helped to dismiss any lingering thoughts that I could have been sitting next to a criminal mastermind or gang member. He was just another sport tourist.

"Well, I doubt you'll have any problems getting people to talk about themselves", Eddie said with an authoritative tone that was music to my ears. "You must have realised how much we like to talk about our rugby by now?", he continued with a much more relaxed looking body position. "The hardest thing will be getting us to shut up again", he added after a brief pause. "You know?", he concluded, before taking his first real glance around the entire cabin. He suddenly seemed a lot more interested in who else was on our flight. I wondered if he was now doing his own bit of ethnographical research.

"I had noticed you guys are pretty keen on it", I replied, relieved to have moved on from my impromptu sermon and hoping to slowly move myself out of the spotlight.

[235]The fact that tourism is wrapped up with identity construction and consumption is not a new concept. According to Erik Cohen, the sociology of tourism encapsulates all research activity conducted on specifically on the actions and behaviours of tourists. In 1972, he classified tourists as falling into one of four different groups (i.e. the drifter, the explorer, the individual mass and the organized mass. He has also noted, on several occasions, the sociological importance of the host guest relationship and the consequences of tourism on a destination. While Erik Cohen could be considered the first to explore the sociology of tourism, Graham Dann was equally influential in the early study of tourist motivations. His early studies were amongst the first to focus on the reasons why people engaged in tourism/tourist activities, looking specifically at the various push and pull factors involved in the decision making process. He was also one of the first to attempt categorising 'the tourist' based on their various behaviour and motivations. Dean MacCannell was another pioneer in the study of the tourist that has had a major influence on my understanding and appreciation of tourism academia. His primary interests focused on the cultural experiences that tourists encountered whilst away from home and engaging in tourism activity. His most influential work, however, looked at the perceived authenticity of tourism production and consumption. More recently, John Urry has effectively highlighted tourism's "multi-faceted' nature, claiming it to be interwoven 'with many other social and cultural elements in contemporary societies". Likewise, he has stressed that the international nature of tourism results in the need for those studying it to critically examine societies from both the hosts and the guest's viewpoint. As the subject of tourism has aged, its theoretical principles have become more sophisticated and over the past two decades alone there has been a noticeable shift in attention away from impact identification, towards understanding the identity of those involved in the production and consumption process. See **Erik Cohen (1972)** Towards a sociology of international tourism, *Social Research* 39, pp 164–82; **Graham Dann (1977)** Anomie, Ego-Enhancement and Tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 4, pp. 184–194'; **Erik Cohen (1979)** A Phenomenology of Tourist Experience, *Journal of the British Sociological Association* 13 (1), pp. 179–201; **Graham Dann (1981)** Tourist Motivation: An Appraisal, *Annals of Tourism Research* 8, pp.187-219; **Dean MacCannell (1989)** *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisured Class* (New York: Schocken Books); **John Urry (1990)** *The Tourist Gaze - Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage); **Erik Cohen (1995)** 'Contemporary Tourism: Trends and Challenges; Sustainable Authenticity or Contrived Post-Modernity?' in Richard W. Butler and Doug G. Pearce (Eds.) *Change in Tourism: People, Places and Processes* (pp. 12-29) (London: Routledge); **John Urry (2000)** *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge); **John Urry (2002)** Social networks, travel and talk, *British Journal of Sociology* 54 (2), pp. 155–75.

"So how long have you been going to games then?", I asked in a manner that should have stated loud and clear that I saw him as being a potential participant in my study.

'This is it', I said to myself as I waited anxiously to see how Eddie would respond. 'I've gone all in', I added as I began to replay the way in which I had played this particular hand. I knew only too well the importance of the question that I had just asked. I was equally confident that he would also have known what it implied, and where I hoped it would lead us both.

"Me?", he said, before pausing and appearing to choose his words very carefully. "Well, yeah, I've been going all my life I suppose", he said, playing it rather cool and seeming almost unaware of the fact that I had been building to this point from the moment he first took his seat back in Christchurch. "More recently, it's been a way of keeping in touch with friends and business contacts, you know?" he said, pausing briefly once again to let me catch up. "It's a great excuse to catch up with those you may only see once every couple of years".

I wasn't too surprised by the responses that I got from Eddie. It's nothing less than I had been expecting. He's certainly not the first to question me on the validity and value of my academic identity. I have put up with over a decade of raised eyebrows and perplexed looks from those who have questioned the pathway I first chose as a fifteen year old back in 1996. I strongly considered calling myself either a sociologist or an anthropologist. I even considered the term social psychologist. In the end, however, they remain terms that I am uncomfortable using when describing who I am, and what I do. I spent several hours of the bus ride to Christchurch trying to decide what my fellow PhD candidates called themselves when they our out in the field, doing their ethnographical-based data collection. I tried unsuccessfully to remember if any of them even mentioned it during their seminars. I also thought about those who have produced and published similar studies into the identity of sport tourists.

'How does Mike Weed classify himself?', I asked myself as I waited patiently for Eddie to tell me more about his past. A part of me wishes that I had be given the opportunity to study sociology, psychology or anthropology as an undergraduate. I doubt, however, that many academic institutions would have accepted someone with an Advanced GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism and no A levels to his name.

Over the course of the next twenty minutes Eddie spoke openly about having had his fair share of "productive" nights associated with rugby-related travel. He admitted that he had never given any thought to the popularity of sports-related travel, but thought

that the industry was probably dominated by those "high earning middle-aged professionals" with "a significant amount of disposable income" and "plenty of free-time" to follow their favourite team. I just sat back, smiled and tried to mentally record as much of it as possible.

I wanted to know how much interaction Eddie thought he may have with the locals of Melbourne that weekend, but didn't feel the need to interrupt or ask any further questions. He was on a roll and I had no intention of stopping him. I really didn't want the plane to land. That said, however, I was also conscious of the fact that this wasn't supposed to be an interview. As a result, I had already decided against grabbing my notepad and scribbling down the information he appeared more than happy to provide. Furthermore, I saw no reason why he would object to me tape recording the follow up conversations I expected us to have at some point in the future. I was just about to ask Eddie for a business card or email address when he told me a story about how his wife wouldn't let him take his business cards away with him that weekend. She had told him that it was supposed to be a chance to catch up with his mates, and not another business trip.

"We go to the sevens every year", he announced out of the blue, drawing his thoughts about the proposed new stadium in Dunedin to a sudden and unexpected end. Not only did it appear to have no relation to what he had been talking about, but it was also followed up with a statement that still makes me smile to this day. "We actually pay someone to come along and get all the drinks for us", he added, before giving another quick glance over both shoulders to see if anyone else had overheard his confession.

"You what?", I asked, leaning in closer to hear more. I immediately had images of them hiring a butler or maid to patiently stand in the aisles of the Westpac Stadium as Eddie and his mates sat watching the rugby with cigars in their hands. I imagined them having a bell or whistle to summon their servant. I also imagined Melanie's response if I even suggested that I may be part of such a group.

"We don't employ them or anything", he said, clearly concerned by my initial reaction. "It's nothing sinister or anything", he added, looking around for the second time since he revealed this secret. "We each put in a bit of extra cash to ensure someone else can come with us and act as a runner", he continued, making it sound much more civilised and respectable. "It's often one of our wives or kids after a free trip to Wellington", he added. "They're not interested in the rugby... They just want to see the

costumes and experience the atmosphere… You know?", he finally concluded, appearing happy with his own explanation and justification.

"Have you seen the queues for the food and beer stalls at the Sevens?", he asked, hoping to gain my personal and professional opinions on their actions. "Having someone do all that for you means you don't have to miss any of the action on the field", he declared, as he looked around for the third time in less than a minute. I'm not sure who he was looking at, but to my knowledge our conversation was not being enjoyed by anyone other than ourselves.

"I see", I said, unable to keep a straight face at the fact that he appeared to feel particularly guilty about his confession. I informed him that I hadn't seen the queues at the Wellington Sevens yet, but that I knew plenty of people that had and was therefore able to fully imagine what the queues for food and beverages must be like. I also explained that I had been to enough international sporting fixtures to know exactly how time consuming it can be to purchase the 'fast' food they offered. I was just about to tell him that I would rather go thirsty than risk missing any of the action when I was interrupted by a couple of announcements over the speakers.

The pilot announcement that we had began our decent was followed immediately after by a stewardess asking for those passengers with movie players to now turn them off and prepare them for their return. She also asked those standing near the front and rear of the plane to take their seats as the seatbelt sign was just about to be switched back on. Eddie and I both looked up towards the front of the plane and, pointing at those in the costumes, he asked if they had been "going strong all flight?".

"They sure have", I responded, pleased to see the interruption hadn't resulted in the end of our conversation. "I've lost count of the number of beers they've got through during the past three hours", I replied with a smile on my face. I also shook my head in a gesture which signalled a mixture of disbelief, disgrace and, yet, also admiration and envy. Whilst doing this, however, I was also making a mental note to find out more about Eddie's annual trip to the Wellington Sevens. I thought that it had the potential to make an excellent discussion topic for my thesis. It was definitely something that I wanted to talk more about the next time we spoke. We hadn't even got onto the topic of whether he got dressed up for the occasion.

"Hope I'm not staying in the same place as them", Eddie stated in a manner which made me question whether he was embarrassed by or for them. He thought a couple of

them would struggle to make it out that evening and suggested the outfits should have been saved for the night out, as opposed to the early morning flight.

"Yeah, me too", I said, wanting to show him that we also had that in common. A part of me, however, expected it was inevitable that they would all be staying at my hotel. They looked like the kind of group that would have picked the cheapest package trip available. They also looked like they were embracing our tour operator's motto of 'partying till you drop'. I thought that they would easily end up reinvesting the money that they saved on their food, flights and accommodation on other social activities offered in our host destination. It reminded me a lot of holidays that I had enjoyed with my mates. The biggest difference, however, was that we did it between the ages of 19 and 22. These guys were all the other side of 35. A couple of them looked around my father's age. Some looked even older.

"Would I be able to get your email address?", I asked Eddie as we came into land. "I'd love to continue our chat some more in a week or two", I said, purposely making it sound like we wouldn't end up spending our time going over ground that we had already covered.

"Sure", he responded, as he made a gesture with his hand that signalled that he would first need a pen and paper. "I'll need a pen and something to put it on", he added just in case I either missed or didn't understand what his gesture implied. I grabbed my diary and asked him to write it out on the back page, checking all the time to ensure that I was able to read his handwriting. "Have you got a business card or something I could take and maybe pass on to my friends", he asked as he passed the diary and pen my way. "I'm sure they'd also be willing to help out as well", he quickly added. "I know for a fact that Jono has done a lot more sports related travel than I have", he continued, revealing his mates name for the first time. "He's the guy who has paid for me this weekend", Eddie clarified, seeing the bemused look on my face. "And the lucky bugger's even off to France in a couple of months", he informed me with an obvious hint of envy in his voice.

"He's going to the Rugby World Cup?", I said, grateful that my safety belt prevented me from jumping on the seat and revealing just how much I wanted to meet this guy. "That would be fantastic", I added, nodding my head and smiling like a Cheshire cat. "It's a shame he wasn't on this flight", I continued, looking at the empty seat between us. "I'd love to discover what he has planned for you this weekend", I informed him while blatantly fishing for an invite to meet up again at some point over the weekend. I was now fully prepared to scrap the fishing rod and dive in after my catch. I

was just about to do exactly that when I was rudely interrupted by the thump of the plane's tyres hitting the tarmac directly below us.

The shocked expression on Eddie's face implied he was equally unprepared for our returning to earth. Neither of us had realised we were that close to the ground. The sudden braking sensation confirmed that we had just arrived safely in Melbourne. I was, however, more concerned at the time by the fact that I was unable to offer Eddie a business card. 'I knew there was something I had forgotten to do', I said to myself, as I offered him three make-shift versions written on separate pages of my notebook.

"Better than nothing", I joked as he folded them up and put them away in this inner jacket pocket. "I'm just sorry I can't give one of them to Jono in person", I added, picking up the fishing line once more. I know that I should have just asked him if I could meet up with them later, but I was hoping that he would take the hint and make the first move. "Maybe we'll end up staying in the same hotel and bumping into each other in reception this afternoon", I said running out of ideas.

"Maybe?", he replied, either unable or unwilling to read between the lines and provide me with the offer I so desperately wanted. "Knowing Jono, I think we'll be bumping into quite a lot of things over the next couple of days", he joked as he undid his belt and reached up to the overhead locker. "I just hope we don't break anything in the process", he continued with the kind of cheeky smile that suggested that there was plenty of things that he hadn't told me about his social relationship and past adventures with this other man.

# Chapter 17: Living life in the past

I can still visualise myself arriving in Melbourne. It is as if I am sitting in that middle seat directly between me and Eddie. I can hear the tyres screeching on the runway and feel the relief that I never had to pull that red lever. I can remember it like it was yesterday. The shoebox full of notes is certainly helping me reconstruct some parts of the story, especially the conversations I had, but a lot of this interpretive narrative is coming straight from the heart. As stipulated on several occasions during the first half of this thesis, my story is being constructed in the here and now. It may be about a past event, but it is definitely being (re/de)constructed in the present[236].

The more that I remember, the more I want to write about. The more that I write about, the more I end up remembering. According to the pilot, the local time was approaching eight thirty in the morning as we slowly made our way from the runway to the terminal. He welcomed us all to Melbourne and trusted we all enjoyed a pleasant and painless flight. "Oh and one last thing", he said, causing several conversations to stop, several heads to turn and my ears to tune in to discover what came next. "Go the Wallabies!".

"He's brave", Eddie joked as the entire cabin reacted noisily to the pilot's impromptu announcement.

"I'm sure he got the exact reaction he was looking for", I said, assuming he'd being planning that move for the past few hours. "I'm just grateful he didn't say it back in Christchurch", I added, giving a moment pause before offering my explanation. "We could have been hijacked by nuns!", I joked, looking around for the standing ovation that I felt such a comment deserved. "Glad we didn't need to implement our new skills", I

[236]The stories we tell are always partial reinterpretations constructed within the confines of our present circumstances. According to Stephen Crites, for example, 'the remembered past is situated in relation to the present in which it is re-collected. The child is not the father of the man. The man in this respect, is the father of the child". He adds that "by telling the story from the perspective of this self, as in a first person narrative, usually told in the past tense, I distance this self from the inter-subjective matrix of experience in order to claim it as my own, as that personal past with which I claim identity". His use of past and present tense helps him to "artfully bridge" the "hiatus between the 'I' who recollects and the self who appears as a character". In **Stephen Crites (1986)** 'Storytime: Recollecting the past and projecting the future', in Theodore Sarbin (Ed.) *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct* (pp. 153-173) (New York: Praeger) (pp. 157-159).

said changing the subject and pointing to the emergency exit that doubled as my window. I wanted to remind Eddie of the one thing that distinguished us from those sitting in the rows in-front and behind our seats.

I was keen to forget all about the despair felt in the departure lounge and the emotional outburst that had occurred high above the Tasman Sea. I was surprised how awake I felt. The extra leg room had also allowed me the luxury of being able to stretch out and, as a result, meant that my right knee hadn't seized up during the flight. In fact, I walked off the plane feeling a great deal stronger than I felt when I stepped aboard back in Christchurch. My nausea had thankfully vanished and I felt ready to take on the next challenge. For the first time that day, I felt capable of achieving my goals and reaching my target. I had three fish in the bag already.

I walked onto the plane having spoken to no one but myself and the taxi driver. I walked off the same aircraft having to continuously remind myself to let Eddie have his turn with the invisible microphone. Our conversation had shifted from the fact that we were flown here by an Aussie to the beauty of sport's unpredictability. We exited the plane debating the fact that nobody knew how the weekend was going to turn out. Not me, not him, and not the forty-four professional rugby players selected to represent Australia and New Zealand at the MCG the following evening. He was, however, adamant that the pilot was in for a bad night and the All Blacks were heading for a convincing victory.

"34-14" was his prediction, with a "long overdue" Joe Rokocoko hat-trick. I, myself, was going for a closer "24-18" score line. Despite our acknowledgement of the unpredictability of life, we just couldn't imagine the All Blacks losing such an important game. Knowing New Zealand had lost the last time they played at the MCG only increased my belief that they would want to put in a faultless performance. We both agreed that Graham Henry was the best rugby coach in the world, and, with the Rugby World Cup only months away, we were convinced that Richie McCaw would be lifting aloft the Bledisloe Cup, the Tri-Nations trophy and the William Webb Ellis Trophy before the year was over.

We agreed that it was dangerous to write off the Australians at any sport, but both thought an All Black victory was inevitable. They simply couldn't lose. The only unknowns left to discuss were the try scorers, the version of the Haka they would perform before the game and the overall margin of their victory. We had our own predictions, but

neither of us really knew how many they would actually win by. What's more, neither of us was willing to put money on the final result.

"I never bet on the A-Bs", Eddie informed me, before explaining how he was scared it would somehow effect the result. The two guys walking along behind us, however, must have overheard the caution in his voice and were keen to share their opinions on the subject.

"Ah, it's a dead cert mate", one informed us. "A-Bs by a landslide" he shouted, followed by "twelve points or over; no worries". Clearly, he wanted the entire corridor to know his prediction. He thought that they would win it comfortably.

"Forty points to seven, I reckon", his equally confident companion added only seconds later, much to the collective amusement of those walking around us.

A chorus of collective approval greeted his prediction, followed by several shouts of "Go the A-Bs" coming from both in-front and behind us. Personally, I thought that he was a long way off. I couldn't see the away team winning by such a large margin. The gentleman to my right put his hand on my shoulder and claimed if the Aussies won he would rip up his return ticket and swim home. Similarly, the guy passing Eddie to our left said that an All Blacks win was "a mere formality".

I will never forget the collective confidence of those around me as we made our way into the airport. You could practically smell it in the air. Though it could easily have been interpreted as arrogance, I saw it more as a sign of complete faith in the ability of their team. Having read a number of sociological articles based on the cultural importance of rugby union within New Zealand's society, I was only too aware of the links that exist between the creation of strong social identities and the continued international success of the All Blacks[237].

[237]The close relationship between New Zealand's national sport and its cultural identity has been noted on many occasions, by many authors, and within many different contexts. According to David Novitz and Bill Willmott, the production and consumption of team sports has exerted a strong societal force on New Zealand's residents for over 150 years. Similarly, Steven Jackson has claimed that the formation of self-concepts and social identities is often influenced by an active engagement with competitive sport. Jock Phillips is one of a number of authors to make the connection between New Zealand's colonial past and their society's attitude towards sport, especially those that involve being the active member of a team/group. The characteristics of Rugby, for example, were not only seen to fit particularly well with the physical and social needs of a man's life in the frontier, but also better suited to the rough playing fields found all over the colony. Furthermore, it was also closely associated to the existing rituals and culture of the pioneer male community. Phillips has argued on several occasions that rugby was more than a game, calling it on one occasion "a barometer of the nation's health". He also noted how spectators traditionally came along to drink and bet as much as they did observe the game. Over the course of the early 1900s, rugby is said to have entrenched itself as both "a way of life for every schoolboy", and as "a matter of national pride and identity for men and women throughout the dominion". While this has changed over time, especially with the growing popularity of other team sports such as cricket, football and basketball,

I thought about all of the times that I had travelled to see Cambridge United play, equally confident of seeing a rare away win. I then thought of the times that I was left crying and heartbroken on the coach ride home. I soon learnt to treat any win as an unexpected bonus. If I had of refused to go games that I thought we might lose then my programme collection would probably be less than half its current size. By the time I was a teenager I actually preferred attending the games where we were predicted to lose. There was less pressure attached, and much lower expectations. I loved supporting the underdogs. I loved the possibility that we may beat the odds. It made the pain of losing that little bit easier to take.

I said nothing of the nostalgic narratives being (re)played in my mind as we continued to be overtaken by people looking like they needed to be somewhere else. I merely smiled and tried to keep pace with both the conversations and the feet of those around me. I wondered what memories were currently going through their minds. I wondered what the New Zealanders who travelled across to Melbourne ten years ago had thought the day before their team lost to Australia at the MCG. 'Could history really repeat itself?', I thought as I looked around the crowded corridor.

'Perhaps it wouldn't be such a bad thing if they lost', I said to myself, looking at those around me. 'Maybe it would act as a bit of a wake-up call before the Rugby World Cup', I continued. 'Nah, you can't think like that', another voice argued back. 'An Australian victory would be ten times worse', he said, thinking about the potential for trouble in town after the game. 'But we're not in England anymore', I reminded myself, thankful that the days of segregation and police escorts were behind me. I remembered being encouraged to close the curtains on our Junior Us coach on a couple of occasions to ensure we weren't covered in glass should some idiot decide to throw a brick at us.

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the close connections between the All Blacks and New Zealand identity has certainly remained a fashionable topic of social debate and academic discussion. See, for example, **David Novitz and Bill Willmott (Eds.) (1989)** *Culture and Identity in New Zealand* (pp. 1-20) (Wellington: GP Books); **John Nauright (1990)** Myth and Reality: Reflections on Rugby and New Zealand Historiography, *Sporting Traditions* 6, pp. 219-230; **John Nauright (1995)** *Sport, Power and Society in New Zealand: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (NSW; University of NSW Press); **John Nauright (1996)** Sport, Manhood and Empire: British Responses to the New Zealand Rugby Tour of 1905, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 8 (2), pp. 239-255; **John Nauright and Timothy J. L. Chandler (Eds.) (1996)** *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity* (London: Frank Cass); **Jock Phillips (1996)** *A Mans Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male, a History*, Revised Edition (Auckland: Penguin Books); **Timothy J. L. Chandler and John Nauright (Eds.) (1999)** *The Rugby World: Race, Gender, Commerce and Rugby Union* (London: Frank Cass); **Greg Ryan (Ed.) (2005)** *Tackling Rugby Myths: Rugby and New Zealand Society 1854-2004* (Dunedin; University of Otago); **Chris Collins and Steven J. Jackson (Eds.) (2007)** *Sport in Aotearoa/New Zealand Society* (Melbourne: Thomson).

Gauging by the new reports I had seen over the past two weeks, the Australian supporters were likely to be outnumbered by the number of travelling All Black supporters, whether they were coming from other parts of Australia or crossing the Tasman. Furthermore, from what I had been told by a couple of friends that had lived there during their Overseas Experience (OE), Melbournians were hardly fanatical about this form of Rugby. Personal experience suggested, however, that the Australians would be far less likely to look for trouble if (or when) they lost, especially as the real fans must have known a loss was always going to be likely.

From what I could see, this game had a memorable All Blacks performance and a comfortable, if not convincing, victory written all over it. The A-B's were at full strength. The Wallabies were missing several key players. 'Surely, there could only be one outcome', I reassured myself as I decided to find out some more information from those around me. I wanted to include some others in the conversation that Eddie and I had been engaged in for the past ten minutes. I wanted some other opinions. I wanted to cast my fishing rod and see if those around me would take my bait. I knew it wouldn't be long till I was made to go off and stand by myself at the immigration desk. I didn't expect many others to be carrying an English passport in their pocket.

"So where are you guys from?", I asked, turning to face the two guys walking directly behind me. I had already pictured myself having over a hundred pairs of eyes watching me as I headed to the desk set aside for non Australian and New Zealand passport holders.. 'If they couldn't tell the fact that I wasn't one of them by my accident then they'd certainly get the message at that point', I thought to myself as I awaited a response.

"I'm from Christchurch…, but, my good friend, Charlie here…, he's from Nelson", the taller and skinnier of the two men stuttered, pointing towards the much shorter man struggling to keep pace by his side. "And, we've never, seen our boys, lose!", he added with a smile. "Not, in the seven years, we've been travelling, together" he continued with confidence oozing out of almost every visible pore, grabbing his mate and pulling him in closer at the same time.

"Hey, you aint another flaming Pommie expat are ya?", Charlie said, trying to put on an East-End Cockney accent especially for the occasion and looking up at his friend for either support or a sign of approval.

'How could they tell from a six-worded question?', I asked myself, while looking around to see how the others in the busy corridor had reacted to my attempt to get a larger

discussion going. 'They must have been listening to my earlier conversation with Eddie', I concluded, refusing to believe my English accent was that obvious.

"Well let's hope you and Charlie can say the same thing on Sunday", Eddie said, ignoring the question that Charlie had just asked me. He said it without the hint of any emotion. He never even looked round to face them. He just continued on his way. "I also hope that you'll both be travelling over to France later this year to help them win that bloody trophy", he added, giving me a quick wink as he turned to smile at them both. Whether intentional or not, Eddies statement caused the two men to immediately drop back a little, and effectively ended any hope I had of continuing the conversation.

I sensed Eddie had little interest in interacting with any of the guys flanking us on both sides. His pace had definitely quickened since I had tried to involve other people in our conversations. I felt torn between wanting to secure some more contacts and trying to ensure that I didn't damage my relationship with Eddie. Having worked so hard to break the ice, I was reluctant to risk it ending on a bad note. I only hoped the other guys around me wouldn't be overly offended by the sudden, rather abrupt, end to our equally short-lived communication. 'Maybe I'd see Charlie and his mate again', I thought as I picked up my pace and drew level with Eddie once more. 'Perhaps they would be on my bus into town', I told myself, trying to resist the temptation to turn around and see if they were able to keep up. 'Maybe they were staying at the same hotel' I added, making a mental note of what they both looked like in case I should run into them again.

Much to my surprise, I wasn't the only passenger on our flight required to leave the safety of the pack and make his way towards the 'All Other Passports' booths located at the far end of the large room into which we had just arrived. I could see at least half a dozen people heading the same way. The queue, however, was much shorter than the one for Australian and New Zealand passport holders. "Good luck finding Jono", I said to Eddie as we shook hands and said our goodbyes. "Enjoy you're *big* weekend", I added before he had any chance to react. "And remember it's not a business trip!" I joked, reminding him of what his wife had told him before he left.

I hoped that this would not be the last I ever saw of, or heard from, Eddie. I also hoped that I could arrange it so we ended up bumping into each other at some point before we had left the airport. I considered doing a few laps of the arrivals hall to increase my chances. Having spent over half a year reading all about the dynamics of inter-group behaviour, I was convinced that it would be a lot easier for me to interact with

new people if I was already seen to be position within a group[238]. I prayed that Jono may have gone for the budget package option and picked the same tour that I was on. I prayed that they were staying in the same hotel. I prayed that they had seats in the same section of the MCG. I didn't want to go back to feeling lost and alone once again.

"Yeah, nice to meet you" Eddie said, with a sincerity that helped to re-assure me of his interest in helping me out. "Good luck with the research", he added as I exited the crowd and began to wander off in the other direction. "I meant what I said on the plane", he continued somewhat unexpectedly. "Feel free to quote me as much as you like", he said loud enough to ensure it received several raised eyebrows and curious glances as I stopped, turned, smiled and nodded. A part of me that knew exactly what such a statement implied. At the time, however, I refused to accept the fact that I would probably never see him or hear from him again. I also refused to concede that I had just lost my first catch of the day.

I walked away trying to focus on all the positives. I was conscious of the fact that I had let too many negative thoughts affect my judgement back in Christchurch. I thought that securing the first contact was always going to prove the hardest. I wanted to believe that I had now achieved that goal. Better still, I was still hopeful that Eddie would help me to secure the assistance of his friend Jono. I was hopeful that everything else would just fall into place over the course of the next three days. First, however, I needed to find a suitable place in which I could record as much of our conversation as possible into my notepad. I just hoped that I would be able to remember it all.

I'd been replaying everything Eddie had said over and over in my head since we had started speaking. I knew there was only so much that I could store, and only so long I that could store it. 'Why wouldn't he want to help?', I reassured myself as I found a

[238] I was fully willing to depersonalise myself when joining the two package tours that I had arranged to travel with. I was certainly looking forward to becoming one of the in-group during my weekend in Melbourne. According to Self Categorisation Theory, categorisation as a group member involves the depersonalisation of the self to the extent that one's personal identity, or at least certain aspects of it, becomes inhibited when social identity becomes increasingly salient. A depersonalised self-categorisation effectively means that the self and in-group can ultimately become one and the same. Self-categorisation has been found to depersonalise not only individual attitudes, but also personal feelings, and behaviours in terms of the in-group prototype. While people are known to be driven by a variety of intrinsic motives and goals, their behaviour is also often determined by a strong desire for positive social identity. For further discussion see **Henri Tajfel (1982)** Social Psychology of Inter-group Relations, *Annual Review of Psychology* 33, pp. 1-39; **Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (1986)** 'The Social Identity Theory of Inter-group Behaviour', in Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin (Eds.) *Psychology of Inter-group Relations* (pp. 7-24) (Chicago: Nelson Hall); **John C. Turner and Katherine J. Reynolds (2004)** 'The Social Identity Perspective in Inter-group Relations: Theories, Themes, and Controversies', in Marilynn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and Social Identity* (pp. 259-277) (Oxon: Wiley-Blackwell).

convenient spot against the wall of the immigration room. 'Surely, he was going to want to tell his mates all about the tourism researcher from Otago', I added, trying to remove the doubts from my mind. 'Surely, I must have made some sort of lasting impression', I continued, as I relived his confession about their annual pilgrimage to the Wellington Sevens. 'I guess I'll never know for sure until I get back to Dunedin and send him an email' I concluded, conscious that I had done everything I could.

I spent the next couple of minutes reliving, and subsequently writing down, our various conversations, including his habit of networking during sports events. I noted the importance of my asking Eddie for Jono's contact details in the email that I planned to send him upon my return to Dunedin. On getting as much of it down as possible, I decided to put my pad and pen back in my coat pocket and proceeded to join the end of yet another queue. Suddenly, there were only eight people between me and the white line that signified my official arrival into Melbourne. Suddenly, my body became crippled with fear once more. Suddenly, my nerves and nausea returned.

# Chapter 18: I'll see you on the other side!

'What if all of this had been for nothing', I thought as I slowly got closer to the white line. 'What if I'm sent packing on the next available flight home?', I added as my stomach knotted and my throat tightened. I could feel the sweat arrive on my forehead, neck and palms. Looking at the two immigration officers located directly in front of me, I was sure they were the same people that I had encountered seven months earlier in Sydney. Memories of that day came flooding back into my mind. I thought of the embarrassment experienced when I was asked if I "had another passport?".

'Of course I didn't have another passport!', I said to myself as I replayed the entire incident in my mind. We (i.e. Melanie and I) only wanted to make the most of our eight hour stop over. Unfortunately, the Dunedin travel agent had failed to mention the fact that I would require a visa to enter Australia. We wanted to go and take a couple of photos of the city's iconic landmarks. We thought it would be nice to get some lunch by the waterfront somewhere. I had looked into the various trains we needed to catch to ensure we were back with plenty of time to spare before our evening flight to Singapore. I even got myself a little guidebook.

Melanie, being a New Zealander, had already crossed the white line by the time that I was being refused entrance. 'How could anyone have overlooked such an important detail?', I said to myself as I stood in an identical looking room, facing identical looking officials. I recalled the difficulty we had getting them to let Melanie back across the same white line she had crossed only moments earlier. They had to get a superior down from the main office. Apparently none of those working in the booths had the authority to simply scribble out the arrivals stamp they had just put in her passport. I have never been so embarrassed. I have never felt so humiliated.

My parents still tease me about the time their son, the "tourism academic", was refused entry into Australia. Standing alone in Melbourne, I couldn't help but worry that history was going to repeat itself. Desperate for a distraction, I turned around and started talking to the gentleman behind me in the queue. I wanted to make the most of every second I had before being called up to the booth. I knew that it should have been alright.

I knew that I had done everything to ensure that the visa given to me was still valid. The 'but what if' questions, however, simply refused to leave me alone.

"I've just never quite got round to getting my citizenship sorted" Paul confessed to me with a smile as he explained that he'd been living in Invercargill for the past 21 years. He added that changing his passport was something that he had "always intended to do at some stage" in his life, and told me that he'd not left the South Island, let alone New Zealand, for almost a decade. What's more, this was his first ever venture "across the ditch". He informed me that a couple of work colleagues had recently convinced him to join them for the weekend. "They're somewhere over amongst that lot" he informed me, pointing to the ever-increasing number of people being processed across the other side of the room.

There must have been at least 200 people standing in several different lines, most of whom were deep in conversations with those located around them. A quick count revealed that they now had twice the number of officials dealing with their requests to cross the white line. "I wonder what's taking these guys so long.", Paul added, pointing towards an Asian family who had been at the booth in front of us for the past ten minutes. Having been more interested in watching Eddie's progress towards the front of his queue, I hadn't really paid much attention to those being processed in front of me. There was still five people between me and the white line.

'Why is it taking so long?', A voice in my head moaned impatiently as I took another look over in Eddie's direction. The longer I stood there, the more likely it looked that he was going to get through before I did. I wondered what questions they must have been asking the worried looking Asian family. Having 'been there' in Sydney, I felt some sympathy for them. "It must be a visa issue", I said, responding to Paul's earlier question. "So what kind of visa have you got for this place?", I said; keen to see if he had anything special in his Passport.

"Me, I've just got one of those clever electronic micro-chip things", he said, opening his passport to the appropriate page and showing me the small square bar-code that someone had recently attached to the previously blank page. "I had to send it up to Wellington", he added, sounding surprised that they couldn't deal with it closer to home. "Suppose you must have the same", he said, pointing to the passport that I had been holding in my left hand for the past five minutes.

"Nah, I've got nothing", I said with a confused frown and a nervous little chuckle. "I was supposedly given something back in January", I informed him. "It should still be

valid", I added, crossing the fingers on my right hand at the same time. "But I guess we'll find out soon enough", I continued, looking back over at the Asian family who still hadn't been allowed to cross the white line. "I got into Sydney okay on my way back to New Zealand at the start of the year", I said, thinking about the drama we had faced trying to find the hotel that we were advised to book. "It was on my way back to the UK that they wouldn't let me in", I continued, smiling as I thought about the irony that resulted in us being told that we would have to leave the airport during our scheduled stop over on our way back to New Zealand.

We actually had a shorter stop over on the return journey. It was only seven hours. The difference, however, was that whilst our November stop over occurred during the day, our January visit saw us arrive from Singapore late at night. As a result, we were subsequently told that we were not allowed to stay in the terminal overnight and that we would have to find somewhere else to sleep. Our connecting flight to Auckland was at 6am. We had to pay for a room in which we spent less than four hours. At least, however, they did not charge me for the visa I needed to cross the white line and leave the airport.

The immigration web-site that I had checked only days before I left Dunedin implied that this electronic visa should still be valid. 'But why didn't I have anything in my passport?, I said to myself as I tried to see what was in the passport of the man standing in front of me. 'He's got one of those bar-codes as well', I noted as I began to feel like the odd one out once again. I could see it from where I was standing. He had it open to that page, as if he knew that I was looking over his shoulder. He must have been listening to our conversation.

"Were you on their flight as well?", Paul asked me, clearly taking as much of an interest in the behaviour of the group in fancy dress as I had been ever since I joined the queue. Not for the first time that day, I felt somewhat relieved to be observing them from a safe distance. Their singing and good-natured tomfoolery had clearly moved up a few gears as they got closer to the white line. I was, however, somewhat surprised to see them behind Eddie in the queue. The soldier at the front was clearly in charge of putting them into rank and distributing the passports accordingly. He also appeared to be having great fun inspecting each and every passport photo.

"Yeah", I said with a smile as I turned back towards him. I realised at that point that I was yet to take a good look at his facial features. I'd been more interested in the colour of his passport. I thought back over all the faces that I had seen that morning. I

decided that I really needed to make a much more conscious effort to take a mental photograph of everyone I spoke to from that point onwards. "Is that an All Black scarf on under there", I said, pointing to the black material that I could see popping out from under his jacket.

"I was sitting at the back by the toilets", he responded, answering a completely different question. He was clearly still enthralled by the show being put on by those queuing on the other side of the room. "A couple of those nuns spent more time at the back of the plane than they did in their seats", he continued, point over to the guys near the back of their group. "If they weren't buying more beer, or trying to chat up our stewardess", he added, taking a noticeable pause midway through his sentence, "then they were queuing for the bathroom", he continued. "That guy must have spent a small fortune", he said, pointing towards someone in the group. "Those beers weren't cheap!", he continued, shaking his head. *"Y'know?",* he added before revealing that he'd run out of cash somewhere over the Tasman Sea.

I actually cared very little about how much these guys had consumed on the flight, or how long they had spent queuing for the bathroom. I was much more interested in the impact that their behaviour had on Paul's enjoyment of his flight. I was desperate to know why he had also started drinking so early. I wanted to know if it was his personal choice, or the result of those around him. After several practices in my head, however, I just couldn't think of a polite way of asking the question. I began to re-assess my initial assumption that he had been inconvenienced, as opposed to impressed, by their behaviour.

I had a host of other questions I wanted to ask. I was also conscious that the Asian family had disappeared and that I was now third in line to be seen. I wanted to try and get him in the net before I got called up to the immigration booth. He just didn't appear to be interested in stopping for breath. Much like the two guys that I had sat beside at the departure gate, he just kept talking. He gave me no opportunities to participate. He moved on from talking about the guys on the plane to talking about his own plans for the weekend. Next, he mentioned their plans for that evening. Then he did a full circle and started to repeat some of the things that he had already said about the flight. I was seriously struggling to keep up.

Paul's two friends sounded as though they had it all mapped out for him to merely follow. 'Just like Eddie', I thought, turning just in time to see him cross the line and proceed on towards baggage claim. "So" I said, seizing the opportunity presented by a

brief moment of silence. I strategically allowed myself just enough of a pause to ensure that I had his full attention before I asked the first of many questions. "I guess you'll be supporting the All Blacks tomorrow night?", I said, pointing once again to the small bit of black and white I could see bursting over the top of his jacket collar. "Do you consider yourself a kiwi now?", I added, just as I could see that he was about to start talking again.

"Ah yeah, definitely mate", he replied, revealing his scarf and clenching his fist in front of his chest as he did so. "I turned to the dark side about ten years ago", he joked, adding how he had "no real family" left back in England. "Never really liked the place much anyway", he added, screwing his face up in the process. "I have no intention of going back there anytime soon", he continued, shaking his head to further emphasis the point. "So what's your story then eh?", he asked, sounding like a true Kiwi in doing so. There was no hint of an English accent in his voice. "What's your excuse for being here?", he added in a manner that suggested one needed an excuse.

"I'm studying down in Dunners", I said, confident that he'd know exactly where I meant. "Been there for three years now and loving every minute", I added, keen to show him that I totally understood why someone from England could easily end up settling in New Zealand for the rest of their life. "But I've got a few years before I see myself joining the dark side", I continued, pointing to my Cambridge United scarf. "I'm still a Pom, god help me!", I said, looking up to the heavens and confirming what I had meant by my last statement.

"Arr, but they'll get you in the end my friend", Paul responded with the sound of inevitability in his voice. "Especially if you choose to stick around as long as I have!", he added, smiling as he clearly let his mind wander off into a place that I found myself unable to travel. "No point living your life in the past mate", he said after a few seconds reflection. At that point, however, he was clearly distracted by something happening directly over my shoulder. "Ah, looks like you're up chief!", he said, pointing to the immigration officer waving me over to her window. "Guess I'll See you on the other side!", he concluded as he gave me the 'move along' signal with both hands.

I could feel my palms moisten as I approached the line and passed over my passport. 'Here we go again!', I thought as I could see the women casually flicking through the pages and looking at my various different student visas. 'That doesn't look good!', said a nervous sounding voice in my ear. The image of my lonely-looking bag circulating the carousel for the next few hours leaped into my mind as she scanned the bar code through her machine.

"Going to the game?", she asked, as she took a second look at the various student visas I had accumulated since 2004.

"Sure am", I said, trying to demonstrate my confidence that I was allowed to be there. "Actually doing a bit of research for my degree", I added, in case she also wondered why a 'Pom' would be travelling across the Tasman Sea to watch Australia host New Zealand. 'Shit, why'd you go and say that?', I thought as I quickly replayed that statement in my mind. 'You were supposed to say that to Paul', I said to myself, looking back quickly to see if he was watching. He wasn't.

'You probably shouldn't have told her that', I said to myself, conscious of the fact that I definitely didn't have a study or work-related visa for Australia. 'Honestly, why'd you go and say that?', I asked myself again as I also cursed my fondness for speaking before thoroughly assessing the potential consequences. 'Why couldn't you have just smiled and said yes?', I said, wanting to kick myself for revealing the reason that I desperately needed to be let across the white line. 'Why do you always have to go and put your big size ten in it?', I added, before I had a chance to defend myself.

Not that I had any defence. I just hoped that she either hadn't heard me through the glass or that, better still, she simply didn't care why I wanted to get into her country. I just wanted to cross the white line. It was only inches away from my feet. 'What am I going to tell my supervisors if they refuse me entrance?' I said, conscious of the fact that the immigration officer still hadn't responded to my revelation.

"That's nice", she said, finally breaking the deafening silence that in reality must have lasted at least twenty seconds. "Welcome to Melbourne", she continued as she took one final look at her monitor and reached for the stamp. "Enjoy the game!", she added with a smile as she handed my passport back through the hole in the booth's window. The relief was immense. I couldn't help but look down as both feet crossed the line and I entered Melbourne for the first time. I wondered what had flashed up on her screen, but opted against looking round into her booth. I wanted to get away from her as soon as possible. I didn't want to give anyone the opportunity to call me back again.

I found myself replaying Paul's "living in the past" comment as I made my way to the exit of the room. 'Is that what I'm doing?', I questioned as I found myself caught up in the steady flow of people that were heading towards the baggage reclaim area. 'Should I try to forget England and everything I willingly left behind?', I asked as I rummaged through my pockets and grabbed my note-pad once again. 'Will I eventually turn to the dark side?', I wrote on the top line of another new page, referring to Paul's half-hearted

comment about the lure of the All Blacks on those living in New Zealand. 'Is it my destiny?', I added in my best Darth Vader voice.

'More importantly, should I even be trying to resist?', I asked myself, as I began to re-assess the benefits of buying an All Blacks scarf as soon as I got into Melbourne. A shirt seemed excessive. 'A scarf shouldn't cost that much', I said to myself. 'And it would be a lot more practical', I added, thinking of how my Cambridge Scarf was in desperate need of a wash. 'It would certainly help me to it fit in around here', I concluded as I became increasingly more conscious of the amount of black on display as I followed the signs to the baggage collection area.

'Why did his comment strike such a sensitive nerve?', and, 'Why am I finding it so difficult to silence all the conflicting voices in my head?', were just two of the questions that I jotted down on my pad as I decided to slow my pace right down and take a look over my shoulder. I was curious to discover what Paul had meant when he had said that he had no "real" family left in England. 'Was he an only child?', I wondered to myself as I took an even longer look over my shoulder to see if he was anywhere to be seen behind me. I had thought about waiting, but also wanted to see if he made any effort to try and catch up with me. I wanted to know what kind of impression I had left on him and if he wanted to continue the conversation that ended somewhat prematurely back on the other side of the white line.

'Did he have no cousins or extended family?', I asked myself as I started to re-assess my own family tree. 'Perhaps they were not considered to be real enough', I thought only seconds later. 'My cousins are definitely a part of my family', I concluded, having quickly given the matter some thought. 'They remain as real to me as anyone else', I added, feeling a little guilty that it had been such a long time since I spoke to them. 'Maybe that's because we grew up in the same village?', I added, trying to imagine how different my childhood would have been if my parents had not lived so close to the rest of the Family.

'Who would have taken me to see Cambridge United?', I continued, realising the significant influence that my Grandparents have had on my life. 'And would I have still wanted to visit the Abbey as a teenager?', I added, wondering if the lure of a bigger club would have proven too great to resist at that age. 'Snap out of it!', screamed the ethnographer in my head. 'This is not al about you!', he added, conscious that I needed to start noting down as much as I could remember from the ten minutes I had spent listening to Paul. He had covered so much in such a short space of time, but I had failed to get his

contact details. He had taken the bait, but somehow managed to avoid getting caught up in my net.

I entered the male toilets and found myself a vacant cubicle. It was a necessary stop, but I also needed somewhere quiet to regain my thoughts and (re)interpret my experience. As much as I wanted to wait around for Paul to catch up, I figured that I would be able to find a suitable spot next to him as we waited for our bags. I decided to complement my observations with my more recent thoughts of 'home' and 'the family'. I also started to make some connections back to the notion of national identity formation and the fandom work of Grant Jarvie and Alan Bairner[239]. Likewise, the thesis of Ian Jones also sprang instantly to mind, especially the comments from respondents that he selected for inclusion within his discussion chapters[240].

I began to smile at the thought that I may have potentially secured another respondent for my research. 'Why would he refuse to help?', I said to myself as I realised that I should probably get back out there and find him again. I thought his story would offer something completely different to those offered by either Eddie or Jono. 'Why didn't you wait for him?', I asked myself as I exited the bathrooms and looked in both directions. 'Why did you ever let him out of your sight?', added a frustrated and equally anxious-sounding voice in my head. 'What if you've gone and blown another golden opportunity?', it continued in my ear as I struggled to recognise any of the people seen following the signs to the baggage reclaim area.

Looking at my watch for the first time in a while, I wondered how many other planes had landed in the past forty minutes. 'Perhaps I should try walking back the other

[239] Grant Jarvie argued that sport regularly contributes to an individual's continual search for both self and social identities, whether it is through culture, nostalgia, mythology, invented or selected traditions. Similarly, Allan Bairner has also highlighted how our sporting allegiances are often based on our attachment to a particular place and the symbolic representation of our 'home' identity. More recently, he has also written about how the desire of fans to express their national identity through sport spectatorship can be linked to either nationalism (in the broader sense) or, at the very least, to patriotism. He also noted that attachment to a particular 'home' region (i.e. city, town, or village) may well receive priority ahead of any affinity with the nation. See, for further discussion, **Grant Jarvie** (1993) 'Sport, Nationalism and Cultural Identity', in Allison Lincoln (Ed.) *The Changing Politics of Sport* (pp 58-83) (Manchester: Manchester University Press); **Grant Jarvie and Joseph Maguire (1994)** *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought* (London: Routledge); **Allan Bairner (2001)** *Sport, Nationalism and Globalisation: European and North American Perspectives* (Albany: SUNY Press); **Allan Bairner (2004)** *Sport and the Irish: Histories, Identities, Issues* (Dublin: University College Press). **Grant Jarvie (2006)** *Sport, Culture & Society: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge).

[240] One of Ian Jones' conclusions was directly related his belief that it was the actually process of building and sustaining a sense of strong attachment to Luton Town that provided fans with noticeable satisfaction and subsequent positive emotions. See **Ian Jones (1998)** Football Fandom: Football Fan Identity and Identification at Luton Town Football Club An *unpublished thesis* submitted to Luton Business School, University of Luton, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

way?', I thought, wondering if he had decided to wait for his friends to cross the white line. 'Why didn't you ask for a business card?', asked the voice in my head. I offered no answer. I was too busy trying to decide which way I should turn next. In hindsight, it was actually one of the few questions that I knew I was fully capable of answering. I still felt that I shouldn't be there. I still felt like I didn't belong. My self doubt was slowly choking the life out of my admittedly 'ad hoc' data collection method. It was killing my research. And I had no idea how to stop it.

Standing alone in the corridor, I made the assumption that Paul must have passed by whilst I was in the bathroom. Consequently, I opted against retracing my steps and trying to go against the flow of people heading for their bags. Having retrieved my overnight bag from the conveyor belt, I patrolled the area several times before giving up and heading towards the customs check point. 'Perhaps I should have gone the other way', I said despondently, thinking that he must have still been waiting for his friends. 'I'd only been in the bathrooms for a couple of minutes', I added. 'Surely he couldn't have made it through to customs already?', I concluded, trying to think of another possible explanation regarding my failure to spot him in anywhere ahead of me in the long and slow moving queue that I had just joined. 'Perhaps there was a problem with his passport and he never made it to the other side', I thought as we all made our way towards the border control/customs area. 'Wouldn't that have been ironic?!'

# Chapter 19: I wonder what happened to Steven

Despite all my best intentions, and over ten minutes hanging around the baggage claim area, I never did see or speak to Paul from Invercargill again. I did, however, find myself replaying something that he had said to me back on the other side of the white line. It was actually the last thing he said before I went up to the Immigration Officer. He said; "I'll see you on the other side". Yet I didn't bother to wait for him. The thought that I may have missed out on another three interviewees was more than enough to make the nausea return to the back of my throat. It had disappeared the minute that I crossed into Melbourne, but obviously it hadn't gone too far.

I knew that I desperately needed to work out a way of regaining my self confidence. I knew that I needed to stop over-analysing everything that I heard in my head. I needed to focus on the task at hand. I needed to not only trust myself, but more importantly, I needed to be the academic who justified this data collection method back in Dunedin. And it needed to start right that very second. "I wonder how long this will take?", I said to the stranger standing in front of me, trying to put the past behind me once again.

"Who knows?", responded the gentleman without even bothering to turn around. "I just wanna get to the bar in my hotel", he said, as he shuffled his bags forward with his feet and increased the distance between us. He just kept looking forward. I saw him check his watch and count the number of people between him and the doors to the outside world. The room was full to bursting point and I suspected that it would be at least another ten minutes before I would be directed to one of the five large machines they had scanning everyone's baggage. My attention was soon grabbed by the occasional glimpse of day light offered every time the huge glass doors opened to let another traveller out of the room.

"Yeah, you and me both!", I said as I considered how long it had been since the pilot announced our arrival. "Have you got the time?", I asked, knowing the answer to my question would be yes. I was still desperate to make casual conservation. I wanted to see what it took to get him to turn around. 'Why didn't he want to talk?', I wondered as

he slowly raised his right arm and pointed my gaze towards the large clock on the wall. I found it difficult to believe that it had taken me forty-five minutes to reach this point.

'This is it', I said to myself having successfully made it through customs without any problems. "Welcome to Melbourne Mr Wright", I whispered as I approached the doors that separated me from the rest of the world. After years of dreaming, months of planning and weeks of waiting; I had finally made it. That early morning shower seemed so long ago. 'This was what it was all about', I said to myself as I tried to take in as much of the moment as I could. 'No more hiding', Pilch said confidently in my ear. 'No more stressing about things I had no control over', said the ethnographer. 'And no more crying over spilt milk', I responded to both of them. 'No regrets'.

'You may never get another crack at this', I thought as I noticed all the representatives waiting to welcome their sports-travel package groups on behalf of their employers. 'Okay, so they may not be here for me, but I want to be there for them', I informed myself, instantly recognising the majority of logos from the various online brochures that I had looked at when trying to find the best package trips. I knew I had no one waiting for me. All I had was a voucher for a return ticket on the airbus.

'And why didn't you just spend the extra two hundred dollars?', I thought as I passed welcome sign after welcome sign. 'Why didn't you use some of your scholarship money and travel with one of these guys?', I continued as I watched various representatives welcome their clients. I couldn't help but feel envious as I saw groups of individuals laughing and joking with other people they may or may not have ever met before. 'These are the people you should be talking to', I stated. These were the kind of tourists that I had visualised back in Dunedin. These were the kind of people I thought that I would be meeting in the airport, on the plane and in the hotel. They looked like friendly people, willing to talk to anyone and everyone.

I soon found myself standing alone in a room full of sport tourists. I felt alone. I felt invisible. I knew that I was expected to make my own way to my hotel. I had printed out all the instructions the day before I left. I also had the map they had emailed me several months ago. 'At least they had given me a voucher for the bus into town', I thought as I looked around for anyone that I had met so far that morning. I was curious to know if Eddie had found his friends yet. I wondered whereabouts he and Jono would be meeting. I tried to recall if he had said what time his other friend was arriving from Bangkok. I was also keeping a close eye out for both Charlie, from Nelson, and Paul,

from Invercargill. I felt as though I had some unfinished business to conduct with the two of them, and their travelling companions.

While the tour representatives were wearing uniforms and carrying official-looking clipboards, my attention was captured by two individuals standing several metres away from the rest of the operators. Unlike the others, they had set up a little welcoming display which included a portable display screen. They also had balloons. I felt drawn to them like a moth to the light. I also felt the overwhelming desire to find my camera and capture myself a lasting image. 'Now why hadn't I travelled with these guys?', I asked myself as I admired the extra mile that they had gone to welcome their clients. I wanted to know how many people they were expecting to greet over the next two days. Unlike in Christchurch, however, on this occasion I was able to find the confidence to walk over and ask. I even asked if they minded smiling for a photo.

Tony was a grey-haired Maori, aged somewhere in his late fifties or early sixties. His colleague Jen was an Auckland-born Asian of a similar age. Unlike the other conversations initiated so far that morning, I was happy to introduce myself as an interested ethnographer from the University of Otago. I was actually conscious of the fact that I didn't want them to see me as just another sport tourist. I wanted them to know exactly why I was in Melbourne that weekend. I was certain that they would be interested in my research. More significantly, I didn't see them as being potential respondents.

Tony seemed suitably intrigued from the moment that I asked to take a picture of them by their sign. He was curious as to why anyone would want to study the people that they were responsible for looking after on their tours. He soon started to talk about some of the interesting characters that he had met during his time as a sports tour representative. He told me about a ninety year old gentleman who was accompanied on their last tour of the UK by his seventy year old son. "I'm still not sure who was looking after whom!", Tony joked, clearly enjoying the nostalgic memories our serendipitous meeting had stirred up inside. He then pointed down to the various bags located by their feet and told me how a couple of them belonged to a guy "I simply had to talk to!"

Jen smiled a lot and agreed with everything Tony was telling me. She, however, appeared more interested in making sure the two of them didn't miss any of their clients as they entered the arrivals lounge. "Oh yeah, you have to meet Steven", she confirmed. "He's been on seventeen of our trips", she continued as she started scanning the room.

"Including the last two Grand Slam Tours" she added, before staring back down at her clipboard once more.

"You know, I don't think he's missed a trip in seven years", Tony continued once he saw his partner had finished speaking. "*And that includes the last two World Cups*!", he noted with extra emphasis to illustrate the importance of this fact. He even suggested that I could probably "write a thesis on him". He was joking. I think? He said it with a mischievous smile on his face and followed it with the faintest hint of a laugh.

'This guy sounds perfect', I thought at the time, joining Tony on tiptoes and scanning the crowded room for any sight of him. Not that I had any idea who I was looking for. He sounded too good to be true. I tried to imagine what he was going to look like. I concluded that he must have been extremely wealthy to travel as much as he did. Either that or he was very old. He must have been retired to have that much spare time. I started to re-assess my data collection strategy and imagine the material that I would be able to collect if I was allowed to become his shadow for the weekend.

'I'd love to know what he has planned', confirmed the ethnographer in my mind. 'He must have been to Melbourne several times', the voice in my head continued, thinking of all the places that he could probably show me over the next few days. 'I wonder if he's ever been to a Bledisloe Cup Test Match at the MCG before?', another voice chipped in, enjoying the confidence that was once again returning with every thought.

"Are you in a rush?", Tony asked. "Because I'm sure Steven would be happy to share some of his stories with you", he said with an encouraging mix of belief and authority. For the second time in less than a minute he also gained a couple of inches in height and began searching the lobby area once again.

"That would be great!", I replied emphatically and unable to hide either my excitement at his idea. "I've not got any plans at all", I added, before I realised how desperate that little confession might have made me sound. "I have to catch an airbus into town at some stage", I added, conscious that I didn't wanted to get in their way or disrupt their itinerary. As much as I would have loved for them to adopt me for the weekend, I was also reluctant to jump at the first offer that came my way. I kept thinking about all the lists that I had made and all the things that I wanted to achieve on this trip. I told Jen how I had seen a few people on my flight wearing their company's logo and that they would probably be coming through in the next five to ten minutes.

Turning to Tony, I said that I would "wait until they got busy". I started to redirect the focus of our conversation away from Steven and towards the other people that he had met whilst working for his employers. After several more interesting stories I decided to find out a little bit more about him. "And what about you?", I enquired casually, hoping to discover some more about his own motivations for doing his job. 'Nice one!', said an impressed-sounding ethnographer. 'Perhaps he would make a good respondent after all', the voice in my head added. "So how did you end up doing this?", I asked pointing to the display screen located behind him. "Maybe I should interview you two", I joked, looking careful at their faces to try and judge their individual responses to my statement.

Apparently Tony had been a client on a Glam Slam Tour of Europe but had ended up helping out so much he finished up on the payroll. He had subsequently travelled on a couple of international tours, including the last Grand Slam Tour of the UK. He was also due to go to France in September for the Rugby World Cup. "I can't believe I'm actually getting paid to go to the World Cup!", he said with a large grin on with face. "How many people can say that?", he continued without breaking his smile. "Sure, I know it'll be a lot of hard work… but how could I turn it down?", he asked rhetorically. "I guess your department's budget doesn't stretch that far?", he concluded, noting the huge sigh of disappointment that I was unable to avoid.

"Not quite", I responded, thinking long and hard about how much I would love to trade places with either of these two individuals. I thought Tony was the luckiest man alive. I had just discovered my ultimate dream job. "So where do I sign up?", I joked, looking around for some kind of application form. A part of me was being completely serious. I would have done anything at that moment to secure myself a seat next to him on the coach ride into Melbourne, let alone the plane to France. 'Now that would be a research trip', I thought. 'Imagine the people that I would meet', said the ethnographer voice in my head. 'Imagine the stories that I would be able to write about', he added. 'I could write the greatest thesis ever', I said to myself confidently, unaware of the fact that neither of us had actually said anything as we both let our imaginations wander free.

"I wonder what's happened to Steven", Jen said, breaking the silence and changing the subject entirely.

"Perhaps he's fallen asleep somewhere", Tony responded, seeming somewhat less concerned with his unexplained disappearance. "You know what he's like?", he added, shaking his head at the memories that this statement had clearly evoked.

Sadly, I had no idea what he was like. The longer I stood there, however, the more I wanted to find out. I suspected that he was somewhere amongst the two or three hundred people that seemed to be trying to get breakfast at the café across the other side of the Arrival's Hall. I could see the end of the queue from where I was standing. Conscious of both time and the increasing number of people streaming out through the large double doors from where I had earlier emerged, I reluctantly made the decision to leave my lookout post and go searching for either Eddie or Paul. I thought the sudden influx of people may have coincided with the arrival of Jono's flight from Auckland.

I know it seems rather futile now, but I was obviously working without the benefit of hindsight at that time. I was fully submerged in the plot that I was writing for myself, and refused to give up hope that we would bump into each other. I've always believed the cliché that you make your own luck in life, and I was determined to try and increase my chances of a 'coincidental' reunion. Grabbing the business card offered by Tony, I enquired about his plans for the rest of the weekend. "Any chance we could continue this over a drink sometime?", I asked casually, hoping to find out more about the trip that initially got him the job that he was doing that day.

"I'm afraid I'll be running around after this lot all weekend", Tony informed me, pointing to the two large groups heading our way. "But we have a two hour pre-match social event tomorrow afternoon if you fancy it?", he added, before turning to Jen in search of an approving nod or an agreeing smile. "We can't have you walking around Melbourne by your lonesome now… can we?", he said, hoping to get a reaction from either his colleague or the group of clients that I had found myself almost entirely surrounded by.

Thankfully, I looked around to see several of them shaking their heads at the thought me being alone before the Test. I wondered if they would have felt the same if they had known exactly who I was and why I was there. I wondered if Tony would later inform them of my academic identity. "Just give me a call later if you're interested", he said, before adding that "I'm sure we'll be able to accommodate you".

"I'm definitely interested", I said with a mixture of personal excitement and professional gratitude. "Sounds fantastic!", I added with the sudden realisation that such an event could potentially provide me with an endless supply of names and contact details. "Great talking to you", I continued as I slowly backed my way out of the group. "You've both been really helpful", I said, acknowledging both Jen and Tony with equal admiration. I was confident that I had won Tony over, but was aware of the fact that I

also needed to ensure that Jen was also happy with me gate-crashing their employers private pre-match party. "And good luck with this lot!", I shouted, trying to evoke a reaction from the second wave of guys heading their way.

Looking up to the heavens, I thanked the Lord for my ability to be in the right place at the right time. What's more, feeling at least two foot taller than I did several hours ago, I came to the conclusion that I no longer needed to chase after any of the people I had spoken to earlier. I no longer cared if I saw Eddie or Paul ever again. There contribution to my thesis no longer seemed so vitally important. I know longer felt that it would have been the end of the world if Eddie decided to throw away my details and ignore my follow up email.

I vowed to continue recording my memories and emotions in my newly purchased diary. I also vowed that I would continue to talk to people, and observe their behaviour. The desperation and doubt that had plagued me for most of the morning, however, now seemed like a distant memory. If anything, I was a little embarrassed by how badly I had let it affect me, especially on the plane. 'Why had I ever doubted myself', I thought as I made my way out of the terminal building and into the fresh, slightly crisp, air. I no longer felt that I needed to stalk my prey or feed their egos by pretending to agree with everything they said. I felt I could be myself once more. I felt I could do some of the things that I had always wanted to do in Melbourne. I felt a huge weight had been removed from my shoulders. I wanted to make the most of every minute.

# Chapter 20: Entering AFL country

It was standing room only by the time I was ushered on board the airbus into the city. Thankfully, the stop was well signposted and located less than a minutes' walk outside the arrival's area of the airport terminal. I thought that I was lucky to be let on. In fact, at that particular moment in time I was feeling pretty lucky about a lot of things. All that I could think about was the event that Tony had mentioned inside the Terminal. I considered waiting for the next bus and going back in to see if Steven had appeared to collect his belongings. I suspected that he had probably shown up the minute that I had left the group.

I didn't expect the driver to allow anyone else on after me, especially not the unshaven gentleman with the two massive suitcases and rather large backpack. I assumed that he would be told to wait for the next one. They ran every 30 minutes. His acceptance, however, meant that I was soon trapped up against the luggage racks. It reminded me of the underground in rush hour. I thought that it would be rude not to at least discover the names of the people upon whose toes I would inevitably end up standing. I could hear those sitting at the back chatting away from the moment I stepped onboard. Likewise, those in the middle appeared to be just as vocal as we pulled away from the arrivals terminal.

Being tall, I could just about see where we had come from. I couldn't, however, turn around far enough to see where we were going. A sly smile came over my face when I considered Paul's comment about not living in the past. All I could see was my past. I had no idea what was coming up or when the next intersection may arrive. I didn't know what the immediate future had in store. I also had no idea how long this journey was expected to take. I could see bits of Melbourne disappearing behind me into the distance. I thought about all the New Zealander's that would be flying in to the same airport and making the same journey over the course of the next 24 hours. I also wondered whether the guys in fancy dress would be let onto one of these buses, or forced to get a taxi.

'Surely, someone had to crack soon', I said to myself as I smiled to the lady sitting on one of the seats in the front row. I was desperate for someone else to break the

deafening silence which filled our third of the bus, but felt as though I had started my fair share of conversations already that morning. I purposely brushed my elbow against those of the man standing too close for comfort, hoping to evoke some form of reaction. I felt we were far too close to go on ignoring each other's existence. 'What's wrong with these people?', Pilch asked me as I tried to turn enough of my body to face the other man standing only inches away. 'Why is no one talking to each other', he added as I tried to identify the person most likely to respond to a fairly harmless question. "Is this your first time in Melbourne?", I asked, unable to bare the silence a second longer.

"Not exactly", the gentleman responded with a little chuckle to himself. He also gave a quick glance over his shoulders to ensure that it was in fact him that I was talking to. You could almost see the tension evaporate in the air that we were all sharing. I also swear that I could hear the others around me give a collective sigh of relief as they began to tune in to find out what was so funny about my question. "I lived here for three years", the gentleman continued, "but that was quite a while ago… and… I've not been back since the Commonwealth Games", he revealed to the obvious interest of all those within earshot.

"I've still got a lot of friends living here", he continued, clearly noticing the audience that he had now successfully captured. He went on to explain how he now lived back in Wellington and had decided to come over for the Test Match while his wife was accompanying his daughter on a school trip to Japan. He listed a couple of mates that he hoped to catch up with before eventually offering me the floor. "What about you?", he asked.

"No, this is my first time", I responded. "But I've wanted to come here", I added immediately afterwards. I subsequently introduced myself and explained exactly why I was there, stating the research as both a blessing and a curse. I no longer felt the need to hide who I was or what I was doing. I explained exactly what I hoped to achieve in terms of "meeting people and observing the behaviour of the travelling supporters". I even tried to ensure that I maintained regular eye contact with all of those around us. We both knew that they were listening and I didn't want them to think this was a conversation that they were excluded from. I wanted them to feel as much a part of it as possible. I figured the more people that I included the longer it would last, and the quicker the journey would seem.

"I've got a nephew at Otago", claimed the woman sitting in the front row. "He's having the time of his life down there", she added, before admitting how she was "not

sure how much study he was doing". Though I wanted to find out more about her Nephew, the entire group's attention was immediately captured by a comment made from the man with the two suitcases and rather large backpack. He said it at the exact same time as the women had mentioned her Nephew, but it was simply too good to ignore.

"I'm guessing I'm the only one on this bus not going to the rugby" he joked, pointing to all his bags. "I'd forgotten it was this weekend until I saw the crowds in the airport", he added, pointing out the lack of space available.

"How is that even possible?", asked the gentleman standing next to him. "I mean, where've you been hiding for the past month?", he added with no attempt to hide his complete disbelief.

"Don't let the bags fool you mate, I've lived in Melbourne all my life", the Australian responded immediately in a rather defensive manner. "I've been on a walkabout for a while, you know?", he continued, using an expression that immediately reminded me of Paul Hogan's character in the Crocodile Dundee movies. "I've been visiting friends all over the place", he added, before telling us how he thought that the first game was actually over in Auckland this weekend. "I didn't expect to see so many bloody Kiwis when I got off the plane, that's for sure", he said with a wry smile, before looking in my direction. "And you can quote me on that if you want mate", he informed me with an even bigger grin spreading across his face. "I hope you know that the true Melbournians don't give a rat's arse about the Wallabies, let alone the All Blacks", he stated in a raised voice that must have been heard by everyone on the bus. "This is AFL country you're entering here", he added as he turned to see if the bus driver was on his side.

"That's true", added the gentleman who had claimed to have lived there for three years. He also noted how it was "practically impossible" to watch a decent game of rugby when he lived in Melbourne. "Why else do you think I had to leave?", he joked, looking straight at the Aussie and awaiting an equally quick-witted response.

While the lack of floor space made it difficult to move, I was happy to take a hypothetical step back and let those around me have a go at debating the pros and cons of rugby union over AFL. If I had known at that stage that it was going to last the rest of the journey, however, I may admittedly have tried to nip it in the bud. As much as I loved listening to the good natured banter that was being shared between those around me, I was left feeling a little lost on a number of occasions. That said, by the end of it I was

keen to see how many of the New Zealanders on the bus would also try to take in an AFL fixture over the weekend.

It wasn't just the Rugby and AFL that I intended to watch that weekend. I was well aware of the fact that my weekend in Melbourne also coincided with both the Americas Cup Final, in Valencia, and the 2007 French Formula One Grand Prix. Team New Zealand (TNZ) was racing the Swiss-based Cup holders 'Alinghi' in the first to five final. While TNZ had been leading 2-1, it was now posed at 2-2 after Alinghi won the fourth race the day before I left Dunedin. Whilst I had not checked out the AFL schedule for the weekend, I did know that three Americas Cup races were due to take place whilst I was in Melbourne.

I thought that watching TNZ compete to reclaim the Americas Cup would provide me with a good opportunity to make some new friends, especially on the night of the Test. The fifth and sixth races were both due to start around midnight on the 29th and 30th of June, and the seventh was scheduled for around the same time on the 1st of July. Unfortunately, the final race also clashed with the French Grand Prix and I had no intention of missing that fixture, not even if it meant I missed out on seeing TNZ win back the trophy they lost in 2000.

Being fully aware of Melbourne's global reputation as a sports-mad city, I couldn't wait to find a bar to watch both events unfold during the earlier hours of Sunday and Monday mornings. I was certain that I would be able to find someone else from my package tour to join me. I refused to accept that I was the only sports addict in town. I wondered if Tony would be able to escape his group for a couple of hours during the middle of the night to watch the races with me. I was just about to ask the local if he could suggest a suitable sports bar for me to try when I looked out of the window and noticed that we had appeared to arrive at the inner city coach station.

As everyone else scuttled off in a number of different directions, I was pleased to see that the guy that I had first started talking to appeared to be waiting for the same hotel shuttle bus. He apologised for the fact that we didn't get to talk more on the bus and hoped I understood that "a Kiwi and an Aussie could argue for days over sport".

"That's why you guys make such good research subjects", I joked, keen to reveal more about why I was there. I re-assured him that I had thoroughly enjoyed listing to the kiwi's ganging up on the heavily outnumbered Aussie. I had particularly enjoyed listening to them try to educate him about the disciplined nature of rugby union. I also mentioned that, being a Pom, I would always think football (and not 'soccer' as they liked

to call it) was a million times better than AFL and both rugby codes put together. I reminded him that without the global game, these hybrids wouldn't even exist.

I also explained how I was just glad that the front of the bus was making as much noise as the middle and the back. I joked how by the end I thought everyone was listening to us, "even the driver".

"I guess everyone has an opinion or preference when it comes to sport", he said, beginning to realise my research wasn't so ridiculous after all.

"Especially when it is seen as a part of our national or socio-cultural identity", I added, slipping my academic hat on for a second. "But then, with you having lived in both Wellington and Melbourne, I guess that I don't need to tell you all about the importance of sport within our society", I continued, thinking of the numerous books and journals available on the subject. "Not with the number of events held in both those cities every year", I said, hoping to get an equally detailed response. I could see I had got his attention and, as with Eddie on the plane, was keen to reel him in and get him onboard the boat before he could wriggle himself free. "Surely you must enjoy the Sevens every year?", I asked, referring to the same Wellington Rugby Sevens tournament that Eddie had spoken about as we made our way across the Tasman Sea.

"Mate, I love it!", he responded instantly. "But please don't call me Shirley!", he said, making reference to a classic Leslie Neilson joke from the classic 1980's movie Airplane. I got it immediately. I wanted to hug him on the spot. Little did he know, but he had just made the same joke that my father was notoriously fond of making, especially around strangers and especially around me. As a result, I had subsequently found myself using it on many occasions. I hadn't had anyone say it to me in years.

"I haven't missed one yet", he boasted, clearly unaware or unappreciative of the impact his joke had on the person he was speaking to. "Not even when I was living over here", he continued, keen to stress the amount he loved going to his home towns annual Sevens Rugby tournament. "My name's Jim by the way" he said, digging into his inside pocket and producing a professional-looking business card.

"I guess you'll need this if you want to keep in contact and interview me for your research" he added, before returning back to the subject of Sevens. "To be honest, I have always preferred the sevens to the fifteen man game", Jim informed me, as I put his card inside my wallet. "Not only is it more open and exciting, but its faster and more entertaining to watch, you know?".

Not wanting to interrupt, I just nodded and smiled.

"The atmosphere at the Sevens is always terrific, often electric! Its miles better than any Test Match", he continued with obvious passion and a hint of local pride in his eyes. "You know what I mean?", he asked, before pausing for a breath and a moment to (re)consider the statement he had just made. "Okay, so I guess tomorrow night should be close", Jim continued before I could think of anything to add. "But only due to the sheer number of people she can hold!", he concluded seconds later. "You're going to love it mate!", he said, looking me dead in the eyes. "She's bloody magnificent!"

"She?", I said, knowing that was my cue to say something. I knew what he meant, but that was the first thing that came to mind. "I thought only the locals called it that?", I added seconds later with a smile on my face. I wanted to show him that I was suggesting that his personal allegiance to Melbourne may have left his evaluation a little biased. "Seen 'her' a few times have we?", I joked, keen to place the ball firmly back on his side of the net.

"Yeah, quite a few!", he replied, "but I'm guessing you'll need your dictaphone on to help you remember them all", he continued with an equally big smile on his face. "I don't want to reveal everything now… or we'll have nothing to talk about when you come to interview me", he concluded. "Plus, I think that's your ride is pulling up behind you" he said, pointing to the minibus pulling into the stop directly behind where I was standing.

"You're not joining me?", I asked, disappointed at the thought that our encounter was about to come to an end. 'I like this guy a lot', I thought as I checked that this was indeed my ride. "I love his sense of humour", Pilch added, still playing back the 'and don't call me Shirley line'. I was also mightily relieved to find someone who appeared to be a lot more interested in watching the rugby this weekend, as opposed to merely drinking themselves under the table. More specifically, I loved the fact that I didn't have to ask for an email. He practically forced it into my hand. He clearly wanted to be a part of my study. I just prayed that he would prove to be the first amongst many.

I got the impression that we could have stood there for hours. I couldn't wait for the next time. Unlike the other potential respondents that I had met, I wasn't even remotely interested in following him round for the next few days. It would have been nice to bump into him, but I was happy to leave it entirely to chance. I wasn't going to try and arrange anything. I knew from our earlier conversation that he had plenty of friends to see whilst he was in town. I also knew that he was flying home the day after the Test.

"Nah, think I'm gonna be good and walk from here", Jim informed me, tapping what looked like a bit of middle-age spread just above the beltline. "To be honest I was just keeping you company till your bus showed up", he added with a smile on his face. "Couldn't have you standing around on your own now", he continued as we both walked towards the shuttle bus.

"Arr… Thank's Shirley", Pilch quipped, speaking aloud for the first time on the trip. I could tell it was Pilch, because I didn't have time to run it through my head before I said it. It just came out. As discussed within the prologue, it is a voice that I have tried hard to tame, and control, since my move to New Zealand. I duly offered Jim my hand and revealed my appreciation for everything. "I'll call you next week", I added, tapping the pocket in which I had just placed his business card. I felt we had known each other for ages. I felt comfortable around him, and wasn't strategically planning my sentences or consciously biting my lip. On the contrary, I felt completely at ease.

"No probs!", Jim responded with a bit of a chuckle, clearly taking a few seconds to catch on to Pilch's little piece of humour. "It's not as if I had anywhere better to be", he revealed, adding, "the guy that I'm staying with will be at work till lunchtime and only lives round the corner". "I tell you what…", he continued as if a light bulb had just switched on above his head. "…You should definitely try and get across to the Telstra Dome at some point during your visit", he said as I passed my overnight bag to the driver. "It's about a five minute walk that way", he informed me, pointing to the exit located over my shoulder. "It's where I spent most of the Commonwealth Games", he added, before becoming distracted by something in his pocket. "It's no MCG but if you like stadiums it'll totally blow you away!", he said, reaching into his pocket to answer his vibrating cell phone.

"Most definitely!", I responded, unaware of how close I was to Melbourne's second biggest sports stadium. "I'm planning to do a tour around it on Monday morning", I said, keen to show him that I had done some background research before I left home. Having handed over the voucher provided by the tour operator, I was just about to jump on board when Jim pulled his mobile phone away from his ear and informed me that, according to his mate in Wellington, Qantas had just been forced to offload ten passengers due to be flying over for the rugby because of an issue with excess weight.

"Apparently they've all been put onto another trans-Tasman flight that goes via Auckland", he said unable to prevent a grin exploding across his face. "Can you imagine

how pissed off they must be feeling right now?!", he added, returning to his call the moment he stopped laughing. "Enjoy your Melbourne experience Dr Wright", he shouted as I took up a seat next to the driver. "Good luck and don't forget to call me whenever you're ready to continue this conversation", he said as he pulled the phone from his ear once again. "Just don't forget your dictaphone!", he added as he finally turned away and headed for the exit.

I waved goodbye to my new friend and started to replay the interaction that I had just witnessed between the 'walkabout' Aussie and the Kiwis who surrounded us both[241]. As I tried to make a mental note of everything I had just talked about with Jim, I found myself thinking about a book chapter that I had stumbled across earlier that month in Adrian Smith and Dillwyn Porter's text on post-war sport and national identity[242]. Much like the interesting out-group fanship article that I had found and finished reading the week before the excursion, the chapter was all about the sporting rivalry between New Zealand and Australia[243]. Ultimately, it supported the article's conclusion that the Australians are more interested in beating the English than they are beating their trans-Tasman neighbours.

[241] Kathleen and Billie Dewalt revealed that they have discovered that "doing detailed field notes is an important means of training one's mind. As one replays (in the mind) and recounts (in the field notes) conversations and events, many different details emerge than when one just simply participates". In **Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt (2002)** *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira) (p. 74).

[242] See **Adrian Smith (2004)** 'Black against Gold: New Zealand-Australia sporting rivalry in the modern era, in Adrian Smith and Dillwyn Porter (Eds.) *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World* (pp. 168-192) (London: Routledge).

[243] When discussing the 'healthy' relationship that the two Australasian nations share, Adrian Smith notes how "A sceptic might start by asking whether there is in fact a history of sporting rivalry between Australia and new Zealand. Until 1980s Australians did not take NZ seriously as a sporting nation, except netball and sailing". It was a statement that I found particular surprising at the time. I had always thought their rivalry was similar to England's against France. Smith argued, however, that the Australian had always been more passionate about beating the English. With New Zealand, it was described as a case of wanting to put "the Kiwis in their place", which he said would always be "a highly pleasurable experience"[243]. He also noted how New Zealanders traditional valued any victory over Australia as a noteworthy "triumph over adversity, with the obvious exceptions of rugby, sailing and netball"[243]. Smith also touched upon the same confidence that I had noticed in the Airport corridor, noting how "a victory for the All Blacks" was "not viewed as a win but simply as a re-establishment of the natural order"[243]. He suggested that New Zealand was the only country in the world to be so closely identified "with one particular team in one particular sport"[243], before concluding that "a renewed debate about the mythology constructed around New Zealand rugby has formed part of a wider discourse on the profound social changes experienced by the country since the mid 1980s". In **Adrian Smith (2004)** 'Black against Gold: New Zealand-Australia sporting rivalry in the modern era, in Adrian Smith and Dillwyn Porter (Eds.) *Sport and National Identity in the Post-War World* (pp. 168-192) (London: Routledge) (p. 184). See also **Jan Halberstadt, Robert P. O'Shea and Joseph Forgas (2006)** Outgroup fanship in Australia and New Zealand, *Australian Journal of Psychology* 58 (3), pp. 159-165.

# Chapter 21: Hardly a Hilton

The transfer from the inner city bus station to the door of my hotel took just over thirty minutes and gave me a scenic tour of the back streets of Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD). There were nine of us in the minibus, four couples in the back and a lonely-looking me next to the driver in the front. I looked and listened for any obvious signs that they were also in Melbourne for the rugby, but made little conscious effort to interact with those sitting directly behind me. Moreover, the lack of communal conversation allowed me to focus on replaying, and reinterpreting, everything that had occurred over the past few hours.

I wanted to record everything that Jim had said from the moment we first met. All four of the couples were staying in four different hotels and, despite what I had first suspected, were evidently not travelling together. My hotel was the last stop. Even from the outside, however, I could tell that it wasn't going to be as flash as the others we had stopped at. I thanked the driver, who had thankfully made no effort to engage me in any polite conversation. I was more than content to make some notes, whilst also silently talking to myself. I didn't need any distractions.

By the time we pulled up outside my hotel, I had managed to scribble down most of the conversations that I had recently participated in with both Tony and Jim. I had also noted my failure to find Eddie and Paul, plus the unexplained absence of the serial sport tourist called Steven. Feeling rather pleased with myself, and the recent developments, I had also began to note some key terms of reference that I wished to focus on during any follow up conversations conducted once I returned to Dunedin. I was also thinking about the best way of approaching the pre-match party.

'VFR/Reunions', was one potential theme that I had circled on my pad. I saw it as an interesting avenue that I definitely wanted to explore, in terms of their desire to catch up with family and friends they hadn't seen for a while. 'Place Attachment' was another, related to Eddie's links to the Waikato and Jim's links to Melbourne. The third point that I had jotted down was 'Alcohol Consumption'. While none of the three had been drinking, I was keen to discover how their experience had been affected by those who

had. I was also curious to find out how much a part of the sports-tourist identity could be linked to alcohol consumption.

I thanked the driver for fetching my bag from the back and was stunned to see, and hear, a dozen men exiting a larger airport shuttle parked up across the road. 'I told you so!', said a rather cocky-sounding Pilch as the reality of the situation hit home. They were all wearing fancy dress costumes, they all looked as though they hadn't slept and now they were all heading in my direction. 'At least I will be checking in before them', I responded to myself, grabbing my belongings and making a beeline for the hotel entrance.

Once inside, I crossed my fingers that the shuttle ride from the airport had curbed their enthusiasm and sobered them up a little. Not that I wanted to spoil their fun. I just remembered how uncomfortable I had felt around them earlier in the day, both in the air and as I queued to cross the white line in the airport. The clock above the desk told me it was 10.30am. I couldn't believe it had only been five hours since I had eaten my breakfast. The hotel receptionist was busy chatting with two Irish couples who appeared to be checking out and saying their fond farewells. It took another couple of minutes before I realised that it had actually been seven hours since I last ate anything. The time on the clock was two hours slower than that displayed on my wrist.

What with everything going on at the airport, I had completely forgotten to change my watch to Melbourne time. 'No wonder I was hungry', I thought as my stomach grumbled in agreement. Thoughts of food, however, were soon replaced by thoughts of getting out of the hotel and exploring the city. The wall behind the desk was covered in various posters that advertised everything from scooter hire to scuba diving. There was also a blackboard welcoming those here for the weekend's Rugby and a number of others listing the schedule of events for the next seven days.

Though I had my suspicions when I saw the price of the package that I had signed up for, I was still a little disappointed to discover the 'city centre hotel' that I had been promised was actually just a large backpackers hostel. 'At least I had paid extra for a double room', I thought as I looked around the large open plan ground floor. The room itself was littered with even more notice boards, including those for people selling their cars, computers and digital cameras. To my right were a couple of sofas and, behind them, the café/restaurant area where I assumed I would get my free breakfast each morning. Next to that there were some more tables surrounded by chairs and, against the

wall behind that, four computer terminals where I assumed I would get my free internet access.

To my left there was a large wooden dining table covered in board games and books. Next to that there were stairs that, according to the sign and arrow above them, led down to the basement bar where I assumed I would get my complimentary beer on arrival. To the right of the reception desk there was a security door that appeared to have been purposely wedged open. This had clearly been done to allow those checking out to bring what looked like their bedding down to the reception desk. To the left of the reception desk was another room that appeared to be full of luggage lockers.

'Why is she taking so long', an impatient sounding Pilch screamed in my head. 'I hope I get checked in before they come through that door', added another equally impatient sounding voice. The receptionist, however, who looked as young as the ground staff that I had seen at 5.00am in Christchurch, clearly had no idea that the current peace and quiet would soon be shattered. Somehow I doubted that the group behind me would be as orderly as I had been, especially as she was making no effort to hide the fact that she was engaged in gossip about a 'huge' night out last Wednesday. I somehow doubted that the nuns would be any more interested than I was about where she went, who she saw and how much alcohol Sarah had consumed by the end of the night. Not unless 'Sarah' happened to be a Kiwi kid from Christchurch with a dad who liked travelling to rugby matches in makeup.

'Too late', I said to myself as I heard the double doors swing open behind me. Looking around, I was surprised to see the group had almost trebled in size since I first spotted it outside the hotel. 'I guess that's why it has taken them five minutes to cross the street', I thought, hoping this sudden burst of activity would prove the catalyst for me finally being called up to the reception desk. I also assumed that was why I hadn't seen them exit the airport whilst I was talking to Tony and Jen in the arrivals lounge. 'They must have been waiting for reinforcements', I concluded as the first wave came marching towards me.

Turning back to face the front, I could see the conversation between the receptionist and her friends had thankfully come to an end. I could also see the look of fear on the receptionists face as she did a head count of the group heading straight for her. I couldn't help but smile at her as I witnessed her face go from looking hung-over to looking horrified. Within the space of a few seconds, her queue had gone from me, who apparently was happy to wait for her to finish her story, to something approaching thirty

sport tourists, who sounded like they had come straight from an all night session down at the local boozer.

'They must have filled three or four airport shuttles', I thought as I made eye contact with the receptionist for the first time. 'Thank God they hadn't all been on my flight', I said, thinking back to how noisy it had been with just the twelve of them onboard. "Not you rowdy lot again", I said with a wry smile, turning to acknowledge their arrival in the queue. A nun and the highway patrol officer were standing directly behind me, both of whom I recognised from my flight. "I thought I'd seen the last of you guys in the airport", I joked, looking straight at the same gentleman that had tapped Eddie on the head several hours earlier. "I thought this country was quite fussy when it came to letting foreigners across the white line", I continued, trying to judge their reaction to my bravado approach.

'Surely, they'd recognise me from the departure gate', I thought as I replayed my own nervousness at being let in to the country. I wanted to say something that acknowledged the fact that we had all arrived into Melbourne at the same time, on the same flight, from the same place of origin. I wanted them to know that despite my lack of costume we still had several things in common. "I see you've multiplied since I last saw you", I said still looking for any kind of verbal or visual response from either of them. "Great effort with the costumes", I continued, reluctant to turn around until on of them acknowledge my existence. Sadly, I got nothing. Not even a smile.

It was as if I wasn't even there. Either that or they simply didn't understand the words that were coming out of my mouth. Looking further down the line, I could see the guy who had been handing out the passports at the airport was once again barking orders to some of them as he made his way towards the front of the group. He was trying unsuccessfully to establish who had all the necessary paperwork. All he was getting, however, was a barrage of playful abuse from his troops. My own quick head count noted there were twenty-eight of them in total.

'I wonder where they've come all from', I thought as I tried to decide upon my next move. 'And what time they got out of bed', I continued, looking at the number of slumped shoulders and even heavier heads being carried on top of them. 'I wonder how long they've all known each other', I continued to myself. 'And how exactly do they know each other?', I added, trying to assess what their various relationships were. Some looked as though they could be brothers; others looked more like father and son. I

guessed they all belonged to some kind of club. The youngest member looked around his mid thirties. The oldest must have been at least seventy.

Having finally been invited up to the desk, I was greeted with the news that our rooms may not be ready for another three hours. The receptionist, named Rebecca, pointed to the guys behind me and questioned if we were all checking in together. "If I was with these guys then I'd probably be in my batman suit", I informed her, pointing her to the voucher that I had just placed in front of her. It clearly said that I had a double room booked under the name of Richard Wright. Unfortunately, I could see from the look on her face that she was feeling somewhat overwhelmed by the sheer number of people standing directly behind me.

A quick look over my shoulder revealed that at least three other groups had arrived in the last ten minutes. "Is everything okay?", I asked, as it became apparent to me that she had no idea how to process my voucher. "Perhaps you should go and ask for help?", I added, hoping not to upset or offend her. The sticker under her name badge informed me that Rebecca was actually a trainee. She had an Irish accent and looked in her late teens or early twenties. Her colleagues, however, were nowhere to be seen.

The room was feeling increasingly crowded and the noise level was also increasing by the second. She may not have made the greatest first impression, but I couldn't help but feel a little sorry for the girl stood in front of me. I thought of all the times that I had been faced with a similar sized queue while working at the Cambridge Tourist Information Centre. At least I had my back to the crowd. She had to face them. Worse still, she had clearly been left to face them alone without any supervision or support. My request for her to go and get help was designed to re-assure her that it wasn't her fault and that she should not have been left alone.

"Okay", she replied after pressing almost every button on the keyboard in front of her. "I'm really sorry about all of this", she continued before revealing that it was actually her first day on the reception. "We weren't expecting you all till this afternoon", she added, implying that the tour operator had provided them with the wrong information. "Check-in isn't usually until 2.00pm", she repeated in a voice that was barely more than a whisper. "I'll be back in a second", she said as she picked up the phone and calmly called for backup.

"So where have you all come from?", she asked me, putting the phone down and sounding as if she wanted to kill some time until the A-Team arrived. "My supervisor will be out in a second", she added, clearly feeling a lot better knowing she was about to

be saved. I, however, was less confident. I thought her message hadn't sounded urgent enough. It could easily have been misinterpreted. I would have been screaming for assistance. I would not have used the phone either. I would have left the desk and done it in person. I would have wanted my supervisor to see the panic in my eyes.

"Well I'm from Dunedin", I said loud enough to ensure even the deaf members amongst the group must have heard. "And, as for these interesting looking characters", I continued, pointing over my shoulder but opting to continue facing the front, "well…", I said, adding a little pause in just for the affect. "… I'm not entirely sure where they've come from *but they're not with me.*". I was hoping that the emphasis placed on the last five words would finally evoke some form of reaction. I no longer cared if it was positive or negative. I just wanted them to acknowledge my presence amongst them.

I could sense from the various mumbling and sighing that the crowd were getting restless and agitated. I couldn't blame them for being frustrated. I just hoped that I may be able to distract them. I was hoping that my vocal attempt to distance myself from them may encourage a few to speak up and let us both know where they considered their home to be. But they just refused to bite. They gave me nothing.

"I'm guessing we'll all be wearing Black at the MCG tomorrow", I added, turning to fact them for the first time in over a minute. I was reluctant to give up without a fight. 'Surely this would be enough to stir them up a bit', I thought, looking at those standing less then two metres away. I still got nothing in return. Rebecca, however, still seemed unable to accept the fact that I was here by myself.

"So you're not together then?", she said for the second time since we had started this process.

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I really wanted to make an 'Irish' joke, but thought better of it. I just wanted to know whether my room was available or not. I was tired. I was hungry. I was growing increasingly annoyed by the time that this relatively simple procedure was taking. I was tempted to get my notebook out and start writing my thoughts down in front of her. I was also tempted to give up and try again later, preferably when she had finished her shift. I could smell the food being served in the café and thought about letting those behind me loose on this poor misguided receptionist. My thoughts instantly became redundant, however, as her 'supervisor' finally appeared in the doorway behind her.

Her rather belated appearance was marked by several sarcastic cheers, wolf-whistles and even a brief slow hand-clap from the group behind me. 'At least there's

nothing wrong with their eyes', I thought, referring to the fact that they must have been deaf not to hear any of the things I had said about them. If things were going to turn ugly, however, I really didn't want to get caught up in the crossfire. I listened in as Rebecca tried to explain the situation to her equally overwhelmed looking superior.

"He's actually on his own", she informed her colleague. "He's not with the rest of them", she added, as if the situation needed any further clarification. "I've told him that we weren't expecting them till later and that check in isn't until two", she continued, as the other girl started to process my voucher on the computer, "I think they've come straight from the airport", she concluded. "They all arrived at once" she added, trying to justify how the queue had got so long in the time her colleague had been away.

As much as I wanted to get involved, I felt it best to bite my lip and let them try to sort it out. I noted how she had forgotten to mention that she spent at least five minutes talking about her social life with a couple of guests who had long since left the scene. The last thing I wanted to do, however, was to make a scene. To be honest, Rebecca's refusal to accept that I could possibly be travelling alone had actually knocked the wind out of my sails. Her disbelief had reminded me of why I was there. This, in turn, led me to reconsider why my own behaviour, not to mention dress, was entirely different from those behind me. I wasn't there to party. I was there for participant observation.

I wanted to interrupt the discussion taking place behind the desk and point out that this wasn't a holiday. I wanted to inform them that I was undertaking tourism research and was less than impressed with what I had seen so far. I wanted them to know that I also lecture on a hospitality paper at the University of Otago, which focuses specifically on offering a quality service. I wanted them to know that I didn't make a habit of travelling or staying in hotels all by myself. More specifically, I wanted Rebecca to know how much I wished that Melanie was standing next to me at that time. I knew that I must have looked lonely. I wanted them to know that I didn't want to be by myself.

After a further five minutes of standing around, I was informed that I was in luck. 'I don't feel very lucky right now', I muttered under my breath as I was told that my room had just been cleaned and was actually available after all.

"There's $30 refundable key deposit", I was informed as I signed all the necessary paperwork. "The internet is in the corner there and here is your free token", I was told, giving me no time to question whether they would accept a mixture of New Zealand and Australian Dollars. I wasn't sure how much cash I had on me, and wanted to invest some of my Aussie money in the café. Looking at the gold coin she placed on the desk, she

informed me that my ‘free’ internet was only valid for ten minutes. “The tokens cost a dollar and you can purchase more from here if you require longer”, Rebecca added, before revealing that the complimentary breakfast was only available from eight till nine and didn’t include any of the cooked options that I had been able to smell from the moment I first arrived.

The tone adopted by Rebecca’s supervisor suggested that she had said the exact same thing on numerous occasions in the past. I thought about how many times she was going to have to say it all over again to the forty people behind me. Looking at Rebecca, who was busy making mental notes behind her colleague, I hoped that she would quit long before things ever got that bad. On handing over all of the Aussie dollars in my wallet, I was given my room key and asked if I had any questions. ‘Yes, actually’, I said to myself, thinking about the numerous things that I wanted to know about the sporting attractions that the city had to offer me. However, whilst the reception appeared to be the right place, I was not convinced that they were the right people to ask. Furthermore, it seemed like the wrong time for me to enquiry about my free drink or the possibility of a welcome pack. I just wanted to escape to my room.

# Chapter 22: Elevator agony

My room was small and far from what I had imagined it might be like as I lay in bed the night before. It had four walls, a window and a double bed, but it was completely soulless. There was nothing on the walls. It smelt damp and unclean. The bed had been stripped, but not made. The clean sheets and pillow cases lay nicely folded on top of the mattress. Rather than wait for someone to come and rectify the situation, however, I decided to just make it up for myself. Having done so, I grabbed my notepad and went off to investigate the bar.

I didn't want my free drink. I was just curious to see who else was down there. All I really wanted was some lunch and a place where I could sit down and write up my thoughts regarding the excursion so far. I wanted to note my frustration at the hotel's apparent poor organisation. I could hear people complaining as I squeezed my way through the queue and headed down to the supposedly twenty-four hour hotel bar. It was closed. The lights were off. And the doors were locked.

Seeing that the two receptionists were still struggling to deal with the nuns from Christchurch, I decided against making any comments about the state of my room or asking when the bar would be open for business. I had no intention of joining the back of the queue. 'Are they trying to leave a bad impression', I asked, unsure of what to do next. I headed back through the queue and ordered myself a toasted cheese and ham sandwich at the café that appeared to double up as both the breakfast room and the restaurant. I took a seat at one of the tables and started reliving everything I that had happened since I arrived at the hotel.

The gentleman at the next table was complaining bitterly to his mate about the insufficient number of beds for their group. At the reception desk I could also hear raised voices as the Sergeant Major and Highway Patrol Officer completely ignored those waiting in line and made a complaint about the fact that their beds had not been made. I spent the next hour writing up my notes and observing wave upon wave of black shirts, coats, hats and scarves swarming into the hotel and across to the reception desk. I timed how long it took the two girls to deal with each group. 'They're getting better', I said to myself as I counted how many were told their rooms were not ready.

I felt sorry for everyone involved and, not for the first time that day, wished that I had picked another sports tourism package. I thought about Tony and assumed his clients were not having the same trouble. I wanted to get out of the hotel and make my way over to the MCG. My camera, however, was still in my coat pocket, and coat was still up in my room. In the lift I was joined at the last possible minute by a group of fifteen fully grown gentlemen, each with their own suitcase. As I was pushed further and further back into the corner, they began to argue over who would have to wait behind or take the stairs. The lift was clearly overloaded and the doors refused to close.

I would have happily taken the stairs. By this time, however, I was well and truly trapped at the back of the elevator. For me to escape, I knew that I would need at least four or five of them to get out first. They wanted the third floor. My room was on the second, and I had already pressed the button as I entered the lift. I decided to just keep quiet and let them squabble amongst themselves. It was like I was invisible anyway. Not one of them acknowledged that there was someone else with them. It took several minutes before a couple of them were finally forced out into the hallway. Those who remained found this hilarious. Those who had been removed clearly failed to see the funny side.

Once under way, those in front of me acted as if someone had pressed the wrong button by mistake when it reached and stopped at my floor. They failed to make the connection that the person who had already been in the lift may have wanted that floor. Rather than try and squeeze past, however, I decided to wait and get out on the third. As we exited the lift I heard someone acknowledge that there had been "an impostor" in the elevator with them. Another looked at me and suggested that I must have been "a spy". A third member of the group continued this theme by labelling me an "infiltrator".

I knew they meant no harm. I knew it was only a bit of banter. But it wasn't two-way. They weren't talking to me. They were talking at me. They were talking about me, without showing any interest in hearing my side of the story. Not that I could think of anything to say. I had no comeback. I was more upset by the fact that they had clearly seen me in the lift, and yet still chose to ignore me completely. 'Why hadn't they said anything?', I asked myself as I walked down the stairs to the second floor. 'What was I still doing wrong?', I thought as I headed straight for my room.

The corridors were full of life and laughter. The walls were so thin that it sounded like everyone was all in the same room. I, on the other hand, was now feeling even more alone than I had at the airport. I couldn't believe that this group of sport tourists had just

been called an "impostor". 'Were they right?', I thought as I found my room and grabbed my coat. I certainly felt out of place in the lift. I didn't feel much better standing in the queue for reception. 'Maybe I am "a spy"', I said as I stared out of the window at the brick wall I had for a view. I felt the sickening nausea return for the first time since the crossing the white line at the airport. It was worse than before. It was even worse than the pain that I had felt back Christchurch. It literally knocked me off my feet.

I slumped onto the bed, and felt the tears starting to form once again. I felt a long way from home. I felt lost. I felt alone. I felt extremely vulnerable. It scared me how close to the mark those guys in the lift had been. 'What if everyone does that?', I thought as I buried my head into my pillow. 'What if no one wants to talk to the impostor?', I wrote on the top line of a new page in the diary that lay open by my side. 'What if I am just wasting everybody's time?', I wrote in the centre of the page as my tears started to hit the paper. 'How could they have looked straight through me?', I sobbed, referring to the guys in the queue. 'Why didn't the guy in the airport even want to look at me?', I said, replaying yet another failed attempt to initiate a casual conversation. 'Why weren't people taking the bait that I was putting out for them?', I continued, thinking once again about those standing right behind me in the queue.

The questions kept coming as my tears were gradually replaced with feelings of bitterness, anger and even resentment. 'How could they have been so disrespectful?', I added to the page, before throwing my pen across the room. '*Sod them all!*', Pilch screamed in my head as I realised that this was the second time I had cried on this excursion. 'I don't need any of them!', I thought as I got off the bed and gathered up all the things. "I'm not going to let them ruin my weekend", I said louder than first intended to the brick wall visible from my window. 'I'm not going to let them ruin my ethnography either', I added as I decided that I needed to escape this hotel and find some other people to observe.

After a quick pit stop in the bathrooms located down the corridor, I took the stairs down to the ground floor and made my way towards the reception desk. While there were still at least a dozen people waiting to be served, I still had no intention of joining the back of the line. For once I honestly didn't care whether I upset the people I pushed in front of. I wanted Rebecca, her supervisor (who still wasn't wearing a name badge) and anyone else within earshot to know that I had made my own bed and that I now wanted the free map that I had seen them offering those who checked in. I also wanted to know when I would be able to get my free drink from the bar.

Having finally been given what I wanted, I turned around and offered a less than heartfelt apology to the people still waiting in the queue. I had no intention of sticking around to see if it was accepted or not. I just wanted to escape through the nearest exit. I had already plotted the fastest route from my hotel to the MCG, so the map was put away in my pocket for emergency use only. Fortunately, I have always had a relatively good sense of direction and have always been good at remembering directions. I didn't want the map because I thought I might need it. I really just used it as an excuse to make a bit of a scene in the lobby of the hotel. I thought that it might make me feel a little better. I also thought that it might make a few more people notice me.

Turning right again onto Elizabeth Street, I quickly found myself feeling a great deal better than I had in my hotel room. The agony had turned largely to apathy. I was still fully conscious of the fact that I appeared to be the only one walking around on my own, but I was equally aware of the fact that I had finally got myself to Melbourne. 'Not bad for an average kid from Sawston', I said, trying to lift my spirits and force a smile back onto my face. 'Perhaps I should ring Tony and find out more about tomorrow', I said to myself, keen to ensure that I had something to look forward to on the horizon.

'Nah, he'll be busy sorting out all his clients' I responded, conscious of the fact that I didn't want to appear too desperate. 'I'll call him later this afternoon', I said, thinking that he may have to ask one of his employers if they could accommodate me. 'Besides, the only thing that I want to see on my horizon right now is the MCG', I said as I managed to muster up my first smile since I left the hotel. I couldn't wait.

Looking back, I am not sure why I expected to be embraced as one of the in-group. I'm even more embarrassed by the way that I took the rejection so personally, not to mention unprofessionally. The people in the queue, like those in the lift, were not being vindictive, or purposefully vicious for that matter. They probably thought they were being funny. So maybe it was the lack of sleep. Or maybe it was the stress travelling by myself, and the pressure of the occasion that got the better of me, and my emotions. This is not, however, a narrative full of excuses or answers based on hindsight. I'm more interested in assessing whether this memorable moment represented yet another major turning point in my PhD field work experience.

# Chapter 23: Ain't nothing but a 'G' thing!

As I reached the end of the Elizabeth Street, I was happy to find myself standing across the road from a landmark I recognised from my hours spent on Google Earth. The landmark was Flinders Street Station. From here I knew exactly how to get to my destination. I knew that I needed to cross Flinders Street. I knew that I then had to turn left and walk along towards the railway station's main entrance. From there, I knew that I needed to resist the lure of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) on Federation Square and make my way down to the banks of the Yarra River.

Everyone that I had spoken to prior to my excursion had told me that I had to spend a bit of time at Federation Square. Apart from the Information Centre, however, I had no idea what to expect once I got there. I hoped to see some fellow sport tourists wondering around and taking in the local sights. I expected the VIC to be over flowing with people wanting to know what to do and where to go whilst they were in town. It certainly looked impressive from the outside. It also had a huge poster promoting the Test Match. It covered an entire side of the building.

Whilst I didn't go inside, there was no obvious queue of people waiting to be served at the predominantly underground VIC. The square itself was also a lot quieter than expected. So were the streets that surrounded it. I found myself feeling the same degree of excitement that I had experienced as I held my grandfather's hand on our way to the Abbey Stadium for the very first time back in 1989. Back then, however, I really had no idea what to expect or even which direction to look for that matter. This time round I knew that the MCG was somewhere straight ahead of me. I wasn't sure, however, when I would be in the position to catch my first glimpse.

I walked past the VIC and down some steps towards the river. The lack of any obvious signposting had also come as a bit of a surprise and disappointment. The fact that I had successfully resisted the lure of the entering the Information Centre only proved how much I wanted to find the Melbourne Cricket Ground. I knew that I had plenty of time to go back later. What I didn't know, however, was how I was going to feel when I finally saw one of the world's most famous sporting arenas. And this excited me more than anything. She had me under her spell already.

Thankfully the experience of seeing her for the first time was every bit as good as I had dreamt it would be. In fact, as first impressions go, I am confident this one will last forever. What's more, unlike Anfield (Liverpool), the Camp Nou (Barcelona) or Carisbrook (Dunedin), she was every inch as big as I had expected her to be. She was, to quote a word my undergraduate students love to use when describing thing in their essays 'huge'. To quote my new friend Jim, she was indeed "Bloody Magnificent". She dominated the skyline and reminded me immediately of Rome's Coliseum, Lisbon's Stadium of Light and Cardiff's Millennium Stadium.

The experience was everything that I hoped it would be. As expected, it instantly took me back to the very second I saw the Abbey Stadium floodlights for the first time. I could feel the hairs standing to attention on the back of my neck. I just had to get a closer look. All I could think about was whether there would be a space for me on one of the guided tours. I didn't care when. I had all afternoon. I didn't care how much it cost. I had a clear credit card at my disposal.

Judging by the distinct lack of people, I wondered if most of the people seen arriving at the airport had opted to stay in their rooms and sleep off all the early morning excitement. I just hoped that they weren't already booked on a Friday afternoon tour of the MCG. I just wanted to be left alone to enjoy this experience. I didn't need anyone else to help me appreciate this moment. This was all about me. I briefly wondered if I should have gone into the VIC and enquired about the availability and times of tours. I was also a little concerned that they might have stopped the tours to prepare to the weekend's big match.

The riverside path was clearly the place to be for fitness junkies, whether it was running, cycling or skating. There were several boathouses directly across the water on the opposite bank and, once again, I was besieged by memories of watching the students rowing on the River Cam. These recollections, however, were soon replaced by completely unrelated memories triggered by the large Ferris wheel I found myself walking towards. While it appeared to be closed, I suspected it would be a popular attraction later that evening and even more so during the weekend. I thought of all the places that had similar attractions and how bitterly cold it usually got at the top. I thought of the ones I had been on with girlfriends past and present. I thought of the most recent one I had been on in Edinburgh the week before Christmas.

Getting myself completely caught up in the moment, I actually ended up walking straight past the start of a large concrete walkway that appeared to lead straight to my

destination. 'You complete and utter Pillock', I said to myself as I stopped and gave some serious consideration to the pros and cons of turning around and heading back towards the Ferris wheel. Seeing a bridge up ahead, however, I decided to stick with my course and follow the river a little further. I was confident that I hadn't wandered too far off course. I could still see the stadium and was equally convinced it would only prove to be a minor detour.

Once at the aforementioned road bridge, I turned left and crossed over what appeared to be a main road leading back into the city centre. 'Wow', I said to myself, realising for the first time the significance of the building that I was now able to see much clearer through the trees. It looked nothing like I had imagined it would. It looked more like a function centre or concert hall. Only the words written in large letters on the side of the building revealed its true identity. "The Rod Laver Arena", I announced to the world, reading the sign aloud. Looking around, however, I noticed that there was no body else around.

There was a lot of scaffolding strewn randomly around the building's perimeter, some of which was piled up on the grass that stood between me and the steps up to the arena. The entire area appeared to be suffering from a hangover caused by the night before. 'There must have been something big here last night', I said to myself as I spotted my first signpost. It revealed the direction and distance from where I was standing to each of the three other Grand Slam tournaments. Wimbledon (London) was 16,990 kilometres to my right. Roland Garros (Paris) was only 111 kilometres closer than this, but in the opposite direction. I was literally couldn't have be any further away from home if I had wanted to. Flushing Meadows (New York) was 300 kilometres closer than Wimbledon but also in a completely different direction.

'Why does it have the directions of the Lexus Centre and Vodafone Arena, but not the MCG?', I questioned as I got my camera out for the first time since the airport. I was surprised to see that I had only taken two pictures since leaving Dunedin. Having successfully taken photograph number three, I followed the pathway round to a couple of temporary looking buildings that claimed to be an Information Centre. I wanted to know when the tours were running and how one went about securing a spot. More specifically, I wanted a leaflet (or two) that I could take away and read over later that day.

The Information point was completely shut up and looked a lot more like a ticket kiosk. Looking up, I was surprised that I could no longer see the MCG dominating the skyline. Spotting what appeared to be a path in the right direction, I opted against taking

a closer look at the various other sports stadia dotted around the sports precinct and focused my attention on getting myself to the place that Jim had called 'she', and the locals simply called 'The G'.

'Un…be…liva…ble!', gasped all the voices in my head as I reached the top of a concrete staircase that ran directly between the Rod Laver Arena and the much newer-looking Vodafone Arena. "Now *that* is a stadium", I stated aloud, unconcerned over who may have heard. It had looked big enough as I stood by the river. But that was then. This was now. Its actual size had only just become fully obvious for the first time. It was bigger than huge. Huge didn't even come close. Better still, it was beautiful.

I looked both left, at the Rod Laver Arena, and then right, at the Vodafone Arena. I even did a full 180 degree turn and looked back towards the Lexus Centre and the Olympic stadium. They all looked so small in comparison. They looked so dated. They looked ugly. 'I can't believe that's the 1956 Olympic stadium', I said to myself, comparing it with the one that hosted the 1992 Games that I had visited in Barcelona only a few months previous. It looked more like a local athletic club. I actually felt sorry for them, and anyone who had to work in them. They just looked so inadequate, not to mention inferior in every way. They must be green with envy.

I started to think about Dunedin's dream of building its own sports precinct around the Logan Park area. I thought of all the potential opportunities of having the rugby, cricket, tennis, hockey, football and athletics all within five minutes walk of the University campus. 'If only they could find someone willing to pay for it all', I said to myself as the MCG appeared to grow larger and more impressive with every second that passed. I just couldn't take my eyes off it. I thought about all the positive impact it could have on the city I call home. I then thought about my other home and wondered why the University and city had never combined forces to build decent sporting facilities to attract second or third tier events to Cambridge.

'How I would have loved to have this on my doorstep', I said with a sigh as I started to make my way along the walkway. I grabbed my notebook for the first time since I had left the riverbank and started writing down a mixture of observations and opinions. The place was eerily quiet. I had seen a few workmen wandering around the outside of the Rod Laver Arena, but that was pretty much it. 'Where were the crowds of tourists?', I asked myself as my photograph count hit double figures. 'Where were all the pilgrims that I expected to find paying tribute to some of the world's most iconic sporting sites?', I added underneath. 'Surely, I can't be the only one interested in this area?', I

said to myself as I found an even better vantage point than the one I had stopped at only seconds before.

I refused to believe that I was the only person who wanted to visit the city's famous sports precinct. Having seen relatively few people in the CBD, I had convinced myself that this area was going to be a hive of activity from the moment that I arrived to the moment that I flew home again on Monday, especially with record numbers of New Zealander's reported to be crossing to Tasman to attend the weekend's Test Match. The New Zealand media had been dominated by nothing else for the past month. I had heard rumours of it being a sell out crowd. 'That's 100,000 people', I thought as I looked around and counted only eight other people within sight.

'Maybe I was approaching it from the wrong direction?', I said to myself, conscious of the fact that I had already missed the most direct route to and from the ground. 'Maybe everyone else was lazy and caught the tram?', I thought as I reached the large concrete stadium concourse. In my notebook, I described her at the time as being 'without doubt the biggest, most impressive stadium I have ever seen'. Beneath this I listed some of the other stadia I was comparing it with. The list included previously mentioned football stadia such as Barcelona's Camp Nou, and Benfica's Stadium of light. It also included Cambridge's Abbey Stadium, the old Wembley Stadium and Dunedin's Carisbrook.

With the exception of Cardiff's Millennium stadium, there were no others that came close in terms of sheer presence. I tried to imagine how I would have felt if my grandfather had brought me along here as an eight year old to watch an AFL game. I thought of all the kids that had been taken here by a parent or grandparent over the past hundred years. The Abbey may look a lot older than this did, but looks can be deceiving. The oldest parts of the Abbey date back half a century at the most. The oldest parts of the 'G', as Jim had affectionately referred to her as, were over three times that old. I could feel myself falling in love all over again.

I have always felt an amazing degree of solace in and around purpose-built sporting stadia. And the MCG was certainly no different. I found myself able to draw a significant amount of strength from its unique and powerful aura. I consciously tried to empty my mind and forget about everything that had occurred so far on the excursion. I simply shut my eyes and stood there. It felt good. It felt right. It felt a long time overdue. Opening my eyes again slowly, I studied every inch, imaging the time and effort that went into designing and building this magnificent stadium. I knew it had

recently undergone a major facelift. But I saw more than just concrete and metal. I saw a work of art.

I marvelled at its symmetry and detail. I couldn't wait to see what it looked like from the inside. Looking up to the highest point in the stand, I wondered what the view would be like. I stood an soaked it all up for over ten minutes. I could feel the stress and anxiety being drained out of my body. I guess it could have been longer. I was aware of some people talking as they passed me. It could have been a bus party for all I cared. I didn't care what I looked like. I didn't care what anybody else thought. I was not interested in what anyone else was doing. I wasn't here for them. This was all about me. I was finally at the 'G'. I had no intention of sharing this experience with anyone. This was my moment.

# Chapter 24: Scarfie(s) for life!

'MCG Stadium Tours, Gate 3' the sign informed me. 'But where's Gate Three?', I asked, looking around for any clues as to which direction round I needed to walk. Failing to see any gate numbers, or anyone to ask, I decided to just start walking clockwise along the large concrete concourse that surrounded the colossus stadium. 'I never thought I would be so captivated by a cricket ground', I said to myself as I walked passed the life-size bronze statue of Dennis Lillee. 'Then again, until half an hour ago, I had never set eyes on a cricket ground that could seat 100,000 people before', I continued as I imagined how busy the concourse must get before the start of the Boxing Day Test Match.

"These guys must *really* like their cricket", I said to a gentleman walking in the opposite direction.

"Yeah, not bad, is it", the man responded, taking the time to stop and admire the view. "Still takes my breath away, that's for sure", he added as he began to take a noticeable interest in my OUAFC jacket. "You come over here for the game?", he asked, as he raised his head slightly to make eye contact. I guessed that a little voice in his head had informed him that he had been staring straight at my chest for the past ten seconds.

"I am indeed", I said, having myself only just spotted the logo on his baseball cap. "Thought I'd case the joint first", I added with a smile on my face. "What about you?", I asked, feeling a lot more comfortable about his initial interest in my jacket. He was wearing a Highlanders hat. 'Maybe he works at the University', I thought, taking a much better look at his face. 'Play your cards right and you may have bagged yourself a Dunedinite', I thought with a certain degree of excitement.

"Well I'll definitely be back here for the rugby tomorrow", he happily informed me. "But I've been living here for the past couple of years", he continued, using his arms to demonstrate the fact that, by "here", he meant Melbourne. "I was born in Oamaru" he revealed, before adding that he was "at varsity down in Dunners for four years". He sounded as proud as he was pleased to be able to share that piece of personal history with me. "I'd like to say I studied there, but I guess I didn't do a great deal of studying… if you know what I mean?" he added, making another obvious hand gesture to imply he

may have frequented some of the North Dunedin bars a lot more than he did the University library or lecture halls.

"I've actually just dropped a couple of my old Castle Street flatmates off at Gate 3", he continued, revealing himself to be yet another stereotypical Dunedin 'Scarfie'[244]. "Yeah, I picked them up this morning", he added before going on to tell me that it was the first time they'd all been together since they graduated back in 2003. "I was going to do it with them, but there were only two spaces left" he added, shrugging his shoulders as if he wasn't too overcome with grief.

"Was that the last one of the day?", I interrupted, looking to the skies and praying that I wasn't about to be asked if I could come back on another day. I didn't want to wait any longer. I just couldn't. I'd waited long enough already. 'Why didn't you turn around and take that stupid walkway?!', groaned an angry sounding voice inside my head as I tried to calculate if it would have got me here before this guy arrived with his mates. 'Why did I waste time admiring the view?', I said to myself, feeling more aggrieved by the second. "Do you know if there is a waiting list?", I asked, hoping I may be able to sneak on at the last minute. "Perhaps someone won't show up?", I added more in hope than anything. I doubted they would be running as many, if any, tours on the day of the Test Match and Sunday just seemed like a lifetime away. I also doubted I would have time to do it on Monday morning.

"Don't panic mate, they're running them every fifteen minutes today", he said seeing the fear in my eyes. "There's another one on the hour and I think there were plenty of spaces on it" he added, placing a re-assuring hand on my shoulder. "I've done it so many times that I thought I'd go and get the beers in", he informed me with the grin on his face. "You can take the student out of Dunedin" he joked, sounding more than a little nostalgic about his time at the University of Otago. "So what you doing there and how

[244] The University Online Urban Dictionary describes a 'Scarfie' as "A Kiwi university student. Specifically, a student at the University of Otago in Dunedin". According to Wikipedia, it is "the nickname for a student of the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand derived from the cold local climate and the tradition of wearing gold and blue striped scarves. Although current students rarely wear the bright scarves, it is a commonly used name for the students in national press and by the University, including by the Otago University Students' Association's "Scarfie" magazine". While the first definition implies it's only for New Zealand students, I would most certainly consider myself a 'Scarfie'. I've even been known to wear an Otago Yellow and Blue scarf (it's actually Melanie's). I took it to wear at the Second Test Match in Auckland. I hoped that it would help me generate a conversation (or two). I never even considered taking it to Melbourne. In plural form, it was used for the title of a 1999 film about a group of Otago students who discover a large crop of marijuana in their basement. The film is screened especially for first year students during their Orientation Week, and my flatmates also made me watch the movie within my first month of arriving in Dunedin. See **University Online Urban Dictionary (2009)**, available at; http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=scarfie [accessed 28/ 2 / 2009]; **Wikipedia (2009)**, available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scarfie#cite_note-0 [accessed 28/2/2009].

come you're not in class?", he continued, pointing at the University's coat of arms on my jacket. "And what's the O U A F C stand for?", he added before I had chance to compute his previous two questions.

"Ah thank god" I responded, breathing out a vocal and equally visual sigh of relief. "Thought my luck had run out for a second", I added looking skywards and visually thanking the heavens for answering my latest prayer so quickly. I couldn't wait to sign up for the next available tour. I was also comforted to hear that they were proving just as popular as I had hoped they would be. "Sorry mate" I said, realising I had failed to answer any of his questions. "Otago University Association Football Club", I continued, referring to the five initials on my jacket. "Heard of them?", I asked, before informing him of my position as a player-coach for two of the four teams.

"I'm quite fond of a bit of footie myself", he informed me, making a kicking action to emphasise the fact even more. "Me and some of the guys at work have been going along to support the Victory in the A-league", he added, referring to the Melbourne-based franchise in Australia's only professional football championships. "Although, I suppose I should be supporting the Phoenix", he added, before sharing his opinion that the New Zealand team were "a bit crap". "We're talking about getting a posy together and going to watch them play a few away games next season", he explained, much to my obvious interest.

"Anyway, I'd really better be off", he said, making a gesture with his hands that implied he had little choice in the matter and would much rather have stayed. "Gotta get the beers in the fridge before their tour ends", he informed me, looking over his shoulder at the stadium once again. "I'm thinking of taking them to the footie tonight", he added as he started to walk away. "Should be a great game you know", he concluded as he picked up his pace from a walk to a slow jog. "Enjoy the tour mate" and "You'll love the museum!", were just two of the things he yelled back in my direction as he jumped into an unlocked car that had been parked in what looked to be a bus stop.

"What footie?", I shouted back as he sped away completely oblivious to the confusion he had just caused. I knew the A-League didn't start again until August. I'd become a bit of a fan of the Wellington Phoenix and, whilst the overall standard was not much better than the Blue Square Premier that Cambridge United played in, it was better than nothing. "What footie?", I asked again, only this time much less vocally. I was sure that I would have known if there was a pre-season fixture going on this weekend. I had checked before I left.

'The first pre-season games not for another month', I said as I stood rooted to the spot for a few more seconds, reflecting upon all the information he had just fired in my direction over the course of the past few seconds. And then it hit me. 'He was probably talking about AFL', I concluded, realising that I was probably the only person in Melbourne that would immediately assume 'footie' meant Association Football and not Aussie Rules or Rugby League. Confident of my mistake, I turned and headed in the direction from which I saw him first arrive on the scene. I realised I was still none the wiser regarding how far round I would have to go to reach gate three. I guessed it couldn't be far away.

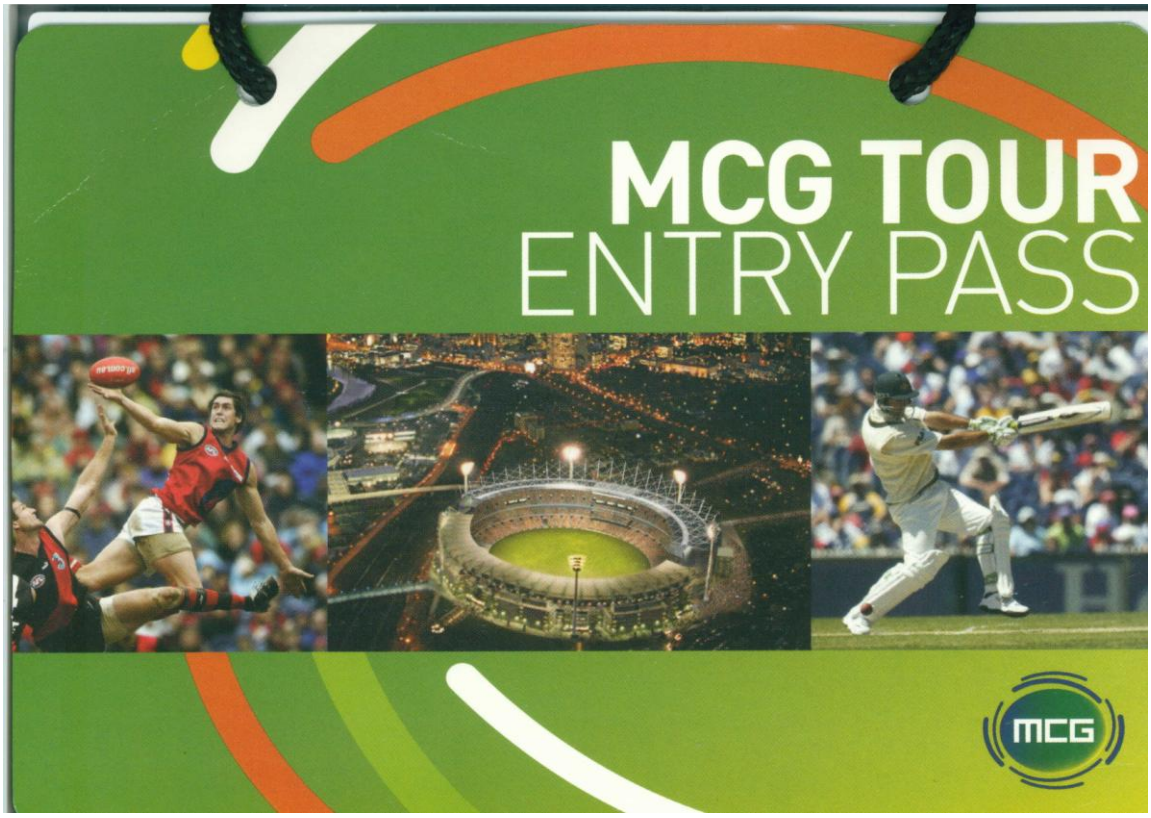
I regretted that I hadn't discovered the Scarfie's name or which two AFL teams were playing that evening. He had made the fixture sound very tempting, but I didn't really fancy going alone. I wished that we had talked for longer, or met under different circumstances. I would have loved to have joined him and his mates for a beer. 'He never said if his friends still lived in Dunedin', I said to myself as I noted down all the questions that I never got the chance to ask. 'I wonder if I will bump into them inside the MCG', I thought, trying to picture what they might look like. 'I wonder what they studied at Otago'. 'More importantly, I wonder whether they were on my flight this morning' I continued, trying to picture anyone who may have looked the same age as the guy I had just met.

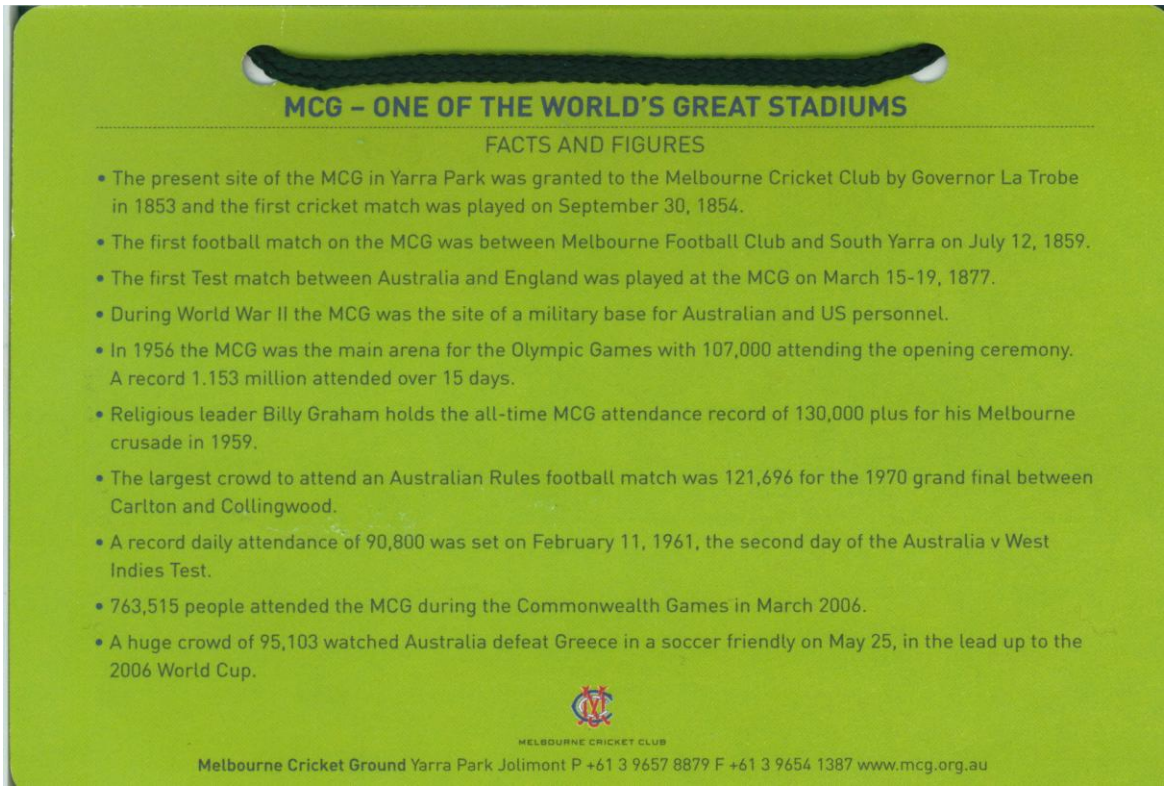
As I rounded the corner, however, my attention was immediately grabbed by the people standing around yet another entrance to the stadium. Finally, I had found Gate 3. A less than obvious sign on the wall pointed me to the ticket desk. The tour cost AUS$15 by itself or AUS$20 if I wanted to combine it with a tour of the museum as well. The woman behind the desk also informed me that it would last approximately an hour and a half. The next one was due to start in around five minutes. It was only 12.55am. I couldn't believe it was still so early.

After paying to do both the tour and the museum, I was given a green 'entry pass' on a piece of string and told to show it to the guys on the door to my left. It looked like a security pass and contained a number of facts and figures on the back. There were ten 'facts and figures' listed on the back under a heading which calls the MCG 'one of the world's greatest stadiums'. Did you know, for example, 'the present site of the MCG in

Yarra Park was granted to the Melbourne Cricket Club by Governor La Trobe in 1853 and that the first cricket match was played on September 30, 1854'? [245].

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I felt very important as I walked through the glass door that doubled as Gate 3. 'A bit different from the rusty metal turnstiles at the Abbey', I thought as I entered a lobby area which contained a flight of stairs, three lifts and a gift shop. I noticed a couple of others standing around with the same green passes hanging around their next. Rather than introduce myself, however, I decided to take a quick look around the shop. I wanted to get a couple of postcards before the tour started. I also wanted to see if they were selling anything specifically related to the Weekend's Test Match.

I thought about all the products that I had seen earlier that day in the departure lounge. I was surprised by the amount of All Blacks merchandise they had in store. There were more products for the New Zealand team then there was the Australian. As expected, there were also two entire walls dedicated to AFL. They appeared to have something for every team in the league. 'Looks like a sports shop', I said to myself as I paid for my postcards. 'Can't imagine seeing that in any of the stadium shops in the UK', I added as I took one last glance around at everything on sale.

In the lobby area I was approached by two guys and a girl, all of whom appeared to be a similar age to each other and, most importantly, myself. Up to that point, nearly everyone that I had seen had looked at least ten years older than me. I soon discovered that they had all arrived from Brisbane the day before. The two guys, named Matt and Dave, were both originally from New Zealand but had moved to Australia after graduating. They never said which university they studied at, but I assume that they would have taken more of an interest in my Jacket if it had of been Otago.

While Matt had been in Australia for the past three years, the other had been living here for nearly a decade. The girl, named Sarah, was quick to point out that she was an Aussie. She also pointed out that she had never been to New Zealand. In fact, as she said it, she slipped on the yellow and green Wallabies beanie she had just bought from the shop across the room. "I have to show I'm not a Kiwi", she stated, "especially when hanging round with these two" she added, smiling and pointing at her two travelling companions. They informed me that they had seen the All Blacks play a Test Match at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium, but couldn't resist the opportunity to experience a Test at the MCG.

While Matt and Dave had never been to the ground before, Sarah told me about an AFL fixture that she had been taken to by her grandfather as a child. "I was eight", she stated, adding "and it was the coolest thing ever!".

Amazed by the coincidence, I revealed how my grandfather had taken me to watch my first football match when I was the exact same age. I felt obligated to point out, however, that it was in Cambridge, England and "a proper football match", as opposed to some Aussie Rules game. "The stadium we went to was a little smaller than this", I admitted, looking around me and trying to get a glimpse of the field through the windows that we were standing by.

Once again, I couldn't help but get a little bit lost in my own nostalgia. I shut my eyes for a brief second to capture a snapshot of the Abbey Stadium. It's a place where I have experienced every emotion imaginable, from love to loathing, lust to longing. I remembered the smell of the bacon rolls and the sound of the crowd welcoming the players onto the pitch. I once again started to wonder what I'd be doing now if my grandfather had taken me elsewhere instead. Suddenly, without warning and as I stood surrounded by so much sporting history, the terms 'Topophilia' and 'Patina' leapt into my mind[246]. I knew that the stadium had been renovated for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, but had still expected much of the insides to retain the stadium's unique heritage. Everything that I had seen up to that point, however, appeared to be newer than the pair of jeans that I was wearing. I had thought that certain parts of the stadium's outsides would have been untouchable, but it looked like it could have been built yesterday.

[246] Jonathon Bale discussed the stadium as being a 'sacred place' which generates a form of spirituality among those who make the pilgrimage and congregate within it. Adopting Yves Tuan's earlier work on the personal meanings attached to 'space', he also employed the term 'Topophilia' to describe the love and affection that sports fans can feel towards the material environment. It means the love of a place. Similarly, according to Grant McCracken, Patina is "a physical property of material culture" that "consists of small signs of age that accumulate on the surface of objects". While he talks about the physical wear and tear of objects, he goes on to discuss the symbolic properties of these objects. The tenure of symbolic status is taken as an indicator of the objects legitimacy and status. In other words, the 'patina' of a place such as the Abbey or MCG comes from the traces of the past/prior users evident in the stadium. In **Grant McCracken (1988)** *Culture and consumption: New approaches to the symbolic character of consumer goods and activities* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press) (p. 32). See also **Yves F. Tuan (1974)** *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall); **Jonathon Bale (1989)** *'Sports Geography'* (London: E & FN Spon); **Jonathon Bale (1990)** In the shadow of the stadium: football grounds as urban nuisances, *Geography* 75, pp.325-344.

# Chapter 25: What goes on tour (stays on tour!)

My eyes were instantly drawn towards the arrival of two elderly gentlemen dressed in full MCG regalia. They had it all. The Panama hats, the blazers, and the matching ties. They even had the MCG tie pin and matching cufflinks. Rather than announce their arrival into the room, they stood in silence and counted the number of people in the lobby. As stunning as their outfits were, I couldn't help but think about how inappropriate it was for the time of year, the weather outside, and the inside of a stadium that essentially looked like it was built less than five years ago. They looked like they were still living in the summer of the 1920s.

"This is Bill everybody", we were told by the man on the right. "Bill is by far the best and most experienced guide we've got here at the Melbourne Cricket Ground", the gentleman added much to Bill's obvious approval. "He's been here almost as long as me", the man continued clearly enjoying his role in the opening performance. "And is just as much a piece of the furniture", he joked, giving Bill a gentle pat on the back. "So please look after him, and return him in the same state as you find him", he said, taking a backwards step and turning the spotlight firmly onto his colleague.

A couple of the children started clapping. I was happy to smile, but found myself curious to know whether everything that we had just heard was as scripted and pre-rehearsed as it had sounded[247]. I was confident that the same man hadn't stood their

[247] According to Walter Benjamin, "The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity". Authenticity, and the search for it, has long been an area of interest and intrigue within the academy. John Taylor, for example, suggests there are at least as many definitions of authenticity as there are those who write about it. Dean MacCannell proposed that tourism was essentially the search for "authentic experiences" and, as a result, a type of modern day pilgrimage. He highlighted the similarities that existed between the "quest for authenticity" and societies continual fascination with "the sacred in primitive society". Inspired, or at least influenced, by the observations of Daniel Boorstin, much of MacCannell's initial gaze on the authenticity of the tourist experience was focused around the socially-constructed notion that "sightseeing is a ritual performed to the differentiations of society". The search for the 'authentic' other, for example, underpins much of his seminal thesis especially that attached or associated with the past. According to MacCannell, those who actively attract tourism are guilty of scripting staged performances based entirely on their understanding of what their guests (i.e. the audience) wishes to observe and consume. The authenticity is therefore carefully managed and manipulated in an environment, or 'space', that may not be an accurate representation of the host's everyday life. On the contrary, that aspect of their culture can only be found behind the stage. In **Walter Benjamin (1968)** 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in Hannah Arendt (Ed.) *Illuminations*, (pp. 217-252) (New York: Shocken Books) (p. 220); For further discussion, see **Dean MacCannell (1973)** Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings, *The American Journal of Sociology* 79 (3), pp. 589-603; **John P. Taylor (2001)** Authenticity and Sincerity in Tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 28 (1), pp. 7-

fifteen minutes earlier and introduced the previous group's guide as being either the second or third best they had. As I looked around at my fellow sport tourists, I also started to think about the social construction of sporting heritage, and the staged authenticity of iconic venues being valued as a site of social pilgrimage[248].

"I bet he says that about all of them", I said to the attractive brunette girl that had recently taken a position next to where I was standing. Another quick scan of the people in the room revealed that she appeared to be the only person standing on her own. Her name was Karen. I discovered that much before Bill went round the group asking for our names. I also discovered that she was from Newcastle, England. I know that I should have been listening to Bill's speech about what an honour it was for him to show us around his home, but, having made the initial move, I felt as if I couldn't ignore her when she started talking to me. I didn't want to be rude, especially not to the only other person who had decided to do the 1.00pm MCG tour by themselves.

'I'm sure it's just the usual speech about staying off the grass, keeping up and only going into the areas open to the public', I said to myself as Bill noted his fifty-year relationship with the MCG and then began to run through the rules of the tour. I was far more interested in what Karen had to say about her six months living in Melbourne. It was her last day in the city, and she was flying home in less than 24 hours. She was "gutted!" that she would be missing the Test Match, and spoke about her time travelling around the rest of Australia and New Zealand. She also confessed that she would have supported Australia, despite the fact that she knew her family "back home" would have "disowned" her for such "a crime".

Karen claimed to be a "massive" sports fan. She told me that she couldn't leave Melbourne without having one last look around the stadium that she had passed everyday on her way to and from work. She rated the previous year's Boxing Day Ashes Test as her best ever sporting experience, even though she was the only one in her group of friends supporting England. I wasn't surprised to hear that she got "a lot of stick" after

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26; **Tazim Jamal and Steve Hill (2004)** Developing a framework for indicators of authenticity: the place and space of cultural and heritage tourism, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 9 (4), pp. 353-372; **Stroma Cole (2007)** Beyond Authenticity and Commodification, *Annals of Tourism Research* 34 (4), pp. 943–960.

[248] Robert Higgs and Michael Braswell suggest that, while sports may often be good things, they are not inherently divine. They question the use of mythological parallels from prehistory as justification for viewing sports as a religion and offer a dissenting view to the claim by a growing number of scholars that Sports are a new religion. See, **Robert J. Higgs, Michael Braswell, Joseph L. Price (2004)** *An unholy alliance: The Sacred and Modern Sports* (Macon, GA; Mercer University Press). See also **Toby Miller, (2008)** Sport, Authenticity, Confession, *Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies* 8 (4), pp.540-542.

they were convincingly beaten. I actually contributed very little to our conversation. It was more a case of nodding and smiling. I was happy to let her do all the talking.

I guessed Karen was the only one amongst the group not going to the Test Match. However, I was soon proven wrong. Having provided a brief overview of his entire life story, Bill stated that he had no interest in, or knowledge about, either of the Rugby codes. He added that he had "absolutely no intention" of being here the following evening to watch the Australians beat the All Blacks "*yet again*", and admitted that he would be unable to answer any questions based on the weekend's "big" match.

This statement got everybody's attention. The room went silent. Even the Australians amongst us appeared to be stunned at such an admission. He went on to explain that he had been dragged along the last time the two teams played at "the G" and couldn't see the point in doing it again. The highlight of his weekend was going to be Sunday's AFL game between the Kangaroos and the Western Bulldogs. That, according him, was a game not to be missed. One of the Kangaroo players was playing his 300$^{th}$ game. He did provide us with the player's name, but it meant nothing to either me or Karen at the time. Bill acknowledged that there wouldn't be as many people in attendance, but appeared confident that the crowd would be "twice as noisy" as those watching the Test Match. He strongly recommended that we should all come along and see what the 'G' was really like during a decent game of footie.

"That sounds good", I whispered to Karen, wishing she wasn't leaving the country tomorrow. She sounded like someone who could have made a good tour guide for the weekend.

After introducing his lack of interest in rugby, Bill started to take more interest in the names and places of origin of those in the room. "And we'll start with you!" he said, looking straight in my direction and making me feel guilty for gossiping during his Health and Safety briefing. I felt like the naughty school boy, caught flirting with the girl next to me. 'My god', I thought, 'it was GCSE English all over again'. I had only said two or three words. Karen had done most of the talking. I was only listening. I was only being polite. Yet, as was usually the case back in Mr Bligh's 1994 classroom at Sawston Village College, I had been the one caught by the teacher at the front of the class.

'Some things never change', moaned Pilch, as I thought of a way to make the most of the spotlight he had thrust upon me. "My name is Richard and I'm a sports mad Pom studying sports-related tourism across the ditch in Dunedin", I announced loud and proud, realising all eyes were now firmly fixed in my direction. "So prepare to be

studied", I added, looking around at my audience with a smile. It was more of a knee-jerk reaction, as opposed to a carefully planned casting of my fishing line.

The sound of nervous, inquisitive, laughter filled the brief silence that followed. I could have easily revealed more, but opted against it. I knew that I had offered Bill a lot more than he was expecting. I'm sure he was expecting a 'Richard from Dunedin' kind of answer, followed by 'Karen from Newcastle', 'Sarah from Brisbane', 'Matt from Brisbane etcetera until everyone had spoken. I hoped, however, to inspire those around me to do something similar. I wanted those around me to reveal more than just their name and home town. I wanted to discover what they did and, ideally, why they were there.

My plan of attack was to try and suss out any potential respondents before we had even left the room. I wanted to enjoy the next hour and a half without trying to make casual conversation with anyone. I was no longer working. I wanted to play. 'Were they going to play the game with me?', I asked myself as Bill responded to my enlightening introduction. Rather than ask me to explain myself further, however, he just pointed to the person standing to my left. Her name was Karen, and she was from Newcastle. That's all she said. That is all that anyone said. Apart from the children that is. They were also happy to share their ages. One also told us that he was a Taurus.

All that I learnt from my experiment was that my group consisted of five Australians, including a family of four from New South Wales, eight New Zealanders and two from England. With the exception of Matt and Dave, the other six New Zealanders all appeared to know each other, with four claiming to be from Auckland and the other two from the North Island town of Tauranga. There were two young children and two older women, one of whom appeared to have been there with her husband and both of the aforementioned children. The other woman was particularly uncomfortable standing within a group of five men. She looked as though she would rather have been anywhere else at that moment in time.

Despite my day-dreaming, I could still hear those around me discussing the academic from Dunedin. I never actually heard anyone using those exact words, but I had clearly been successful in distinguishing/differentiating myself from the rest of the collective. 'That's me!', Pilch wanted to respond, clearly enjoying the fact that he had been let off the tight leash that I had been keeping him on ever since I relocated to New Zealand. 'Did they think I was deaf?', I said to myself, feeling more than a little relieved

to have shown my hand so early in the game. Whilst it wasn't a pre-meditated strategy, I now wanted to see if anyone make the first move and introduce themselves to me.

My fortuitous meeting with Tony and Jen had essentially removed a huge burden from around my neck. The embarrassing incident in the hotel had also helped me to relax, and put things into perspective. As far as I was concerned I simply had to show up to their pre-match social event and everything else would subsequently fall into place. I was convinced that I would have at least twelve more fish in the bag before the Test Match got started. Anyone secured during the stadium tour, therefore, would be seen as an added bonus. I had already considered the fact that if I was able to secure twenty participants during this first excursion then it would make my trip to Auckland a lot more fun.

"That was quite a show you put on back there", I was told by Karen as we quickly found ourselves at the back of the group. The collective introductions were now complete and our new 'group' status had been fully established. I was now thinking a lot less about the social identity and inter-group behaviour literature, and more about my notions of personal heritage[249] and existential authenticity[250]. My mind had drifted towards my personal consumption of a unique heritage sport tourism experience.

"Why thank-you!", I responded with a slight nod of the head. "I wanted to leave you with a lasting impression", I informed her, smiling at the thought that my cunning plan may well have worked. "And I was deadly serious!", I added after a brief pause. "I *am* here on research", I continued, before giving her an overview of my aims and objectives for the weekend. I felt safe telling her everything, including how my morning

[249] Dallen Timothy and Stephen Boyd suggest that personal heritage sites attract visitors who possess 'emotional connections' to that particular place. These include locations owned or attached to special interest groups, specific societies or subcultures. Family history research, military reunions and travel to former battlegrounds by war veterans are all listed as examples of 'personal' heritage experiences; along with travel to historic places of religious, cultural, and vocational interest. See **Dallen J. Timothy (1997)** Tourism and the Personal Heritage Experience, *Annals of Tourism Research* 24 (3), pp 751-754; **Dallen J. Timothy and Stephen W. Boyd (2003)** *Heritage Tourism: Themes in Tourism* (Harlow: Prentice Hall). See also **Gerald Sides (2006)** In Search of Personal Heritage: Genealogy Tourism within New Zealand, *an unpublished Thesis* submitted for the Degree of Master of Tourism at the University of Otago.

[250] According to Ning Wang, authenticity is a life-long process of self-discovery. He draws inspiration from existential philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Satre to look at authenticity from a different angle to that typically taken by tourism researchers. While he acknowledge the existence of objective and constructive forms of interpreting products and performances, it's his acknowledgement of a third, more reflexivity, authenticity that got me thinking about myself. As noted in chapter one, reflexivity is essentially seen as a way of increasing authenticity by acknowledging the researcher's position in his/her research. Carol Steiner and Yvonne Reisinger describe Wang's existential authenticity as 'being in touch with one's inner self, having a sense of one's own identity and then living in accord with one's sense of oneself' See **Ning Wang (2000)** *Tourism and Modernity, A sociological Analysis* (Oxon: Elsevier Science Ltd); **Carol J. Steiner and Yvonne Reisinger (2006)** Understanding existential authenticity, *Annals of Tourism Research* 33 (2), pp. 299-318.

had begun as a bit of a nightmare, gradually gotten a bit better, and then taken a dramatic nosedive, before getting a bit better once more. At no point did I see her as a potential respondent. I therefore felt comfortable revealing my true colours.

"So what are your plans for your last night in Aussie?", I asked, hoping to secure myself a date for the evening. I wanted some company. I was dreading having to go back to the hotel, or having to find somewhere to eat by myself. I thought that she might like to show me a few of her favourite bars. Life experience, as opposed to anything that I had read in a textbook, led me to believe it would be much easier for me to be accepted by others if I was not seen as being alone. I can't remember if I had told her about Melanie at that stage, but I tried to make it crystal clear why I was so interested in her.

"I need to find myself a tour guide and drinking buddy", I informed her, before adding that I was also keen on the idea of perhaps meeting up with some of her friends. I may have been flirting a little, but I prefer to think of it as using my natural charm to gain her trust and assistance. Was it selfish? Yes, I guess it was. Was it ethical? No, probably not. Was it effective? No, sadly it wasn't.

"My flight leaves early tomorrow morning so I'm afraid it'll be a boring, early night", she replied much to my obvious disappointment. "Otherwise, I would have loved to help out and show you round", she added, sounding both genuine and sincere. "It all sounds quite exciting", she continued with a smile on her face. "Very James Bond!", she concluded, before saying that I would have "no problems getting people to talk". "You'll be right mate", she assured me with her best attempts at either an Australian or New Zealand accent. "Just hit town in your tux and drink lots of Vodka Martini's", she joked, her voice once again returning to that of someone from Newcastle.

"Shaken, not stirred!", Pilch replied, trying to imitate Sean Connery while contain my disappointment that I would probably be eating alone that evening. I wished that I could have shared her confidence I my ability. I wished that I thought it was going to be as much 'fun' or as 'exciting' as she clearly did. 'I'm an ethnographer, not a spy', I thought to myself, replaying her comments over and over in my mind. 'Perhaps I should have used a James Bond line back in the hotel', I thought, realising how harmless the comments made outside the elevator had actually been. All Karen had effectively done, however, was to further convince me that I desperately needed a 'Bond Girl' to help me work my magic.

I started to regret the fact that Melanie wasn't invited to join me on the excursion. I knew that she would have hated being dragged around yet another stadium, but these

were the activities that I much preferred doing alone anyway. I didn't need her help to do that. I just wanted someone to keep telling me that it would be okay. I needed the constant reassurance that she has always given me. I needed her love and support. More significantly, I felt it would make me look more appealing, more trustworthy, to my fellow sport tourists. 'I wouldn't have been alone in that lift this morning', I added, still unable to shake the unpleasant experience from my mind.

The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I needed someone to fall back on and, perhaps even, entertain. I needed a side-kick. I didn't care who it was, how old they were or where I found them. 'Nobody likes to be approached by a lost looking loner, especially an academic with a foreign accent', a paranoid voice kept reminding me. 'Look what happened while queuing at customs', it added, further emphasising the difficulty of my challenge to be accepted and embraced by those around me.

The first few minutes of the tour saw the group walking along a maze of narrow corridors, and passing an astonishing number of closed doors marked 'private'. Having realised that my hopes of securing Karen's services as a sidekick had been quashed; I turned my attention to catching up with the rest of the group. It was a little callous, but I wanted to cut my losses and re-focus my attentions on Sarah, Matt and Dave. I couldn't afford to waste my time on someone who was unable to offer the assistance that I required. I also wanted to ensure that I didn't spend the entire tour languishing at the back of the group. I could no longer hear what Bill was saying.

I wanted to know what could be found behind every door. Suddenly, however, my gaze was drawn by the bright light seen at the end of the tunnel. I hadn't had an inspirational epiphany. It was definitely daylight shining at the end of the corridor. Upon reaching it, we walked up a small flight of stairs and out into the middle of the arena. The whole group went silent. Even the two children looked completely awestruck. Likewise, Bill also appeared to be at a loss for words. I think the "*wow*" that Pilch could no longer hold in said it all. I thought it looked amazing from the outside. This was something else.

"Wow indeed", Bill agreed, before composing his thoughts and offering us a few well-rehearsed facts and figures. I can't recall the dimensions of the playing field, or any of the other numbers that Bill duly presented to the group. It was big. It was beautiful. She was magnificent. All I wanted to do at that point was break all the rules and make a run for the middle. I wanted to find the very centre and just lie there in silence. I wanted

to imagine the noise made by 100,000 people. I wanted to soak up the atmosphere as much as possible. I never wanted the leave.

Bill temporarily interrupted my dreaming to point out a yellow seat located high in the opposite stand. "That's the furthest anyone has ever hit a six from the middle", he informed us, making an impressive looking batting action with his hands and reliving the moment for all our benefit (not least of all his). It was Damien Martyn in a state game. Turning my attention to the stand behind me, I was able to spot at least two other groups of people at two different points in their stadium tour experience. Both looked to contain around fifteen tourists and one tour guide. One appeared to be inside the MCC's private member's enclosure. The other was located much higher up, right at the top of the stand. This group appeared to be looking down on us. A couple of them were clearly taking our photo.

'I guess that must have been the group with the former Castle Street residents on it', I thought as I wondered how long it would be until we reached those two different stages of the tour. 'They look so small', I said as I stuck my hand front of my face and successfully squashed half the group between my thumb and index finger. We must have looked like ants to them. I didn't want to leave where we were standing, but I also couldn't wait to be up there. I also hoped that there would be a group standing here when we reached that point of the tour. I wanted to see what that group was currently seeing. I wanted to capture that image for myself.

As Bill tried to usher everyone in an anti-clockwise direction around the perimeter of the field, my thoughts were interrupted by one of the Australians from some unpronounceable town in New South Wales. I think it was Wollongong. "So were you being serious, back then?", the father of the two children asked in my direction. "Are you really studying us?", he continued with just a hint of scepticism creeping through into his question. "Because we drove eleven hours yesterday for this weekend's Test…", he stated, clearly questioning his own motives for being there. "My brother is going to be sitting on our brand new leather sofa, in our brand new home, watching it on our equally brand new 32inch flat-screen Television", he added as we made our way towards the place where the players enter the field. "So what does that make us?", he asked inquisitively, clearly keen to hear my interpretation of his family's sport tourist behaviour.

"Just the kind of people I'm interested in talking to", I answered honestly and without a moment's hesitation. "It only took me eight hours from Dunedin", I pointed

out to him with a smile. I loved the fact that someone had actually taken the bait I cast out back in the lobby. As much as I wanted to find out more, however, I was distracted by Bill's request that we stopped where we were for a few minutes so he could tell us some more facts about the place he called home. I hoped that a little pause in the proceeding wouldn't affect the conversation that I was desperate to have with the middle-aged Australian who was now standing next to me.

From the side of the pitch we were then herded through a gate and directed up into the stands. Rather than ask any leading questions, I decided to let my new best friend offer me as much, or as little, as he wanted. As we passed the booths used by both the teams and the match day officials, I said that I would love to talk to him more at the end of the tour and that maybe we should exchange contact details. I didn't want to do anything other than listen to Bill. I had paid for the full tour experience. I wanted to be a tourist. I didn't want to be conducting an interview at the same time. I didn't think that would be fair on my tour guide, my interviewee or myself.

According to Bill, the room on our left was always for the batting team, whilst the other always goes to the fielders. 'But that means they have to swap during the middle of a game', I calculated as we went through a door and back inside. 'That's one of the silliest tradition's I have ever heard!', I continued, thinking about the inconvenience it must cause to players, their support crew and the cleaners. 'Why can't they just have a home and away area like everyone else', I continued to question as we past the sound-proof commentators rooms. The doors were closed, but we could hear people setting up all kinds of electrical equipment that I immediately assumed must have been for the Test Match.

I was able to get a quick glance inside one of the media rooms as a member of the crew walked out and past the group. 'I wonder what they think of all these tourists getting in their way', I thought as we were directed down yet another corridor to the door of the players' dressing rooms. I didn't hear why we weren't allowed to venture inside, but I was certainly not amused. 'That's one of my favourite bits of a stadium tour!', I sulked as we were taken back outside and embarked on some concrete stair climbing. 'I wonder if he'll make it up to us by taking us somewhere else', I thought, refusing to believe that anywhere could offer a stadium tour without access into a changing room.

Looking behind me, I was surprised by how high the group had climbed in such a relatively short space of time. Bill encouraged those unafraid of heights and wanting an unrivalled view of the ground, not to mention Melbourne's CBD, to continue climbing

right up to the top of the stand. "They're the highest seats in the MCG", he announced with all the confidence of someone who had stated that particular fact on numerous occasion before. I bounded up the steps two or three at a time. Ever the competitor, I was keen to be the first in the group to see the view. I knew it wasn't a race, but I still wanted to beat the two kids to the top. I could feel the adrenaline pumping through my veins. I was only joined at the very top by Karen and five others. The rest opted to stay with Bill at the bottom.

The view was as breath-taking as the climb. It's a view that you will have already have seen in this thesis. It was used to introduce Act Three. It's the same one that I still have on my computer's desktop. I can picture it with my eyes closed. After some personal reflection, and plenty of photo-taking, I spotted a tour group emerge out of the tunnel and into the arena. "Look at the ants", I said to Karen as I pointed down to the people by the pitch. They were the same size as my thumbnail.

The tour involved a lot of walking and took us to several other important areas of the ground. We were shown into the official member's enclosure and, with my knee still throbbing from my earlier stair climbing antics, I jumped at the chance to sit on what Bill called "the best seats in the house". They were two long leather sofas, both able to comfortably seat five fully grown adults. He wasn't wrong. The view was amazing. The huge windows could be opened or closed, depending upon one's preference. I knew that I would pick atmosphere over warmth any day of the week.

"If I wanted to stay warm I would watch it at home", I told Bill as he joined me for a bit of a rest. The MCC restaurant was located directly behind where we were sitting and looked impressive, exclusive, expensive and yet still very inviting. The members bar was directly above it and also offered views down to the pitch. The glass display cabinets were full of historic cricket memorabilia, some dating back to the 1870s. The building may have been modern, but its heritage was unmistakable. As we waited for the lift to take us to yet another level, Bill informed us that the Melbourne Cricket Club is Australia's largest and one of the biggest in the world.

Founded in 1838, Bill noted that there was approximately "97,000 members", comprising of "59,000 full members" and "38,000 restricted members". At the time, there were also more than 164,000 waiting list candidates. "It can take over a decade to get a basic restricted membership", he continued as we entered the lift. "Every member of my family has been put on the list at birth", he added as he pushed the button and the door closed. Bill continued to inform us about how he was entitled to entry to the

Members Reserve for nearly all sporting fixtures and got preference when it came to securing seats at all non-sporting special events.

Other benefits of belonging to the MCC included reciprocal rights at a number of clubs and stadiums around the world, as well as the opportunity to attend numerous club functions exclusive to members. While restricted members, or "RM's" as he called them, also have access to all these events, they are unable to nominate candidates for the waiting list or vote on club affairs. I was shocked to hear that only full members were guaranteed seats to the annual Boxing Day Test and the AFL Grand Final. Along with several others in the lift, I was also disappointed to hear that members were forbidden from letting other people enjoy their privileges. Not only were MCC memberships non-transferable, but everyone had to have their card on them when they entered the ground. "They all have to be scanned", Bill assured us, "even mine!", he said with a wry smile as the lift doors opened.

# Chapter 26: Small world/large planet

The final forty-five minutes of my 1.00pm stadium tour was focused solely on the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC), as opposed to the cricket ground in which it is based. We spent five minutes standing outside the MCC library, which Bill described as "a facility for reference and research" available to all MCC members and their invited guests. Furthermore, it was said to house the most comprehensive and interesting collection of sporting books in the southern hemisphere, consisting of "approximately 40,000 items" including "periodicals, newspapers, programmes and ephemera, and microfilms, videotapes and CD-ROMs".

"So where's our Pommie student then?", Bill asked, looking around for yours truly. "Perhaps, if you asked me nicely at the end, I could try and get you a few hours in there later?", he said to the obvious amusement of the rest of the group.

"*Yes Please!*", I responded, taking his bait before it had even hit the water. "That would be *awesome!*" I added, nodding my approval as I tried to peer through the windows of the locked doors. "Sounds like the second best seat in the house could be found in there", I joked, making a reference to the large leather sofa we had just been sharing. 'I wonder if he would let me come back before the AFL game on Sunday', I said to myself, looking at my watch and trying to work out if I could fit it into today's schedule. 'I'd need at least a couple of hours', I thought, dreaming about what may be found the other side of the glass. 'More like a couple of days!', Pilch chipped in, as I turned to see the last members of the group turning the corner at the end of the hall.

From the library our group were slowly guided down to the final stop on the tour. The MCC museum, we were told, was also a national sports museum and "opened in November 2006". According to Bill it housed "more than 1200 artefacts" and is "a social history collection based on sport". In reality, it appeared to me as a museum purely for cricket and the MCG. As we were directed into the museum, we were also handed over to the curator. The group was then informed that looking around the museum is "optional" and "an additional $5" to those who only paid for the tour. Those not eligible, or not wanting to look around, could follow Bill who had already offered to "happily show them to the nearest exit".

Desperate to thank him before he exited the stage, I used this opportunity to not only ask Bill about the library, but also a couple of questions that I had constructed as we were being shown round. I wanted to know more about the number of people they typically showed round on these tours. I also wanted to know how prepared they were for this weekend, and whether all the guides were members of the MCC. Looking at his watch on several occasions, however, it appeared as though he was in a rush to be elsewhere. He told me they probably dealt with around 1000 people a day during the busier times and occasionally ran tours every 15 to 20 minutes.

"You'd need to talk to my boss about all that other kind of stuff", he said before offering me his hand and wishing me the best of luck with my studies. Unfortunately, he said nothing about his earlier offer to let me loose in the Library. I informed him that I hoped to make it along to the AFL game that he mentioned at the start and would be measuring the noise levels to see whether it was indeed louder than the Test Match.

"So you were listening!", he said with a wink and his biggest smile to date. "I thought you were busy chatting up Karen from Newcastle", he added with a wink as he looked over my shoulder towards the attractive brunette who appeared to be engrossed in one of the museum's many different information displays.

"But of course!", I responded, winking back and leaving the rest open to his own interpretation as he quickly disappeared through yet another door marked private. 'He probably wants to get out of those ridiculous clothes', I concluded, as I turned around and wandered back towards the museum. I was more than a little disappointed that he appeared in such a rush to escape my company. That said, I was content with the answers that he had given and keen to find the man from New South Wales with the brand new house, sofa and television.

"Where's everyone gone?", I asked Karen as I realised that over half our group had clearly decided that they had better places to be.

"Most left whilst you were busy chatting up our tour guide", Karen informed me with a smile. "I'd stay myself, you know, but I've been round here several times and got heaps of packing to do before tomorrow", she added seconds later, looking around to see if anything had obviously changed. "I guess you're staying?", she asked, looking at her watch and surveying at the practically empty room one last time.

"Of course", I responded without any hesitation. 'Err… why wouldn't I want to stay?', said the academic in my head. "Good luck with the packing", I said offering my hand. "Have a safe trip back to Geordie land", I added as she slapped it playfully away

and gave me the nicest smile I had seen since leaving Dunedin. I thought that she looked a little sad that I didn't offer to leave with her. Rather than watch her walk away, however, I turned around and walked up to the first display case full of old photographs. 'You know she wanted you to go with her?', said a mischievous sounding voice in my mind. 'Yeah right', another voice responded. 'As if I was ever going to miss out on looking round here', it added, as I considered whether to see if she was still standing in the door way.

Rather than wait for an official invitation, I decided to throw caution to the wind and (re)introduce myself to the only other people still around from my tour group. I had nothing to hide, and even less to lose. I couldn't remember their names, but knew that they were a part of the Auckland group. 'The worst thing they could do is to tell you to piss off and leave them alone', Pilch said, feeling glad that he had resisted temptation to leave at the same time as Karen. 'She only would have ditched me the minute we got out of the ground', I thought as I edged ever closer to my new targets.

'Surely, the fact that these guys had decided to stick around meant we already had something in common', I thought keen to find out more. 'Why wouldn't they want to talk to me?', I repeated several times in my head as I pulled up along side them and waited for the right time to pounce. 'They've got to be true sports fans', I added, thinking that they would have left with the rest of their group otherwise.

Thankfully my suspicions proved to be correct. Over the course of the next fifteen minutes, I was able to discover that the group had flown over from Auckland a couple of days ago and were all due to leave the day after the game. They spoke of the "influx" of All Black supporters witnessed this morning at their hotel and suggested that the city centre was going to be "crazily busy" that night. One of the men, named Ray, told me about his son studying commerce down in Dunedin. After a couple of minutes trying to convince him that his son should take some of our tourism papers, he reached into his wallet and handed me his business card along with a promise to "help out in any way".

His friend had stayed quiet during this time and didn't get involved until he overheard me reveal that I was born and raised in Cambridge. This fact immediately grabbed his attention for a couple of reasons. First, he explained that he had only just returned from spending a year working in the city. Second, he said how he was trying to convince the girl that he met there to come and live with him in New Zealand. He actually worked at one of the pubs that I used to frequent while working in the tourism

office. His name was Ian and, while he didn't have a business card to offer, he assured me that he would also help out and do whatever was required.

"I used to go into that tourism office all the time", Ian told me, taking a greater interest in my facial features. "I suppose that you were already out in NZ by then", he concluded, after realising that I left Cambridge at the start of 2004. "I arrived in the March of that year", he said, before noting "what a small world we all live in". His talk of my home town was as comforting as it was poorly timed. It effectively (re)triggered the same sentiment, and longing for home, that had become a recurring theme of my day. We ended up talking more about punting on the River Cam than we did anything remotely related to my sports tourism research.

It didn't take me long to get us onto the subject of Cambridge United. Sadly, however, he was quick to admit that he wasn't even remotely interested in "soccer" and therefore never got round to going to the Abbey for a game. "I was always working on a Saturday", he said, telling me that a few of his colleagues were supporters and that they had tried on several occasions to get him to a game. Hearing someone else talk so passionately about "what a great place" my home town was, and how much "he hated leaving it" made me both proud and sad at the same time.

"Why did you leave all of that for Dunedin?", Ian asked me with genuine astonishment visible in his face and his confusion transmitted vocally through the tone of his voice. "You must miss it?!", he added, seeming far more interested in being the interviewer, as opposed to the interviewee. Fortunately, it was a question that I never had time to answer. A part of me wanted to justify my move. The rest of me, however, was relieved when Ray interrupted, apologised and pointing to his watch. He revealed that they "*really* had to get going" and needed to "catch up with the others". He'd been standing around for over five minutes and had seen everything there was to see in the museum.

It wasn't long before I was deep in conversation with the only other person left in the room. This time, however, it wasn't me who made the first move. On seeing Ian and Ray head for the exit, the Museum Curator wasted little time in coming up and introducing himself. His name was Colin. I hadn't even made it onto the second line of the old Ashes Test Match programme that I was looking down on. We were both aware of the fact that he had been listening in to my conversations with the two Aucklanders. At one point, we were waiting to see if he was going to say anything in an attempt to join in. Only once I was alone, however, did he come over and offer to give me my very own

personal tour of the museum. He insisted that he showed me their tribute to W. G. Grace and Jack Hobbs, the latter being yet another famous son of Cambridge.

'Could this world be any smaller', I thought as another tour group arrived at the door and saved me from answering more of Colin's questions about my home town. He had already told me that he would probably watch the Bledisloe Cup Match at home on Television. When asked about Sunday's AFL fixture, he said that he would definitely be there to see Glenn Archer play his 300th Game for the Kangaroos. He also recommended that if I was going to attend, I should arrive early to soak up all the atmosphere and pre-match entertainment. It sounded too good to miss.

I used the arrival of the tour group as my cue to say goodbye and begin my trip back to the hotel. It was approaching 4.00pm by the time I made my way out of the nearest exit. 'That must have been the longest tour in history', I thought, trying to calculate where my afternoon had gone. I'd been there for over two and a half hours. 'I guess we didn't leave the lobby till after 1.15', I said to myself, replaying the tour in my mind. 'And it took us at least an hour and a half just to reach the Museum', confirmed the ethnographer, who remembered looking at the time before saying goodbye to Karen. 'That means that I must have been in the museum for nearly an hour', I concluded, thinking it had been no longer than twenty minutes.

The sun was beginning to set. The street lights were slowly coming to life. Once again, as the glass door of Gate 3 swung shut behind me, I was instantly reminded of how large our planet really is. Suddenly, I was made very aware of the fact that I had no one waiting for me outside, or back at the hotel. I was alone. I wondered what my chances were of ever talking to Sarah, Matt, Dave, Karen, Ray or Ian again. I wondered if I would see Bill or Colin at the game on Sunday. I grabbed Ray's business card out of my pocket and read the details once again.

'So why are you still being such a miserable bastard?', I asked myself in a desperate attempt to look on the bright side 'Correct me if I'm wrong, but haven't we just secured at least half a dozen new 'sport tourists' to interview', said a confused sounding voice in my head. 'I know you're right', I responded, trying to lift my spirits. 'I mean, surely either Ray or Ian would be able to convince at least one of their other group members to participate', I added, thinking back to the snowballing technique I implemented successfully during both my Lord of the Rings research and my Lions Tour thesis. I added up the number of email addresses and business cards that I had already gathered that day. 'And it's not even 4.00pm yet', I thought as I made my way across the

MCG concourse. 'Perhaps today's not been so bad after all', I said as I slowly walked away from the place they call 'the G'.

Looking back, I had felt safe inside the Stadium. I had also felt comfortable and confident. I had felt like I belonged to something. The further away I got, however, the less I wanted to return to the hotel. I didn't want to go back by myself. My mind may have been saying that I was making progress, and heading in the right direction, but my body was sending me a number of mixed messages. My tiredness had hit me the minute that I walked out of the stadium and into the afternoon air. According to the map, the pathway that I had missed earlier was certainly the most direct route back to Federation Square. It was essentially a straight route back to the Ferris wheel, which unlike earlier was now lit up and slowly turning.

My stomach grumbled away under my jacket. My eyes, however, were convinced that it must have been bed time. I felt like I had done more than enough physical and mental activity for one day. I had written enough in my notepads to keep me busy for a couple of weeks. I also felt emotionally-drained. I'd gone from anguish to anger, self-confident to self-conscious, and nostalgic to nauseous. I'd experienced pleasure and pain. I'd gone from thinking that it was a small world, to thinking that I couldn't possibly be any bigger. 'No wonder I was exhausted', I thought as I turned around to get one last look at the sole reason that I was there in the first place.

'It's all your fault', I said, looking back at the giant stadium. 'You'd better get an early night', I added, thinking about the two very different sporting fixtures that it was responsible for hosting over the next couple of days. 'So should you', claimed yet another voice in my head. 'You've got an even bigger day ahead tomorrow', it continued as I turned back towards the Ferris wheel and continued to walk away from my new friend.

I knew that the adrenaline that had been keeping me going would not last forever. I've never needed a significant amount of sleep, which is pretty lucky considering the trouble that I have sleeping. That said, however, I was well aware that the two hours that I had achieved back in Christchurch would prevent me staying up too late that evening, especially if I was going to be watching the Americas Cup and Formula One during the weekend. My thoughts as I made my way back down to the river, therefore, were largely dominated by the double bed waiting for me at the hotel. I should have been thinking about my research. I should have been participant observing. I was, however, once again

finding it increasingly difficult to focus on anything apart from myself and the increasingly fragile nature of my body.

The footpath by the river resembled a major highway with walkers occupying the slow lane, joggers in the middle lane and cyclists passing them both in the outside lane. I couldn't tell between those that had just finished work, and those that were exercising just for the sake of it. I assumed that they were all Melbournians. They all seemed to know exactly where they were going. None of them seemed to be admiring the scenery. '*How could you even consider going to bed already*?', shouted an angry-sounding Pilch in my ear. He had a valid point. It was a Friday night. I was in Melbourne. I was supposed to be doing whatever the sport tourists were doing, and going where ever they wanted to go. I doubted that too many of them would be going to bed in the middle of the afternoon.

I secretly hoped that everyone else would be feeling just as tired. I hoped that those seen drinking this morning had not spent the entire day in bed. I hoped that they would be feeling even worse than I did. That way, I felt that I could fully justify the early night I so badly craved. 'Surely, the old guys must be knackered', I rationalised as I finally reached the steps up to Federation Square. It had taken me twice as long as it had to cover the same distance earlier in the day. 'Surely everyone else would also be operating on New Zealand time', I added, trying to build a strong enough case for the defence. 'Surely, they'll all be thinking about saving themselves for tomorrow', I concluded as I reached the top of the steps and looked for a suitable seat in the Square.

'Who the hell are you trying to kid?', argued the ethnographer as I grabbed my notepad and checked to see if my pen was still working. 'You know you've got at least another five or six hours before you could ever justify any thoughts of retiring to your room for the night', he added, looking at his watch with an obvious degree of disgust and distain. 'How old are you!', another voice screamed in my head. 'Just pull yourself together man', it continued, sounding a lot like the voices I used to hear during my university days in Eastbourne.

'If only I had brought a pair of shorts and my trainers', I thought, knowing that run always helps to wake me up and blow away the cobwebs. I've always enjoyed running. I've always found it to be a great stress and anxiety reliever. It has never failed to offer me a temporary escape from the real world. I love how it provides me with a chance to escape the voices in my head, allowing me time and space to reflect upon the past, evaluate the present and dream about the future. I love the effect it has on my self

confidence. I enjoy setting myself targets and then testing my ability to reach them, whether they are distance or time-related.

My legs actually felt as though I had already run a marathon or three since leaving Christchurch. My right knee was also clearly still angry about the fact that I had run up all those steps in the MCG. 'What would our physio say', it had screamed at me every time I transferred weight on to it. I could see her shaking her head in disappointment. I was supposed to be taking it easy. For once, however, it was not the shattered cartilage causing me the greatest amount of pain. My head still felt as though I was enthusiastically pounding those steep concrete steps. It felt full to the point of bursting. The tension and pressure needed releasing. What's more, my eyelids felt even heavier than heart. Something wasn't right. This wasn't how I had planned it. this wasn't how I was supposed to be feeling. I was supposed to be happy.

# Chapter 27: Watching people (people watch)

As I sat alone in the Square, I began to replay everything that had happened to me since I first stepped onto the plane that morning. I started recalling every person that I had seen, every conversation that I started, or at lest tried to start, every last detail of every last second was relived and subsequently reinterpreted. I opened my diary and started scripting every word in as much detail as I could. I went over all the notes that I had made, and found myself adding or editing them accordingly. I started to add emotions and opinions to my already highly subjective participant observations.

'What a day!', I thought with a heavy sigh. I wanted to record everything. I didn't care how relevant it would be deemed at a later date. I was trying hard not to think about the future. Not when there was still so much of the past that needed discussing. There was so much I wanted to say. There were so many memories that I wanted to reassess. The more I wrote, the better my aching body began to feel. The tension built up above my eyes was noticeably being released as my pen made contact with the pages of my diary. I could almost visualise my fears and failings flowing through my veins, down my arm and out onto the page in front of me. I can still see them imprisoned in the words written at Federation Square that afternoon.

I had only meant to sit down for five minutes. I was there for over an hour. I still longed to rest my head down on a pillow. I was still desperate to drift away from the social setting I found myself in. My stomach, however, was not reading from the same script. It had other ideas. It wanted feeding. It didn't care what time it was, where I was (or wasn't) or who I was (or wasn't) with. It just wanted some personal attention. It didn't care that I couldn't stop yawning. It didn't care that the clock on the wall of Flinders Street Station said it was only 5.15pm. It knew different. It knew that it was past its usual dinner time, and its patience had finally run out. 'Feed me!', it grumbled loud enough that passers by would surely have been able to hear it. 'Feed me now!'

I had made it less than a hundred metres towards the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) before remembering that I had actually forgotten to do the one thing that had caused me to sit down in the first place. It wasn't to take a break and rest my injured knee. It wasn't so that I could start writing up my many thoughts and feelings about the

excursion. It wasn't even to try and ease my splitting headache. There had been another reason, and I couldn't believe that it had slipped my mind so easily. Up to that point, I had found it difficult to think of anything.

'You *really* needed to call Tony', I said to myself as I approached the doors to the VIC. 'You *really* needed to find out more about the private pre-match party', I added, in case the situation required anymore clarification. 'You need to know when it is, where it is and whether there will be any food on offer', the voice continued, unable to shake the hunger pains that were getting more severe by the second. 'I want some kind of guarantee that I'm not going to be turned away at the door', added an even more concerned sounding Pilch.

'Okay, okay', I said, trying to quieten the voices in my head. I had wanted to leave calling him until the early evening. I had hoped that things at his end may have settled down by this point, and that he may have a bit more time to talk. 'What if he's eating his dinner?', I said to myself, anxious not to disturb him at an inopportune moment and unable to ignore my own need for some long-overdue sustenance. I wasn't consciously putting it off. I genuinely thought that it would be better to leave it until later in the day before phoning. I didn't want him to know that the success of my whole excursion depended upon this one event.

'Perhaps I should leave it another hour or two', I thought, answering my own question and deleting the first three digits of his mobile phone number. I began to question the likelihood that his hospitable offer still stood. I began to question whether it was ever as genuine as I had first thought. 'What if he was just trying to get rid of me?', I asked myself as I turned around and headed back to the seat that I had left only seconds earlier. 'What if he has no intention of answering my call?', I continued as I sat down and frantically flicked back through the notes that I had made earlier in the day. The seat was still warm. The hunger pains no longer felt that life threatening.

The words 'serious' and 'sincere' instantly leapt off the page as I read the notes written as I sat on the shuttle bus to my hotel. 'He sounded interested in my research', I thought, replaying the final minutes of our time together in the Arrivals Hall. More importantly, his comment about not wanting me to be alone before the Test Match had also seemed heartfelt and authentic. 'At least, that's how I remembered it', I said to myself, trying to dismiss the paranoia and self doubt that seemed determined to sabotage everything I had done so far. My written interpretation of the encounter certainly suggested that I had no reason to doubt him or the sincerity of his offer.

Going on what I remembered, plus what I had recorded, I was pleased with the impression that I had made. It was with colleague Jen that I was less sure about. 'But it was Jen that really wanted to introduce us to Steven', I said to myself, still reluctant to believe that my place at the party wasn't already guaranteed. 'Surely, she wouldn't have bothered playing along if she wasn't serious about helping my research', I added, trying to recall if she had smiled when Tony offered to helped. 'I wonder if Tony had said anything to Steven about me?', I continued as I took a moment to imagine the scenario in my head. 'I can't wait to meet him', I said, excited at the prospect of being introduced to him by either Tony or Jen. I had so many questions I wanted to ask him.

Another fifteen minutes past before I finally made my second attempt at leaving the Federation Square. My headache had all but disappeared. The aching in my knee had eased substantially. Even my neglected stomach seemed to have given up the fight for attention. Looking around, I had no intention of requesting a table for one amongst all the couples and work colleagues seen joyfully celebrating the end of yet another week. My plan was simple. McDonalds. I had spotted one earlier on Elizabeth Street. It was close. It was cheap. I wouldn't look like I had been stood up. I wouldn't have people gossiping about why I was eating alone. More importantly, I wouldn't have to ask anyone for a table for one. It was perfect.

My watch said it was nearly 6.00pm. 'Now that was a much more reasonable time to be eating dinner', my head informed my stomach. 'It'll also help kill another half an hour', I thought, conscious that I still hadn't dialled the number on the business card located in my jeans pocket. I was also aware that, after eating, I would probably have to go and have another go at infiltrating some of the groups staying at my hotel. 'The 24 hour bar must be open by now', I concluded as I looked at my watch once again. Going on what I had seen and heard that morning, I thought it unlikely that many, if any, of them would have ventured too far from the hotel. I was fairly confident that most would have spent the afternoon in bed.

'What a waste', I thought as I finally left the Square and looked back along Flinders Street, trying to get one last glimpse of the magnificent MCG. The bar across the street seemed a particularly popular two-storey establishment. 'Perhaps I should save McDonalds for another day and eat in there?', I said as I crossed over the road and went for a closer look. 'You'll have to have a go on one of those tomorrow', I added as a tram silently trundled past in front of me. The bar wasn't full but I failed to see any free tables as I took a quick glance through the open doors. There was a small group dressed in All

Black gear standing in the corner, but I just couldn't see myself walking up and introducing myself.

My 'fast food' dinner tasted exactly how I had imagined it would on my walk towards the global institution that is the Golden Arches. I found myself thinking about the McDonalds breakfasts I had experienced in France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. I also thought of all the times that I had entered their premises merely to use their bathrooms. I was actually able to list nine different countries in which I had found myself in this position. 'That's pretty pathetic', I said to myself as I entered the restaurant, unable to find the strength to find somewhere else to eat. Being my first Australian McDonalds experience, I felt obliged to order a large 'Aussie' Burger Combo from the teenager behind the counter.

'Why do they all look the same?', I thought, referring to the individual wearing the uniform. I knew exactly why everything else looked the same. 'Surely, the staff should look different?', I thought as I discovered the 'Aussie Burger' actually contained the exact same ingredients as the 'Kiwi Burger' that I had eaten in Oamaru only the day before. I grabbed one of the spare stools that looked out onto Elizabeth Street and proceeded to ruthlessly pass judgement on everyone that walked by the window.

I love people watching. I love trying to work out where they've come from, where they're going and, more importantly, why they are on the move. I love guessing what they may be thinking. I'll use their facial expressions and body language to concoct narratives about all the different voices they hear in their head. I don't care about their actual names. I am more interested in what they are listening to through their headphones, or what they are writing on their mobile phones. I find myself asking how it will affect their immediate or distant future.

As I sat alone in my own little world and consumed my dinner, I found myself taking a particular interest in the clothes being worn by those passing the window. 'I wanted to see some 'sport tourists'', I thought as I finished off the last of my French fries. I was eager to record the number of All Blacks shirts, scarfs and hats that I saw go buy in either direction. It was just like being back in Christchurch Airport. According to my watch, however, it was almost exactly twelve hours later. After five minutes, I had only noted three All Blacks scarfs. I was yet to see any obvious item of Wallabies-related clothing. 'I'd probably see more in Dunedin', I said to myself as cleared my tray and turned left out of the door. 'Perhaps it's still too early', I added, looking at my watch for what seemed like the hundredth time that day.

'Perhaps they're all eating in their hotels', I added as I continued to judge everyone heading in the opposite direction. 'I wonder how many people actually live in Melbourne', I thought, realising that I should probably have done a little bit more research on things other than the sports precinct. The pavements were still busy and, much to my surprise, many of the shops were still open. It had been dark for at least an hour and a half. I thought about the things that I would probably be doing if I was still in Dunedin. I wondered if my regular Friday night drinking buddies would still be at the Staff Club. I wondered what movies Melanie had decided to hire with the girl friends that she had arranged to come over and keep her company. I wished that they were all here with me. I wished I had someone that I could call and meet up with. I wished that I had someone to keep me company.

'I hate being alone', I said for what felt like the hundredth time that day. 'Stop whining and start dialling', added a less than sympathetic-sounding voice as I turned the corner onto the street of my hotel. I didn't want to do it whilst I sitting in McDonalds. I also didn't want to be one of those people seen walking down the street glued to their mobile phones. I thought it best that I waited until I got back to the hotel. This way, I could sit down and look at a map. I thought that I may need to ask the receptionist the best way to get to their event. I also wanted people in the hotel to see that I had someone to call. I thought it may prove that I actually had some friends.

'I hope I'm not too late', I said to myself as I found his card and nervously started to enter the digits into my mobile. I could feel the nausea gradually returning as it started to ring. 'What if he doesn't remember me?', I said, trying to picture his face in my mind. 'What if he's checked with his bosses and I'm not allowed to join the party?', I asked myself, starting to regret the haste with which I had left the airport that morning. 'What if…'

His answer-phone clicked in before I could finish asking the next 'what if' question. The sound of his pre-recorded voice message instantly helped to ease my nerves and reduce my fears. I waited for the tone and then left him a short message that stated who I was and why I was calling. I asked him if he could call me back some time that evening with some more details about the pre-match party he had mentioned at the airport. I ended it by hoping his day had gone according to plan and thanking him once again for his generous offer. I started replaying the message the minute that I hung up. I thought about all of the other things I could, perhaps should, have added within my message. I hoped that I hadn't come across as sounding to desperate.

'You should have informed him that you are happy to pay a cover charge or buy a ticket', I said to myself, knowing only too well that it was too late to change it now. I didn't care how much it cost. 'You should have at least given him your number', Pilch added after realising that I had assumed that his mobile phone would have automatically stored it as a missed call. 'I wonder why he was unable to answer?', I continued, trying to picture what he was likely to be doing at that very moment in time. 'Perhaps he's back at the airport', I responded, feeling sorry for him if this was the case. 'Perhaps he's gone to bed already', I thought next, noting how exhausted he had looked at 9.00am that morning. 'He is more likely to be down at the hotel bar getting to know his clients', I concluded, creating a mental image that instantly brought a smile to my face. I thought that was exactly what I would be doing if I were him, or had his job.

The lobby area was surprisingly quiet, with only a couple of people checking their emails and a couple more sitting at one of the tables near the café. The reception desk was completely deserted. Having climbed enough stairs already, I opted to press the button that summoned the same lift that had caused me so much heartache earlier in the day. 'Surely, this ride will be a lot less memorable', I said as I waited impatiently for it to make its way down from the top floor. 'I wonder who'll emerge out of the woodwork this time', I thought as the doors opened and I got inside. I had decided to go back to my room and get myself ready for whatever the night had in store. I knew that the longer I took to get ready, the less time I would have to spend sitting in the bar by myself.

Upon entering my room, I quickly decided that I needed another shower. I had been wearing the same clothes since 04.30am and spent a significant amount of time on my feet, walking around and climbing stairs. I also thought it would help wake me up enough to ensure I didn't fall asleep before I got my free drink at the bar. Though not in the same league as the one experienced at 4.15am that morning, the hotel's shower was a lot better than I had anticipated. It was hot. It was wet. It did the job. As I made my way back to my room I was continuously reminded that the walls were paper thin. On two separate occasions the talking was so clear that I turned around expecting to see people standing behind me.

There was at least one party happening somewhere nearby. The distinctive sound of pressurised cans being opened could still be heard as I closed my bedroom door behind me. I dug out the smart, yet casual, clothes that I had planned to wear that evening and thought about whether I should try to locate the 'party' room that sounded very close. I knew that I would arrive empty-handed, but thought that I could always promise to make

it up to them later in the night. Somehow I doubted that they would even open their door, let alone invite a complete stranger in to join their party. Furthermore, the voices that I could hear sounded a lot younger than most of the people that I had seen and spoken to so far on the trip. A part of me thought that they were probably just backpackers, as opposed to sport tourists here for the rugby.

Deep down, I knew that it didn't really matter who they were, where they were from or why they were in Melbourne. I knew that even a drunken Pilch didn't have the courage, or sheer audacity, to try and gatecrash someone else's party uninvited. As a result, I simply continued to make myself look as though I had just thrown on the first thing that came to hand. I didn't want people knowing that I had carefully pre-planned what I was going to wear over the course of the entire weekend. I even had different options that allowed for various weather conditions. I was also conscious that Melbourne's bars and clubs probably had much stricter dress codes than those in Dunedin. The last thing that I wanted was to deal with the embarrassment of being turned away for wearing the wrong kind of shoes.

Hearing what sounded like a small group making their way along the corridor towards the lift, I thought that this may have been a golden opportunity to try and exorcise the demons of the morning. I gathered my phone, wallet, camera and keys from the bed. I then tried to ensure that I would exit my room the second after they had walked by my door. It needed to look like a coincidence. I wanted to share their lift. I wanted to find out where they were going and what the night had in store for them. More importantly, I wanted them to invite me along for the ride. 'Don't forget your pen and pad', screamed the ethnographer in my head as I prepared to make my move.

Sadly, once again, my presence in the lift was completely ignored. Unlike before, however, I did at least manage to raise a couple of polite smiles from two of the five guys who kindly held the doors open for me. I had timed it so that I turned the corner just before the elevator doors had started to close. There was no way that I was going to be stuck at the back this time. The men were all dressed in shirts and suit trousers. They looked more like they were going out for a formal dinner. They were all aged in their mid to late thirties. They may have been talking and laughing as they approached the lift, but their conversation had stopped the second I had joined them in the lift. 'What didn't they want me to hear?', I thought as I heard them start talking again the minute they were several metres away. 'Why had they turned mute on me?', I asked myself as I watched them walk straight past the stairs to the bar and out of the front door. *'Why?*'

# Chapter 28: One more for the road

'Where is everyone?', asked myself as I walked down the stairs that led directly to the bar. It was just as quiet as before. There was no music playing, and I could hear no obvious signs that the party had started without me. But at least the lights were on this time. I pushed open the doors that had been locked on my last visit and found myself standing in an empty room. Okay, so it wasn't entirely empty. But it was as lifeless, and soulless as my double room on the second floor. The bar was dead.

Having already turned the few heads that were sitting in the far corner, I felt somewhat obliged to stay for at least one drink. I couldn't bring myself to turn around and walk out again. That would have been rude. It would have looked weird. Besides, the barman had just got up and made his way back behind the bar for me. Only two of the bar's fourteen booths were occupied. There were only eleven of us in the room. That included the barman.

'At least I won't have trouble finding a seat', I joked to myself trying to look on the bright side. 'Perhaps I can get to know the barman', I thought as I did another scan of the room. I wanted to check that there wasn't another room hidden away around the corner. The lack of any bar stools meant that I would have to stand up if I wanted to try and prevent the barman from rejoining his friends. I tried desperately to think of an entertaining anecdote to start as I ordered a pint of the local Victorian Bitter. I opted, however, to make an observational comment about how quiet it was. He didn't look like the talkative type.

"Aye, but it's still pretty early", the barman replied in a thick Irish accent. "It was much busier earlier", he added as he gave me my change and immediately started to walk away. "And I'm sure it'll pick up later", he informed me as he walked away and left me standing alone at an empty bar.

'What is it with all the Irish people?', I muttered under my breath as I decided to take my drink and find a suitable seat. It didn't look like it had been busier earlier. There were no obvious signs to suggest that this bar had ever been busy. I didn't take me long to decide upon the booth that I wanted to make mine for the evening. The one closest to the door and furthest away from the bar seemed perfect. 'They still owe me a free beer', I said to myself as I took a brief look through the window into the empty smoking area.

'How could you have forgotten something as important as a free drink', I questioned, as I sat down. I felt a little embarrassed by my oversight. 'I must *really* be tired', I concluded, struggling to find any other logical reason as to why it hadn't been the first thing that I requested. 'Although perhaps I should save it for tomorrow?', I said, looking around once more at all the empty seats. Even the consumption of free beer seemed a waste when there was no one around to enjoy it with.

'I wonder how long I can make this one last', I thought, considering the fact that it may indeed get busier later. Looking at my watch, I decided that I would give it until at least 8.30pm before I tried elsewhere. '45 minutes seems like a reasonable effort', agreed the ethnographer inside my head. 'Surely, a few more people would have come in by then', I said, taking a very small sip of my drink. 'This'll never last that long', Pilch pointed out as I glanced back over towards the group which once again now included the barman.

'Looks like their all hotel staff', I said as I tried to make out what were talking about. 'Sounds like a couple of them were heading away overseas', I concluded as I reached into my jeans pocket and placed my phone on the table. 'Still no word from Tony', I thought as I replayed the message that I had left him over half an hour ago. 'Perhaps he's still eating his dinner', I added, trying to ease my initial fears that I was being ignored.

'They look like they've been here a while', I said to myself, changing the subject and making yet another assumption based purely on my interpretation of what I could see and hear going on across the other side of the bar. The interaction that took place between those sitting in the two adjacent booths implied that they were all part of the same group. 'I must look so lonely', I said feeling increasingly isolated and extremely uncomfortable. 'Why hasn't one of them come over and invited me to join them?', I questioned, as I grabbed my pad and pen from my jacket pocket. 'Would you?', I responded, as I wrote the same question down on a brand new page. I tried thinking of times that I had invited complete strangers to come and join me and my mates.

It took less than twenty-five minutes of sitting alone for me to decide that I needed to escape the building once again. There were definitely a lot of happy memories being relived in the opposite corner. What's more, the barman didn't seem to be charging anyone for the drinks that he kept going to get from the fridge. 'Perhaps they've got a tab running', I said trying to explain his behaviour. The fact that no one had entered the room since my arrival fifteen minutes ago meant that the barman was rarely seen standing

behind his bar. In fact, if he wasn't at the aforementioned booth, he was out in the courtyard having a cigarette.

I just couldn't handle it anymore. My drink had run out several minutes earlier and I didn't fancy having another by myself. I thought about going for a walk. I didn't have a destination in mind. I just wanted to be as far from here as possible. I was convinced that the city centre would have woken up by that stage. 'It's a small world', I kept reminding myself over and over again. I tried to put myself in the shoes of all the people that I had met so far. I tried to visual Eddie and Jono, plus Jim and his mates, all sitting in a bar somewhere, talking about old times. I thought about Matt, Dave and Sarah and wondered where they would end up that night. I considered whether Ray, Ian and the rest of their group would have been out on the town that evening or taking it easy back in their hotel.

'Where could they possible be right now?', I asked myself, trying to improve my odds of conveniently bumping into one or, preferably, all of them. 'I wished that I had kept an eye out for more bars', I added, conscious of the fact that I could only recall seeing the one opposite Federation Square and Flinders Street Station. 'There must be hundreds of options' I concluded, realising that the odds of me seeing someone I knew were not in my favour. 'They can't all be as dead as this one', I concluded, looking around in desperation. 'I wonder if Karen has been dragged away from her packing', I thought, remembering the wonderful smile that she had given me just before she left the MCG.

'You should probably try ringing Tony again', I added, checking my phone once more. 'He can't still be eating', said a nervous sounding voice in my head. 'He must have looked at his phone at least once in the past hour', I added, becoming evermore paranoid that he had forgotten about me and my invitation to the party. 'What if he never rings back', I continued, feeling the nausea beginning to return to the pit of my stomach. 'Hang on!', I said to myself, immediately silencing the discussion going on in my mind. I thought that I could hear voices at the top of the stairs.

Sure enough, the double doors parted company for the first time since I had been sitting down. A large group of casually dressed middle-aged men entered the room and took a look around at all of the empty booths. A couple of them made no attempt to hide their disappointment at the lack of patrons. Fortunately, however, they appeared full of life and looked ready for anything. Their arrival immediately doubled the number of

people in the room. The barman was outside having another cigarette. I hoped that he would have seen the group and realised that he finally had some people to serve.

'Maybe I should stick around a little longer', I said to myself, pleased to get a smile out of all but one of them as they passed by. 'Maybe my luck is about to change', I thought, wondering when this rollercoaster of a day was ever going to stop. It had already thrown me in ever direction imaginable. It had made me feel both sick and sensational. But I had wanted to get off hours ago. I had never really wanted to get on in the first place. I hate rollercoaster rides. I just didn't have the stomach for them. I am far too fragile. I am far too boring. I would much rather keep my feet placed firmly on the ground. I am no adrenaline junkie.

I had purposely picked the booth closest to the exit in order to allow for an easier escape should the bar not get any busier. I had also picked this spot on the basis that no one else could enter or exit without first having to walk straight passed me. I wanted to make sure that I was seen by everybody who came through that door. It wasn't until the group started to order their drinks, however, that I realised who they were. 'I know that voice', I said to myself, turning around and having a better look at the one talking to the barman. 'He looks a lot better without the make-up', I added whilst trying to see how many drinks he was ordering. It looked like a lot.

Taking over two of the booths directly behind mine, I overheard the leader make a toast to everyone for their willingness to look ridiculous and get into the spirit of the historic occasion. "Hear, hear", I cried aloud, raising my empty pint glass. 'Where did that outburst come from?', I thought, looking around to see the response that it may have generated. It certainly wasn't in the script. In fact, it was by far the most radical thing that I had done all day. I had been sitting in silence for nearly thirty minutes. 'I just wanted to see if they can hear me', a voice in my head responded rather sheepishly. 'Perhaps they'll be a lot more sociable out of costume', I said to myself as I waited to receive a response.

"Thank you my good man", said the toast-giver, sticking his chest out as if he were standing to attention.

"Glad we were able to brighten up your morning sir!", added the guy sitting directly to his left as he raised his glass in my direction.

"So you can understand me then", I muttered sarcastically under my breath as I smiled and nodded to show my approval. 'Perhaps it's worth sticking around for that free drink', I said to myself, checking to see if the barman was still standing where one would

expect a barman to stand (i.e. behind the bar). I was certainly curious to discover where this new path may lead. I wanted to spy on this group for a little bit longer. I wanted to have one more attempt at trying to infiltrate their circle of trust. I wanted to see if I could find out some more about them. I wanted to try and answer some of the questions that I had scribbled down as I observed them from a distance many hours earlier. My work here was far from finished.

Getting my free drink proved a lot easier than I had imagined. 'What if the offer was only applicable upon arrival?', I thought as I stood up and walked confidently passed the group that I hoped would soon ask me to join them. I was concerned that I had no way of proving to the barman that I hadn't already claimed my free drink earlier in the day. All I had was my word. I quickly plotted the story that I planned to say in my head. I wasn't planning to make anything up. I just needed to explain how the bar was closed when I first arrived and that I had been out exploring the sports precinct for the entire afternoon. The problem was that I wanted to tell him this at a volume that wasn't really appropriate for the situation.

I didn't want to appear angry or upset that the 24 hour bar was closed at 11.00am this morning, but I hoped to be able to project my voice as far as possible. I wanted everyone to hear where I had subsequently spent my entire afternoon. I wanted them to know that I to was hear for the rugby. I wanted them to know that I was also on their package tour. I wanted them to know that, whilst I may not have been drinking on the plane, I had certainly planned to consume my free drink upon my arrival that morning. The barman, however, refused to play along with my narrative.

'Yeah, no worries!', were the only words that came out of his mouth.

I had asked if it was too late for me to get my free drink, leaving it as vague as possible in order to try and evoke a decent response. I was expecting him to say a bit more than 'yeah, no worries'. I thought that he might at least want to see a voucher or something else that proved that I was indeed entitled to a free drink. The only question he asked, however, was whether I wanted the same again, or something from the fridge. He said that the offer wasn't supposed to include tap beer, but that he was happy to break the rules on this occasion.

'What else could I have said?', I thought as I made my way back towards my booth. As I approached my table, I noticed that the leader was giving out some home-made certificates to several of those sitting around his table. It didn't require a head count to reveal that the group was missing quite a lot of those seen queuing in the lobby

earlier. The certificates went to the individuals judged to have had the best, the worst, the most elaborate and, finally, the most inappropriate costume. There were also additional prizes for the best chat up line, the most money spent on in-flight alcohol and the last one to arrive at the airport that morning. Like the certificates, the prizes appeared to be pieces of A4 paper with the words 'free drink' scribbled in big letters on one side.

Rather than ignore the presentations and take my seat, I decided to stand and applaud the awarding of each prize. I even requested a speech on several separate occasions. I had a new game plan. I wanted them to think that I had drunk considerably more than I had. I wanted them to forget the fact that I was all alone. I wanted them to think that I had been there for hours. I wanted them to think that I was having the time of my life. Ultimately, I decided to make my presence so obvious to them that it would be impossible to be ignored. 'Why not?', I thought. 'it may not be ethical, or morally correct, but what's the worst thing that could happen?', I said, carefully studying their reactions to my rather rude invasion of privacy.

For a brief moment, my cunning plan appeared to be working. Not only did I get all the speeches that I requested, but I was given several thumbs up and even the occasional high five. It appeared that there were enough awards to ensure that no one missed out on their special piece of paper. It also appeared as though I had finally found a way of breaking down the barriers that had stood between us on each of our previous encounters. I had finally got them to notice me. Better still, it looked as though I was actually providing some form of entertainment. I was even offered the piece of paper that apparently contained Nadine's phone number. "She was the sexy blonde stewardess on our flight this morning", the owner confirmed as he passed it round in my direction.

"I remember Nadine", I said, followed by a mischievous smile and a sly little wink. "I was on the same flight y'know?", I added as I was finally able to identify the two men who had so rudely blanked me that morning. "That's okay", I said, passing the phone number back round the circle. "You earned it", I joked, looking into the eyes of the person who had made the offer. I was more interested in earning an invitation to join them for the rest of the evening. "Perhaps you should frame it?", I continued, beginning to enjoy the new social identity that I had created for myself.

"Nice idea mate, but I don't think his wife would appreciate it too much", said a late arrival as he patted me on the back and took the space that I had been eyeing up for the past couple of minutes. "Who's the new kid?", he asked the others, pointing a finger in my direction as they all shuffled around to make a bit more room for themselves.

"Dunno?", said the man next to him as he looked around the group, in the apparent search for an answer. "He's quite funny though", he added with a smile on his face.

"Claims he was on our flight?", added the winner of the worst costume. "What took you so long anyway?", the man continued, before I had a chance to confirm this statement and formally introduce myself. Sadly, however, his last question was not aimed in my direction.

"Yah took yah bloody time!" added the winner of the best costume, looking directly at his mate and acting as if I had simply vanished into thin air.

And that was it. That was the only bit of communication that I had with any of this group during the entire excursion. After continuing to stand awkwardly by them for a minute or two following the late arrival of their friend, I concluded that they were never going to include me in their plans for the evening and reluctantly returned to my seat. I'm not sure where they were sitting during the Test Match, but it wasn't near me. I'm not sure how they spent the rest of their weekend, but I never saw them at breakfast or anywhere else in the hotel. I didn't even bump into them in the bathrooms. I have no idea when they left Melbourne, but they were not on my Monday afternoon flight home. I guessed that they must have left the day after the match.

Having concluded their awards ceremony, the group refused to let the late arrival order another round of drinks. They made him sit and watch as they all stood up, finished what ever was left in their glasses and collectively put them back on the table. As they prepared to leave, I heard the leader of their group use an expression that I had never heard before, and somehow doubt that I will ever hear again. It was something that perfectly summed up the lack of atmosphere in the room. It was something that not only had me smiling, but also had me reflecting upon the missed opportunity that had just come and gone. More significantly, it was something that made me realise that at least some of the group were also from Dunedin.

"Come on guys", the leader of the group announced with a certain air of seniority, "I've seen more atmosphere in the Railway Stand at an NPC game!".

'That's great', I thought as my brain started to immediately deconstruct his analogy. Assuming that he was talking about the same Railway Stand in which I had sat to watch the All Blacks beat South Africa in Dunedin last year, it told me that at least some of them had been to Carisbrook a few times in the past. 'Don't tell me that they're all from Dunners', I added, as I began to fit the pieces of the puzzle together. 'It would

certainly explain their fondness for alcohol', I joked as I looked around at all the empty glasses that they were about to leave in their wake. 'If only I had known that earlier', I said to myself, thinking that I may well have been able to use it to my advantage.

'I love Italian food', I said to myself as I overheard them talking about an Italian-sounding restaurant that they needed to be at in less than ten minutes. They may not have said anything to me as they all headed towards the exit, but I did get several waves goodbye and a polite nod of approval from the leader of the pack. 'Better than nothing', I thought to myself as I began to scribble down some notes about the rather surreal experience. While I felt a little disappointed that I wasn't going with them, I also felt that I may well have had a lucky escape. I certainly couldn't have kept up the drunken sport tourist act all night, and I didn't want them finding out that it was all an act to get their attention.

Upon reflection, I found myself feeling a sense of admiration for their stamina. I was also more than a little envious of their close companionship. 'I can't believe they're all so awake', I added as I wondered how they were showing no obvious signs of their early morning antics. 'They must have slept all afternoon', I reassured myself as I began to regret ordering my third drink of the night. My free drink hadn't lasted very long as I tried to entertain my audience. I had only got this one because it thought that they were going to be ordering another round before they left. They had only had a couple each since arriving.

'At least they noticed me this time', I thought as I wrote a few notes down in my pad and contemplated what my next move should be. The room was near empty once more. Looking at my watch, I was surprised to see that they had only been in the bar for the past fifteen minutes. I noted my acceptance that they were never going to invite me into their group, and decided that I needed to forget about them completely. I had given it my best shot. I had tried everything except asking them straight out for their help. I concluded that there was just too many of them, and that I had nothing additional to offer.

I stared at the drink that I didn't particularly want to drink and realised that I needed to try calling Tony once again. 'Perhaps he hadn't heard it the first time', I said to myself as I accessed my dialled numbers and pressed the re-dial option. 'Perhaps he's out of credit', I added as it began to ring. I was desperate for him to answer, but reluctant to leave a second answer-phone message. I hung up at the sound of his pre-recorded message and started considering the option of leaving my trip into town for the following

day. The shower had woken me up. But the beer was making me tired once more. Furthermore, my headache had returned with a vengeance.

I started to give some serious thought towards heading straight to my room and having the early night that I first considered as I sat alone in Federation Square. Looking at my watch, I couldn't believe that it was only 8pm. 'This has got to have been the longest day of my life', I said to myself as I finally finished my third beer. 'I can't tell anyone back home about this', I said to myself as I began to justify going to bed. 'I'd never live it down', I thought as my attention was suddenly grabbed by some noise coming from the other side of the double doors.

'Typical', I said to myself as around a dozen people came wandering into the bar. 'Were they all waiting upstairs', I said, looking at the bottom of my empty pint glass to see if there was some form of device that told people when I was just about to leave. 'Now what do I do?', I thought, as yet another wave of people came in and smiled in my direction as they passed by my booth. At least half of them were wearing All Blacks jerseys. 'What do I do?', I repeated as I watched them order their drinks and head over to the pool table that had been hiding in the corner.

'Maybe I should put some money down and challenge them to a game', I said, thinking how much I loved playing pool. 'That's how I met Melanie', I thought, realising just how much I wished that she was here sitting next to me. 'She'd know what to do', I thought with a heavy heart as I picked my phone up and began writing her a text to wish her goodnight. 'I hope her evening was a lot better than mine', I said, realising it would be after 10pm back in Dunedin. 'I wonder if they decided to make a night of it?', I continued as I slowly became oblivious to anything else going on around me. I tried to imagine the advice that she would give me, but couldn't get passed the thought that she would be extremely worried if she knew how lost and lonely I was feeling at that point. I didn't want to worry her.

'I think we should definitely stick around a little longer' Pilch said, opening my wallet and assessing the financial implications of getting another beer. 'I dunno', I responded, thinking about how it must look to the barman. Drinking one pint is perfectly acceptable behaviour for someone sitting by themselves. Drinking two might imply you are at least expecting company at some stage. Three suggests that you may have been stood up or have no where better to go. Anymore than three pints, however, and you are going to look like you're either drowning your sorrows or a complete loner with no friends in the world. 'This would be number four!', I reminded myself, looking around at

the group that had been in the bar when I entered one hour earlier. I was convinced that they had been staring at me since I arrived.

I was completely torn as to what my next move should be. I was convinced that I was heading for further disappointment whichever way I turned. I couldn't help but replay all the bad decisions that I felt I had already made that day, especially the one involving Paul at the airport. 'Why wasn't he answering his bloody phone!', I said, checking my phone for the fifth time in five minutes. I knew that I would feel a lot better once I knew that I could attend the pre-match party. I felt that the uncertainty was directly responsible for much of the physical and mental pain I was now suffering.

I took Tony's business card out of my back pocket and dialled the relevant number once again. This time, however, I opted to leave a second, more urgent sounding message, after the tone. I clearly announced my willingness to pay to attend their 'private' pre-match function, and tried to make it sound like I needed to know as sound as possible. I wanted him to think that I may have received another offer or party invitation, but was holding out until I heard back from him. I was still too proud to allow myself to sound as desperate as I had wanted to sound.

I opted for a fourth and final pint. "One more for the road", I said with a smile as I ordered the same again from the barman. 'He clearly thought that I was a sad little loner', I said to myself as I slumped back in my seat once more. I could see the pity in his eyes. In a shameless bid to try and prove him wrong, I picked up my phone once more and started to text. First, I wrote a second, much longer, message to Melanie. I wanted her to know how much I missed her. I thought about saying that I wished that she was here with me, but thought that could easily be misinterpreted as 'I'm having a great time'. I wanted her to know that I wasn't. I wanted her to know how lonely I was feeling. I wanted her to know that I was considering going to bed already. I wanted her to know how much I wanted to be at home.

The next people that I contacted were my football players. Despite telling them that the only football-related text that I wanted that weekend was one telling me their results on Saturday afternoon, I decided to send them all a good luck message. I wrote a much longer message to those had left in charge. I claimed that it was just a case of me double checking that everyone that I had contacted the day before was still able to make it. It felt good to feel important again. I no longer cared how much it may have been costing me to do it. I just wanted someone to reply. I wanted to feel needed. It was pure self indulgence.

As I went about writing my various text messages, I had failed to notice the barman turning on the big screen behind me. Once I realised, however, I soon became fixated as he flicked through the different channels. I prayed for him to find some sport. Any sport would do. I wondered if the AFL game that the Scarfie had mentioned outside of the MCG would be playing. I wasn't fussy. I knew that I could quite happily sit and watch anything sports-related. More importantly, I knew that I didn't need anyone else's company to do it. In fact, I prefer watching it by myself. I hate those that try to talk the whole way through a game. I'd much rather they saved their analysis until the end. I also hate those that constantly shout at the Television, or encourage those around them to start singing the songs that should only ever be sung inside the stadium.

I waited with baited breath as another smaller group of guys entered the bar and, walking straight past me, temporarily interrupted the barman's channel surfing. 'Why is no one texting me back', I thought, as I stared down at my phone. I was desperate for it to make a sound. I had turned the volume up especially. I was paranoid that I may miss a call from Tony. I was also keen for everyone to hear when I got a reply. I began checking my watch several times a minute. I wanted those around me to think that the lonely-looking man in the corner may actually have been expecting some company. I didn't even mind if they thought that I had been stood up. I would happily have accepted charity or a sympathetic shoulder on which to cry.

Much to my annoyance, the only thing showing on the big screen was music. Worse still, there was no sound. The barman hadn't bothered to turn the speakers on. 'That's it!', I said to myself as I downed the rest of my pint in three or four large gulps and bolted for the stairs. 'That's the final straw', I thought, looking straight ahead at all times. I didn't care if I turned a few heads or not. I no longer cared what any of them thought or said about me once I was gone. I was, however, determined not to reveal the extent of my overwhelming depression. I didn't want anyone to see the tears that I could feel building up in the corner of each eye. I didn't want any of these people to see how upset I was. I just had to get out of that depressing basement.

I couldn't stand it any longer. I blamed my tiredness for both my inability to infiltrate any of the groups and my failure to control my emotions. 'Why was I taking it all so personally?', I asked myself as I headed straight for the bathrooms. Once there, I approached the wash basins and took a long hard look in the mirror. "Why is it proving so difficult?", I said aloud, checking for a second time to ensure that no one was occupying one of the two cubicles. I stood there desperate for my reflection to offer me

some answers. I felt like the day had been a complete failure. "What if the rest of the weekend is just more of the same?", I asked my reflection. "What if it's the same in Auckland?", I continued, thinking further into the future. "Why hasn't Tony rung me back?", I asked for what felt like the hundredth time that evening.

I felt sick at the thought that I may never hear from him at all. "Why is it all going wrong?", I screamed at the mirror, banging both fists down against the bench. The questions kept coming, despite the lack of answers. The only time I stopped speaking was when I was briefly joined by someone actually needing the toilet. I quickly pretended to be washing my face and getting ready for a night on the town. My anger and frustration, along with the cold tap water, had so far prevented many more tears from falling. I knew that I was tired. I knew that I was lonely. I was also feeling lost. This wasn't, however, a case of me finally giving up.

I refused to let this thing beat me into submission. I knew this was only the first day of my excursion. I just needed to get out of the bar. I needed to escape the strange looks that I had been getting all night. I needed the opportunity to look at myself and silence the doubts that were filling my head. I was determined to somehow salvage what I could from the wreckage. "You know you're being stupid don't you?!", I informed, as opposed to asked, the man in the mirror. "You know you're over-analysing and thinking far too much about the future?!", I added, occasionally looking around to check no one had entered the room without me noticing. "You know you're taking this all way too seriously?!", I concluded. "Sort your shit out"… I continued, "…or you may as well just pack your bags and grab a taxi to the airport".

# Chapter 29: The Good Samaritan

I thought I looked terrible. I was certainly a lot paler than I remembered looking in the mirror this morning. "No regrets!" I said, however, as I decided to go outside for some fresh air. I didn't want to go to bed feeling like this. I knew that I would only lie there tossing and turning all night. 'I really don't want to be here', I thought after struggling to make it only a few steps from the hotel entrance. It was no longer my nerves, insecurities or self-doubt talking. This was different. The voices in my head went silent. My head felt like it was going to explode. My mouth went dry. The buildings on the other side of the street started to spin.

"Are you alright there boss?!", said a large Polynesian-looking gentleman as the ground started to become increasingly unstable beneath my feet. Everything felt wrong. Nothing felt right. Nothing was doing what it should. Something was broken. My body was no longer responding. And that's when it happened. I say 'it' because, almost two years to the day, I am still not entirely sure how to explain what I experienced at around 8.45pm on Friday 29th June 2007. I honestly don't know what happened. I am also struggling to know how to include it in this story. I can tell you that it can not of been pretty, and it certainly wasn't healthy. All I know is that it remains one of the strangest experiences of my life. I just switched off.

Looking back, I can't help but see the irony of including something that I don't remember in a thesis built almost entirely around the power of memory. Somehow, having escaped the hotel bar and bathroom, I found myself sitting on a cold piece of Melbourne roadside curb. I remember going outside. I remember not knowing which way to turn. I can not say, however, how I ended up with my head nestled between my knees, trying not to be sick on my shoes. I felt completely empty, and yet my head has too heavy for me to lift. My breathing was all over the place. I think 'erratic' is the official term. I wasn't sick. At least, I was unable to see any evidence to suggest that I may have been sick anywhere nearby.

I didn't see where the guy sitting next to me had come from. I had no idea who he was. He appeared to be with a group of five others, all of whom were forming a

protective circle around me. They all looked equally confused and concerned by what ever they had just witnessed. They only spoke to reassure passers by that I was alright and that there was nothing they could do to help. "Had a few too many have we?", one of them said, making a drinking gesture with their right hand.

I turned to answer him but no sound came out of my mouth. I had forgotten how to speak. Someone had found my 'Ctrl-Alt-Del' buttons and reset my system when I wasn't looking. I had never fainted before. The closest that I had ever come was in a supermarket in the South of France. That, we decided at the time, was caused by a mixture of dehydration, heat exhaustion and sun stroke; none of which seemed likely causes on this occasion. 'Maybe it was the alcohol?', I thought, trying to rationalise the fact that I had apparently just collapsed in a heap, on the spot, with little prior warning. 'But I had only had four pints!' argued the voices in my head as they slowly returned from where ever they had been hiding.

"I guess I must have blanked out for a minute there" I said, finally gaining enough strength to lift my head and look at the Good Samaritan sitting by my side.

"Yeah, something like that", he replied with a wry smile on his face. Judging from the way he said it, however, that was not the same diagnosis that he had come up with. He clearly thought that I had just stumbled out of the bar having consumed three or four too many beers, as opposed only four in total. He clearly thought that I had been drinking all afternoon. He thought this was all alcohol related. I, however, didn't. I hadn't felt drunk when I was in the bar. What's more, despite the fact that I was trying to have an argument with my reflection, I hadn't felt drunk when I was standing in the bathroom. This felt different. This was much scarier.

Ultimately, my desire to clear my head had apparently worked. It felt completely blank. Thankfully, I still knew where I was. I still knew who I was and why I was in Melbourne. What I was less sure about, however, was when it was or why I was now sitting next to a complete stranger by the side of the road. I had absolutely no recollection of what had just happened. I still don't. All the voices in my head had temporarily gone AWOL. Apparently, even my own multiple identities no longer wanted to be a part of my ethnography. They had packed their bags and left me to suffocate in my sad and pathetic self pity.

I'll never know if their help was initially asked for, but it was gratefully appreciated. As the voices finally started to return, it was Pilch that had the most to say to those around me. He made it very clear that he was happy for them to think that I was

just another drunk. 'At least that way they'll probably think that I've been out with some friends', he whispered into my ear. 'Just tell them you're on your way home', he added as I struggled to make any sense of how I had ended up where I was. 'Tell them you're a Scarfie from Dunedin', he continued, knowing that we had a reputation for our heavy drinking.

Having regained my senses, I was quickly able to reassure the Good Samaritan that I would be able to look after things from here. I thanked him and his mates for helping me out. Apparently, he saw me fly out of the hotel "like a bat of the hell". On reaching the curb, however, I had just stopped. He thought that I had seen a ghost or something. He said it was obvious that I needed some help. He made it sound like I had just fallen to the ground like a stone. Luckily he was able to stop my head hitting the pavement. His biggest concern was that I may have fallen forward into the road. He admitted that I could have fainted but, based on the number of drunks roaming the streets, he had assumed that it was more likely to be alcohol related. His name was Joe.

It had felt surreal. It was like it happened to someone else. I had completely lost control of my body. It was bloody scary. 'That's it', I said to myself. My day had officially hit rock bottom. 'Surely, it can only get better' Pilch added, looking at my watch to see how long that little embarrassing episode had lasted. It was only 8.55pm. 'Had time stopped still?', I asked myself, checking the clock on my phone to ensure that I hadn't damaged my watch. 'How could it still be so early?', I added, as I tried to put the pieces of the jigsaw back together. I wished that I had asked Joe and his friends some more questions. 'What the hell was going on?', I asked any part of my mind that might have been able to offer a rational answer. I felt lost at sea.

I literally didn't know which way to turn. Did I go inside and hope that my music would effectively drown out the voices? Or, did I listen to the voices and stick to the original plan? Did I try to find out where all these people were heading? Or, did I go to bed and ask them all in the morning? Despite everything, I still felt that I should go exploring. I was still curious to know what Federation Square looked like on a Friday night before a Test Match in Melbourne. I thought that I would always regret it if I went back inside the hotel. 'But what if it happens again?', I said to myself, as a cold shiver ran down my spine.

Both directions had their obvious advantages. I thought about the torture of lying awake in bed, unable to sleep. My curiosity had never been more awake. I knew that it wouldn't go away without a fight. I looked around for a sign. I needed help. I wanted

some guidance. I needed some divine inspiration. I looked up to the sky and begged for a little bit of assistance. 'If only they could adopt me for the night', I thought as the group of staff seen drinking in the bar came out of the hotel and walked straight past me as if I wasn't even there.

That is when everything changed. That is when I heard a noise coming out of my pocket. That is when I felt short series of vibrations brushing up against my upper leg. 'Thank you!', I thought, reaching into my still vibrating trouser pocket. 'Please be Tony', I said as I grabbed my phone and looked down at the screen. It wasn't. But it was the next best thing. In hindsight, it was a million times better. It was Melanie. It was just what I needed. Her text was short but it said more than enough. It informed me that she was in bed thinking of me. It told me to "stop stressing myself silly", to "stop over-analysing everything" and to "start enjoying myself". Most significantly of all, she told me to '"Just be myself".

It was just what the doctor had ordered. It was just what I needed. I felt the strength returning to every part of my body. It was accompanied by a large dose of self confidence. I sent a reply, wishing her sweet dreams and a good night's sleep. More importantly, I also said 'THANK-YOU!!!' in capital letters. I said nothing of what had just happened, but have subsequently tried to explain the massive impact her vote of confidence had on the remainder of the excursion. She only found out about my brief 'episode' a few days ago, and she reacted exactly how I thought she would. I knew that she would have stayed awake worrying about me. The last thing I needed was to be thinking of her unable to sleep at home. I wasn't just embarrassed. I was ashamed. I was angry.

'How could I have let it get this bad?' I said, questioning once again why I had let it affect me so much. I needed to re-assess my priorities. I needed to do it right there and then. It couldn't wait a second longer. 'What do I want to do?', I asked myself for only the second time that day. I had asked myself a lot of questions based on what I felt that I needed to do, but none had really addressed the question of what I actually wanted to do. Not from a solely personal perspective. Ultimately, I had missed half the things that Bill had said at the start of the MCG stadium tour trying to convince a girl that I had only just met to be a sidekick. I had spent most of my day worrying myself sick about whether or not I would get enough people to talk to me. I hadn't enjoyed any of it so far.

So what did I want to do? Well, I definitely wanted to see Federation Square on a Friday night. I definitely wanted to see how busy the restaurants and bars were. I

definitely wanted to see if I could capture a glimpse of the MCG at night. I definitely wanted to know if it would be lit up. 'If it's not, then it should be!', I said as I finally turned the corner onto Elizabeth Street and headed in the direction of Flinders Street Station. 'How had I lost my faith so easily?', I asked myself, feeling better with every step.. 'How had I allowed myself to become so defeatist?', I continued, 'and, who was that guy that I saw in the mirror?'.

'That wasn't me', I assured myself as I walked passed a group of middle-aged men in suits, serenading a couple of student-aged girls. 'Ah, been there, done that', I thought nostalgically as I gave them a smile and a nod that said it all.

"You wanna join us mate?", one of them asked, acknowledging my obvious approval of their song choice. "I think we're winning them over!".

"Not tonight boys", I said with a smile that had been missing for too long on this trip. "I'm saving my voice for tomorrow night", I added, throwing in a reference to the reason why I had travelled to Melbourne. Finally, I was speaking first, and thinking later. Finally, I found myself unconcerned as to whether they understood what I meant or not. 'Now this was more like it', I informed myself, before enquiring as to where I had been hiding for past 24 hours. I started to question many of the decisions that I had made that day. I wasn't trying to over-analyse it. I wasn't thinking about the 'what ifs'. I was trying to pinpoint when, where and why I had lost sight of the bigger picture. I wanted to know where my self confidence had been hiding.

I vowed to do things differently from that point onwards. I swore that I wasn't going to waste this weekend worrying myself silly. 'I am in Melbourne', I reminded myself, taking the time to look around at both the buildings and the people rushing around like they had a million other places to be. 'I may never get the opportunity to come back', I added, thinking of the scary moment I had just encountered outside the hotel. I had never been more serious. I had never been more determined to forget about my research and go with the flow. Something had changed. I was seeing things with a much wider lens.

Once in Federation Square, I made my way over to the same seat that I had sat in several hours earlier. Reaching into my pocket I got out a fresh note-book and started to scribble down anything and everything that came to mind. There was no ordered sequence. There was even less rational logic. I had an armada of questions. I had a few answers. Only once I had finished replaying the past, did I make any attempt to look up and observe what was going on around me. It certainly seemed pretty busy. 'Was it

busier than normal?', I thought as I looked at the queue of people waiting for tables by the restaurants that surrounded the square. 'What was a Friday night in Melbourne normally like?, I added, conscious of the fact that I had nothing to compare it with.

I could see the two doormen across the road had actually started directing people off in other directions. The pub they were guarding was clearly full to bursting point. I could hear the noise it was generating from where I was sitting. 'Why would anyone even want to try and get in there?', I thought as another small group joined the back of the queue standing outside. I sat and timed how long it took them to give up and head off up Flinders Street in search of somewhere else. 'Good luck', I thought having recently come from that direction and seen few other options. It took them twelve minutes before they left the line.

The couple at the front of the line were there when I arrived at the Square and appeared fully intent on waiting around until somebody left. The girl looked frozen. The guy looked like he needed the toilet. 'I hope he makes it in time', I thought with a smile on my face. I couldn't stop smiling. 'Maybe I was drunk after all?', I said, trying to test myself by reading the posters on the wall of the museum. 'Perhaps I am still in shock?', I added, running my hands over my head in search of any evidence that it had actually hit the pavement outside the hotel.

Looking at the time on the clock at the Railway Station, I decided that I had achieved everything that I had wanted to achieve and decided to finally go back to the hotel and call it a night. I had seen, done and experienced more than enough for one day. It was after 9pm and I could no longer think of any reason why I needed to stay up any later. I decided to walk a different way home, but was too tired to try anything too adventurous. I picked the street that ran parallel with Elizabeth Street and turned left after a couple of blocks to ensure I ended up back on the right path. It was dark and I didn't fancy getting lost. I was also conscious that I was on my own in an area full of drunken groups.

It took ten minutes to get back to the hotel. I may have passed a lot of people heading in the opposite direction, but I rarely got to see from where they had come. Once at the hotel, I found myself unable to resist the temptation to have a quick look downstairs. I wanted to see if it had indeed become any busier in the hour and a half since I had made my rather dramatic exit. If anything, it was even quieter. I turned around and headed straight to the elevator. While downstairs was deserted, the corridors were very much alive to the sound of music. I could hear plenty of people talking about

what they should wear and debating how cold it was outside. It was only 9.45pm. I couldn't believe that I was heading to bed already.

'Why did Melbourne time go so much slower than New Zealand time', I asked my watch as I took it off and placed it on the bedside table. After making sure my door was locked, I collapsed on the bed and opened my diary to the first available blank page. '**How was it still only 9.47pm???**', I wrote at the top of the page, underlining it to add even more emphasis. My attention was then grabbed by the conversation taking place in the room next to me. The walls were so thin it was like they were sitting on the end of my bed. Ironically, she was moaning about exactly that. "These walls are like paper you know?", she said at one point, banging on the wall with something that sounded like a shoe. I was tempted to bang back, but guessed that she thought my room must have been empty. I certainly didn't want to alert them to my presence.

I lay there and waited for a response from whoever she was talking to. Her partner quickly reminded her how cheap the package had been and asked her what she had expected. He also reminded her that the money they saved could be spent on better things like drinking and shopping. He seemed much more interested in getting into town as soon as possible. He wanted her to finish her drink so they could get to Federation Square. "Good luck with that", I whispered into my pillow as I heard them leave their room and walk past my door.

'What a difference a day makes', I wrote on the first line of a new page, thinking of a song my Dad used to play when I was a child. '24 little hours' I sang to myself, trying unsuccessfully to remember the next line. I started to write about my walk home. I noted the drunks, who could well have been locals enjoying their Friday night. I knew I had no feasible way of distinguishing between who were, and who were not, 'sport tourists'. In many ways it had reminded me of Dunedin at around midnight. The biggest difference, however, was that these people were clearly not students. They were wearing suits and appeared to be at least ten years too old. 'Maybe it was their fathers and uncles', I noted, thinking about the big group that I had encountered on several occasions that day. I placed a big smiley face next to this remark. 'Perhaps this is where the Scarfies get it from?', I added on the line below.

I'm not sure exactly when I fell asleep but judging on the number of pages that I had written it must have been pretty soon after I had finally plucked up the courage to go and clean my teeth. That was just after 10.00pm. I remember thinking about everything that had occurred since my alarm had sounded back in Christchurch. I remember trying

to rationalise my insecurities, and my lack of confidence. I remember trying to relate my experience back to the various identity theories that I had uncovered within both the social psychology and sociology literature. I found myself thinking long and hard about the methodology I had tried to follow. I found myself evaluating all of the data that I had collected that day. It was enough to send me to sleep.

I was only woken twice in the night. My neighbours came home at 2.30am and had clearly forgotten how thin the walls were. I'll let you guess what they opted to do next. My next unscheduled, and equally rude, awakening came exactly twenty-six hours after I first got out of bed on Friday, 29th June 2007. Apparently, I had forgotten to disable both of the alarms that I had set on the evening of Thursday the 28th. The abusive language that I could hear through the wall also revealed that I was not the only one to have been unexpectedly awoken by my early morning alarm. It was 04.10am. It was Saturday June 30th. It was day two of my Excursion.

# Chapter 30: Don't look back in anger

According to the New Oxford English Dictionary, a group is "a number of people or things located, gathered, or classed together"[251] It doesn't give a minimum number. I couldn't help but feel alone during the first day of my Melbourne excursion. I was alone. As my narrative of self reveals, the majority of my conversations were actually going on in my mind. The various voices kept reminding me of all the things that I had done wrong. They kept playing on my insecurities and fears. They kept reminding me of places that I had been and things that I had seen. My memories of the past, were largely dictating my fears for the immediate future. I simply spent too much time sharing my own company. I had too much time to think about the importance of the occasion. I had too much time to think. I felt trapped.

All I wanted to do was find a group to join. More specifically, I wanted to be invited. I didn't care how big the group was, and at that point would have settled for a group of two, me included. I needed other people to distract me. I needed other people to boost my self esteem and self confidence. I needed other people to help me occupy my time. Being alone seemed to make time slow down. That day seemed to last forever. The old mantra that time goes faster when you're having fun seems very applicable on this occasion. The only time that time seemed to speed up, or at least operate at a normal pace, was when I was enjoying myself.

My first day in Melbourne was all about comparison making. I was constantly comparing myself with those around me. A part of me wished that I had opted to drink on the flight. It may have drowned out the pessimist and encouraged me to take more of a much more vocal role in this production. At the time, however, I was feeling far too self-conscious to let my social identity take over the reigns. While I had wanted to include a reflexive element to my ethnography, this was never meant to be about me[252]. I wanted to focus on my social relationship with those around me, as opposed to my personal relationship with my self.

[251] In **New Oxford English Dictionary (2003)** Revised Edition (Oxford: OUP) (p. 491).

[252] Carla Willig cites how "reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' ones subject matter while conducting research. In **Carla Willig (2001)** *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: adventures in theory and method* (Buckingham: OUP) (p. 10).

Only at the very end of the very long and lonely day, did I start making some connections with the literature that I had read and reviewed during the creation of my research proposal. Only then did I start to reflect upon the theoretical concepts that I was attempting to place into the context of sports-related tourism. Only then did I give any serious thought to the passion that went into my original research proposal. Only then did was I able to locate my self and social identities. It was arguably the only time during the entire day when I felt as though I truly belonged within the group. It was how I had imagined my entire excursion would be from the minute I arrived at the airport.

I wasn't on the outside (trying hard to get in). I wasn't just watching sport tourist behaviour. I was actually being and behaving like a sport tourist. It felt like a natural setting. It felt like I was truly involved in my research. I was finally being the interpretive ethnographer that I wanted to be so badly. I was finally observing the participant. I was also self-indulging. The only thing that separated me from those around me was the fact that I had no one sitting next to me on the plane. I was probably the only one in the entire hotel that had a room to themselves. Eddie and Jim had been the only people I had seen travelling alone that day. Both, however, had people to meet once they arrived. Neither of them would have considered going to bed before 9pm. In fact, I suspect that they were probably still out in town when my alarm went off.

According to Henri Tajfel and John Turner, Social Identity Theory essentially presents individual identity as a point along a continuum that ranges from personal identity through to social identity[253]. A multitude of variables affect which of the multiple arenas of group memberships will be the most prominent on the social identity side of the equation, along with whether personal or social identity will be most salient at any one moment of time[254]. Likewise, Stephen Worchel and Dawna Coutant also acknowledge that several internal and external factors can influence the salience of these comparisons, arguing that individuals engage in simultaneous comparisons between themselves and

[253] See, for example, **Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (1986)** 'The Social Identity Theory of Inter-group Behaviour', in Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin, (Eds.) *Psychology of Inter-group Relations* (pp. 7-24) (Chicago: Nelson Hall); **John C. Turner and Katherine J. Reynolds (2004**) 'The Social Identity Perspective in Inter-group Relations: Theories, Themes, and Controversies', in Marilynn. B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and Social Identity* (pp. 259-277) (Oxon: Wiley-Blackwell).

[254] See, for example, **Andrew J. Weigert (1986)** The social production of identity: meta-theoretical foundations, *The Sociological Quarterly* 27, pp. 165-183; **Richard Jenkins (2004)** *Social Identity* (London: Routledge); **Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke (2005)** 'A Sociological Approach to Self and Identity', in Mark Leary and June Tangney (Eds.) *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 128-152) (New York: Guilford Press).

other members of both the perceived in-group and out-group[255]. The factors listed included: group development, group identification, and individuation[256].

The social psychological theories of Marilynn Brewer were immediately considered of particularly relevance to my academic investigation of sport tourist behaviour and identity. Furthermore, I also made several connections between her inter-group research and the desire of all tourism destinations to offer something unique, yet equally familiar to their guests. Her Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT), for example, had proved particularly valuable when it came to my immediate reinterpretation of the excursion and the way in which I had struggled to infiltrate the various in-groups discovered during those early moments out in the field[257]. Although ODT recognises that individuals possess a number of different motives, of which self-enhancement and self-esteem are just two, its true value comes in the provision that social identification and inter-group behaviour are not solely driven by the desire for positive distinctiveness and/or a favourable image of individual self[258].

While I was admittedly blind to it at the time, upon reflection I was finally able to apply many of Brewer's findings to my own erratic, overly emotional, behaviour in Melbourne. Brewer argues that, on its own, self-enhancement is unable to account adequately for the social patterns of identity or inter-group relations observed in social psychological research[259]. She suggests that needs for both distinctiveness and assimilation lead people to align themselves with groups that confer a meaningful identity in contrast to other groups, but with a strong sense of similarity or solidarity with a set of in-group members[260]. I was desperate to be accepted by those around me. I was actively seeking some form of self enhancement, not to mention a much needed boost to my falling self-esteem. The problem was that I wanted this to occur on my terms. I want to maintain my distance, my distinctiveness and my self identity.

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[255] See **Stephen Worchel and Dawna Coutant (2004)** 'It Takes Two to Tango: Relating Group Identity to Individual Identity within the Framework of Group Development', in Marilynn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone (Eds.) *Self and Social Identity* (pp.182-202) (Oxon: Wiley-Blackwell).

[256] Ibid.

[257] See **Marilynn B. Brewer (1991)** The social self: On being the same and different at the same time, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17, pp. 475-482; **Marilynn B. Brewer (2005)** 'Optimal distinctiveness, social identity, and the self, in Mark R. Leary and June P. Tangney (Eds.) *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 480-491) (New York: Guilford Press).

[258] See **Cynthia Pickett and Geoffry Leonardelli (2006)** 'Using Collective Identities for Assimilation and Differentiation', in Tom Postmes and Jolanda Jetten (Eds.) *Individuality and the Group* (pp. 56-74) (London: Sage).

[259] See **Marilynn B. Brewer (1991)** The social self: On being the same and different at the same time, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17, pp. 475-482.

[260] Ibid.

The fact that I struggled to attach a meaningful identity to any of those encountered at the airport, on the plane or in the hotel, left me facing an up hill battle right from the very start. Only when I stepped out of the picture and looked solely at the behaviour of those I observed during the first day of my excursion was I able to recall several incidents that supported Brewer's theory of Optimal Distinctiveness. One of my biggest challenges was removing me from the centre of my ethnographic gaze. This certainly wasn't helped by the fact that I spent so much time by myself. As a result, I entered the majority of social engagement thinking about the relevance to my research, my study, my thesis and my personal identity.

Despite what I had written, and despite what I had told myself on many different occasions during the day, I was unable to ignore the fact that it was unavoidably all about me. Upon reflection I think that this is why I took everything to heart. This is why I took the exclusion and rejection so personally. This is probably why I ended up in the gutter. According to Paul Camic and colleagues, a hermeneutic relationship can emerge when doing any type of research that involves the study of other people[261]. I didn't note it at the time, but the more I relive my emotional reaction to my excursion, the more convinced I am that my first impressions had a much bigger effect on my epistemology and ontological position than they did my actually methodological approach[262]. Ultimately, 'the researcher' and 'the participant' are unavoidably affected by each other and can, therefore, modify how both (re)act[263].

Once again, upon reflection, I am now able to see that I had somewhat unintentionally gone into this excursion with a grounded theory approach to my interpretive ethnography[264]. I wasn't working completely blind, but it was only as I lay in

[261] **Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (Eds.) (2003)** *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design* (Washington: American Psychological Association).

[262] According to Paul Camic, Jean Rhodes and Lucy Yardley**,** the foundation of all social scientific inquiry is built around the answer to the following three questions. First, the research must decide what is real (i.e. their ontological philosophy), Second, they must ask themselves who knows what is real (i.e. their epistemological stance). Finally, they must consider how they know what is real (i.e. their methodological preference). To them, qualitative research "questions whether an objective conception of reality can truly exist, suggesting that other forms of investigation are necessary to increase our understanding of the thing we are studying". While I will probably never be able to truly distinguish between real and fake, the richness found within the many different realities that I have attempted to explore should hopefully provide me with a better understanding of the potential answers available. In Ibid (p. 4).

[263] Ibid (p. 5).

[264] Inductive methods, such as grounded theory and ethnography, encourage the researcher to approach a topic without firm preconceptions about what variables will be important or how they will be related and to gradually build a theory to explain the data that are collected. See, for example, **Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Straus (1967)** *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology press).

my bed and listen to the people in the neighbouring room that I started to put the day's experiences into context. It took at least an hour for me to get back to sleep after my alarm went off. I considered getting up and going for a walk. I thought about the queue for the showers in the morning. I wondered what the buffet breakfast was going to be like. I started to plot the rest of my weekend around the things that I wanted to do. I wondered if I would get an apologetic phone call from Tony, telling me exactly where I needed to be and what time I should arrive. I still lived in hope that things could only get better. I didn't see how they could get any worse. More over, I refused to let me let them get any worse.

According to Laurel Richardson we all live our own unique plot lines[265]. To Donald Polkinghorne, plot provides the structure through which we remember and relive the relationship among the events experienced and the life changing decisions that inevitably occurred as a consequence[266]. Emplotment can operate as a single thread, but often employs multiple threads or subplots which are woven together into a complex and layered whole[267]. It is through the construction of a plot that I have chosen to compose and configure the story of my first day in the field. The 29th of June 2007 was constructed from a series of temporal events. Ultimately, my plot also provides the criteria required to assess what to include and exclude from the narrative. It allowed me to order and prioritise the things experienced from the moment I went to bed on the Thursday to the moment I was woken up by my alarm in the early hours of the Saturday.

The existence of a plot helped me to establish a suitable beginning and end, creating what Polkinghorne terms 'the temporal boundaries for the narrative gestalt'[268]. When the plot of the story concerns a researcher's production of a knowledge claim, those events and actions pertinent to the production of the claim are typically selected for inclusion. Other aspects and activities, however, such as the clothes worn, the room in which the analysis was undertaken, the eating of breakfast are rarely seen as central to the plot. They may only be included as a background narrative that helps me express the

[265] See **Laurel Richardson (2001)** Getting Personal, *Qualitative Studies in Education* 14 (1), pp. 33-38.

[266] In **Donald E. Polkinghorne (1997)** 'Reporting qualitative research as practice', in William G. Tierney and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Representation and the text: Reframing the narrative voice* (pp. 3-22) (Albany: SUNY Press) (p.13).

[267] Ibid (p. 14).

[268] Ibid (p. 14).

diachronic perspective of human actions[269]. Doing so, however, allowed me to retain an often missing temporal dimension. It allowed me to exhibit everything that occurred.

Upon reflection, my review and reinterpretations of the literature read prior to my excursion had failed to fully prepare me for the complete interpretive ethnographic experience. This was no ones fault but my own. I wasn't looking in the right places. The autoethnographic tale that you have just consumed is undoubtedly mood-dependent[270]. It is intentionally fragmented, and yet unavoidably fluid[271]. My tangents are deemed as important as they are inevitable. They are dictated by the personal memories that arrived on the scene as I sat at my desk and replayed the longest day of my life. While I can edit them once they have arrived, I am unable to control their arrival time. They exist within the continual threads of the plot.

I knew that I was going to have to be creative with this non-fictional tale. I also knew that I was inevitably going to have to exclude many parts of my four day Australian excursion. I feel it is important, however, to reveal what I was thinking in the shower that morning. As stipulated from the outset, my memories of this unforgettable excursion are of central importance to the subsequent construction of my heartful autoethnography. I hope you believe me. I need you to feel that you could have been sitting in the empty seat between me and Eddie. I need you to imagine that you shared the taxi ride I experienced at 4.45am in Christchurch, or even the double bed I had to myself in that soulless double room. Could you hear the alarm going off? Did it wake you up?

Donald Pokinghorne argues, for example, that all academic research is a personal performance[272]. The crux of my entire argument, however, is based around my new found belief that even ethnography can not help but be influenced by the contextualised social norms, scripts and practice situated at the 'place' of contemporary consumption[273]. I am

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[269] Ibid (pp. 14-18).

[270] See, for example, **Carolyn Ellis and Art P. Bochner (1992)** 'Telling and performing personal stories', in Carolyn. Ellis and Michael Flaherty (Eds.) *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience* (pp. 79-101) (London: Sage).

[271] See, for example, **Laurel Richardson (2000)** 'Writing: A Method of Inquiry', in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 923–948) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage); **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** 'Fragmentary Reflections of the Narrated Body-Self', in Jim Denison and Pirko Markula (Eds.) *Moving Writing: Crafting Movement in Sporting Research* (pp. 25-50) (New York: Peter Lang).

[272] See **Donald E. Polkinghorne (1997)** 'Reporting Qualitative Research as Practice', in William G. Tierney and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *'Representation and the Text: Re-Framing the Narrative Voice'* (pp. 3-22) (Albany: SUNY Press).

[273] Paul Camic, Jean Rhodes and Lucy Yardley state that "no experiment, no research question, and certainly no interpretation of data can be truly objective". They also acknowledge that the "problems we are interested in, the questions we ask, the kind of data we collect, and the analyses we undertake all emanate from some context, be it socio-economic, political, cultural, or personal". In **Paul M. Camic, Jean**

not an expert ethnographer. I am, however, an experienced sports fan. I am also experienced when it comes to being a tourist. I have been watching sport and going on holiday my entire life. My multiple identities, however, are neither natural, nor are they fixed in either time or space. They are constructed by the societies to which I currently find myself attached. They are subject to constant and continual change.

We all have multiple identities that are formed and transformed in social interaction. That is, our self and social identities are composed of a set of interwoven features that have both territorial and non-territorial aspects. I may have completed two further excursions to Auckland and Wellington, searching for more participants to observe and investigate, but it was the first 24 hours of my data collection period that significantly altered my entire approach to my thesis. My excursion to Melbourne highlighted the importance of understanding and acknowledging the ethnographers place at the heart of his/her ethnographic research[274]. It was an experience that also had me thinking about the influence of my past on the present[275].

My trip to Melbourne helped me to discover the extent to which I had been effectively living and breathing my field of investigation for my entire life[276]. It got me

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**E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (Eds.) (2003)** *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design* (Washington: American Psychological Association) (p. 6).

[274] Amanda Coffey suggests that ethnographers "have to be reflective insiders, negotiating roles and subjectivities, looking out", as opposed to being "outsiders looking in". Delysa Burnier supports this but also notes how many qualitative research texts advise researchers to avoid studying communities or cultures of which they are already a part, stating the difficulties that surround gaining a new perspective on something you already know. Bucking the trend and the advise of others, however, she still opted to conduct an ethnography of the community in which lived. She found a compelling research topic close to her home and even closer to her heart, and subsequently set about using her insider status to help as opposed to hinder her exploration. She used day-to-day life experiences to connect past with the present and, through her embodied presence, was able to gather sensitive insights that she believed an outsider would not have found. In **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity* (London: Sage) (p. 57). See also **Delysa Burnier (2006)** Encounters With the Self in Social Science Research: A political Scientist Looks at Autoethnography, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35 (4), pp.410-418; **Ralph H. Saunders (2001)** Home and away: Bridging fieldwork and everyday life, *Geographical Review* 91 (1-2), pp. 88-94.

[275] Robert Bullough and Steffinee Pinnegar constructed a set of suggestive guidelines to which they believed all quality autobiographical work should try to adhere. They argued that all autobiographical self studies should not only ring true and encourage a sense of connection between the author and the audience, but also promote insight and interpretation. Furthermore, they should engage historical truths in an honest and authentic manner and seek an improvement to the lives of both the writer and the reader. Finally they note the importance of portraying character development, offering fresh perspectives (i.e. on established truths) and setting it all within an suitable context. They concluded that "Self-study framed as autobiography or conversation places unique and perhaps unusual demands on readers; and it demands even more of those who seek to produce it". In **Robert V. Bullough Jr, and Steffinee Pinnegar (2001)** Guidelines for Quality in Autobiographical Forms of Self-Study Research, *Educational Researcher* 30 (3), pp. 13–21 (p. 20).

[276] According to Amanda Coffey, ethnographic fieldwork occurs "in a variety of social and cultural settings". She describes 'field' as "a heterogenous group of locations and contexts" and states how our lives are a continuous "area of social enquiry", making "the boundaries of observation and analysis almost

assessing the value of autobiographical research, and the validity of being a true insider[277]. It got me thinking about the implications of both my subjectivity, and my self-indulgence[278]. It got me reassessing the social identities that I had initially planned to place under my scientific microscope and, more importantly, made me realise that my investigation was as much about my personal identity, as it was about the experiences of Eddie, Jim or Steven (who I sadly never got to meet)[279].

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limitless". Jennifer Hyndman also discusses the contentious nature of placing boundaries around "the field", claiming it is inappropriate and ill-advised to think of it as a physical location that can be removed from the everyday. She perceives it to be defined in terms of the researchers objectives, claiming it is "not naturalised in terms of 'a place' or 'a people'". Likewise, Karen Till supports this and suggests that, despite the emotional, temporal and spatial boundaries regularly constructed to separate work from play, an individual is incapable of dividing their personal and professional selves into sites of 'home' and 'away' or 'in' and 'out' of the field. She argues that the concepts of 'home' and 'in the field' are unstable categories created by traditional academic conventions and opinions as to what constitutes objective research, concluding that "research spaces are always hybrid: they are complex social spaces of dislocation". The statement I was most able to relate to however noted how "when we move back and forth between shifting homes and field, our research agendas, relationships and even our own understandings of ourselves as researchers will change because we can never know who we will become during the research process". In **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identit*y (London: Sage) (p. 39); In **Jennifer Hyndman (2001)** The field as here, and new, not there and then, *Geographical Review* 91(1/2), pg. 262-272 (p. 262); In **Karen E. Till (2001)** Returning home and to the field, *Geographical Review* 91 (1-2), pp. 46-56 (p. 46).

[277] William Howarth defines an autobiography as simply a self portrait. According to Peter Clements autobiographical research is "first hand' in a way that biography cannot be; it is after all the work of the subject reflecting the agenda set by the autobiographer for his/her own purpose". He goes on to acknowledge the difficulties that face the producers of autobiographical narratives, noting the how the "subject may find it difficult to be objective about him/herself and, in viewing ourselves from the perspective of the present, it may be difficult to create oneself as one was in the past" Clements highlights the problem of "veridicality" (the verification of ones memories) and suggests that even the most honest of storytellers may struggle to cover everything exactly how it occurred. Basically, memories can not only fade over time, but become easily distorted by external influences. Clements also identifies "self-schematas" that inevitably affects our memories "causing us to remember an event in such a way that it is consistent with our present self-image". He points out the fact that we "tend to remember events in terms of our own perceptions of them; often too we quite naturally place ourselves in the centre because it is our part in or our perception of the event (or process or situation) that we are remembering". In **Peter Clements** (1999) Autobiographical Research and the Emergence of the Fictive Voice, *Cambridge Journal of Education* 29 (1), pp. 21-32 (pp. 24-26). For further discussion see **William L. Howarth (1974)** Some Principles of Autobiography, *New Literary History* 5 (2), pp. 363-381; **Liz Stanley (1993)** On Auto/Biography in Sociology, *Sociology* 27, pp. 41-52; **Lena Shirinian (1997)** David Kherdian and the Ethno-autobiographical Impulse: Rediscovering the Past, *Ethnic Autobiography* 22 (4), pp. 77-89; **Dydia DeLyser (2001)** Do you really live here? Thoughts on insider research, *Geographical Review* 91 (1-2), pp. 441-453..

[278] See **Alan Peshkin (1988)** 'Virtuous subjectivity: in the participant observer's I's', in David Berg and Kenwyn Smith (Eds.) *The Self in Social Inquiry: Researching Methods* (pp.267-281) (Newbury Park: Sage).

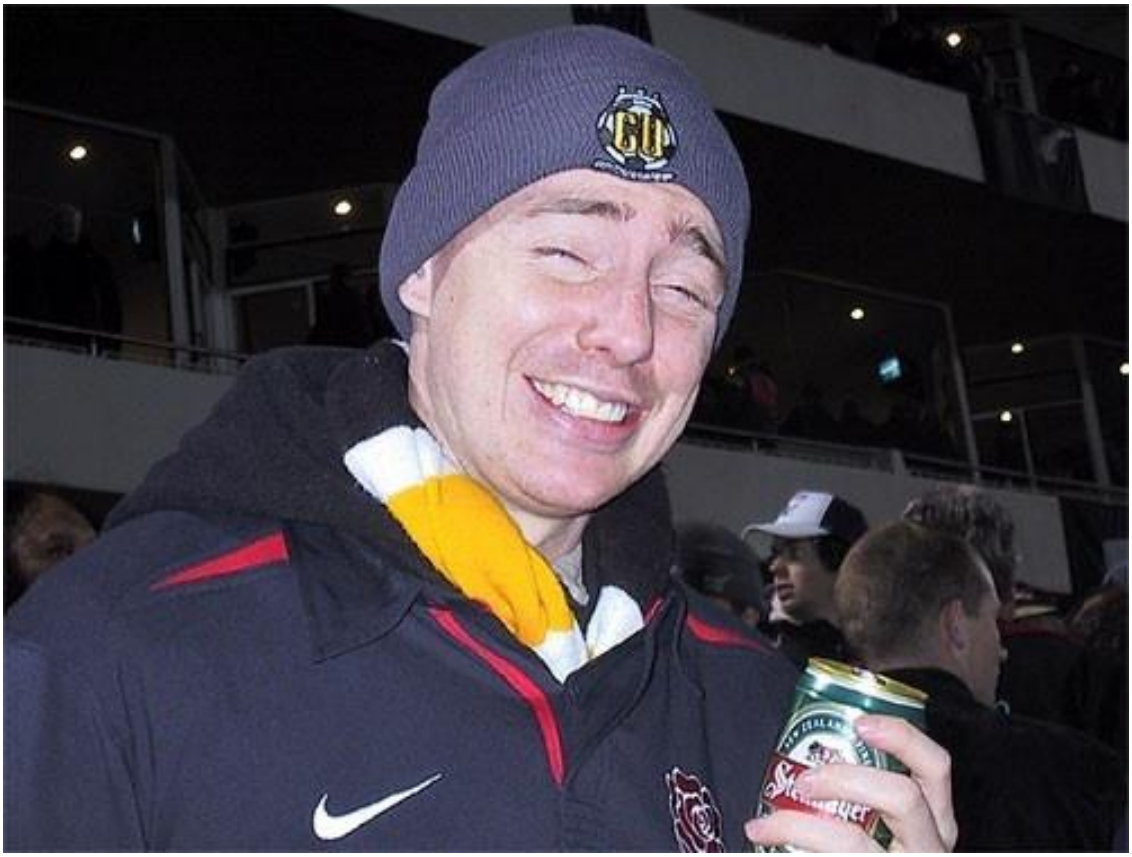
[279] Amanda Coffey argued that "the visibility of the self in the field and the text" was beginning to receive an increasing amount of attention within the social science literature. While she noted that the biographical dimension of ethnographic research was nothing new, she highlighted how "the autobiographical" had also started to grow in popularity. She added that the identification of autobiography as "a key element of the task and writing of ethnography" had subsequently legitimised the use of personal narratives based on fieldwork experiences. Unfortunately, I knew none of this prior to embarking on my excursion to Melbourne. In fact, I hadn't discovered the majority of references found in this chapter, including Amanda Coffey's alternative take on conducting ethnography. In **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity* (London: Sage) (p. 17).

The way in which I have tried to simultaneously (re)package and (re)interpret my memories of the 29th of June 2007, through the use of an autobiographical narrative, is not my unique contribution to knowledge. It is merely to catalyst that led me to change direction. It is the experience that caused me to re-assess how I approach the subject of finding out what is real. While the first half contains the bones that hold the body of my thesis together, the third act was designed to provide the flesh that helps makes me a living socio-cultural entity. It represents the paint on an otherwise blank sheet of canvas. The aim of Act One was to introduce the narrative and the narrator. Act Two was plotted in a manner that hopefully introduced you to the research and the researcher. Act Three, however, revealed the ethnography and the ethnographer.

The aim of the final Act is to finally reveal the autoethnographers that helped to construct this he*art*ful autoethnography. This chapter was not meant to be a conclusion. It does, however, incorporate some of the analytical conclusions that I found myself drawing together at the end of a very long and equally emotional day in the field. It also signifies the end of Act 3. I wanted to reveal the final thoughts that ran through my mind as I drifted back to sleep that night. I wanted to show that I was no longer angry at the experiences encountered, or overly concerned by the lack of fish found in my basket. I was just exhausted (both physically and emotionally). It had been a *very* long day.

# Part Two:
# ‘To the Academy’

## Act Four: The Epilogue



## Chapters 31-36

# Chapter 31: What a difference a day makes

Though Carolyn Ellis deserves the credit for the creation of the assessment criteria found on the list below, it was Andrew Sparkes who suggested using them to show the reader what can be incorporated within autoethnographic narratives[280]. The list offers twelve ingredients. I had a copy of them pinned up in my office for over half a year. I have tried to adhere to it as much as possible. It is the recipe that I have opted to follow. While not all apply to my thesis, I hope that you will be able to see where I have tried to include:

1, the use of systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall;

2, the inclusion of the researcher's vulnerable selves, emotions, body, and spirit;

3, the production of evocative stories that create the effect of reality;

4, the celebration of concrete experience and intimate detail;

5, the examination of how human experience is endowed with meaning;

6, a concern with moral, ethical, and political consequences;

7, an encouragement of compassion and empathy;

8, a focus on helping us know how to live and cope;

9, the featuring of multiple voices and the repositioning of readers and "subjects" as co-participants in dialogue;

10, the seeking of a fusion between social science and literature;

11, the connecting of the practices of social science with the living of life;

12, the representation of lived experience using a variety of genres – short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose[281].

[280] When discussing the use of criteria to judge the value and validity of autoethnography, Andrew Sparkes cites that "just as with our inquiries, we construct our reality as we go along, with these inquiries we also construct our criteria for judging as we go along". He adds, however, that "work which operate on the borderlines of disciplines and cross or blur boundaries, seem to cause problems for those obsessed with criteriology, or the constant search for permanent or universal criteria for judging research". In **Andrew C. Sparkes** (2002) *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p.220).

[281] For discussion see **Carolyn Ellis (1991)** Sociological Introspection and Emotional Experience, *Symbolic Interaction* 14, pp. 23-50; **Carolyn Ellis (2000)** Creating criteria, *Qualitative Inquiry* 6 (2), pp. 273-277.

I am not ashamed or embarrassed by the personal memories that I have chosen to show within this thesis. Much like the professional rugby players that I watched trudge off the Carisbrook turf at around 9.30pm on the 12th of June 2004, however, I am hugely relieved to see the safety of the dressing room on the horizon. I am hoping that the hardest part is now over. The photograph chosen to start this fourth and final Act illustrates my reaction to hearing the referee blow his whistle for the final time that night. England had been played off the park. England's best Rugby Union players looked relieved, as opposed to embarrassed or ashamed. My personal shame lasted long into the night. It is an experience that I will never forget.

Welcome to the beginning of the end. I want to finish by tying up a few lose ends and, at the same time, showing how it all started. I want to reveal exactly why you've just read my memories of a 26-hour period from my 28 year life. The following six chapters combine, much like those within Act One, to form a series of multiple endings, multiple answers and multiple conclusions. My own narrative, however, will neither finish nor be concluded at the end of this thesis. The voices remain as vocal as ever. My imagination is still keeping me awake at night. My curiosity is still killing the cat, and my desire to explore sport tourist experiences remains as strong as it was before this journey began. I am still searching for answers. I am still hungry for more information. I am still living in hope that I may eventually get to meet the sport tourist named Steven. I am still the biggest fan of what I do.

I wouldn't necessarily call it a concluding section, but it definitely (re)presents the beginning of the end. It is the last lap. It is injury time. I like to think of it as that final rush of adrenaline your body never fails to provide your legs when they suddenly see the finish line. I want to reveal where I feel that my unique contribution to knowledge fits within the ever-changing parameters of the academy. More specifically, I hope to get you reflecting on your role within this plot. Every minute spent in Melbourne played a part in both the (re)creation of this story and the (re)birth of this storyteller. I therefore wanted to (de)construct the socio-cultural experience that significantly changed both my personal and professional outlook on life.

I wanted to share my unforgettable ethnographical excursion, and the various emotions that inevitably came along for the ride. He may not have returned my calls that weekend, for example, but I did eventually hear back from Tony the tour guide. We have actually spoken on several occasions over the past two years. While all was quickly forgiven, his failure to respond/reply to any of my messages will never be forgotten.

Likewise, Jim was also happy to share his various sports-related travel experiences with me at a later date, and, as with Tony, I have also tried to keep him regularly updated with regards to my research and writings. Both have offered to help me in any way they can. Both have requested a copy of the story once it is finally finished.

Jim certainly wasn't joking when he told me that I would need to bring a dictaphone to record all his thoughts and feelings about sports-related travel. He even arranged for me to speak to his wife about her various sport tourist identities. She travels as much, if not more, than he does, and had some very interesting things to say about her reasons for doing it. I never heard anything back from Eddie, Ian, Sarah, Matt or Dave, and, despite Tony's promise to pass on my details, I still haven't heard anything from the sport tourist named Steven. The impression that these individuals left on me was clearly greater than the one that I must have left on them. Either that or my follow up emails never arrived at their intended destinations. Ray, on the other hand, sent me an email that explained exactly why he wouldn't be able to contribute anything further to my study. His reasons were both personal and professional related. He not only apologised, but also wished me luck and good fortune with my exploration.

Am I a better person for reliving my memories of the emotions encountered over the course of my excursion(s) into the field? Yes. Am I a better academic? Definitely! Is this a better thesis than the one I initially described to my mother back in 2006? I hope so. It was designed to express my personal and professional desire to understand one's notions of their true self. It was about the creation and consumption of socially-constructed identities. It was about the self acceptance and social acknowledgement of our multiple selves. What happens next is up to you. You may feel like you have read all you need to read. You may feel like you already know all there is to know. Likewise, you may feel like you have already drawn the conclusions that you needed to draw from my story.

I hope I have not only infiltrated, but also influenced your own sociological imagination. I hope you are still keen to know what happens/happened next. I want you thinking of me as you drift off to sleep tonight, and when you next find your self standing half asleep in your shower. Can you, for example, remember exactly where you were, who you were with, or what you were thinking around 9.30pm on Saturday the 12th of June 2004? How about 9.47pm on Friday the 29th of June 2007? Can you recall how, when, where and why you created your first social identity? What about the names that

people used to call you at school? How have your memories of the past gone on to affect your present day life?

I can shut my eyes and replay everything included within every section of this thesis. The bland furnishings within my room in Melbourne, for example, are as vivid in my mind now as they were the day I packed my bag and headed home. I can hear the voices of the couple in the room next door. I can smell the food from the kitchens that filled the dark and narrow passage outside. I can feel the tears on my cheek and the cramp in my fingers as I bared my heart and soul onto the blank pages of my diary. My goal was to see if I could use language (i.e. the plotline) to build up a similar picture in your mind. I want you imagining that you were there.

The early morning shower in Christchurch was just as valuable as the one I had in Melbourne. Likewise, the Aussie Burger was as significant as the Kiwi Burger eaten the day before. Both played their part in this plot. Licking my lips I can still taste them both today. An ethnographer cannot, and arguably should not, switch off during these moments[282]. We all shower. We all eat. So why shouldn't they share the stage that they inevitably helped me (de)construct? Why shouldn't we incorporate the things that we think about when there is no one else around? Why shouldn't we include the things that we think when we are supposed to be watching and/or listening to the experiences of others?[283] Why can't my academic thesis also be a personal narrative? Or, vice versa, why shouldn't my personal narrative also be an academic thesis?[284]

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[282] According Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, an ethnographer "…participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives… watching…listening. … Collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned. … It (ethnography) also bears a close resemblance to the routine ways in which people make sense of the world in everyday life". What they fail to mention, however, is that the ethnographers routine must also be taken into consideration, especially if they are in the process of conducting participant observation. While they acknowledge the importance of embracing reflexivity within contemporary ethnography, they still fall someway short of encouraging the ethnographer to take centre stage. In **Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (1995)** *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 2nd Edition (London: Routledge) (p. 2); In **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity* (London: Sage) (p. 37).

[283] David McCurdy, James Spradley and Dianna Shandy warn against the continued exclusion of the observer, noting how they felt it was impossible for even the more experienced ethnographers to be "entirely objective". They argued that it was unrealistic and incorrect to think that somebody could completely disassociated/disconnect themselves (i.e. their own cultural and personal backgrounds) from their ethnographic studies. In **David W. McCurdy, James P. Spradley and Dianna J. Shandy (2005)** *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society*, 2nd Edition (Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc) (p. 84).

[284] Amanda Coffey has also discussed the importance of recognising the fact that the ethnographer is always a part of his/her ethnography, noting how in her opinion "it is epistemologically productive to do so, and at best naïve to deny the self an active and situated place in the field". Like those before her, however, she also warns against the temptation to focus the entire gaze upon one's self, claiming that such a decision would immediately "render much ethnographic work meaningless". She concludes that while "Our relationships with others in the field can provide a source of self-identification", ethnographers can

I want to spend my life inspiring and educating others. I want to evoke critical debates and provoke discussions. To me, that is the primary responsibility of being an academic. It is our duty to both stimulate and facilitate the voices of the future. It's about being heard and, more importantly, being understood. As convincing as my PhD plans may have sounded back in 2005, 2006 and even the first half of 2007, I was guilty of underestimating, if not completely overlooking, the most important part of the entire proposal. Me. My mother saw it straight away. She told me to look in the mirror. Why didn't I listen?

My over-riding confidence that I would be immediately accepted as one of the in-group came almost entirely from my nostalgic memories of sports-related experiences. It wasn't, as perhaps it should have been, extracted from the textbooks. I had already convinced myself that I possessed all the qualities needed to be an excellent ethnographer. I wasn't hard. I didn't take much convincing. I have always loved people watching, and I have always been a good listener[285]. I have also proven, on many occasions, my unrivalled ability to remember almost anything remotely related to both sport and tourism[286]. Furthermore, I saw myself as an expert at managing and manipulating social interaction, especially when it involves watching sport[287].

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not "lose sight of the ethnographic imperative that we are seeking to understand and make sense of the social worlds of others, albeit using ourselves as key research instruments. Lastly, it would be wrong to suggest that most of us ever really become part of the cultural setting we study, and that our identities have a lasting impact on those cultural settings. That implies far greater level of self-importance than most of us enjoy, and quite rightly so". I may not have had a lasting impact on those I met or the setting in which I met them, but the same can not be said for the impact they had on me. Furthermore, I've been a part of the wider cultural setting for over half my life, both in terms of sports tourism and tourism academia. I hope you have not found this narrative meaningless. I hope you can see the links that exists between the self and the social. In **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity* (London: Sage) (p. 37).

[285] The primary task of an ethnographer is to watch, listen and learn. According to Catherine Palmer, "the ethnographer is concerned with understanding the world from the point o view of those studied. This requires a stance that is uncritical of the behaviour and activities observed and moreover, one which remains open to element that cannot be codified at the time of the study". The thought that I may see something that I either didn't approve of or hadn't been guilty of on many past occasions hadn't crossed my mind. I thought that I knew exactly the kind of behaviour I was going to encounter in Melbourne. In **Catherine Palmer (2001)** Ethnography: A Research Method in Practice, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 3, pp.301-312 (p. 301).

[286] Kathleen and Billie DeWalt stressed the importance of having a good memory, noting the need to test and tune it prior to embarking on an ethnographic field trip. I have subsequently (i.e. post Melbourne) discovered that Amanda Coffey also supported my pre-excursion assumptions, suggesting that "[E]thnography is in itself an act of collective and individual memories", and that "[F]ieldwork is evocative because it enables us to remember and capture a particular temporal moment of our lives". In **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity* (London: Sage) (p. 111). See also **Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt (2002)** *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira).

[287] Wayne Fife stressed the importance of engaging participants in conservational (Two-way) dialogue, a opposed to (one-way) interrogation. He also suggested that the use of unstructured interviews

My desire to gain an even greater understanding of the world of the sport tourist, whilst also saving any type of analysis till after the excursion led me to believe that I was suitably qualified for the job in hand. I was also able to draw strength and comfort from Carla Willig's request to let the participants take the lead role in the data collection process, and was even happier to read her thoughts regarding the need to be "flexible enough to facilitate the emergence of new, and unanticipated, categories of meaning and experience"[288]. Likewise, Wayne Fife's suggestion that "Along with an eye for observation, it is necessary for an ethnographic researcher to develop an ear for interviewing" only served to increase my confidence that I would find my ethnography easy[289]. I not only have two good eyes, but also two pretty good ears for a story.

My background reading helped me build up the belief that my own fanaticism would prove strong enough to ensure immediate acceptance amongst the sport tourists that I expected to meet on my travels[290]. For example, Ian Jones' serious leisure-based study into the social identification of English football fans encouraged me to re-consider the motivations of those buying the cheapest sports tour package to Melbourne[291]. I fully

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could help generate topics that I may not have considered prior to the excursion. I have always considered myself as good listener, as well as a good communicator. My years as a tourism information officer and tour guide, along with my time as a tutor and supervisor, have helped me develop these skills and attributes. See **Wayne Fife (2005)** *Doing Fieldwork: Ethnographic Methods for Research in Developing Countries and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

[288] In **Carla Willig (2001)** *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: adventures in theory and method* (Buckingham: OUP) (p. 16).

[289] In **Wayne Fife (2005)** *Doing Fieldwork: Ethnographic Methods for Research in Developing Countries and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan) (p. 93).

[290] Sport captures and presents the qualities of individuality while at the same time demonstrating how such individuality, when disciplined by rational order, can become aesthetically pleasing and desirable as fraternal communality. The development of a strong allegiance to a particular sports team can strongly assist in the provision of group affiliation (however superficial or illusionary). According to Guttmann, fans tend to be partisans who maintain allegiance to a team over an extended period of time. See, for further discussion, **Leon Mann and Phillip Pearce (1978)** 'Social psychology of the sports spectator', in Dennis. J. Glencross (Ed.), *Psychology and Sport* (NSW: McGraw-Hill); **Allan Guttmann (1986**) *Sports Spectators* (New York: Columbia University Press); **Ian Jones (2000)** A model of serious leisure identification: the case of football fandom, *Leisure Studies* 19 (4), pp. 283-298; **Daniel C. Funk and Jeff James (2001)** The Psychological Continuum Model: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding an Individual's Psychological Connection to Sport, *Sport Management Review* 4, pp. 119-150; **Otmar Weiss (2001)** Identity reinforcement in sport: revisiting the symbolic interactionist legacy, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 36 (4), pp. 393-405; **Daniel L. Wann, Merrill J. Melnick, Gordon W. Russell and Dale G. Pease (2001**) *Sport Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators* (London: Routledge); **Richard Giulianotti (2005)** The Sociability of Sport, Scotland Football Supporters as Interpreted through the Sociology of Georg Simmel, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 40 (3), pp. 289–306.

[291] According to Robert Stebbins, the concept of serious leisure consists of six individual components, each of which helps to define and distinguish an individual's leisure habits. The qualities he identified were perseverance, the following of a 'career' path, significant personal effort, benefits to the individual, the identification of participants with the activity, and the unique ethos that exists within the activity. Ian Jones adopted the serious leisure concept within his examination of the social identity of Luton Town supporters during the 1996/1997 football season, interviewing twenty-one fans with varying degrees of affiliation and attachment to the club. His findings implied that those with the strongest sense of

anticipated that their level of social identification to the All Blacks may be lower than that found amongst those willing to pay a higher price and purchase a more comprehensive tour package. I didn't, however, consider that those on my tour would be any less serious about the leisure experience. I just thought that they would be more sociable. I thought the in-group that we created would be more hospitable. I thought that those on the other packages may be more interested in the result of the rugby match.

Despite all the media reports suggesting that there would be more New Zealanders than Australians in Melbourne that weekend, my personal experience, along with my interpretations of Daniel Wann's various sports-related experiments, proved powerful enough to convince me that those travelling across the Tasman Sea with me would still regard themselves as representing a minority group[292]. The numerous sociological studies on sports fan behaviour also supported my expectations that I would instantly find myself in the middle of a newly formed in-group similar to those created on all of my previous sports-related away trips[293]. Furthermore, having read all of Richard Giulianotti's

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connection (i.e. those displaying signs of serious leisure) also had the strongest identity within the social groups to which they belonged. More importantly, however, he suggested that the model created over the course of his study could in theory be replicated "to any serious leisure activity that provides its participants with a strong social identity" in **Ian Jones (2000)** A model of serious leisure identification: the case of football fandom, *Leisure Studies* 19 (4), pp. 283-298 (p. 295). See also **Robert Stebbins (1992)** *Amateurs, Professionals and Serious Leisure* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press).

[292] Daniel Wann's numerous studies into the relationships that fans construct and consume illustrate the linkages between personal motivation, social identity, self esteem and the need to not only belong to a group, but also defend it against those belonging to other groups. Teams also act as a reference group to which the individual fan strongly identifies. See, for example, **Daniel L. Wann (1994)** 'The "noble" sports fan: The relationships between team identification, self-esteem, and aggression', *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 78, pp. 864-866; **Daniel L. Wann (1995)** 'Preliminary Validation of the Sport Fan Motivation Scale', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* November 1995, pp. 377-396; **Daniel L. Wann (1996)** Seasonal Changes in Spectators' Identification and Involvement with and Evaluations of College Basketball and Football Teams, *The Psychological Record* 46 (1), pp. 201-216**.**

[293] According to the ever-increasing amount of literature on the subject of sports spectatorship, typical motivations for the consumption of professional sport include; the desire to enhance of one's esteem through feelings of accomplishment, the desire to escape the reality of everyday, the desire to be entertained and experience the drama/thrill of uncertainty within a safe and controlled environment, and, finally, the desire for an increased sense of cultural belonging and social attachment, typically with members of ones own family but also with friends and work colleagues**.** These motives frequently overlap, and it is rare for a fan to base their decisions on only one reason. See, for further discussion, **Peter Donnelly and Karen Young (1988)** The Construction and Confirmation of Identity in Sport Subcultures, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 5, pp. 223-240; **Joseph Maguire (1999)** *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations* (Cambridge: Polity Press); **James Redden and Carol J. Steiner (2000)** Fanatical consumers: towards a framework for research, *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 17 (4), pp. 322 – 33; **Kevin Gwinner and Scott R. Swanson (2003)** A model of fan identification: antecedents and sponsorship outcomes, *Journal of Services Marketing* 17 (3), pp. 275-294; **Christine B. Green and Ian Jones (2005)** Serious Leisure, Social Identity and Sport Tourism, *Sport in Society* 8 (2), pp. 164-181; **Mike Morgan (2007)** 'We're not the Barmy Army!': Reflections on the Sports Tourist Experience, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 9, pp. 361-372.

interpretive ethnographic studies, I was fully expecting to witness some newly formed social 'communitas'[294].

I placed a great deal of faith in the fact that I would be surrounding myself with likeminded, equally passionate, individuals. I thought that the collective removal of our 'everyday' would effectively remove the socially constructed barriers that the literature suggested we regularly build on a daily basis[295]. In reality, the biggest barrier that I was confronted with at Christchurch International Airport was the feeling that I didn't belong in the same room, let alone on the same package as those around me. Upon reflection, however, I have been able to recognise the fact that the minute I started to relax and consciously forget about my research agenda (i.e. self-indulge), I also started to overcome the aforementioned barrier.

My biggest regret is that it took me an entire day to consciously make this decision. What's more, it has taken almost a year and a half of continued reflection for me to fully appreciate the life-changing impact that the first twenty-four hours of my Melbourne excursion has had on both my personal and professional philosophies.

Without knowing it at the time, I somewhat instantaneously went from feeling excluded (i.e. being an outsider), to feeling fully included (i.e. being an insider) within

[294] Victor Turner's notes how 'spontaneous communitas can never be adequately expressed in a structural form, but it may arise unpredictably at any time between human beings who are institutionally reckoned or defined as members of any kind of social groupings or of none". His analytical dichotomy between structure (i.e. the organisation of society's rules and statutes) and 'communitas (i.e. the… 'direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities') offered him (and me both) a platform for pilgrimage-based research. He defined it as a special experience where the individual is able to temporarily rise above the structures that regulate the 'everyday' and allow people to unite, regardless of boundaries or status. A Pilgrimage was seen a symbolic and ritual form of cultural or normative communitas that tested the limits of such structure and led to imagined communities. In **Victor Turner (1969)** *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine) (p. 137); **Victor Turner (1975)** *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: Symbolic action in human society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press). See also **Richard Giulianotti (1991)** Scotland's Tartan Army in Italy: The Case for the Carnivalesque, *Sociological Review* 39 (3), pp. 503–27; **Richard Giulianotti (1994)** Scoring Away from Home: A Statistical Study of Scotland Football Fans at International Matches in Romania and Sweden, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 29 (2), pp. 171-200; **Richard Giulianotti (1996)** Back to the future: An ethnography of Ireland's football fans at the 1994 World Cup finals in the USA, *International Review for the Sociology Sport* 31 (3), pp. 323-347; **Alan G. Ingham and Mary G. McDonald (2003)** 'Sport and Community/Communitas', in Ralph C. Wilcox, David L. Andrews, Robert Pitter and Richard L. Irwin (Eds.) *Sporting dystopias: the making and meaning of urban sport cultures* (pp.17-34) (New York: SUNY Press).

[295] Much of the group relations literature emphasises the strong sense of belonging and increased attachment that individuals experience when ever their social identity is perceived to under threat or at risk from an external influence. See, for example, **Nyla Branscombe, Daniel L. Wann, Jeffrey Noel and Jason Coleman (1993)** In-Group or Out-Group Extremity: Importance of the Threatened Social Identity, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 19 (4), pp. 381-388; **Michael Hogg (1996)** 'Intra-group processes, group structure and social identity', in W. Peter Robinson (Ed.) *Social Groups and Identities* (pp. 65-93) (Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann); **Daniel L Wann and Frederick G Grieve (2005)** Biased Evaluations of In-Group and Out-Group Spectator Behavior at Sporting Events: The Importance of Team Identification and Threats to Social Identity, *The Journal of Social Psychology* 145 (5), pp. 531 – 546.

my research. Looking back, I can see that my fellow sport tourists didn't need to talk to me in Melbourne, Auckland or Wellington. More importantly, I didn't really need to talk to them. As much as I desperately wanted to be included, I remained equally determined not to intrude upon - or forced myself into - the personal leisure spaces that these pre-established groups had clearly already created. I could see that they wanted to be left alone to enjoy themselves. In hindsight, I can now appreciate the fact that this is exactly what I also wanted. I wanted to participate in my observations. Forget the research. Forget the distance or objectivity. I wanted to be as much a sport tourist as those around me. I wanted to indulge myself and make the most of my time away from home.

Looking back, I can see the entire excursion from a different, if not superior, viewpoint. I certainly have a different perspective to draw from. I am able to note several moments where I consciously let my nostalgia cloud my judgement. I had always wanted to visit Melbourne. I had always wanted to visit the MCG, Rod Laver Arena and walk around Albert Park. I couldn't ignore my fond memories of travelling away to watch Cambridge United. I missed that feeling of belonging to the minority. I can hear the voices that continuously reminded me of how I was always included as one of the in-group and of how easy it was to strike up a conversation with others supporters on the terraces, many of whom were much older than me. The theories of social identity, self categorisation and optimal distinctiveness seemed to relate perfectly to both my past experiences, and the aims of my ongoing sport tourism research.

Should I have spent longer finding out why no one else appeared to have tried what I wanted to achieve? Yes. I know that my supervisors certainly suggested it. At the time, however, I was adamant that I could effectively test the notions of Optimal Distinctiveness Theory outside of the scientific parameters within which it had originally been created[296]. I was convinced that I could successfully study the creation and consumption of socially-constructed in-group/out-group bias and social identity in a series of real life contextual situations. I also thought that I could achieve all of my goals while both participating (i.e. being a sport tourist) and observing (i.e. being an ethnographer). Do I still think that it is possible to do both? Yes. Do I still think that I have the necessary skills and attributes to achieve my initial research aim? Maybe.

[296] See for discussion **Marilynn B. Brewer (1991)** The social self: On being the same and different at the same time, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17, pp. 475-482; **Marilynn B. Brewer (2005)** 'Optimal distinctiveness, social identity, and the self', in Mark R. Leary and June P. Tangney, (Eds.) *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 480-491) (New York: Guilford Press).

While the cost was admittedly the major reason behind my choice of sports tour operator, the decision to opt against joining one of the more established companies was not entirely budget-related. I thought that the low price would attract people my own age. I thought that the operator's heavy focus on the social aspect of the sport tourist experience would definitely work to my advantage. I didn't want to be stuck in with a group of married, middle-aged, business men with large amounts of spending money. I wanted a diverse spectrum that covered all ages, all genders and, potentially, all social classes. I wanted to target the 'other' sport tourist. The travelling sports event consumer who I felt had so far been neglected in the sport tourism literature.

Looking back, I would probably make the same choice again. I still think that, in theory, I should have found it a lot easier to gain the trust of those in which I had - and still have - the most in common. Likewise, I still have difficulty accepting the fact that I found myself feeling so lost and alone. I hate the thought that I failed, but I do not regret the path that I choose, or the decisions that I made in the heat of the moment. I have never ruled out the possibility of revisiting my original idea. Too many of my original questions remain unanswered. I can't help but wonder what might have been.

I knew that the package I had chosen would attract large, pre-established, groups to sign up. I knew that they weren't going to be any tour reps meeting us at the airport, and that there would be no pre-game entertainment organised at our hotel. I didn't, however, account for the fact that I was going to lose my self esteem and self confidence so suddenly. I didn't think that I would be surrounded by those only interested in socialising within their own well-established private circles. I also hadn't calculated for the fact that those who were polite enough to acknowledge my presence amongst them would show absolutely no interest in letting me (the outsider) inside. This only hit home at 5.00am in the departure lounge at Christchurch International Airport. And it hit home hard. It knocked me for a bigger six than Damian Martyn's impressive effort at the MCG.

Though I had identified the potential of attending stadium tours as a means of initiating additional social interaction within other groups of sport tourists, this was never intended to be my only way of meeting people. Once the doubts had firmly established themselves in my mind, it wasn't long before they were followed by a cocktail of denial, despair, depression and desperation. Despite this, however, I was able convince myself that my best hope lay in the hands of a Maori sports tour representative. I refused to

accept the possibility that I may not hear anything back from Tony. I was desperate to believe that he would come and save the day.

Upon further reflection, I can see how I spent too much time thinking about what might happen (i.e. the future), as opposed to working on the basis of what was actually happening (i.e. the present). My lack of a game plan caused me to rely too heavily on an ad-hoc style of ethnography. As a result, I was continuously reacting to my ever-changing circumstances. I felt that I was always standing one or two steps behind where I needed to be. While I had seriously underestimated the challenge I had created for myself, the lack of a contingency plan led me to head straight for the panic button. I wanted to use Tony's offer of assistance to access as many email addresses as possible. I saw this as a much easier, not to mention safer, route to travel.

I planned to work something out with his employers at the pre-match party. I was also convinced that, with Tony's help, I'd be able to secure their assistance during my second excursion to Auckland. I still remain convinced that the doubt and desperation would have disappeared the second he rang me back. I am equally convinced that things would have worked out completely different had I have been able to attend the pre-match event organised by Tony's employers. I am sure that, in such a situation, I would have found the courage to introduce myself to my fellow sport tourists. I am sure that I would have been introduced to Steven.

I still feel physically sick at the thought of how I literally crumbled and collapsed under the weight of the pressure that I had placed on my shoulders. I'm still not sure if it was the life-changing, 'eureka', moment that Deborah Reed-Danahay speaks of in the opening chapter of her autoethnographic text, but I know that it definitely played a major part in the plotline that I have subsequently constructed[297]. It certainly resulted in a complete reassessment of the self and social identities that I had presented so far on the excursion. It also forced me to reconsider the way that I planned to approach the rest of my time in Melbourne.

I refused to dedicate the remainder of my weekend to chasing 'the other'. I had no intention of making an even bigger fool of myself around those in my hotel. My black-out made me appreciate how lucky I was to be there. It made me appreciate the reason why everyone else had been oblivious back in the hotel. They were there for a good time, as opposed to a long time. They didn't care about 'the other'. They cared

[297] See **Deborah Reed-Danahay (Ed.) (1997)** *Auto/Ethnography: Re-writing the self and the social* (Oxford: Berg)

only about themselves. They clearly had little interest in exploring Melbourne, or visiting some of the city's famous sporting venues. I, on the other-hand, wanted to do exactly that. For al I knew they may have all been to Melbourne a million times before. They may have already seen everything the city had to offer. They may also have been staying for more than just the weekend.

I soon came to realise that I knew hardly anything about the people I had been trying so hard to impress. All I had discovered from my time in the hotel bar was that one of them was married and at least a couple of them had been to Carisbrook at some stage in their life. In reality, the only person that I actually knew in Melbourne was me. I was also the only person whose behaviour I could physically control. I was the only one who knew exactly what I wanted to do over the course of the excursion. So, after hours of endless soul searching, I decided to ignore half the voices in my head and focus my gaze upon myself. I decided sod 'the others' and place the wants and needs of this sport tourist first for a change. As a result, I finally became the self-indulgent sport tourist that I had always secretly wanted to be.

I still spent the majority of my time observing people, recording everything I saw, heard and felt. Upon reflection, however, I quickly began to realise that this was something I had effectively spent my entire life doing anyway. This wasn't anything new. The only difference was the fact that I had started writing everything down. I mean *everything*. I had never kept a diary before. I had written a few stories, but never about me. I had always let my imagination dictate what and who I wrote about. Writing about my feelings and fears was something completely new. I was amazed at how much I had to say, and how good it felt to get it out of my head and onto the page.

As I lay in bed at 9.47pm on Friday 29th of June 2007, I was finally able to see what my research was all about. I was finally able to see this trip through the eyes of everyone else that I had met that day. It wasn't how many email addresses or business cards that I could collect. On the contrary, this was all about the experience of being away from home. Where we were didn't matter. We could have been anywhere in the world. The point is that we were not at home. Being in Melbourne may have meant everything to me but the same could not be said for those that I had encountered so far on the trip. Being with there mates was everything to them. Being away from home appeared equally important, providing them with something different from their everyday environment. The rugby was merely the excuse.

It was about drinking alcohol at 7am. It was about walking around two airports, an aeroplane and a hotel lobby dressed as a soldier, a nun, a highway patrol officer or a doctor. The costume chosen was as irrelevant and the airports and the hotel. The most important thing was the fact they that were not doing it alone. It was about the freedom one feels when they escape from their everyday routine. It was also the security one feels when surrounded and supported by friends and family. Suddenly it all made sense to me. Suddenly I realised how blind I had been. Up to then I had just wanted to make it through the rest of the trip without any more temper tantrums (or tears). Up to then I was focusing on survival. Up to then I was terrified of ending up down and out in the gutter once again. Suddenly, however, I was looking forward to sun rise. Suddenly I was looking forward to starting a brand new day. Suddenly I found myself ready for some long overdue sleep.

# Chapter 32: Look who's talking now!

I woke up at 7.00am, feeling like a completely different person to the one who sneaked off to bed at 9.30am the previous night. My headache had gone. I felt ready to take on the world. I think that I was probably the first to have a shower that morning, and was not overly surprised by the lack of a queue for our continental breakfast buffet. I chose to sit at the same table that I had occupied whilst consuming my toasted sandwich the previous day. I made no effort to make eye contact with either of the two couples sitting at two different tables in the room. I also had no interest in trying to listen in to either of their private conversations.

I simply ate my cereal (muesli), ate my two pieces of toast (one with strawberry jam, the other with marmalade), had a drink of water (there was no juice provided, only tea or coffee) and made my way back to my room to get ready for the adventure that lay ahead. I wasn't able to go for a morning run, but wanted to head straight for Albert Park. I knew, from Google Earth, that it would take me an hour to walk there. I knew from the flyer that I had picked up at reception on my way to breakfast that the city's free tour bus didn't go out that far and didn't start circulating till after 10am. I wanted to be back in the city centre for lunch. I wanted sufficient time to take a look around the Rod Laver Arena, before coming back to the hotel for some pre-match drinks in the bar.

I assumed that I wouldn't be the only one that needed to get from the hotel to the stadium, and hoped to be invited to walk with someone (anyone) to the match. I had one more attempt at getting hold of Tony as I walked the full course of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix track in a personal best of one hour, fifteen minutes, but rather than leaving yet another answer-phone message I decided to send him a text that read "Hi Tony, what's the deal with tonight?, am I still okay to gatecrash your pre-match party?, please let me know asap. Thanks again! Richard". I no longer perceived it to be the end of the world if I heard nothing back. I was still walking around with my fingers firmly crossed and hoped that I would hear my phone ringing the second that I gave up on the idea and made some alternative arrangements.

After spending a few hours in Albert Park, including ten minutes at the memorial for the steward who was killed doing a job his family said he loved, I headed over to the

Rod Laver Arena, via the Melbourne Visitor Information Centre. To cut a very long story short, five of my interviewees were actually met on the match day in Melbourne. I met an Auckland businessman named Tim as I waited for my guided tour of Melbourne Park. I met another Ian (an Aussie from Brisbane) and Daryl (his Kiwi son from Wellington) on the tour of the Rod Laver Arena and was subsequently invited to meet several of their friends during a small pre-match party. Daryl had boasted about his balcony view of the MCG and I was told that I simply had to see it for myself. They were adamant I shouldn't be on my own before the game, and having checked my phone a thousand times that day, I couldn't have agreed more.

I finally felt like I belonged. If the first twenty-six hours of my excursion represented the stuff of nightmares, the next were arguably the stuff of my dreams. Even the unexpected win for the Wallabies provided me with plenty to write about in my diary. The city centre had gone from a place of celebrations, to a place full of tension and obvious unease. It reminded me of football matches attended in England, especially those where the away team had unexpectedly come out victorious. On this occasion, however, it was the home team that had won. The Australian supporters were, as predicted, outnumbered by those wearing black, but thankfully that didn't stop them teasing and taunting the clearly aggrieved looking New Zealanders.

Don't get me wrong, there is nothing I hate more than an Australian victory. I'd rather see the French win. I was, however, unable to ignore the comments I had heard as I walked toward the immigration hall the previous day. I thought about the person that swore to rip up his tickets and swim home if the All Blacks lost. I thought about the predicted scores given, and the rather rude reaction to our pilot's impromptu announcement as we taxied towards the terminal. I thought about all the times that I had been proven wrong when it came to predicting a sporting outcome. I just had to smile. I couldn't help it.

Several scuffles were witnessed as we passed the main railway station and I feared that this could only be the beginning. Daryl and his Dad refused to go out after the game, opting instead to go back to the safety of their city centre apartment. They both wanted to watch the replay. While two of Daryl's friends showed little interest in my research, another two offered to help out in any way they could. After politely declining the offer to go back and help them finish off the alcohol we had reluctantly left behind before the match, I found myself heading towards a small underground sports bar surrounded by a

mixture of 'yellow' and 'black'. I had overheard a couple of people talking about Team New Zealand and their ongoing attempt at regaining the Americas Cup in Valencia.

Within a matter of minutes I was simultaneously watching the Americas Cup Final and the Qualifying for the French Grand Prix. It was great. There was another screen showing a replay of the Test Match that most of the room had only just watched. My eyes, however, were firmly fixed on the Formula One. I spoke to no-one except the barman and didn't leave until the early hours of the next morning. I think it was around 3.00am. I was now very happy to be by myself. I was no longer trying to be something (or someone) that I wasn't. I could feel my self esteem regaining its strength.

The only person I spoke to at my first and, to date, only AFL fixture was the female steward who informed me that the vast majority of teams playing in the nationwide competition were actually from Melbourne. I had asked the steward to point me to the away end, assuming the Western Bulldogs must have travelled from Western Australia, as opposed to Western Melbourne. Ten minutes later and she was still sitting in the aisle next to my seat, trying to explain the rules of her favourite sport. The game itself seemed to go on forever. As recommended by the Museum curator on the Friday afternoon, I had arrived an hour early and was keen to soak up as much of the atmosphere as possible. I actually did two laps of the stadium concourse before entering the ground.

Like my first football match at the Abbey Stadium, I was far more interested in the behaviour of the crowd. I was surprised by the number of families there, from newborn babies through to great grandparents. It certainly seemed like more of a day out than a professional sports fixture. While the passionate 40,000 were sadly not louder than the 90,000 at the previous night's Test Match, the atmosphere was still unforgettable. In fact, it remains the closest thing to an English football match that I have experience since leaving Cambridge. The fans rarely stopped singing and the flags never stopped waving. In total, I was there for at least three hours. I even stuck around afterwards to listen to Glenn Archer thank everybody for helping him to reach 300 AFL games.

I loved every minute of the occasion. I thought back to my first visits to Wembley, to Monaco, to Lords and to Carisbrook. It was another cultural sports-related experience to add to the list. I spent much of the game trying to spot items of All Black or Wallabies-related clothing. I looked everywhere for a Black scarf or a Yellow and Green jersey (or vice versa). I saw none. All I saw was light blue and white (for the Kangaroos) and dark blue and red (for the Bulldogs). The members stand was much busier than it had

been at the Test Match. I looked unsuccessfully for Bill, and tried to see if anyone was sitting on the two giant sofas that he had showed us on the tour.

Only the rough outline of a rectangular playing field and several stained patches of grass where the various sponsor logos had been revealed that the same venue had hosted a rugby game less than twenty-four hours previously. They must have been up all night. Likewise, in the city centre itself, it was almost as if the Test Match had never taken place at all. Whether all the New Zealanders were hiding in their hotel rooms, or had already made their way to the airport remains another unknown. I had assumed that those on my package would be on the same Monday afternoon flight home, but my hotel was also very quiet when I set off for the AFL game. It was even quieter when I returned four hours later. I had made a point of returning to my seat in Federation Square and people-watching for an hour before the game.

That evening, I found myself back in the same underground sports bar, sitting on the same bar stool and watching the same Formula One drivers race around the same Formula One circuit. By the time the drivers saw the chequered flag, however, I was at a 'locals' table exchanging stories about our all time favourite drivers and most memorable races. Several hours later, I found myself saying goodbye to my new friends and merrily skipping my way back to the hotel. The streets were completely deserted. I felt like a local. I felt at home. I felt happy. I felt drunk.

The only person I spoke to for longer than five minutes on the Monday morning was an Australian that I met during my tour of the Telstra Dome. His name was Mark and like Daryl's father (Ian), he had flown over from Brisbane for the weekend. He gave me his business card but admitted he was not much of a 'sport tourist' and had only been convinced to attend by a couple of work colleagues. He had never travelled beyond Queensland to watch a sporting fixture prior to that weekend but felt a trip to the MCG was something that every Australian needed to do at least once in their life. Having seen his team win he was now seriously considering his first ever trip over to New Zealand to see if they could do it again in Auckland the following month.

On my afternoon flight back to Christchurch, I sat next to a Dunedin family that had watched the game on the Television in their Melbourne motel room. They were quick to distance themselves for the 'sport tourists' that they had seen out and about in the city. They were also keen to share their opinions about the huge influx of New Zealanders that had caused them to re-assess their own tourist behaviour that weekend. The family's collective offer to help my research was appreciated, and I took down their contact details

accordingly. While I felt that including their thoughts in my data collection would inevitably force me to re-assess the parameters of my research objectives, I was also reluctant to pass up any invitation for assistance.

The following two weeks were spent writing up my notes and adding to my diary. I tried to type the conversations up verbatim, based on my field notes and memories of what was said. I left it three days before I started to email those who had agreed to participate. I also spent this time (re)evaluating everything that had happened in Melbourne. I tried to make sense of what I had seen, felt, thought and written/recorded. I chose to keep the whole 'blackout' incident a secret. I did, however, inform people of the 'early night' and the surprising struggle that I had encountered when trying to infiltrate the pre-established groups found in the airport, on the plane, in the hotel, on the streets and, finally, in the various stadiums visited.

I was quick to point out that it had been anything but the relaxing break they all accused me of having been on. Having picked a different tour operator and learnt a great deal from my Melbourne experience, however, I was quietly confident about how my Auckland trip would turn out. I knew the bars and restaurants in and around the Viaduct Harbour would be the place to be. More importantly, I had already arranged to meet up with a couple of friends the night before the Test Match. I was determined to minimise the time spent by myself. My biggest concern was the lack of sport tourist attractions in the city. Having phoned Eden Park, I was disappointed to discover they had no stadium tours running over the weekend. They only organised tours for pre-established groups. Apparently no-one had been in touch to request such an activity.

# Chapter 33: The rest is history

I really thought that my prior knowledge of Auckland would assist me. In reality, it actually made it a lot harder to balance, as opposed to completely distance, the personal with the professional. I was torn between socialising with friends and visiting places where I thought that I might meet or at least get to observe some potential respondents. My hotel may have been full of those on the same sports package, but I rarely saw them in the bar or restaurant. The addition of my official All Blacks beanie, which I wore for most of the weekend, definitely helped me fit in amongst those at the Test Match. So much so, in fact, that I was able to secure myself the contact details of three potential respondents. I spoke to a couple of people on the short train ride to and from Eden Park. The rest of my interaction, however, occurred in the bars and clubs of Auckland city centre. It couldn't have been any different to my Melbourne experience.

My four-day trip to Wellington was added as much out of personal curiosity as it was desperation to try and find some more interviewees. A large part of me still hoped that I would be able to extract enough meaningful data from the respondents I had been in regular communication with following my excursions to Melbourne and Auckland. By the time the trip arrived, however, I had also started to (re)consider my options. Whilst I had page upon page of transcripts to work with, I knew that I had pretty much extracted all I could ever hope to from my various respondents. Sadly, I also knew that I still lacked the depth to implement the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) techniques that I had initially planned to use[298].

[298] The IPA approach is phenomenological, according to Jonathon Smith, insofar as it is 'concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event as opposed to the attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself'. Both are seen as lived experiences that typically change a person's conception of themselves, others and the world. IPA seeks to discover meanings by identifying the essential psychological constituents or structure of an interviewee's description of an experience. It is all about interpretation. IPA, however, is less concerned with 'testing pre-determined constructs than with examining individual themes elicited from the transcripts of intensive, semi-structured interviews'. Unfortunately, whilst most on my follow up interviews had lasted over an hour, I would not have described any of the mas being 'intensive'. They were more conversational, and included many things that had little to do with my exploration into social identity. See **Jonathon A. Smith (1996)** Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse: using interpretive phenomenological analysis in health psychology, *Psychology and Health* 11, pp. 261-271. Alternatively, refer to **Jonathon A. Smith, Paul Flowers and Mike Osborn (1997)** 'Interpretative phenomenological analysis and the psychology of health and illness', in Lisa Yardley (Ed.) *Material Discourse of Health and Illness* (pp.68-92) (London: Routledge).

Though I was never going to turn down the opportunity to get a few more email addresses, I had already decided that I was going to focus my attention on a mixture of people watching and comparison making. With the match being played in Wellington, I had also arranged to catch up with Jim for the first time since we went our separate ways in Melbourne. The Centennial Rugby League Test, around which I had built this third and final excursion, was promoted as a special celebration and I was curious to see how many people would travel to Wellington for the October weekend. It was also supposed to be the weekend New Zealand played Australia in the Rugby World Cup Semi-Finals in France. Unfortunately, no one had told either the French or the English rugby teams, both of whom cause major upsets by winning their quarter finals the previous weekend. As a result, the games that I got up to see on the Sunday and Monday mornings of my trip were Argentina against South Africa and England against France.

I bought myself a brand new England rugby shirt on the Sunday and ended up watching the game with a French girl staying in the same Backpackers. I also arranged for a guided tour of the Westpac Stadium ('the Cake Tin') and spent several hours talking to the curator of the National Cricket Museum that I found at the Basin Reserve (Wellington's other international sports ground). I spent my mornings walking around the city and my afternoons reading the work of Carolyn Ellis and Deborah Reed-Danahay. My three evenings were spent alone in a city centre sports bar and my nights were spent writing in my diary in my room. It was certainly the least stressful of my three excursions.

On the morning after the Test Match I caught the cable car up to the city's Botanic Gardens and started to familiar myself with the concept of writing all about one's own experiences and emotion al subjectivity. It was as if it had been written just for the situation that I had found myself in. In less than a page of text, for example, Deborah Reed-Danahay had managed to essentially sum up everything that I had been thinking for the past four months of my life. It was as if she had been reading my mind, or watching my adventures on television. It was actually pretty scary. I half expected her to jump out from behind one of the trees that I had chosen to sit by. Ultimately, however, she gave me an entirely new outlook on both my personal and professional life.

Deborah Reed-Danahay helped me to replace the boundaries that I had been struggling to stay within. She helped me see the value of the confessions that dominated much of the diary entries. I felt that I had been gazing in multiple directions from the moment I submitted my PhD proposal. I found myself revisiting my struggle to find

enough respondents, and my subsequent failure to gather sufficient data from the fish that I had managed to catch in Melbourne and Auckland. I had started by looking through the wide lens recommended by the ethnographic texts that I had read prior to my Melbourne excursion. I had tried somewhat unsuccessfully to focus on the socio-cultural experiences of my fellow sport tourist. I had ended up looking at myself in the mirror and being scared by the vulnerable self that I saw staring back at me. I didn't like the cultural interpretations that I was making. I felt something was missing. I just never knew what it was at the time.

> "…I was left feeling that something was missing, that somehow I had misrepresented the experience and betrayed the people. Writing the traditional ethnography I seemed invisible, yet in absolute control. That was not how it appeared to be in the field, or how I felt it should be. I had questions of identity and selfhood, voice and authenticity, and cultural displacement… I was as much the taught as the teacher. That knowledge did not appear to be present in my first ethnography, because I was not present. I wanted to be there, alongside the people, for that's how I felt it was. I wanted to use a form of representation, which would not violate my desire to be alongside the people… I turned to autoethnography, a blend of ethnography and autobiographical writing that incorporates elements of one's own life experience when writing about others, a form of self-narrative that "place[s] the self within a social context"[299]

> "…Back and forth autoethnographers gaze; first they look through an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations" [300]

I started to formulate a rough plan for the future. The notions being introduced to me were unlike anything that I had ever seen before. I loved the fact that it was different. 'How could I argue its creditability?', I asked myself on several occasions. The stories being shared by the contributors to her text appeared to be dominated by emotional stories of 'life-changing' past experiences, which made my experiences look rather pathetic and

[299] Deborah Reed-Danahay's exploration into post-colonial multiple identities and overlapping relationships that exist between genre and voice led her to question the traditional foundations of cultural anthropology. Whilst it is not a new concept, she suggested that ethnographers were "in the midst of a renewed interest in personal narrative, in life history, and other autobiography". In **Deborah Reed-Danahay (Ed.) (1997)** *'Auto/Ethnography: Re-writing the self and the social'* (Oxford: Berg) (p. 1).

[300] Ibid (p. 38).

insignificant. At the same time, however, I couldn't believe how easy and enjoyable it was to read.

I couldn't believe the degree to which I found myself becoming addicted to, obsessed by, the stories I was reading. I found myself captivated and in complete awe of the linguistic creativity on display. I admired the courage and honesty of the authors. More significantly, I loved the audacity of it all. I liked the fact that I was unaware of anyone else who had adopted such an approach. It was something completely new to me. I imagined all the things that I would like to write about as I laid back and enjoyed the spring sunshine on my face.

According to Reed-Danahay, autoethnography is as much a product as it is a process. She saw it as both 'a method and a text'[301]. I thought about all the unexpected problems that I had encountered in my flexible ethnographic method. I thought about my continual desire for someone else to make the first move, and the helpful advice that I had read/received prior to my Melbourne excursion. I started to compare it to the participant observation literature I had uncovered that May[302]. I started thinking about the different descriptors acknowledged by Carolyn Ellis as I headed back into the city centre and my highly anticipated lunch date with the man that I first met on the airport bus into Melbourne. I tried recalling them in my head, testing how much of the material that I had looked at the day before had actually sunk in[303].

[301] Ibid (p. 9).

[302] See, for example, **Catherine Palmer (2001)** Ethnography: A Research Method in Practice, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 3, pp. 301-312; **Michael L. Silk (2005)** 'Sporting Ethnography: Philosophy, Methodology and Reflection', in David L. Andrews, Daniel S. Mason and Michael L. Silk (Eds.) (2005) *Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies* (pp. 65-103) (Oxford: Berg).

[303] According to Carolyn Ellis there are more than 60 terms in the literature with meanings similar to autoethnography. The ones that I could remember back in Wellington were; radical empiricism, critical autobiography, personal narratives, narratives of self, self-stories, personal essays, personal ethnography, self-ethnography, evocative ethnography, reflexive ethnography, narrative ethnography and native ethnography. Some of those that required me checking my notes include: ethnographic novel, interpretive ethnography, experimental ethnography, phenomenological ethnography, autobiographical sociology, introspective novel and introspective ethnography. Autoethnography has become the preferred term of choice, for not just Ellis, but also for a growing number of likeminded academics, my self included. My personal favourite, however, would have to be the ethnographic novel. I do not see the need to distinguish between ethnography that looks at the culture of others, and ethnography that looks at the culture of the ethnographer. To me, ethnography is still ethnography, regardless of the subjects under investigation. Whilst I also like the terms autobiographical sociology and reflexive ethnography, I feel a couple of the terms have been produced by people that may have missed both the point and the purpose of producing a self-inspired narrative. Personally, I do not see Autoethnography as being any more experimental, critical or radical as any other phenomenological method of study. I also think that the term native is outdated and needs eradicating from the social sciences completely. I do not consider myself, or anyone else to be a native, and I am certainly not a native sport tourist. In **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira) (p. 40).

I couldn't believe how much that I remembered. I couldn't believe how much I wanted to find another seat in the sun and continue reading. I found myself desperate to discover more about the people that choose to write all about themselves. I had already discovered that the same names kept appearing again and again. They all appeared to know each other. At least, they seemed to know a lot about the other persons work. I just wasn't sure if any of these authors had actually met each other (i.e. in person) or if it was just a case of them knowing each other through the things they had read. I was already beginning to feel as if I knew Carolyn Ellis, and I had only just started reading her work. I still had a pile of her articles sitting on my desk unread. Once again I had opted to start with the books before moving on to the journal articles.

After an entertaining, equally enjoyable, hour and a half with Jim, in which we put the sporting world to rights and rarely stopped talking long enough to eat our lunch, I spent the rest of the afternoon losing myself in the highly emotional world of an American sociologist named Carolyn Ellis. I took a seat in the Basin Reserve's historic grandstand and, once again, started to reflect upon everything that had happened over the past two years, especially my excursions to Melbourne and Auckland. Everything was making much more sense. I thought long and hard about the voices that I heard, and the person I became during these two trips. It quickly became a question of how, not if, I was going to embrace this new found appreciation of my embodied self. I knew that I would need more information, however, if I was going to convince myself, not to mention my supervisors, of the merits behind this new approach. I knew that I would need the strongest possible justification.

The more I read, the more I remembered. The more I remembered, the more I revelled in what I was reading. My diary entries were littered with raw, previously untapped, emotion. I found myself unable to ignore the narratives related to my memories of my past sports-related experiences. I was somewhat taken aback by my continual comparisons to things I had seen or felt back 'home'. My eye for detail, in terms of what I had and/or hadn't witnessed also surprised me. I found myself being transported back to the time in which the words were first written. I could feel the despair and desperation. I could feel my desire for things to improve.

The observations and opinions recorded in Wellington were quite similar to those noted in Melbourne and Auckland, especially with regards to the collective behaviour of those watching the rugby and the struggle encountered to infiltrate these pre-established in-groups. I was once again on the outside, looking in. I was also equally aware of my

isolation and vulnerability. The emotions experienced, however, were significantly different. I was happy to watch. I no longer wanted to be a part of it. I was no longer desperate to be included or accepted as one of the group. I also began to realise the extent to which my relocation to New Zealand had affected my self esteem, self confidence and social identification.

I wanted to write my own life story. I wanted to write an evocative ethnographic novel. I wanted to share the experiences that led me to leave the UK. I wanted to revisit my childhood. I also wanted to reflect upon my first and last(ing) impressions of my doctoral research. I wanted to (re)interpret my diary. I wanted to talk about the loss of my old life, including my family, my friends, and, most importantly, my beloved football team. First of all, however, I wanted to finish reading the books that I had brought with me. 'The story writing can wait till tomorrow', I said to myself as I re-opened Carolyn Ellis' text and lost myself in her detailed recollection of a female student wishing to write about her battle with breast cancer[304].

First thing the following morning, after arguably the best night's sleep that I had managed on any of my previous trips, I made my way back to the Basin Reserve. I headed for the exact same seat in the historic grandstand and started writing about my memories of that very first Cambridge United match at the Abbey Stadium. Looking at my watch, I knew I only had an hour before I needed to catch the bus to the airport, but I wanted to at least create a rough plot on which I could work. 'Plenty of time', I thought as I started to structure my autobiographical tale. I never intended to get so immersed. I never expected to find myself hearing the conversations of those around me as I held my grandfathers hand. I never imagined I would find myself able to smell the cigarette smoke that filled the air as we queued at the turnstiles outside the Abbey. I never thought I would lose track of the time so easily.

Part Two of this thesis started with me unable to sleep in fear I would miss my early 7.00am flight to Melbourne. Four months later I found myself running down Cambridge Terrace in Wellington, praying to find a taxi that could make a twenty minute journey in half that time. It was a prayer that wasn't answered. One minute it was 9.30am, the next thing I knew it was 11.42. I had to be at the airport by 11.45. I was booked onto a 12.15pm flight back to Dunedin. The airport was at least fifteen minutes away. Could you think of a better way to end this story? I arrived at the airport in time to

[304] See **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira).

watch the plane I should have been on making its way to the end of the runway. It was almost identical to the dream I experienced the week before I flew to Melbourne. Only I didn't wake up. Or, at least, I haven't woken up yet.

Fortunately, I was able to get myself on another flight without having to pay anything more than the difference. What's more, unlike the flight that I had only just missed, my new journey didn't involve a couple of hours in Christchurch. It flew direct to Dunedin, meaning that I would only be home a couple of hours later than originally expected. All I needed to do was make a couple of rather embarrassing phone calls to Dunedin. The first explained to Melanie why I would be a little bit late for dinner. The second made sure that I would still be able to get a lift home from the airport.

The following three hours were spent with my head and heart firmly located within the story I had begun constructing back in the Basin Reserve. I became so engrossed that I nearly missed my second flight of the day. I ended up sitting next to a former Otago Rugby representative on my flight back to Dunedin. His name, believe it or not, was Steven. He claimed to be on the board of directors of a prominent Dunedin Rugby Club, and, after a little bit of prompting, he proceeded to take great pleasure in telling me all about his rugby-related trips to both Melbourne and Auckland. Apparently, he and about a dozen other guys from his club had entered into the spirit of the occasion, getting dressed up and drinking the whole way across the Tasman. He went as a doctor.

"Melbourne was different!", he told me, before adding the four words that not only left me speechless at the time, but also guaranteed that this 'chance' encounter had to be included somewhere in this story. "Being there" he admitted, referring specifically to the same Bledisloe Cup Test Match at the MCG, and adding a couple of second's pause to increase the importance of the statement, "was everything!".

I couldn't believe my ears. Was it fate? Was it destiny? Was it irony? I mean, you just couldn't make this kind of stuff up (at least I couldn't). All I wanted to do as I boarded the plane home was to continue writing my story. I had no intention of talking to the person in the seat next to me. I just wanted to continue my own nostalgic journey down memory lane. I had intended to put my headphones in and pretend that I was listening to music. I didn't care who they were (or where they had come from). As we landed in Dunedin, however, Steven had not only offered himself as an interviewee, but had also guaranteed that he could get me at least another ten or fifteen other Dunedin-based sport tourists to sign up should I need them.

# Chapter 34: Leaving lasting impressions

"Identity is a life story" [305]

"A man is always a teller of tales; he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others; he see everything that happens to him through them, and he tries to live his life as if he were recounting it"[306]

I love telling tales. I love reading about the experiences of others. I love (re)interpreting the past, the present and, if possible, the future. I love a good story. I love the fact that everybody is capable of sharing at least one tale about something they've done, somewhere they've been or someone they've seen[307]. It doesn't mater how old/young we are, or what language we speak. Stories can be told verbally or visually. They can even be played out in our minds. The only thing that you require is a memory. An imagination also helps, as does an intended audience, but neither our compulsory ingredients.

We tell ourselves stories all the time. We entertain ourselves. We amuse ourselves. We even scare ourselves. Jane Elliot credits Aristotle for claiming that, unlike a narrative which can continue indefinitely, all stories must have a beginning, middle and,

[305] According to Dan McAdams our various identities represent the complex story of our life. He also **cites how "**an individual's story has the power to tie together past, present and future… It is a story that he is able to provide unity and purpose… individual identities may be classified in the manner of stories". His conclusion that "identity stability is longitudinal consistency in the life story" illustrated his belief that our identities represent a fundamental part of our unique story and led him to claim that the changes and transformations that naturally occur over time our merely examples revisions to our individual plotline. ***In* Dan P. McAdams (1985)** *Power, Intimacy and the Life Story: Personological Inquiries and Identity* (New York: Dorsey) (p. 19). See also **Dan P. McAdams (1993)** *The stories we live by: Personal myths and the making of the self* (New York: Morrow).

[306] **Jean Paul Sartre (1938),** cited in Jane Elliot (2005) *Using Narrative in social research: qualitative and quantitative approaches* (London: Sage).

[307] Michael Murray argues that we all live in a storied world, claiming that narrative-inspired text can now be found within all corners of the academic world. He believes that the creating and consumption of non-fictional stories not only "underlies are very being and our way of acting in the world", but also allows us to accept the fact that "we interpret the actions of others and ourselves through the stories we exchange". In **Michael Murray (2003**) 'Narrative Psychology and Narrative Analysis', in Paul M. Camic, Jim E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design* (pp. 111-131) (Washington: American Psychological Association) (p. 96).

most importantly, an end[308]. In her 2005 text on the use of narratives in social research, she begins one of her chapters with the short but extremely poignant (Jean-Paul) Sartre quotation that I have also chosen to open this chapter[309]. I couldn't hope to find a more fitting piece of literature to help me reach the end of this story. I have been a story teller all my life. Only recently, however, have I discovered the potential for incorporating this passion into my professional life.

According to John McLeod, "a story always exists in a space between teller and audience"[310]. He also notes how multiple (re)interpretations are not just possible, but inevitable, especially when the storyteller has based his/her narrative on something private or personal from the not too distant past. The relationship between the author and the audience will always impact upon the way a story is both constructed and subsequently consumed. I did not write this thesis as I sat alone in that horrible hotel room last year. I did not tape record the conversations I had with Eddie, Paul, Jim, Tony or Ray. I did not transcribe the ones I heard on the airport bus, in the bar or as I lay in my bed that night. What you have just read is only a personal narrative based entirely on my reconstruction of what I remember happening during that eventful day. It has been built entirely from a mass of field notes, extensive diary entries and, most of all, my memories of being there and living through it.

My supervisor referred to my diary as an 'aide memoir' used to reinforce the significance of my research experience. I would suggest that it is as much a part of 'the here and now' as it was 'the there and then'[311]. We must not lose sight of the fact that my temporal and sequential account of the 29th July 2007 is only as old as the day that it was actually written. I wanted this, however, to be more than just an ethnographer's confessional tale[312]. I wanted it to be reflexive ethnographic tale of self introspection and

[308] Jane Elliot traces what she describes as "an explosion of interest in narrative evidence in the social sciences" to an increased interest in studying how identities are shaped through discourse and via social interaction. She describes narratives as "a discourse or text that connects events in a clear sequential order and gives meaning to those events in relation to a specific resolution or conclusion". In **Jane Elliot (2005)** *Using Narrative in social research: qualitative and quantitative approaches* (London: Sage) (p. 202).

[309] **Jean Paul Sartre (1938)** cited in Ibid (p. 14).

[310] In **John** McLeod (1997) **Narrative and Psychotherapy *(London: Sage) (p.38).***

[311] Jennie Onyx and Jenny Small state that our memories simply allow us to frame our past within the social contexts of the present. For further discussion see **Mary Kelley (1999)** 'Making Memory: Design of the Present on the Past', in Mieke Bal, Jonathon Crewe and Leo Spitzer (Eds.) *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (pp. 218-230) (Hanover: University Press of New England); **Jennie Onyx and Jenny Small (2001)** Memory-Work: The Method, *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 (6), pp. 773-786; **Edward M. Bruner (2005**) *Culture on Tour* (Chicago: The University of Chicago).

[312] John Van Maanen argued that a confessional tale can become "a self-reflexive meditation on the nature of ethnographic understanding". While he acknowledged that such an approach can lead to both

social identity construction[313]. I always intended to dedicate my final thoughts to the true heroes of my thesis. And, while you may think it's a little late in the day to be offering acknowledgements, I want to leave you thinking about more than merely my memories of Melbourne, Auckland and Wellington.

I started this thesis talking about the importance of making a memorable first impression and acknowledging those who have undoubtedly left the biggest impression on my personal identities. With the finish line now within reach, however, I have no intention of crossing it without first thanking those who have undoubtedly left the biggest impression on my new academic identity. In doing so, I hope to fully justify the choices made and alternative direction taken. More importantly, I want to (re)emphasise your role in the creation of this narrative.

In 1989, Michael Jackson coined the term radical empiricism to describe narrative-based plots which actively included the ethnographer's personal experiences and social interaction with others[314]. Personally, I wouldn't consider myself to be a radical, but then things were bound to be different when Jackson came up with this term. I know I was. That was the year that I went to my first Cambridge United match. It was the year that I watched, or at least remember watching, my first Formula One Grand Prix. It was the year of the Hillsborough disaster. While the author of an autoethnography may have been labelled 'radical' back in 1989, my recent exploration of the literature suggests that opinions have changed a great deal over the course of the past two decades.

The crisis of representation and legitimisation may have taken place in the mid eighties, but arguably it was the turn of the century by the time that tourism academia

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the writer and the reader obtaining a richer, more authentic, understanding of the phenomenon being investigated, he also warned about the dangers of creating a "black hole of introspection". At their best, Andrew Sparkes claims that confessional tales can reveal a great deal about the complexities of conducting ethnographic research, including the ethical issues facing the participant observer. At their worst, however, Clinton Sanders argues that such narratives "represent lengthy therapeutic ramblings in which the writer insists upon telling us about his or her dreams, personal insecurities, "meditations", and sources of "panic". … Certainly articles like this are NOT "sociology" unless one stretches this category to the breaking point". Clearly I have tried to focus on constructing something that falls within the former, as opposed to the latter. That said, I would be lying if I said that I couldn't see some similarities with my story and the issues highlighted by Sanders. In my defence, however, I have never claimed to be a sociologist, or placed this thesis within the sociological discipline. To me it is more of an socio-anthropological text that certainly incorporates aspects of the confessional, but focuses more on culture of evocative autoethnography. In **John Van Maanen (1988)** *Tales from the Field: On Writing Ethnography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) (p. 92); in **Clinton Sanders (1995)** Stranger than fiction, *Studies of symbolic interaction* 7, pp. 89-104 (p. 96). See also **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics).

[313] See **Carolyn Ellis (2009**) *Revision: autoethnographic reflections on life and work* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira).

[314] See **Michael Jackson (1989)** *Paths Towards a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).

really began to reap the rewards[315]. She may have adopted a different term, but Carolyn Ellis is just one of social scientists to have written extensively during the 1990s about the inclusion of personal experiences in sociological research[316]. However, rather than interpreting the other, she opted to violate "taken for granted notions in social science research" by making herself "the object of my research and writing in the first person"[317]. She opted to look a lot closer to home. She opted to embrace the systematic utilisation of subjective sociological introspection (as a means of understanding past experiences)[318].

Carolyn Ellis considers sociology to be a form of intimate and personal conversation[319]. Rather than wallow in self-pity, however, she used her own personal tragedies (the loss of both her brother and lover) to proactively enhance her sociological imagination. That, in a nutshell, is her approach to autoethnography. Obviously, it's not

[315] Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln's eight phases of social research acknowledge the role played by the emergence of phenomenology (phase two) and the removal of distinct disciplinary boundaries (phase three) within the resultant crisis in representation (phase four), which subsequently brought about a completely new way of thinking about the way we research social activities (phase five). To support this, they highlighted how "multiple interpretations" became closely "mediated by the personal biographies of researchers and their research subjects". The search for quality over quantity that first started to take shape during the second and third moments also resulted in the noticeably shift in power, from the observer to the observed, that was said to characterise the fourth and fifth moments. Finally, they focused on the "end of grand narratives aimed at explaining universal phenomena" and the increased importance being placed upon much smaller areas of study, designed not to generalise, but offer much more specific evaluation of a particular time and/or place. Ultimately, these more recent moments represented a further shift away from the collective and towards the socially constructed identities of the individual. The introduction of the eighth stage, which is said to represent "the backlash associated with the evidence-based social movement" only emphasises the ever-changing, dynamic, nature of social study. For further discussion see **Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) (2005)** *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 3rd Edition (London: Sage).

[316] According to Carolyn Ellis, the crisis of representation challenged the modernist's notion of scientific knowledge and truth. More importantly, it also provided a new generation of social researchers with the confidences to illustrate the close, overlapping, connection that has arguably always existed between literature and the social sciences. It encouraged the utilisation of linguistics to emphasis active evocation over passive, distanced, representation. Autoethnography represents a response to realist agendas in both anthropology and sociology. For discussion see **Carolyn Ellis (1997)** 'Evocative Autoethnography: Writing Emotionally about Our Lives', in William Tierney and Yvonne Lincoln (Eds.) *Representation and the Text* (pp. 115-139) (New York: SUNY Press).

[317] Ibid (p. 116).

[318] In two of her earliest contributions to the symbolic introspection debate, Carolyn Ellis illustrated the benefits of adopting a more emotional-based sociology that was built around her desire to utilise the personal experiences of the researcher. She saw our past as being "a legitimate object of research to be described, examined, and theorised". She also argued that "the dichotomy between impassioned research and detached, emotionless science was false and unnecessary", stating how our "emotions, as part of the self, influence every aspect of the research process". In **Carolyn Ellis (1991)** Emotional sociology, *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* 12, pp. 123-145 (pp. 142-143); **Carolyn Ellis (1991)** Sociological Introspection and Emotional Experience, *Symbolic Interaction* 14, pp. 23-50 (pp. 25-27).

[319] Carolyn Ellis argues that ethnographers need to be given the freedom "to tell a good story", claiming that the articulation of social meaning and significance should outweigh the importance placed on the strategic collection and scientific analysis of undisputable fact. She, for example, is "Less concerned with historical truth and more involved with narrative truth" and suggests that "narrative truth is the criterion used to decide when a certain experience has been captured to our satisfaction". In Carolyn Ellis (1997) 'Evocative Autoethnography: Writing Emotionally about Our Lives', in William Tierney and Yvonne Lincoln (Eds.) Representation and the Text (pp. 115-139) (New York: SUNY Press) (p. 115).

that simple, and neither are the stories she tells[320]. Far from it. She wants her readers to feel her pain[321]. My second reading of her 'Final Negotiations', for example, provided me with a completely different experience[322]. It evoked a host of new memories. I saw things from another 'new' perspective. I was able to draw out 'new' meanings. I gradually found myself understanding why she had felt so compelled to sit down and write it.

Carolyn Ellis writes about her lived experiences, but her writing is never about her[323]. It is written for people like me. People who like listening to other people talk about their past experiences, people who love learning new facts, people who are continuously making assumptions, and unashamedly judgemental and, finally, people who cannot help but draw personal comparisons from the things they see, hear and do. I love her stories so much that I keep finding myself going back and starting them all over again. She had me moving back and forth between her tale and my own ongoing story. She encouraged me to read between her lines. She argues that her stories should be seen as being an essential element of 'Homeric' literature, oral traditions, narrative analysis, and fairy tales'[324].

Autoethnography is both a subject and a method of social science research[325]. To Carolyn Ellis, it is "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural"[326] I may have been inspired by what I have read, but my own attempts to write from the heart, as opposed to the head, does not represent an attempt to merely copy Carolyn Ellis. Furthermore, I do not I find myself in a position where I am unable to either question her motives or critique her methods. My aim, however, is not to argue against what she has

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[320] See, for example, **Carolyn Ellis (1995)** *Final Negotiations: A story of Love, Loss and Chronic Illness* (Philidelphia: Temple University Press); **Carolyn Ellis (1999)** He*art*ful autoethnography, *Qualitative Health Research* 9, pp. 669-683.

[321] **Art Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (1996)** "Talking Over Ethnography", in Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner (Eds.) *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (pp. 13-45) (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira); **Art Bochner, Carolyn Ellis and Lisa Tillmann-Healy (1997)** 'Relationships as Stories', in Steve Duck (Ed.) *Handbook of Personal Relationships*, 2nd Edition (New York: Wiley).

[322] See **Carolyn Ellis (1995)** *Final Negotiations: A story of Love, Loss and Chronic Illness* (Philidelphia: Temple University Press).

[323] See **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira).

[324] See **Carolyn Ellis (2009)** *Revision: autoethnographic reflections on life and work* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira).

[325] See **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira).

[326] In **Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner (2000)** 'Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject', in Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd Edition (pp. 733-768) (London: Sage) (p. 734).

already contributed to the field of social research. This cannot be judged as a case of true or false, right or wrong.

I have no intention of questioning whether the things that autoethnographers talk about actually happened. The point is that I believe them. I believe that they are all telling the truth. The value and validity of Autoethnographic writing has, of course, been challenged on several occasion by those unconvinced by its methodological creditability[327]. Its emergence and existence alongside more conventional forms of ethnography, however, cannot be changed. It exists (like it or not). We cannot rewrite history. We can only change the way that we reflect upon it in the future. As stated from the very outset, my aim is not to change the world. I just wanted to challenge the way that special interest tourism research is currently privately produced and publicly presented. More specifically, my aim was to get you thinking, talking and writing about my alternative way of constructing a philosophical thesis.

I am not arguing that autoethnography represents a better way of undertaking social research. I am merely highlighting my belief that I am not the first ethnographer to encounter some personal and professional overlap out in the field. Much of Carolyn Ellis' work is based on her honest and open reflections of personal tragedy and emotional trauma[328]. Mine is not. Mine incorporates aspects of John Van Maanen's confessional tales, to emphasis my belief that all academics are guilty of a little, if not a lot, of self indulgence, especially when out in the field. More significantly, I think that it can be found lurking in the shadows of every piece of academic literature, especially those constructed over the course of several years by those wanting to establish themselves within the academy (i.e. the doctoral thesis).

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[327] Herbert Gans, for example, describes it as "basically autobiography written by sociologists" and argued that it "represents not only the climax of the preoccupation with self that is at the heart of too much contemporary ethnography but also the product of a postmodern but asocial theory of knowledge that argues the impossibility of knowing anything beyond the self". He not only accused autoethnographers of engaging in "ego trips", but also "avoiding the hard work that fieldwork entails". He expressed feeling of sorrow, pity and even fury, suggesting that it represented nothing more than a fad. In **Herbert Gans (1999)** Participant Observation in the era of "ethnography", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 28 (5), pp. 540-548 (pp. 542-543). See also, for example, **Robert Rinehart (1998)** Fictional Methods in Ethnography: Believability, Specks of Glass, and Checkov, *Qualitative Inquiry* 4 (2), pp. 200-224; **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity* (London: Sage).

[328] Carolyn Ellis cites that "social science has been grounded from the beginning in understanding deviance, evil, dysfunction, mental illness, abuse, and abnormal behaviour… Happiness and the mundane don't always make a good plot, which works better with a build up of tension and usually some resolution… When we're happy, we don't want to stop doing what we're doing to write about it". **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira) (p. 43).

My he*art*ful autoethnography has been written to specifically target the hearts and minds of those studying and supervising PhD studies into special interest tourism. I want a reaction that is both vocal and voluntary. I want you talking to others about my story. More importantly, I want you talking to yourself about it. The story of my excursion is not my unique contribution to academia. I am well aware of the fact that you may not feel even the slightest emotional connection to any of my personal information. I'd be disappointed, however, if I hadn't been able to get you thinking about the relationship between your personal and professional identities. I'd be equally upset if I had failed to get you thinking about your past, present and future.

The culture that I am addressing is not that of the self indulging sport tourist, but of the self indulging academic. Having turned away from my original ethnography, for example, I wanted to write about my unforgettable and highly emotional ethnographical experiences of observing trans-Tasman sport tourists. I wanted to tell you all about what it felt like to 'be there' as Australia unexpectedly beat New Zealand at the MCG. I originally wanted to tell you all about the interesting characters that I saw in Melbourne, Auckland and, to a lesser extent, Wellington. I wanted to reinterpret my observations. I wanted to make some concluding comments and leave you with some revealing recommendations. Sadly, however, someone shifted the goalposts. Someone changed the rules. That 'someone' was me.

The date in the top corner of my laptop screen tells me that I was supposed to be submitting this thesis today. How can anyone put a deadline on something like this? I started this journey on April Fool's Day 2006. I had every honest intention of handing it in on the same date three years later. But my private life got in my way. Rather than lock myself away for three years, I opted to teach. I opted to publish and present my previous work. I opted to coach two university football teams. I opted to travel 'home' to England and introduce Melanie to my family, my friends and even my football team. I allowed a little self indulgence to creep in. Do regret it? Not at all. Life is too short for regrets. You cannot live your life in the past.

A good story should be as unpredictable and exciting as the everyday life of the storyteller. It should contain unforeseen twists and turns. It should also involve an element of risk and an edge gained only through a degree of uncertainty. It shouldn't be average. It should have an unpredictable ending. I would have thought you insane if you had told me six months ago that my thesis was going to end up focusing purely on the first 26 hours of my excursion to Melbourne. Likewise, if I had submitted this idea as my

initial PhD proposal, I'm guessing I would have got a completely different response from both my department and the university's scholarship office. I had no intention of producing an average academic thesis. I always wanted to dive deeper. I always wanted to produce something extraordinary.

The writing of this story was by far the easiest part of this entire lived experience. Turing my story into a thesis, however, has been the hardest. I would have loved to include the additional 20,000 words I wrote on my relationship with the six individuals who were willing to help the lost and lonely-looking sport tourist they met in Melbourne. I would have loved to include the insightful thoughts of my partner, my family and my friends and my often bemused supervisors. Much of it was removed during the long, arduous and tiring editing process. The complete, unedited, story would be too big to bind.

Rather than work within the socially-constructed parameters of a traditional doctoral study, I opted to write a complete storied narrative. As a result, it was approaching 300,000 words in total (296,876 to be exact). It covered everything that I wanted to cover. I didn't want to stop at 100,000. I just couldn't. I had to complete the journey for my own sake/sanity. I had to reach my destination. Only having done so, could I feasibly turn around and begin to re-assess the route taken. Hopefully, I will be able to go public and publish parts of the extended edition at some point in the future. Whether anyone will wish to read it, however, is something to which I cannot dictate.

I think that I have adequately covered four conventions of storytelling that Art Bochner discussed in 2004[329]. My story is littered with characters, crises and conclusions. I have also tried to answer the questions that Laurel Richardson claims to ask herself when reading a non-fictional narrative[330]. Likewise, I have compared these questions with

[329] Art Bochner noted how stories should follow 'similar patterns of development', which included 'people depicted as characters; an epiphany or crisis to provide dramatic tension, around which events in the story revolve, and towards which a resolution and/or explanation is pointed; a temporal ordering of events; and, a point or moral to the story that provides an explanation and gives meaning and value to the crisis**.** See for further discussion **Art P. Bochner (2004)** 'Storytelling and the self in Everyday Life: Narrative Inquiry on the Cutting Edge, In Anon (Ed.) *Communication and Methodology* (pp. 183- 191) Available online at http://amrc.cuc.edu.cn/data/upload/download/PDF/04/04-17.pdf [Accessed 15 December 2008].

[330] Laurel Richardson claims that she not only assesses whether the text embodies a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived experience, but also seems like a creditable account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the "real". She also asks whether the narrative has contributed to her/our understanding of social life. She looks at whether it appeals to her aesthetically in terms of the way it has been artistically constructed. She looks for the inclusion of a postmodernist epistemology that not only generates new questions, but makes her want to write (a response). With regards to the motives of the author, she questions whether they have demonstrated a deeply grounded (if embedded) social scientific perspective, whilst at the same time encouraged an interpretive response through the use of creative

the five routinely asked by Carolyn Ellis[331]. I have reflected upon a space where "truth and reality are not fixed categories, where self-reflexive critique is sanctioned, and where heresy is viewed as liberatory"[332].

While there is no agreed definition, I can't help but think that Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner's description of 'autoethnography' essentially covers everything in a more than adequate fashion. It certainly helped me get my head around the concept back in October 2007. The fact that, like Deborah Reed-Danahay, they broke the term down, before explaining how autoethnographers typically change "their emphasis on the research process (graphy), on culture (ethnos), and on the self (auto)" made it virtually impossible for me not to relate it back to my personal PhD experience[333]. All I needed to do was ensure that I adequately stressed my belief that travelling to watch sport has always been a socio-cultural phenomenon, especially to this middle-class mummy's boy from Sawston. I also, however, needed to ensure that my reader was able to read between the lines and see the relevance to the culture of conducting contemporary ethnographies within areas of an academic's particular special interest (i.e. sports-related travel).

Looking at my diary, I knew that I had page upon page of highly emotional material just waiting to be explored and potentially exploited. Carolyn Ellis personally invites her audience to share the emotional experience of the author[334]. She feels the true examination of an autoethnographic piece of literature relates to the extent to which it

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analytical practices. She asks if they have held themselves fully accountable to the standards of knowing and telling of the people that the individual has studied. Richardson also examines whether the author's subjectivity has been both a producer and a product of the entire process, from the collection of data through to the final conclusions. She questions how and why the text has been written, and how it's consumption has affected her emotions and intellect. Finally, she asks herself about the ethical issues involved in the personals story. For further discussion see **Laurel Richardson (2000)** '*Writing: A Method of Inquiry'*, in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 923–948) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).

[331] See **Carolyn Ellis (2000)** Creating criteria, *Qualitative Inquiry* 6 (2), pp. 273-277.

[332] Tami Spry discusses the ways in which her autoethnographies have helped her "to engage the lived experience" and become "more comfortable in the often conflictual and unfamiliar spaces one inhabits in ethnographic research". She also claims to be more comfortable with herself "as other". In **Tami Spry (2001)** Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis, *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 (6), pp. 706-732 (p. 721).

[333] According to Carolyn Ellis, "the primary purpose of a personal narrative is to understand a self or some aspect of a life lived in a cultural context". In **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira) (p. 31)

[334] Rather than declaring facts and findings, Carolyn Ellis argues that evocative autoethnographers should place much of their emphasis on revealing the "ambivalences and contradictions that occurred along the way". In **Carolyn Ellis (1997)** 'Evocative Autoethnography: Writing Emotionally about Our Lives', in William Tierney and Yvonne Lincoln (Eds.) *Representation and the Text* (pp. 115-139) (New York: SUNY Press) (p. 115).

generates feelings of perceived authenticity[335]. I certainly wanted to blend the first eighteen months of my PhD with the last. Likewise, I wanted to reveal how the first twenty-five years of my life affected the last twenty-five months. I wanted to see and show where it has taken me. I wanted to learn on the job. I liked the unpredictability of it all. I feel I have undertaken at least two doctoral studies over the course of the past three years. Back in September 2005, I wanted to try and separate my sport tourism experiences with my emerging academic identity. By September 2006, I wanted to complement the two areas. By September 2007, I was unable to avoid their obvious integration. By September 2008, I was quite literally up to my neck in it all.

My aim is to inspire critical reflection towards our academic allegiances. I am looking for the creation of new knowledge through the (re)presentation of 'narrative truth'[336]. In 1995, Carolyn Ellis revealed how she gained the trust of her audience[337]. I, myself, am no different in this respect. She never claimed to find any answers or have it all figured out. She focused on grabbing her audience's attention and leaving a lasting impression on their sociological imagination. I hope you can see some more similarities emerging between the two of us. She certainly pulled me into her world. She certainly convinced me that this was the direction I needed to head in. I hope I have been able to do her justice.

I hope you are able to feel the specificity of my situation. Carolyn Ellis' notion of the 'artfully persuasive storyteller' encouraged me to relinquish control and place more trust in your ability to access/assess my script from unique vantage points[338]. Autoethnography is said to be an interpretive method that overlaps art and science (i.e. part 'auto/self' and part 'ethno/culture')[339]. That said, it is also something of a genre in itself[340]. It is arguably greater than the sum of its parts and refers as much to the process

[335] According to Carolyn Ellis, personal narrative should be based on, but not completely determined by factual events and experiences. Ibid (p. 116).

[336] See **Carolyn Ellis (2009**) *Revision: autoethnographic reflections on life and work* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira).

[337] Carolyn Ellis openly discusses how **s**he wanted those around her to be an eye witness to her discoveries. Likewise, she wanted the readers of her narrative to feel her vulnerability. She willingly let them be a part of the emotional process of reflection and referred to her self-absorption as a method of learning based on the candid exposure of her personal vulnerability. See **Carolyn Ellis (1995)** *Final Negotiations: A story of Love, Loss and Chronic Illness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press).

[338] See **Carolyn Ellis (1999)** He*art*ful autoethnography, *Qualitative Health Research* 9, pp. 669-683.

[339] See for discussion **Deborah Reed-Danahay (Ed.) (1997**) *Auto/Ethnography: Re-writing the self and the social* (Oxford: Berg).

[340] See, for example, **Art Bochner, Carolyn Ellis and Lisa Tillmann-Healy (1997)** 'Relationships as Stories', in Steve Duck (Ed.) *Handbook of Personal Relationships*, 2nd Edition (New York: Wiley).

as it does the product of the process[341]. As previously stated, my goal was not to argue its validity[342]. I am hoping to communicate some 'emotional truth'[343].

I hope, through the use of imagery and metaphor that I have led you down paths you have never or rarely travelled before. You're interpretation is your prerogative. I hope these concluding chapters help to put a few of my aims and objectives into a more theoretical perspective. Its late arrival was purposely designed to encourage you to approach both Part One ('From the Abbey') and Part Two ('To the Academy') with a relatively open mind. It was also seen as fitting with the temporal sequence of the narrative. The ethnographer who boarded the plane for Melbourne had never heard of Carolyn Ellis. My decision to buy a diary and write everything down was essentially an ad hoc reaction to the difficult position in which I had unexpectedly found myself.

The 'ethnos' found under the microscope in my thesis is neither sport nor tourism. As previously mentioned, the culture that my thesis has ended up exploring is that of the modern day social researcher. The change occurred the minute that I started to look more in the mirror than I did out of the window. I started with my spotlight looking at the Trans Tasman sport tourist. I've ended with my gaze firmly placed on the multiple identities of the individual responsible for doing the observing. This is ultimately a tale about a poorly prepared interpretive ethnographer who unexpectedly stumbled across a strange thing called heartful autoethnography.

I have subsequently tried to embrace everything that I read for the first time in Wellington. I have tried to adopt and adapt autoethnography in a manner that fits my own self-indulgent personalities. I love how my thesis is different from those currently being written elsewhere along my corridor. I love how people are curious to know how I am going and when it is going to be finished. They may not claim to understand my way of thinking, or approve of the route that I have taken, but they all appear desperate to get their hands on a copy the minute it's finished. Though I hate the additional pressure

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[341] See **Carolyn Ellis (2000)** Creating criteria, *Qualitative Inquiry* 6 (2), pp. 273-277.

[342] Tami Spry argues that to fully understand the human experience from a socio-cultural perspective, researchers will ultimately require "a pluralism of discursive and interpretive methods that critically turn texts back upon themselves in the constant emancipation of meanings". She goes on to argue that autoethnography represents an effective way of doing exactly that. In **Tami Spry (2001)** Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis, *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 (6), pp. 706-732 (p. 727).

[343] According to Leigh Berger and Carolyn Ellis, "the goals of autoethnography are not validity – or accuracy – in the traditional sense of the world. Instead, autoethnographers attempt to communicate emotional truth… it is the job of readers to determine if they think the story is honest and if it rings true to their experiences. The whole idea of an autoethnography is to show readers ways they are similar to and different from others in the world". In **Leigh Berger and Carolyn Ellis (2007)** 'Composing Autoethnographic Stories', in Michael V. Angrosino (Ed.) *Doing Cultural Anthropology: Projects in Ethnographic Data Collection*, 2nd Edition (pp.161-176) (Long Grove, Il: Waveland Press) (p. 163).

being placed firmly on my shoulders, I also love the added attention that I've been getting since I first went public with my new proposal.

Thomas Barone argues that the aim of the narrative storyteller "is not to prompt a single, closed, convergent reading but to persuade readers to contribute answers to the dilemmas they pose"[344]. Similarly, Elliot Eisner emphasises the importance of achieving 'empathy' and establishing a 'virtual reality' through the utilisation of 'expressive, contextualised, and vernacular language'[345]. I hope you can see where I have tried to take

[344] Thomas Barone has written extensively on the value of subjective story-telling and, more specifically, the validity of constructing arts-based educational research (ABER). He has also contributed to discussions about the blurring of traditional boundaries that has occurred across the academy, especially the social sciences and art-based disciplines. He argues that both areas play their own distinct roles in the study of individual experiences and collective behaviour. When discussing the design and deliver of ABER, Barone teamed up with Elliot Eisner to produce a comprehensive, much cited, guide that not only explained the literary-inspired strategies employed within arts-based explorations, but also examined the merits of embracing alternative forms of academic inquiry. They noted how "Most arts-based inquiry has employed certain rhetorical strategies and devices. Some involve the use of language that may be characterised as (a) evocative, (b) contextual, and (c) venicular". Like authors of literature – including storytellers, poets, dramatists, novelists, and even essayists and art critics – art-based researchers often use language that is evocative. Literary language is designed to stimulate imaginative faculties, inviting the reader to fill gaps in the text with personal meaning". Barone and Eisner promote the importance of the metaphor, suggesting that they can "re-create experience through the forms they take, never signifying a closed, literal meaning, but enabling the reader to experience that which they express". They also illustrate the value of employing thick descriptions that can "ground the writing in a particular context so that the complexities adhering to a unique event, character, or setting may be adequately rendered". Finally, when arguing the validity of ABER they focus upon its ability to reveal what had not been previously noticed and actively encourage the creation of new questions. As a literary document, the storied narratives found within ABER are, according to Barone; "designed less to provide conclusions than to elicit important methodological and substantive educational questions". In **Thomas Barone and Elliot W. Eisner (1997)** 'Arts-based educational research', in Richard M. Jaeger (Ed.) *Complementary Methods for Research in Education*, 2nd Edition (pp. 73-116) (New York: Macmillan) (p. 74). For further discussion see **Thomas Barone (1990)** 'Using the Narrative Text as an Occasion for Conspiracy', in Elliot Eisner and Alan Peshkin (Eds.) *Qualitative Inquiry in Education* (pp.305-326) (New York: Teachers College Press); **Thomas Barone (1990)** 'Response to the commentary of Miles and Huberman', in Elliot Eisner and Alan Peshkin (Eds.) *Qualitative Inquiry in Education* (pp.358-363) (New York: Teachers College Press). See also; **Thomas Barone (1992)** On the demise of subjectivity in educational inquiry, *Curriculum Inquiry* 22 (1), pp. 25-37; **Thomas Barone (1995)** Persuasive Writings, Vigilant Readings, and Reconstructed Characters: The Paradox of Trust in Educational Story sharing, *Qualitative Studies in Education* 8, pp. 63-74;.

[345] To Elliot Eisner, an empathetic approach to interpretive ethnography involved using the emotional nature of the research experience to help the reader picture it in their mind. He described it as "the ability to don the shoes of another human being", claiming that the best authors are able to transport their audience to any place/space they wish. To him, the inclusion of empathy "pertains to feeling or to emotion, and emotion, interestingly, is often regarded as the enemy of cognition". He publicly rejected this view, suggesting that the construction of a personal narrative based on the lived experience represent the most powerful pieces of discourse available. He questioned the need to "take the heart out of the situations we are trying to help readers understand?". Over a decade later, Elliot Eisner focused his attention of the cultural aspects of construction non-fictional narrative, describing our social traditions as "the glue of culture". He concluded that "empirical research always refers to phenomena that can be experienced, and to be experienced the senses must be engaged with qualities, even when the qualities in question are imaginative Behaviour is always situated; hence a perspective on the situation provides a necessary frame for interpretation". In **Elliot W. Eisner (1991)** *The enlightened eye* (New York: Macmillan) (p. 37); In **Elliot W. Eisner (2003)** 'On the Art and Science of Qualitative Research in Psychology', in Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes and Lucy Yardley (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding*

this advice on board. I hope you can see where I have let my heart rule my head. All the events covered in this thesis are my honest accounts of what I experienced, when I experienced it, where I experienced it and how I experienced it. Most importantly of all, I have also attempted to give you an idea of why I think that I reacted/responded the way that I did.

If maintaining consistency is a crucial part of storytelling, achieving believability is essential[346]. It is what makes it authentic, and hopefully gives it rigor[347]. While there has been a lot of editing, my thoughts and emotions are presented as and when they emerged. Adapting Paul Riceour's watery analogy of the 'centrality' of narrative in both human thought and identity, I have tried to use my memories to surf a wave on the 'sea of

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*Perspectives in Methodology and Design* (pp.17-30) (Washington: American Psychological Association) (p.19).

[346] According to Andrew Sparkes' interpretation, autoethnographers are not trying to "convince readers of the truth of their accounts by appealing to traditional and increasingly challenged authorities and criteria". On the contrary, they are seeking to generate new insight through inspiring the reader to not only recognise and identify the connections that exist between what they have read and their own personal experiences, but also the implications that this has on their understanding of the subject in question. He argues that, "when it comes to telling alternative tales, orthodox "scientific" views of validity (and reliability and generalisability), based on positivistic epistemological assumptions that adhere to correspondence notions of truth, make little sense". Robert Rinehart, however, argued that "believability is dependent on the kind of description that is accurate in a holistic, evocative, emotionally engaging sense… description relies on glimpses of telling detail more than on total immersion in detail. What is enough detail and what is too much detail is one of the fundamental differences between believable and cloying, between engaging and pedantic, between creatively accurate and merely replicable and boring writing". In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p. 201). In **Robert Rinehart (1998)** Fictional Methods in Ethnography: Believability, Specks of Glass, and Chekov, *Qualitative Inquiry* 4, pp. 200-224 (p. 205). See also **Elaine B. Jenks (2002)** 'Searching for Autoethnographic Creditability: Reflections from a Mom with a notepad', in Art P. Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (Eds.) *Ethnographically Speaking: Autoethnography, Literature and Aesthetics* (pp. 170-186) (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira).

[347] Margarete Sandelowski argues that 'artistic truths' are typically more rigorous and accurate/authentic, in terms o f being "true to life", noting that the major difference between the arts and sciences is "not the search for truth per se, but rather the kinds of truth that are sought". Thomas Schwandt, Yvonne Lincoln and Egon Guba support this, based on some of their early work into the creditability, trustworthiness and authenticity of naturalistic studies based entirely on subjective interpretations of past events and personal experiences. They not only question the academic rigor, but also the rigorous nature of the research process, employing their own criteria to judge the value and validity of their work. By doing so, the look specifically at the internal and external meanings, the issue of reliability and the degree of objectivity involved. When assessing the perceived authenticity of the data collected, however, they targeted the way it was collected, the ontological authentication, the educative authentication, the catalytic authentication and the tactical authenticity. The use of triangulation was widely regarded as the best method of increasing trustworthiness, allowing the researched to comment and draw their own conclusions from the (re)interpretations of the researcher. In **Margarete Sandelowski (1994)** the proof of the pudding, in Janice M. Morse (Ed.) *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (pp. 46-62) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage) (p.52). For further discussion see **Margarete Sandelowski (1993)** Rigor or rigor mortis: the problems of rigor in qualitative research revisited, *Advances in Nursing Science* 16 (2), pp. 1-8; **Thomas A. Schwandt, Yvonne S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba (2007)** Judging Interpretations: But Is It Rigorous? Trustworthiness and Authenticity in Naturalistic Evaluation, *New Directions for Evaluation* 114, pp. 11-25.

time'[348]. The way that I have storied my past has helped me to come to terms with my various self and social identities. It has also left a lasting legacy in terms of how I (re)view myself and my research.

According to Jerome Bruner, 'people do not deal with the world event by event or with text sentence by sentence. They frame events and sentences in larger structures'[349]. I hope you are able to see the bigger picture (or broader narrative) that I have tried to (re)frame. In 1976, Patricia Golden wrote how narratives could be used to express or explain the temporal process of discovery from a more personal (human) perspective, including all the planned/unplanned, predictable/unpredictable events encountered along the way[350]. Twenty years later, Donald Polkinghorne noted how personal narratives were still the primary way through which we all organise our past experiences into temporally meaningful episodes[351].

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[348] Paul Ricoeur emphasises the manner in which all researchers are guilty of playing with the data they collect, especially during the interpretation and analysis stages of the research process. His thesis for the centrality of narrative in human thought and identity, however, was built around the belief that "we all live in a sea of time whereby narrative provides the map, bringing order through emplotment (i.e. a configuration from succession)". He later distinguishes between "configuration (i.e. the primary activity by which narrative brings structure to the world through various forms of emplotment) and refiguration (i.e. the means by which the author defines him/her-self through narrative)". In **Paul Ricoeur (1991)** 'Life: a story in search of a narrator', in Mario J. Valdes (Ed.) *A Ricoeur reader: Reflection and Imagination* (pp. 137-155) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press); **Paul Ricoeur (1991)** 'Mimesis and representation', in Mario J. Valdes (Ed.) *A Ricoeur reader: Reflection and Imagination* (pp. 137-155) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

[349] Jerome Bruner discussed two ways in which we construct reality through the ordering of our lived experiences. While the pragmatic/logico-scientific approach was based around the notion of a mathematical system of description and explanation, the narrative approach focused upon the importance of story-telling. As arguably one of the most vocal advocates of embracing discourse-inspired inquiry and analysis, Bruner describes a narrative as "an account of events occurring over time". He saw it as a means of making sense of the world by connecting events over time through the telling of both non-fictional and fictional stories. Furthermore, his discussion of the hermeneutic properties of a narrative focused on both its social construction and its personal comprehension and concluded that "narratives do not exist, as it were, in some real world, waiting there patiently and eternally to be veridically mirrored in a text". He argued that we cannot help but contextualise our lived experiences based on the societies we inhabit. In **Jerome Bruner (1990)** *Acts of meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) (p. 64). See also **Jerome Bruner (1986)** *Actual minds, possible worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press); **Jerome Bruner (1991)** The Narrative Construction of Reality, *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1), pp. 1-21.

[350] Patricia Golden is widely credited as being one of the first to break away from the traditional, more conventional, ways of presenting her social research. She not only focused her attention of the value and validity of narrative-based inquiry, but also incorporated discussions about the actually process of discovery and justification that she implemented within her studies. She opted to reveal the "feeling, thinking component - the human side - of research" through the creation of a narrative that confronted "the disorderly, the overlooked, the unpredictable, and even the boring and routine aspects of research". In doing so, Golden illustrated how the inclusion of a storied presentation allowed the reader to both identify with the researchers experience and draw a deeper sense of understanding from the findings revealed. In **Patricia M. Golden (1976**) *The Research Experience* (Itasca, Il: F. E. Peacock) (p. 30).

[351] Donald Polkinghorne argued that the manner in which social research is created and consumed is rarely, if ever, as neutral and transparent as the academy would like it's audience to think. To him it is always influenced by the epistemological commitments of the researcher. He therefore proposes that narratives represent the most the most accurate way of presenting experiential-based research, and

Polkinhorne believed it is the (re)packaging and (re)presentation of a series of related actions/events that enables us to allocate meaning to our everyday lives[352]. Along with Patricia Golden and Jerome Bruner, Polkinghorne deserves a great deal of credit for educating me about the narrative turn, especially within the context of personal identity construction[353]. I couldn't help but see a lot of similarities between what we had both written about. He unknowingly acted as another key gatekeeper, opening doors to the world of narrative analysis and inquiry. He also answered many of the questions that I had first started to ask back in Melbourne's Federation Square on the evening of Friday 29th June 2007.

A flick through Catherine Riessman's text on the methodological approach to narrative analysis reveals that research into narrative goes back several decades and shouldn't be pigeon-holed into any one genre or discipline[354]. In the mid to late sixties, for example, Barney Glaser; Anselm Strauss, William Labov, Joshua Waletzky and Roland Barthes were all writing about the increasing value of a more subjective narrative approach. In 1966, Barthes commented on how "the narratives of the world are without number… [T]he narrative is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; the history of narrative begins with the history of [hu]mankind; there does not exist, and never has

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emphasised the temporal features of the data collection and analysis process by claiming that the researcher must always incorporate the essential elements of a story (i.e. have a recognisable beginning, a middle, and an end). For discussion see **Donald E. Polkinghorne (1996)** Explorations of narrative identity, *Psychological Inquiry* 7 (4), p. 363-367.

[352] According to Donald Polkinghorne, the use of narratives can transform "a mere succession of actions and events into a coherent whole in which these happenings gain meaning as contributors to a common purpose". He also suggests that the use of a narrative allows the researcher to collate "the diverse actions and events that contributed to the research outcome" into an accessible prose. He argues that adopting a narrative way of thinking is not only "the most effective method of organising action", but also the most "appropriate form for displaying the logic of practice". In **Donald E. Polkinghorne (1997)** *Phenomenology and narrative psychology* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University) (p. 13).

[353] See, for example, **Donald E. Polkinghorne (2000)** The unconstructed self, *Culture and Psychology* 6 (2), pp. 264-272; **Donald E. Polkinghorne (2004**) 'Ricoeur, Narrative and personal identity', in Claude Lightfoot, Chris Lalonde, and Michael J. Chandler (Eds.) *Changing conceptions of psychological life* (pp. 49-70) (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum).

[354] Catherine Riessman describes storytelling as "a relational activity that gathers others to listen and empathise". She sees it as a collaborative practice based on reinterpretation of personal encounters and social experiences. Her comprehensive review of narrative analysis revealed the multiple ways in which we reflect upon past and focuses on more than merely the type of language used. She set about discovering why the stories were memorable and deemed worthy of being shared. She also emphasised the fact that narrative analysis could be used to study more than just disruptive, traumatic, experiences, highlighting it's potential applicability when it came to the exploration of certain social movements, political change, and macro-level phenomena. To Riessman, narrative analysis needs to focus on investigating the construction of the story itself as much as it does the content and conclusions drawn by the storyteller. In **Catherine K. Riessman (1993)** *Narrative Analysis* (London: Sage) (p. 3). See also **Catherine K. Riessman (2000)** 'Analysis of Personal Narratives', in Jaber F. Gubraim, and James A. Holstein (Eds.) *Handbook of Interview Research* (pp. 695-710) (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage).

existed, a people without narrative"[355]. More significantly, Barthes saw them as being an ever-present part of our personal identities (both self and social)[356].

A year later, as Strauss and Glaser wrote about a grounded approach to narrative theory[357], Labov and Waletzky were busy developing the first Linguistic approach to narrative analysis[358]. The more recent literary-inspired writings of Laurel Richardson have arguably left one of the most lasting impressions on my understanding of personal narratives[359]. She encouraged me to stop and look around at the narratives visible in my everyday life. It is largely thanks to her that I started seeing narratives in the stories, novels and journals that I enjoyed reading, the movies, documentaries and other television

[355] **Roland Barthes (1966)** *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of the Narrative,* Occasional Paper, (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham) (p.14).

[356] Ibid.

[357] Researchers who adopt grounded theory generally believe that the application of a valid and systematic methodological approach, will allow them to get a more accurate representation of what is actually going on around them. According to Barney Glaser and Anhelm Straus, grounded theory represents **"**the discovery of theory from data, systematically obtained from social research". They argued that it is the only way of ensuring that the researcher is able to develop a theoretical concept directly related to their research. They also suggested that the outcomes of a grounded theory-based research study could not be "completely refuted by more data or replaced by another theory". The fact that the findings are directly associated to both the data collection and analysis process effectively meant that, while it would inevitably be modified and reformulated at some point in the future, it could not be dismissed or rejected entirely. Finally, Glaser and Straus concluded that the inductive nature of grounded theory made it much stronger than existing methodologies created prior to the actual data collection and analysis process. In **Barney G. Glaser and Anhelm L. Straus (1967)** *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press) (p. 9).

[358] American socio-linguists William Labov and Joshua Waletzky developed a structural model of narrative forms, arguing that certain recurring patterns needed to be located prior to the data analysis process. They proposed that the following six elements were present within all forms of narrative. These were; abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. While the abstract provides the audience with an overview of the stories plot, the orientation includes some much needed information about both the spatial and temporal settings (within which the story was framed) and, more importantly, some background context with regards to the key characters involved. The complicating action reveals not only what happened, but also the consequences of this event, whilst the evaluation reveals what the experience meant to the narrator. The resolution, however, reveals how the impact and implications of the experience have been managed and overcome. Finally, the coda is responsible for returning the audiences gaze away from the past and back toward the present. In other words, it allows the narrator to contextualise it all within the here and now, as opposed to the there and then. For further discussion see **William Labov and Joshua Waletzky (1967)** *Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press).

[359] Laurel Richardson saw her emotional subjectivity as both a mode of reasoning and representation**.** She argued that "Writing is not simply a "true" representation of an objective "reality"; instead, language creates a particular view of reality". The issue, to her, "is not whether sociology should use the narrative, but which narratives will be provided to the reader". She saw narrative creation as being "quintessential to the understanding and communication of the sociological". In **Laurel Richardson (1997)** *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press) (pp. 26-27). See also **Laurel Richardson (1998)** The politics of location: Where am I now?, *Qualitative Inquiry* 4, pp. 41-48; **Laurel Richardson (2000)** 'Writing: A Method of Inquiry', in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 923–948) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage); **Laurel Richardson (2001)** Getting Personal, *Qualitative Studies in Education* 14 (1), pp. 33-38.

shows I enjoyed watching, the painting on our walls and even within the stained glass windows at Kings College Chapel[360].

For Laurel Richardson, it is never an issue of whether personal experiences should be used, but more how, when and where we should be embracing them. She argues that narratives display "the goals and intentions of human actors; it makes individuals, cultures, societies, and historical epochs comprehensible as wholes; it humanises time; and it allows us to contemplate the effects of our actions and to alter the directions of our lives"[361]. She considers language to be the central focus of narrative research and, having been convinced by her passion as much as her logical arguments, I soon found myself addicted to this genre of study. I suddenly felt like altering the direction in which my life was heading. I also found myself re-evaluating my past actions and re-reading my research diary.

Fascinated by the power of language and text, I also gained a lot of my initial ideas from Pamela Moss' edited geography-based publication[362]. I was especially inspired by Ian Cook's autobiographical narrative about his doctoral-related dramas[363].

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[360] Laurel Richardson argued that all knowledge was inevitably socially constructed. She therefore claimed that her work could be found resting somewhere close to the crossover between the historical and the biographical elements of contemporary sociology. She questioned why, and how, sociologists could spend so long looking at others without thinking about themselves or the role they play in the societies they observed/examined. She argued that "We are always present in our texts, no matter how we try to suppress ourselves". Richardson not only expressed her desire to discover the construction of collective stories full of metaphors, imagery and evocative prose, but also pleaded for sociologists to fulfil the promise to become researchers "of and for the people". In **Laurel Richardson (1997)** *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press) (p. 22).

[361] Ibid (p. 27).

[362] Pamela Moss claims that she has always been interested in looking at "how we position ourselves as researchers in the research process". It wasn't, however, until she was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome that she started to look at herself as "a source of information". She notes how she decided to use her personal experiences in the same way that she had previously used those of others. Moss noted how she perceived her life to be relatively average, but pointed out how "[B]y invoking this rather meek description of my daily life, I do not mean to dismiss my privilege; on the contrary, I wish to understand such privilege in the context of my own ordinariness, mundaneness, for it is through this invisibility that the subtleties of power express themselves – either in being oppressed or in being an oppressor". Furthermore, she cited that "with the rise of critical reflexivity and social theory in geography the time has come to rethink… and to think about them [the power of autobiographies] more self-critically. She concluded that it is not only a method of creating data, but also an approach to research in its own right. In **Pamela Moss (2001)** 'Writing One's Life', in Pamela Moss (Ed.) *Placing Autobiography in Geography* (pp. 1-21) (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press) (p. 8); See also **Pamela Moss (2001)** 'Engaging Autobiography', in Pamela Moss (Ed.) *Placing Autobiography in Geography* (pp. 188-198) (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press).

[363] Ian Cook included an autoethnographic component within his second PhD submission that revealed, amongst other things, why he struggled to complete his 'proper' PhD on time. He not only utilised extracts from his research diary, but also exerts from draft chapters, supervisors comments and an abundance of memories. Within the autobiographic book chapter he wrote on the subject, he included a number of anecdotes, including one where he discovered that a member of the academic staff at the university in which he was enrolled had warned another student that they needed "to be careful you don't end up like Ian. He's all over the place'. For further discussion see **Ian Cook (2001)** 'You Want to Be

The similarities were alarming. What's more, they filled me with fear. I really didn't want to end up like Ian Cook. I still don't. I don't want this to blow up in my face. I haven't got the time, strength or the financial backing to keep going. I've got nothing left in reserve. I'm proud that I've had the courage and conviction to tell this tale. The paranoia and gut-wrenching nausea that plagued me back in Melbourne however has never been too far from the surface, and continues to penetrate the cracks in the surface on a regular basis. The sleepless nights remain a problem and the voices continue to both argue and offer advice in my head.

Would I have still travelled to Melbourne, Auckland and Wellington if I had set out to write an autoethnographical thesis? No, I don't think so. I'm sure I would have sat at my desk and written about another sports related topic. The story I started writing in Wellington, for example, could easily have been expanded. It was over 10,000 words by the time I was forced to put it on hold. I attempted to turn a part of it into a journal article and received encouraging and highly constructive feedback from the reviewers. As the creation of this thesis continued to consume me, however, I was unable to dedicate the time required to make the changes. One of the more memorable comments received from the reviewer suggested my narrative of self may actually have been more 'autoethnographic', as opposed to autobiographic.

The third book that I took with me on my four night excursion to Wellington was Amanda Coffey's text on the multiple roles played by the ethnographic self. It had, however, remained safely stored in the bottom of my bag for the entire trip. It stayed there for at least another week after I returned home to Dunedin. Once opened, I was reluctant to close it again. In fact, I spent much of the next week with it glued to my hands. Coffey saw the conceptualisation of the self as being partial and fluid[364]. She was less clear or convinced, however, about the boundaries between ethnography and autobiography[365]. She questioned whether the use of ethnographic devices to write autobiography was essentially the same as the utilization of literary and autobiographical devices to write ethnography.

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Careful You Don't End Up Like Ian. He's All Over the Place: Autobiography in/of an Expanded Field', in Pamela Moss (Ed.) *Placing Autobiography in Geography* (pp. 99-120) (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press). See also **Mike Crang and Ian Cook (2007)** *Doing ethnographies* (London: Sage).

[364] Amanda Coffey noted how "the conceptualisation of the self as partial and fluid is useful in locating the multidimensional and complex aspects of selfhood, which many field researchers experience. It helps to make sense of the fragmentation, negotiation and reconstruction of the self during fieldwork". In **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity* (London: Sage) (p. 36).

[365] Ibid.

By looking at autoethnography from a critical outsider's perspective, Amanda Coffey gave me a completely new impression of my position or visibility in both the field and my text[366]. I began thinking about the strong biographical dimension present in every ethnographical setting, including my own three trips away. I also thought of all the nostalgia-driven stories that I had either been told (by others) or shared (with others). Coffey encouraged me to respect the body as a site of cultural representation and an agent of continual cultural reproduction. She made me look at my self and my culture from multiple directions, many of which were both new and exciting. I could feel myself being drawn infield from out on the wings. She concluded that personal narratives, as a form of ethnography, could in theory be used to link the use of autobiographical material to the poly-vocal and multi-layered notions of self and identity[367].

To Coffey, fieldwork is an embodied activity[368]. She convinced me to once again return to my diary. She encouraged me to reinterpret my experiences. She also persuaded me to not only relive them but also go away and rewrite them into a storied narrative. Even now, having read over them hundreds of times, I find myself able to identify and relate different emotions to previously unseen references to the body (my body). And, in many ways, I've tried to incorporate as much as possible into my thesis. I wish I had taken more photographs. I wish I had made better use of the dictaphone that remained unused at the bottom of my bag for much of the first trip away. I wish I had paid less attention to those around me. I wish I had spent more time interviewing the voices in my head.

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[366] According to Amanda Coffey, some of her colleagues had suggested that autoethnographers "are not 'doing' ethnography at all", accusing their personal narratives as being "self-indulgent writings published under the guise of social research and ethnography". She added that the use of literary tools and autobiographical techniques "within ethnography" could easily be confused with the utilisation of traditional ethnographic practices to construct autobiography. Apparently there is a difference. Coffey appeared unsure, however, of the long-term implications that such developments would have, noting how many critics had argued against the merits of a fully reflexive style of ethnography. In Ibid (p. 155)

[367] Despite the multiple criticisms attached to embracing personal narratives, Amanda Coffey re-iterated the fact that all ethnographic work takes shape around the personal position of the ethnographer. She argued that it was impossible, not to mention implausible, to believe that a researcher could enter a setting void of any socially construct identities. She added that cannot help but bring our prior knowledge and understanding of the theories and frameworks relevant to that particular study. More significantly, she notes how "we also bring a self which is, among other things, gendered, sexual, occupational, generational - located in time and space". Ibid (p. 158).

[368] On the issue of embodiment, Amanda Coffey states that "It is possible through autobiographical ethnography to capture and emphasise the physicality of fieldwork and the embodiedness of the fieldworker". She concludes that "autobiography gives us the tools to connect emotionally with the field. It also connects the physical self to the place and representation of the fieldwork. 'I was there' evokes physical as well as mental meaning and presence. Ibid (p. 131).

# Chapter 35: The Sparkes that finally (re)lit my fuse

My introduction to the work of Andrew Sparkes came much later in the day than those who have read our work might think. It was also very late in the evening by the time I got round to opening his 'telling tales' book for the very first time. Once again I found myself lying in the dark unable to switch off. It was Amanda Coffey who first pointed me in his direction. She spoke critically about his embodied narrative of self, calling it a multi-layered account employing ethnographic writing as analysis, autobiography, diary and self-discovery[369]. She also illustrated his use of the self as both a unit of analysis and representation, calling his contribution an example of either autoethnography or ethno-autobiography[370].

I felt compelled to find out more. Coffey had revealed enough to stimulate my sociological imagination. I subsequently made it my mission to go away and further explore what Andrew Sparkes had to offer me and my research experience. While I doubted there was any real difference, I was also curious to discover what exactly I should be calling myself. 'Was I an ethno-autobiographer?', I asked myself as I typed his name into the Central Library's search engine. 'Does it really matter?', I thought as I went in search of the book that topped the list. It was actually the only one that had been found. I was a little disappointed, but assumed that he must have opted to focus his attention on the production and publication of journal articles. That particular search was next on my list of things to do that day.

Much like Carolyn Ellis and Deborah Reed-Danahay, Andrew Sparkes also saw autoethnography as being both a method and product of investigating changing ideas about the body, self, and identity. He defined it as "connecting the personal to the

[369] According to Amanda Coffey, Andrew Sparkes had used himself "as a unit of analysis and representation". She noted how he had constructed "his own body narrative to represent a narrative of self… (re)presented in the first person, as an autobiographical account". Apparently he had also utilised several ethnographic techniques, including autobiography, to effectively illustrate his own self-discovery. She saw his fatal flaw as being 'qualitatively different' from existing confessional tales or semi-autobiographical narratives and noted how he used ethnographic analysis to centralise his exploration of the self. See **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity* (London: Sage) (p. 154).

[370] When trying to categorise Sparkes contribution to ethnography, Amanda Coffey suggested that his personal narrative represented "a new wave of autobiographical writing which focuses on the body and the self". Ibid (p. 123).

cultural", until the "distinctions between the personal and the cultural become blurred"[371]. Having found his 'telling tales' textbook, I was soon directed to a number of journal articles written over the course of the decade, many of which, from their titles and abstracts alone, appeared to encourage empathetic forms of understanding and were written to challenge our - often disembodied - ways of knowing[372]. It took me a day to locate them all. Once in my possession, however, I began to read and review them in the same way that I had done the previous year with the various works of Richard Giulianotti, Daniel Wann and Mike Weed.

The biggest appeal of Andrew Sparkes' approach to sports-related ethnography was not the topics he covered but the way he wanted to cover them[373]. He appeared to recognise the growing appeal of writing about one self[374]. He also seemed to share my passion, my emotion and my competitive streak. More importantly, like me, he appeared

[371] In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p. 102).

[372] See, for example, **Andrew C. Sparkes (1994)** Life histories and the issue of voice: reflections on an emerging relationship, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 7 (2), pp. 165-183; **Andrew C. Sparkes (1994)** Self, Silence and Invisibility as a Beginning Teacher: a life history of lesbian expereince, *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 15 (1), pp. 93-118; **Andrew C. Sparkes (1995)** Writing people: reflections on the dual crises of representation and legitimisation in qualitative inquiry and the problem of criteria: implications for sport psychology, *The Sport Psychologist* 12 (4), pp. 363-386; **Andrew C. Sparkes (1996)** The fatal flaw: A narrative of the fragile body-self, *Qualitative Inquiry* 2, pp. 463-294; **Andrew C. Sparkes (1997)** Ethnographic Fiction and Representing the Absent Other, *Sport, Education and Society* 2, pp. 25-40; **Andrew C. Sparkes (1998)** Athletic Identity: An Achilles' Heel to the Survival of Self, *Qualitative Health Research* 8 (6), pp. 644-664; **Andrew C. Sparkes (1999)** Exploring Body Narratives, *Sport, Education and Society* 4 (1), pp. 17-30; **Andrew C. Sparkes and Martti Silvennoinen (Eds.) (1999)** *Talking Bodies: Men's Narratives of the Body and Sport* (So Phi, Finland: University of Jyvaskyla); **Andrew C. Sparkes (2000)** Autoethnography and Narratives of Self: Reflections on Criteria in Action', *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17 (1), pp. 21-43; **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** 'Fragmentary Reflections of the Narrated Body-Self', in Jim Denison and Pirko Markula (Eds.) *Moving Writing* (pp. 25-50) (New York: Peter Lang).

[373] On the back cover of his telling tales text he explained exactly what he hoped to achieve through its publication. He stated his desire to challenge and displace "the tried and true and often dull writing styles employed by qualitative researchers of sport and physical activity". He also wanted to break "disciplinary boundaries to move the field into a new and unfamiliar territory by engaging qualitative researchers to think of themselves as storytellers, not just scientist". In addition, he not only wanted to provide "innovative examples of how, when and why to use new writing practices to make research more readable and understandable", but also encourage "researchers to acquire and nurture their own voices in their writing". He hoped "to highlight the writing process of discovery, understanding and analysis" and discuss "the emergence of new forms of representation and the shifting landscape of qualitative research within the social sciences". Finally, he wanted to illustrate "how writing styles range from confessional to fictional to persuade readers to accept and believe what is written" and evaluate "the methods that can be employed to judge and legitimize the different tales used to represent research". In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics).

[374] According to Andrew Sparkes, "Researchers from a variety of disciplines are rightly interested in autobiographical tales both as a cultural product and as a social act, as well as a resource for investigating changing ideas about the body, self, and identity". He noted how personal story-telling was well established and remained one of the most popular genres of book sold, especially those written (or commissioned) by professional sportsmen and women. In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p. 102).

genuinely interested in trying to advance the pedagogy of his subject area. His embodied narrative of self, for example, had revealed an individual willing to put everything on the line. While I had felt true sympathy for Carolyn Ellis, I physically found myself feeling Sparkes' pain being transferred from the page and into my own battered body.

The spinal injury, or 'fatal flaw', that effectively ended Andrew Sparkes' dreams of establishing a professional rugby career provided the perfect platform for arguably his best piece of writing to date[375]. I t was the article that Amanda Coffey had felt compelled to include within her own review of personal narratives and, having suffered my share of sporting injuries, I found myself able to closely relate to his physical frustrations and emotional heartache. Sadly, I also know all about the seemingly never-ending road to recovery and have shared his desire to regain optimal fitness as quickly and effortlessly as possible. While my injuries have never been as serious as Sparkes', my body was also damaged at the time I first came across his work. I was waiting for my long-overdue, much needed, knee surgery.

Andrew Sparkes' 'Telling Tales' text was actually the book that I chose to take with me to the hospital on the day my operation finally arrived. I enjoyed how he appeared to be trying to make his "findings" available to a wider and more diverse academic audience[376]. I also admired how he actively embraced literature (and stories) from outside the academy. For example, he encouraged me to track down one of the novels he spoke about[377]. Less than a week later I had Sam Fussell's 'Muscle' sitting on

[375] See **Andrew C. Sparkes (1996)** The fatal flaw: A narrative of the fragile body-self, *Qualitative Inquiry* 2, pp. 463-294.

[376] According to Andrew Sparkes, the telling of a story "occurs when writers intervene in the narrative and suggest how they might feel about characters or interpret events". The showing of a story, however, "involves the author's effacement, so that the characters act out the story and reveal things about themselves without the author proposing interpretations". I found myself wanting to show, as opposed to merely tell, people what I had experienced during my excursion to Melbourne. In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p. 80).

[377] Sam Fussell's story is a no-holds-barred, blow-by-blow, account of his journey into the world of competitive body building**.** His narrative not only reveals what he did, but also what he saw and what he felt as a healthy hobby grew into an unhealthy obsession. ***Within his introduction he explains how "t***hose in search of a steroid primer or an exercise manual are advised to look elsewhere; my purpose is different. Part ditty, part dirge". The story follows his solitary pilgrimage into a world of drugs and depression, A world that he claims was "governed by a savage force that swallowed me whole from a bookstore in New York City, and did not relent until it had chewed me up and spit me out 80 pounds heavier and 3,000 miles later on a posing dais in Burbank, California". He ends his introduction as follows; "I was swabbed in posing oil and competition color, flexing with all my might, when I came to, a sadder and wiser man". It still sends a shiver down my spine. He puts my story telling ability to shame. My favourite line, however, came later on in the text and reveals the control that this so called 'leisure activity' had over his life. He claimed that "It beat the street. It beat my girlfriend. It beat my family. I didn't have to think. I didn't have to care. I didn't have to feel. I simply had to lift". Please read **Sam W. Fussell (1991)** *Muscle confessions of an unlikely bodybuilder* (London: Scribners) (p. 61).

my shelf, with only a couple of chapters left unread. It was exactly how Sparkes had described it and, to this day, I still find myself thinking about Fussell's personal observations and private insecurities as I visit the weights room of the university gym.

Sam Fussell's inspiring story was not the only text that Sparkes encouraged me to enquire about at the library. He also directed me towards a number of likeminded scholars, all of whom had recently chosen to utilise their memories of past lived experiences in their explorations of their own body-self relationship. His various articles, for example, led me to search the databases for the sporting-related narratives of Celia Brackenbridge, Jim Denison, Margaret Carlisle Duncan, Brett Smith, Mark Sudwell, Richard Tinning and Tosha Tsang[378]. Together, these literary-inspired authors left a lasting impression and gave me an unparalleled insight into complex issues of self and social identity, gender, sexuality, ethics and illness. It was, however, Andrew Sparkes who lit my fuse. It was Andrew Sparkes that had me addicted to finding out as much as I could about this alternative genre of social science.

The Scandinavian influence in Andrew Sparkes work was not only obvious in terms of the sources of information/inspiration that he acknowledged, but also the people he chose to work with. Martti Silvennoinen, for example, has not only published his own narratives of self, using a number of personal photos to evoke childhood memories around which he was then able to reflect, but has also collaborated with Andrew Sparkes on an edited text full of sports-related personal narratives[379]. Similarly, I found myself

[378] Andrew Sparkes noted how "A growing number of scholars in sport and physical activity have drawn on their personal experiences to explore issues relating to body-self relationships over time, identity construction, gender, sexuality, aging, impairment, disability, race, and ethnicity". Margaret Carlisle Duncan, for example, may base much of her personal narratives around her vivid memories of 'being there', but she also chooses to include several literacy additions that did not actually need her to have been there. Brett Smith, however, uses an amalgamation of diaries, short stories and poetry, along with self-introspection and interactive introspection, to cover the sensitive subject of coping with clinical depression. While Tosha Tsang recalls the difficulties faced trying to overcome racial stereotyping in order to feel a part of a professional rowing team, Celia Brackenbridge discussed the danger that the adoption of a reflexive stance could easily be mistaken for wallowing in self pity. In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p. 76). See, for example, **Jim Denison (1996)** Sport Narratives, *Qualitative Inquiry* 2 (3), pp. 351-362; **Margaret Carlisle Duncan (1998)** Stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 15, pp. 95-1; **Richard Tinning (1998)** "What position do you play?", in Chris Hickley, Lindsay Fitzclarence and Russell Mathews (Eds.) *Where The Boys Are* (pp. 109-120) (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press); **Celia Brackenbridge (1999)** Managing myself, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 34 (4), pp. 399-410;. **Brett Smith (1999)** The Abyss, *Qualitative Inquiry* 5 (2), pp. 264-279; **Margaret Carlisle Duncan (2000)** Reflex, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17 (10), pp. 60-68; **Tosha Tsang (2000)** Let Me Tell You a Story: A Narrative Exploration of Identity in High-Performance Sport, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17 (10), pp. 44-59.

[379] See, for example, **Martti Silvennoinen (1994)** To Childhood Heroes, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 29 (1), pp. 25-30; **Martti Silvennoinen (2003)** 'Ectasy on skis', in Jim Denison and Pirko Markula (Eds.) *Moving Writing: Crafting Movement in Sport Research* (pp. 163-175) (New York:

accessing the articles and edited texts produced by Pirko Markula[380], Esa Sironen adopted 'memory work' to provide a systematic exploration of personal experiences of sport and body histories[381]. Likewise, Ulla Kosonen explored several issues of femininity and sexuality through her memories of her physical appearance[382]. Finally, Artto Tiihonen focused on his memories battling asthma and the social construction of male sporting identities in his native Finland during the 1960s and 70s[383].

I soon found myself swimming in a sea of contested self and social identities. I was moving from stories of gender and sexuality, to those based on memories of overcoming illness and serious injury. Lisa Tillmann-Healy's memories of her struggle with bulimia, through a first-person narrative in the form of short stories and poetry, had me questioning if any of my school friends had been suffering in silence back in Sawston[384]. I also started to look at those around me in my present day environment, including my current group of tourism students. Every article offered me something completely new to think about.

Deborah Reed-Danahay and Carolyn Ellis may have demonstrated the potential for adopting an autoethnographic approach, but it was Andrew Sparkes who finally convinced me to use my emotional Melbourne experience(s) as the basis of my entire thesis. His desire to push the blurred boundaries provided me with the confidence to continue down this pathway of discovery. I was fixated about his views on creative non-

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Peter Lang); **Andrew C. Sparkes and Martti Silvennoinen (Eds.) (1999)** *Talking Bodies: Men's Narratives of the Body and Sport* (So Phi, Finland: University of Jyvaskyla). See also **Mikko Innanen (1999)** 'Secret Life in the Culture of Thinness', in Andrew C. Sparkes and Martti Silennoinen (Eds.) *Talking Bodies: Men's Narratives of the Body and Sport* (pp.120-134) (So Phi, Finland: University of Jyvaskyla); **Jim Denison (1999)** 'Boxed in', in Andrew C. Sparkes and Martti Silennoinen (Eds.) *Talking Bodies: Men's Narratives of the Body and Sport* (pp. 29-36) (So Phi, Finland: University of Jyvaskyla); **Mark Sudwell (1999**) 'The Body Bridge', in Andrew C. Sparkes and Martti Silvennoinen (Eds.) *Talking Bodies: Men's Narratives of the Body and Sport* (pp. 13-28)(So Phi, Finland: University of Jyvaskyla).

[380] See, for example, **Pirko Markula (2002**) 'Bodily Dialogues', in Jim Denison and Pirko Markula (Eds.) *Moving Writing: Crafting Movement In Sport Research* (pp. 1-24) (New York: Peter Lang); **Pirko Markula and Jim Denison (2005)** 'Sport and the Personal Narrative' in David L. Andrews, Daniel S. Mason and Michael L. Silk (Eds.) *Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies* (pp. 165-184) (Oxford: Berg).

[381] See **Esa Sironen (1994)** On memory-work in the theory of body culture, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 29 (1), pp. 5-13.

[382] See **Ulla Kosonen (1993)** 'A Running Girl', in Leena Laine (Ed.) *On the Fringes of Sport* (pp. 16-25) (St Augustin, Germany: Academia Verlag).

[383] See **Artto Tiihonen (1994**) Asthma, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 29 (1), pp. 51-62; **Artto Tiihonen (2002)** 'Body talks', in Jim Denison and Pirko Markula (Eds.) *Moving Writing: Crafting Movement In Sport Research* (pp. 77-92) (New York: Peter Lang).

[384] See **Lisa M. Tillman-Healy (1996**) 'A secret life in a culture of thinness: reflections on body, food and bulimia', in Carolyn Ellis and Art P. Bochner (Eds.) *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (pp. 76-108) (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press);

fiction and the concept of 'dramatic licence'[385]. I was equally intrigued by his article on the critical feedback he received from reviewers after going public with his 'Fatal Flaw'[386]. I loved how he appeared to have an answer for everything thrown back in his direction. I loved his passion and obvious belief in the value and importance of what he had written.

I soon found myself digging out the feedback that I got from the reviewers of my first attempts of writing an autobiographical narrative. I wondered if I had targeted the wrong journal. In hindsight, however, I came to the conclusion that I had simply submitted it several months too early. It wasn't ready. I wasn't ready. I wasn't able to accurately to reveal the thoughts that I had in my head. I tried to play it safe, to remain distanced and detached from my observations. I merely told the story of my first football match. I didn't, however, show it to my reader. I talked at them, and not to them. By the start of my final year of my PhD, however, Sparkes had more than convinced me that it was the articulation of my memories, and their significance, that would help make my story believable.

I enjoyed the comforting sense of security that I felt whenever I sat down with a copy of Andrew Sparkes' work. He made me see the academy in a whole new light. His work has undeniably influenced my own efforts at autoethnography. My goal is to contribute and complement. I will leave the comparing to those that choose to read my narrative. My thesis is a testimony to every one of the academics that I have mentioned within my narrative. It is not, however, a tribute. I'm looking to advance and adapt, as opposed to merely adopt heartful autoethnography. It is not perfect, but then neither is the work of those mentioned.

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[385] According to Andrew Sparkes, "those who believe that different forms of representation have something positive and worthwhile to offer should take courage from the advances that have been made in this area and not be deterred from experimenting. Indeed, they should see themselves as making a valuable contribution to the ongoing development and strengthening of qualitative research". He argued that the creation of autoethnographies which "draw upon the experiences of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding" are bound to raise questions due to its position on the "boundaries of disciplinary practices". In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p. 227).

[386] Andrew Sparkes noted how only "a small number of sociologists of sport have opted to produce what have been defined as autoethnographies or narratives of self". He opted to explore the lack of suitable criteria available to those responsible for passing judgment on an autoethnography/narrative of self's value/validity. In keeping with the genre, he chose to write about the difficulty he had getting his own narrative of self published in a leading journal. The issue of self-indulgence is also raised and rejected alongside the reactions he received when submitting "a more trusting tale". In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2000)** Autoethnography and Narratives of Self: Reflections on Criteria in Action, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17 (1), pp. 21-43 (p. 21).

The best autoethnographies always leave you wanting more information. They cause you to question the author's methods and motivations. They also raise issues of creditability. That said, I am yet to come across anyone who thinks they are 'average' academic articles. Returning to 1989, Michael Jackson advised how the stories of autoethnography may begin with the experience of one person, but are designed to encourage the reader to reflect upon their own unique lived experiences[387]. He also explained that "Unlike traditional empiricism, which draws a definite boundary between observer and observed, between method and object, radical empiricism denies the validity of such cuts and makes the interplay between these domains the focus of its"[388].

Do you see the relevance? I hope so. That is exactly what I've been trying to do from the front cover onwards. I have used pseudonyms to hide the identity of those met along the way. Some, however, actually asked to have their 'real' names included. I have opted against naming the tour operators used, the hotel stayed in and the airline used. Other landmarks and attractions, however, have survived the editing process. Anyone who is identifiable was informed of my intentions prior to the construction of this thesis. I look forward to seeing and hearing their reactions. Interestingly, we are never asked to mask the identity of the academics that we are encouraged to critically reinterpret. The closest that most authors come to protecting their peers is the regular dropping of first names. This is something that I have personally chosen to avoid. I wanted to make it more personal. I want you to think of these sources of inspiration as people, rather than published authors.

As stated in the Prologue, I set out to produce something that would hopefully appeal to more than just a handful of my peers. I'm sorry if I have unintentionally abused anyone's trust. This has definitely been the toughest game that I have ever played. It is the steepest hill that I have ever climbed, and the longest run that I have ever been on. Quitting or failing to reach the finish line, however, has never been an option. I may not

[387] Michael Jackson was one of the first to try and locate the ethnographer within they ethnography. He noted how "our personal lives, tend to get suppressed in our academic discourse.", despite the fact that, in reality, it is our personal engagement with the subject that has the biggest influence on the findings extracted from the field. His notion of "radical empiricism" explored our shifting sense of ourselves as subjects and as objects by emphasizing the researcher's active involvement with others during the knowledge construction process. Jackson argued that "if we are to find common ground with them, we have to open ourselves to modes of sensory and bodily life which, while meaningful to us in our personal lives, tend to get suppressed in our academic discourse". In **Michael Jackson (1989)** *Paths Towards a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press) (p. 11).

[388] B***y telling their stories, Michael Jackson suggested that radical empiricists ask their readers to embark on a collaborative journey that tacks between individual experience and social roles, relationships, and structures.*** Ibid (p. 3).

have beaten my colleagues to the end, or met half the deadlines that I have set myself, but I have learnt more about the culture sports spectatorship, more about the culture of sports-related tourism, and more about the culture of the ethnographic researcher than even my wildest imagination had suggested I might. More importantly, I've also learnt more about my family, my friends and myself.

To those who say 'being there is everything', I would ask them to try travelling solo to watch two foreign countries play against each other in a foreign country. Those able to say that it was still 'everything' are the people to whom I would like to dedicate Act three of my thesis. If you are able to travel overseas and enjoy attending sporting events by yourself then you are clearly a true sports fan. Those, like me, that wished they were able to share that same experience with friends and/or family may admit that being there wasn't everything. My own experiences revealed that travelling alone to sporting events can also be treated with a hint of concern or mistrust by those travelling in pre-established in-groups. I would also suggest that the majority of those observed would not have been there had they not have been surrounded by familiar faces.

I have discovered that I am extremely judgemental. I judge people on their accent, age, clothes and social behaviour. I judge them on the extent of their allegiances. I have discovered that I do not have the self confidence to be a spy or covertly infiltrate other people's pre-established social networks. On the contrary, I need to be invited in. I need to feel welcome and a legitimate part of the team. I need to be myself. Whilst I knew much of this already, I had never really thought about it from an entirely ethnographic perspective in the past. I naively headed to Melbourne believing that I could keep my personal behaviours separate from my participant observations.

I have discovered that serendipity; coincidence, hindsight and even irony can play a major part in conducting ethnography and, as a result, should never be consciously excluded. I have discovered that I am not ready, willing or able to forget or forgo my past experiences, and that my affiliations to where I have come from are as strong as ever. I have discovered that moving to the other side of the world has had a much greater impact than I realised when I first embarked on this journey. I have discovered that writing reflections help to ease both my mental and physical pain. I have discovered that Damien Martyn can hit a cricket ball a very long way, and that the AFL is essentially just a Melbourne game, as opposed to an Australian-wide sport.

I have discovered that I still feel terrible after a sleepless night, and that I look even worse after a couple of months without shaving. I have discovered that self esteem

and self categorisation are the key ingredients in the creation of a sustainable, salient, social identity. I have discovered, somewhat anecdotally, that there are indeed strong connections between the concept social identity theory and the social practice of sports spectatorship, especially when it involves a trip away from home. I have discovered that there are even closer connections, however, between the culture of the travelling sports fan and the culture of the academic. Both involve the creation of an identifiable social identity. Both are built around the desire to belong to a community. Both are built on the fear of being excluded. But that's enough about me and my discoveries. My findings were always going to be whatever you found yourself discovering at the end of the story[389].

[389] According to Carolyn Ellis, the construction of a personal narrative allows "authors become 'I', readers become 'you', and participants become 'us'. Participants are encouraged to engage in personal relationships with authors/researchers, to think of themselves as co-researchers, to share authority, and to author their own lives in their own voices. Readers, too, take a more active role as they are invited into the author's world, aroused to a feeling level about the events being described, and stimulated to use what they learn there to reflect on, understand, and cope with their own lives. The goal is to write meaningfully and evocatively about topics that matter and make a difference, to include sensory and emotional experience". In **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira) (p. 31).

# Chapter 36: Gazing (far) beyond the narcissist's navel

> "I choose to foreground my own voice. This is not narcissism; it is not egocentric indulgence… Critical autobiography is vital intellectual work…. The social analysis accomplished by this form is based on two assumptions; first, that it is possible to learn about the general from the particular; second, that the self is a social phenomenon. I assume that my subjectivity is filled with the voices of others and about the worlds which we create/inhabit… because my subjective experience is part of the world, the story which emerges is not completely private and idiosyncratic"[390]

Autoethnography, like any form of alternative interpretive enquiry, is not without its fair share of overly sceptical critics (and overly critical sceptics)[391]. Before I go any further, however, I would like to dedicate this final chapter to my good friend, esteemed colleague, established drinking buddy and the only person on this planet that thinks it is okay to switch his allegiance from Southampton to Portsmouth Football Clubs. The irony that, after over a year of 'navel gazing' jokes, you are now in the process of constructing your own autoethnography will never be lost on me. Welcome to my world.

Like Kathryn Church, I consider autoethnography to be 'highly intellectual work'[392]. According to Andrew Sparkes, however, the production of autoethnographic tales "brings perils as well as pleasures, problems as well as possibilities and potentials"[393]. By embracing the complex, highly emotional, interplay of self introspection, my thesis has expressed the many socially constructed values of the narrator. I have simply attempted

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[390] In **Kathryn Church (1995)** *Forbidden Narratives: Critical Autobiography as Social Science* (London: Gordon & Breach Publishers) ***(p. 5).***

[391] Herbert Gans argues that autoethnographers are conveniently neglecting the primary goal of sociology (i.e. helping people to understand their society). His strong reaction to the emergence of autoethnography is one of obvious distain and equal distrust. He not only rejects the lack of 'detachment' and 'distancing', but also believes it will prove nothing more than a passing fancy. See, for further discussion, see **Herbert Gans (1999)** Participant Observation in the Era of Ethnography, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 28 (5), pp. 540-548.

[392] Kathryn church's unforeseen emotional breakdown led her to re-assess her private and professional lives. Her subsequently discover of consumer participation saw her begin on a new pathway of discovery. It introduced her to the concept of critical autobiography. Within the introductory chapter of her now seminal text, she noted her initial struggles to come to terms with the compartmentalised nature of the academy. She claimed that "the public is split from the private" and "the personal/subjective from the rational". In **Kathryn Church (1995)** *Forbidden Narratives*: *Critical Autobiography as Social Science* (London: Gordon & Breach Publishers) (p. 3).

[393] In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p.105).

to offer my reader an "experience of the experience"[394]. I may be self indulgent, a little egocentric and even a bit of a narcissist at times, but it is only when I am alone or around trusted friends and family members. I have always tried to keep Pilch away from my academic self. Whether I listen to him, or respond to his voice in my head, however, depends upon where I am and who I am with at the time.

As revealed in the first chapter, I am reluctant to place self indulgence, or even narcissism for that matter, as being completely unethical or invisible within the corridors of the academy. I am equally uncomfortable placing these personal traits at the opposite end of the continuum to the notions of 'rigour' and 'objectivity'. I refuse to see it as a fatal flaw that needs to be removed or eradicated from my research. How does being self indulgent differ from having high self esteem, being self confident or being self assured? As Church points out, the self is a social phenomenon[395]. We are all social beings and, as a result, any study of the self is also a study of the society in which that self is situated or contextualised[396]. I, for one, am a highly impressionable child of the 1990s who has grown up in a competitive and consumer-driven capitalist culture that is ultimately built around the notions of power and greed.

I am both idealistic and idiosyncratic. I know that is more than evident within this thesis. But, then again, so it should be. I would be more concerned if it, and I, was invisible. The synonyms currently listed on my computer screen claim that being self indulgent can also be interpreted as meaning; 'romantic', 'optimistic', 'personal', 'individual', 'distinctive', 'all you own', 'eccentric', 'peculiar' and 'particular', 'naïve' and 'unrealistic'. I am a hopeless romantic, who is determined to ensure the optimist on my left shoulder is always a little bit louder than the pessimist on my right. I hope that my thesis will one day be seen as no more (or less) peculiar than any other form of interpretive ethnography.

My thesis is particular and will always be as personal, individual and distinctive as any other. I have just been a lot more open and honest about it. It is certainly my own

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[394] In **Carolyn Ellis and Art P. Bochner (1992)** 'Telling and performing personal stories', in Carolyn Ellis and Michael Flaherty (Eds.) *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience* (pp. 79-101) (London: Sage) (p.98).

[395] See **Kathryn Church (1995)** *Forbidden Narratives*: *Critical Autobiography as Social Science* (London: Gordon & Breach Publishers).

[396] Social constructionists such as Kenneth Gergen see everything we do as being socially influenced and unavoidably linked to our relationship with others. To them the self is merely another social construct, created by and for everyone else to see. See, for discussion, **Kenneth Gergen (1985)** The social constructionist movement in modern psychology, *American Psychologist*, 40, pp. 266-275; **Kenneth Gergen (2001)** *Social construction in context* (London: Sage).

unique contribution, and I cannot wait to sign the form stating that this is all my own work. I can be naïve at times. I can also be unrealistic. I am not, however, overly eccentric. I am definitely guilt of self indulgence, especially when it comes to sports-related travel and tourism[397].

Kathryn Church claimed that the construction of what she called 'forbidden narratives' have traditionally been approached with 'deep suspicion' and 'hostility', especially within the boundaries of the academy[398]. I am yet to discover an autoethnographer unaware of the risks they take, especially when having to demonstrate the creditability of their stories[399]. All of the autoethnographers that I have come across have certainly dedicated a considerable amount of ink and paper to arguing against the claim of narcissistic navel gazing[400]. Likewise, all were quick to warn me of the inherent dangers that I may face my taking this path. Both Michael Hall and Tami Spry have

[397] Andrew Sparkes once commented on how the term self indulgence made him feel vulnerable and left his work wide open to criticism. He asked his readers to think about how "we set the boundary between providing the audience with sufficient information about the self without being accused of self indulgence?". His response focused upon the misunderstanding and lack of suitable criteria available to accurately assess the social value of autoethnography. In doing so, he noted a number of others that supported his belief that the self is not only social constructed, but plays a major role in the construction of society. See, for further discussion, **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** 'Autoethnography: Self-indulgence or something more?', in Art P. Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (Eds.) *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature, and aesthetics* (pp. 209-232) (New York: AltaMira).

[398] See **Kathryn Church (1995)** *Forbidden Narratives*; *Critical Autobiography as Social Science* (London: Gordon & Breach Publishers).

[399] According to Laurel Richardson, "creditability is accomplished, in part, through the artistry of the teller - the selection of details, the tone, the images, metaphors - and, in part, through locating the story within a larger context of genre. Readers bring to the story pre-existing expectations regarding that genre's structure; writers reinscribe those structures by writing through them, glossing, using words from a particular domain to construct believability". Similarly, Andrew Sparkes claims that "engaging in new writing practices can be risky, but the task is not impossible". He added, however, that "undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as untenured staff, will require support and encouragement from advisors, committees, and colleagues if they are to explore new forms of representation". Carolyn Ellis warns how, "in autoethnography, we're usually writing about epiphanies in our lives and in doing so we open ourselves up for criticism about how we've lived". To Jane Elliot, however, the biggest risk comes in the form of the "so what?" response to a story. Together these authors gave me the confidence to continue. I am not afraid of answering the 'so what' question. In **Laurel Richardson (1997)** *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life* (New Brunswick: NJ: Rutgers University Press) (p. 77); In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p.227). In **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, AltaMira Press) (34). For further discussion see **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity* (London: Sage); **Jane Elliot (2005)** *Using Narrative in social research: qualitative and quantitative approaches* (London: Sage).

[400] Andrew Sparkes suggest that the "universal charge of self-indulgence" is "based largely on a misunderstanding of the genre in terms of what it is, what it does, and how it works in a multiplicity of contexts". He dismisses the claim, pointing out how autoethnography can reveal "multiple subjectivities of social life and a range of embodied feelings, emotions, and reactions to others". He also argues that, as a genre, it can "raise socio-psychological questions that connect individual and group interaction to the surrounding social structures", before concluding that well written personal narratives can "encourage acts of witnessing, empathy, and connection that extends beyond the self of the author and thereby contribute to sociological understandings". In **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** *Telling Tales in Sport and Physical Activity: A qualitative journey* (Champaign, Il: Human Kinetics) (p. 99).

highlighted the fact that writing about ones personal opinions could potential "result in a lack of publications"[401]. Likewise, Andrew Sparkes noted how self-knowing, self-respectful, self-sacrificing, or self-luminous can easily be misunderstood and misinterpreted as self-indulgent[402].

Eric Mykhalovskiy has offered some of the staunchest, and subsequently well documented, support to all of those keen to embrace the emotional subjectivity of the self. He challenged traditional reductive practices and argued that "to write individual experience is, at the same time, to write social experience"[403]. He also dismissed calls of self indulgence, pointing out that autoethnographies encourage a different way of telling/showing and are never directed towards a universal reader, with universal characteristics. His philosophical justification is ultimately based on a dualism between the individual and the social[404]. Basically, if my identity is indeed socially constructed, then every word that I have written must have been influenced to some degree by my social environment and the societies I have inhabited.

Every character has played their part in the construction of my thesis. Likewise, every lived experience has made me the person that I saw in the mirror in this morning.

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[401] See, for example, **C. Michael Hall (2004)** 'Reflexivity and tourism research: Situating myself and/with others', in Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (Eds.) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies* (pp. 137-154) (London: Routledge); **Tami Spry (2001)** Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis, *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 (6), pp. 706-732.

[402] Robert Rinehart argued that the navel-gazing, self indulgent, misapprehension of autoethnography has typically been led by those whose actions are "grounded in a deep mistrust of the worth of the self". According to Andrew Sparkes, "work like confessional tales, autoethnography, ethnodrama, poetic representation, and fictional representations, which operate on the borderlines of disciplines and cross or blur boundaries" also appear to agitate and make life awkward for those obsessed with the constant search for permanent or universal criteria for judging research". In **Robert Rinehart (1998)** Fictional Methods in Ethnography: Believability, Specks of Glass, and Chekov, *Qualitative Inquiry* 4, pp. 200-224 (p. 212); **Andrew C. Sparkes (2002)** 'Autoethnography: Self-indulgence or something more?', in Art P. Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (Eds.) *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature, and aesthetics* (pp. 209-232) (New York: AltaMira) (p. 220).

[403] According to Eric Mykhalovskiy, "those who use autobiographical perspectives in the practice of sociology and related disciplines have noted, with concern, the association of their work with self-indulgence". To him, however, the condemnation of autobiography as self indulgent merely reflects one person's perspective. The charge is therefore seen as being contradictory to the aims of the author who is not attempting to find, nor claiming to have discovered, any universal truths. In **Eric Mykhalovskiy (1996)** Reconsidering Table Talk: Critical Thoughts on the Relationship between Sociology, Anthropology and Self-Indulgence, *Qualitative Sociology* 19, pp.131-152 (p. 141).

[404] Erik Mykhalovskiy cleverly deploys the powerful weapon of irony "to expose how self-indulgence, as a critique invoking highly insular relations of readership, authorship and subject/object distinction, relies on the conventions of a traditional masculine academic discourse". He does, however, admit that some autoethnography can be a little too "self-adoring, or self-hating without being sufficiently self-aware or self-critical, and without taking into account cultural constraints and possibilities". He subsequently warned that if this does occur then "what gets written is not that useful to anybody, not even yourself". In **Erik Mykhalovskiy (1997)** Reconsidering Table Talk: Critical Thoughts on the Relationship Between Sociology, Autobiography and Self-Indulgence, in Rosanna Hertz (Ed.) *Reflexivity and Voice* (pp. 229-251) (Thousand Oaks: Sage) (p.234).

This has never been a one man show[405]. If I am indeed indulging in anything right now, it is certainly not my self. Amanda Coffey noted how all fieldwork starts from where we are and is shaped by where we've come from[406]. What I have consistently argued in this thesis is the fact that, to a true sports fan, being there can often mean everything. What I have subsequently discovered, over the course of this emotional rollercoaster ride, is the fact that 'being there' is actually unavoidable. It is inevitable.

We are always 'there'. We simply can't be anywhere else. The only thing that changes is where the relevant 'there' happens to be. I was certainly 'there' when I was judging people from my seat in the Christchurch departure lounge. I was 'there' when I sat and did the same on the stool of Melbourne's Elizabeth Street McDonalds franchise. I was 'there' when I was 'fishing' for respondents at the start of the MCG stadium tour. I was 'there' when I blacked out and needed the assistance of a large Polynesian named Joe. I've been 'there' since you picked up this thesis. Finding myself 'there' has helped me construct this heartful autoethnography. It has helped me find a position that I plan to keep for the foreseeable future. A part of me will remain 'there' the rest of my life.

Our social identities are complex beyond all proportion. They are heavily gendered, sexual, occupational and generational. They are located in both time and space. They are both fixed and fluid. We cannot escape them. In hindsight, this was of course the biggest flaw of my original research proposal. I certainly wanted to be there from the beginning to the end. That said, I also wanted to be positioned elsewhere at the same time. I somehow managed to notice the impossibility and implausibility of being in two places at the same time. I was both ignorant and naïve. I tried to exclude my memory from playing a part in this story. I tried to be objective. I tried to keep my distance, and remain suitably detached. I failed.

Carolyn Ellis noted how autoethnographers typically utilise personal epiphanies to begin and end their stories[407]. The impression that I hope I have left you with is one of a

[405] Tosha Tsang illustrates the issue of multiple ownership, while defending her rowing-based narrative of self, citing; "I have claimed these stories to be my own, yet a story of myself, of my identity, necessarily involves and depends upon a story of others too. So these stories belong to them as well… these are also the reader's stories, for through reading, readers construct their own meanings and identity with or resist certain elements of a story. How they do so not only reflects back on them and their own values and notions of themselves, but also implicates them as collaborators in the creation of the meaning of the text". In **Tosha Tsang (2000)** Let Me Tell You a Story: A Narrative Exploration of Identity in High-Performance Sport, *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17 (10), pp. 44-59 (p. 47).

[406] See **Amanda Coffey (1999)** *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity* (London: Sage).

[407] See **Carolyn Ellis (2004)** *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira).

storyteller who has used his experience of a lived experience to become both self-aware and self-critical of his current place/position on the socially constructed field of special interest academia. I am naturally emotional. I am equally irrational and easily flustered. I act on impulse, and often wish that I hadn't. I do not, however, believe in regret. I hope you can see, however, that I am no more self-obsessed or self-adoring than the author of next piece of literature you choose to read, whether it is a novel, a thesis, a textbook, a journal article or a newspaper column.

I think that Alan Skelton summed things up nicely when he came up with the following three justifications as to why he welcomed the narrative style of autoethnography. He notes how the ambiguity of personal stories prevents "simple closure", encourages continued thinking and supports emotional reflection[408]. He acknowledges its accessibility and readability, especially when compared with the majority of academic literature. Finally, he sees it as a productive medium in which "post-modern sensitivities" can be brought together to offer a critical, dynamic, approach to self and identity creation[409]. I hope that I have made a lasting impression. I hope that you will never forget about the story of my PhD. I hope that you have found it both easy and enjoyable to read.

This was my first authentic attempt at mixing my own personal and professional cultures. It represents my quest for a sense of absolute and unquestionable belonging. I wanted to author my text in a manner that acknowledges that 'I was there'. Inspired, by the publications of Deborah Reed-Danahay, Carolyn Ellis, Laurel Richardson, Donald Polkinghorne, Amanda Coffey and Andrew Sparkes, I have tried to fully embrace the literary-inspired narrative turn. I have described places, people, the personal and the private. My field notes are authored and crafted pieces of creative non-fiction. They document my emotional journey and diary my perceived vulnerabilities. I trust that you will have picked up on the rhetoric and my rigorous, if less than subtle, attempts to target your sociological imagination. I trust that you will have grasped how central these things are to both the conceptualisation and the contextualisation of my knowledge creation/contribution.

Ultimately, I have constructed something that sees the subject and the object standing shoulder to shoulder, side-by-side. My personal self has never existed at the

[408] See **Alan Skelton (2000)** Review of Talking Bodies, *European Physical Education Review* 6 (3), pp. 27-29.
[409] Ibid.

expense of my more public, theoretical, and rational demeanour. So what else have I discovered from this once-in-a-life-time experience? I have discovered that if I am going to go on another sports tourism package, then it is definitely worth spending the extra money to be on one that arranges for someone to meet you when you walk out into the arrivals lounge of a foreign destination. I have discovered that the academy needs to be a lot more flexible when it comes to the criteria imposed on doctoral candidates, especially the word limit. I am not calling for 'radical' changes to the system, but if the powers that be want the philosophers and forward-thinkers of the future to show their creativity then someone needs to loosen the leash that is currently placed around their necks.

I am all for tradition, but I have recently discovered that, while times have changed, attitudes are still lagging behind in places. There are a lot of people living their lives in the past. I have also discovered that all stories must come to an end, as opposed to a conclusion. In keeping with the way that I have produced my thesis, I want to go against the advice of others and that of traditional academic practice. I don't want to have the last word, or final say. On the contrary, rather than leave you with some mundane recommendations about the obvious need for further exploration, I want to leave you with the thoughts of someone else. I want to leave you with a couple more quotations, both of which are deemed highly appropriate as this particular journey of discovery comes to an end. The discovery of these forward thinking individuals represents, without doubt, the greatest discovery of my entire doctoral experience. They taught me that nothing is ever new, but everything is always unique.

I hope that you are still sitting comfortably. I hope that I have left you questioning the merits of not just allowing, but actively encouraging, some self indulgence to come and share my academic stage. I hope you feel the need to personally respond to my thesis. I hope that we will meet again on the other side. I hope that you have discovered who I would like you to think that I am. I hope that you discuss this others, even if it is only to warn people that they don't want to end up like Richard. I really am all over the place. But I live in hope, not in regret.

"The most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community…

Do not split their work from their lives.

They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation…

They want to use each for the enrichment of the other…

You must learn to use your life experience…

In your intellectual work"[410]

"On the whole, autoethnographers don't want you to sit back

As spectators; they want readers to feel, care and desire.

If culture circulates through all of us,

How can autoethnography be free of connection…

To a world beyond the self?"[411]

# The End.

[410] Members of the International Sociological Association voted *The Sociological Imagination* the second most popular book of the twentieth century, beaten only by Weber's *Economy and Society*. It has been translated into seventeen languages, reprinted/released on many times and is arguably one of the most celebrated, not to mention cited, pieces of academic literature ever published. With all this in mind it seemed rather fitting to save my best, and most influential, quotation to the very last page of my thesis. Mill's work focused entirely on the study of everyday social issues created as a consequence of ordinary personal experiences. He looked specifically at the autobiographical and historical features of human culture, noting how those without sense of belonging or control can lapse into states of either apathy or anxiety. More significantly, he also discussed the value and validity of embracing a reflexive philosophy to sociological study. He was decades ahead of his time, and I wouldn't have been able to do any of this without him. In **Charles Wright Mills (1959)** *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Grove) ***(pp. 195-196).***

[411] In **Art P. Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (1996)** 'Talking Over Ethnography', in Carolyn Ellis and Art P. Bochner (1996) *'Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing'* (pp. 13-45) (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira) ***(p.24).***