

**On the Track towards Enlightenment:
A Semantic Analysis of a Spiritual Capitalism in *Runner's World* Magazine**

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ABSTRACT

On the Track towards Enlightenment:
A Semantic Analysis of a Spiritual Capitalism in *Runner's World Magazine*

Tijana Potkonjak

The subjectivist and secular turns of late modernity have, along with economic shifts that accompanied them, increased the body's centrality to self-identity. Physical embodiment and experience not only act as a type of capital, exchangeable for other forms of currency, but are also - because of the popularization of spirituality - seen as intrinsically valuable and potentially liberatory. In consumer culture, the body-cum-physical capital has become a commodity, and a new relationship based on aesthetics and consumption between the body and the self has developed (in which the body is a "project" of the self). This is a relationship that contemporary spiritualities have been accused of profiting from, but from whose oppressions they promise an escape, in the form of self-transcendence. Running, which will be introduced as one type of "body project," seems to have the potential to liberate the runner from the experience of the mundane. This thesis offers a short genealogy of ascetic practices associated with religion, linking them to those prescribed by the aesthetic regimes of late modernity, and then performs a semantic content analysis of the articles in *Runner's World* magazine, focusing on the intent of the communicator only. The conclusions drawn are that this publication's message is underscored by a contradictory discourse of consumption and asceticism, which is merely one of the contradictions already inherent in the ideology of the capitalist framework within which the magazine operates.

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For the last year and a half, I have been enchanted by and immersed in the world of long-distance running. In a marathon, you cross paths with many strangers whose names you will never know but to whom you will feel connected forever. In those gruelling yet blissful hours, the support you receive from the crowds and fellow runners carries you when your own legs are no longer able. This thesis is dedicated to my own cheering section, my mother, father, and sister, Sara, and to my fellow marathoners, my partner, Andres, and my dog, Calvin, for making it seem less absurd to continue the journey for so much as a finisher's medal.

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Chapter 1: “Body Projects” in a Historical Context

In a culture obsessed not with fitness, but with the mark of it, chiselled fat-free bodies can be seen no longer only in late-evening infomercials for the latest magic diet formula, abdominal machine or home exercise program, but almost everywhere (Kolata 230). Male and female television, movie, and music stars are no longer trim and thin but muscular and toned. For men, the new happy medium between Tom Cruise (who himself has become quite a lot more “built” over the last decade) and Arnold Schwarzenegger is a Colin Farrel/Hugh Jackman type physique, the same type that graces the covers of *Men’s Health* and *GQ* magazines every month. Even for women, the pursuit of the Calista Flockhart look has been replaced by a Carmen Electra/Elle McPherson one, in which shoulder, quadricep, glutteal and abdominal muscle definition is sought after. People are raving about First Lady Michelle Obama’s triceps, and even biceps: something that would have been unheard of in the mainstream ten years ago, when the only alternative to the very skinny look was a more body-building physique, that of Linda Hamilton in *The Terminator* and Lucy Lawless as Xena Warrior Princess.¹ Even this physique has become popular, and people argue over whether veiny and muscular female celebrities, such as Madonna, and Sarah Jessica Parker, are overdeveloped at the same time as these figures speak openly about their very rigid and excessive exercise regimens and dependence on exercise (McConnel). Regardless of whether some people take exercise too far, it is clear that “thin is *no longer* in,” but that “fit” is. “Fit,” of course, always

¹ According to interpretation, this might not even have been an alternative. Innes, for example, does not differentiate between a bodybuilding look and a more subtle Lara Croft and G.I. Jane look (sported by Angelina Jolie and Demi Moore respectively) (1-4).

involves “thin” and a very high muscle to fat ratio, but the pursuit of “thin” has changed to include the pursuit of musculature and athleticism. Heroin chic has been replaced by dumbbell chic.

Fitness and nutritional tips and information for both men and women, which serve as a lay rendering of nutritional and exercise science, can be found in everything from health and fitness magazines to the health section of newspapers, and cereal boxes (such as Special K), and countless internet sites, both corporate and personal. Although infomercials still offer the “magic bullet” solution to the perfect body, it is clear that a common theme resonates throughout this entire discourse. Amidst all the fad diets and scientifically “founded” arguments in the form of “eat this/don’t eat that” and “do this/don’t do that,” people are always looking for the simplest workout and diet plan, one that will not be too all-consuming and therefore allow for slip-ups, etc. However, as anyone who has invested any time into a fitness regimen can attest, regardless of which contradictory training program or diet one follows, no result can be achieved without discipline. The fitness craze of the 1970s and 80s, which over time has led many otherwise quite sedentary people to the starting lines of marathons, has convinced even doctors who are not afraid to turn to non-pharmaceutical alternatives to begin to prescribe exercise not only as a means to preventing premature death, but as a means of curing even the most major depression. The question asked by many people embarking on a fitness program for the first time is: “How much exercise is enough?” For Dr. Ronald Dworkin, a critic of what he calls “fitness culture” - which chases not fitness, but the constancy of an endorphin induced high that, much like psychotropic drugs, numbs people to the realities of quotidian living - this question has turned into “is there such a

thing as too much?" His answer simply is "yes," and that obsessive exercise, and the obsessive pursuit of fitness goals, serves as a constant diversion from unfinished goals in real life (Dworkin 103-130).

The omnipresence of what shall herein be referred to as the "gym body," the toned and fat-free body that serves as a postmodern rendition of the (religious but also medical) fasting body is a symptom of "body projects." These consist of corporeal undertakings stemming from a "practical [and collective] recognition of the significance of bodies," which are seen as "malleable entities [whose surfaces] can be shaped and honed by the vigilance and hard work of their owners" (Shilling 4-5). These are projects deeply tied to a discourse of aesthetic consumerism, which, much like ascetic discourse before it, is endorsed and legitimated by scientific knowledge. This shall be explored further on in the introduction.

The focus of this thesis will be a type of leisure whose pursuit forms part of a "body project" of postmodern life. That leisure activity is running (not "jogging," as it is often called), or, more specifically, running as it is portrayed in the primary text of *Runner's World* magazine, an American publication whose readership spans the globe, including Canada.² This magazine serves as a type of "consumer capital:" a "product and pseudoscience hurled at the" running enthusiast, promising him or her the empowerment to pursue their hobby in the most effective way (Mansfield and McGinn

² Although the general public often interchanges the terms "running" and "jogging," consumer products devoted to running are very particular about making a distinction between these two terms, which is this: "running" is the pursuit of individual excellence in a sport and generally involves a specific training regimen and racing (although, for the most part, the only person a runner is truly trying to beat is him or herself); "jogging", on the other hand, is the pursuit of running, at a pace generally at or below 10 minutes/mile, purely for the purpose of fun or fitness. In the latter, there is no competitive element involved (VanArragon 45-56).

53). As will be shown, the presentation of running in *Runner's World* is often accompanied by other manifestations of "body projects," including diet and fashion. Running, however, also exists in seemingly non-aesthetic or consumerist modes, including spiritual ones in which it promises enlightenment, liberation from the mundane, and self-transcendence. The question that will guide the analysis of this thesis is how these two seemingly contradictory modes of running - running as an aesthetic (superficial) "body project" and running as a source of spirituality - can co-exist in the context of a sample of "consumer capital." The definitions of "text," "context," and thus "discourse," that are used are taken from traditional linguistics in which "discourse is defined by the context of occurrence of certain utterances" (Mills 9). These "utterances" comprise the "text," which, in the case of this thesis, are the articles studied. The "context" is the beliefs and values to which the authors seem to subscribe, which are part of a much larger matrix of cultural artefacts that all underscore a capitalist ideology. The word "ideology" is used here, as per Roger Fowler's definition, "in the neutral non-pejorative sense," as simply "a way of looking at the world" (qtd. in Mills 6).

Postmodernity and the Body

Many scholars have researched the genealogy of the new hyperbolized aesthetic significance placed on the body. Although the body as a Western sociological problem can be traced back to the second part of the nineteenth century, which saw the growth of interest in non-European societies by European ones and of concern regarding public health because of the changes that had been brought about by the Industrial Revolution, the shift into what is referred to as late (high) modernity, or postmodernity, has led the

body closer to the centre of theoretical interest (Varga 214).³ This shift is the climactic culmination of the processes of modernity that have enabled governments and medical institutions to exert a larger degree of control over their citizenry, and that have concurrently reduced the power of religion over the body (Turner, *Discourse* 157-168). In this climactic culmination, the ability of religious and political meta-narratives to provide trans-individual meaning structures that contribute to self-identity has been lost (Shilling 2; Varga 220), and this decline in traditional institutional and social bonds has increased individualism as a *modus vivendi* (Varga 221). Individualism has been accompanied by a rise of consumer culture, which places high importance on the body as a bearer of symbolic value. In the individualistic and consumerist milieu of Western postmodernity, the body has become a source of ontological and existential security to fill the gap left by the disappearance of previous narrative structures (Shilling 2-3). This is why the body has become so central to postmodern life, and thus to postmodern sociological study. What Shilling says about bodybuilding can apply to gym-going in general: “if one feels unable to exert influence over an increasingly complex society, at least one can have some effect on the size, shape and appearance of one’s body” (6).

The Body in Christianity

A very short (and by no means comprehensive) synopsis of the history of the significance of the body in Western civilization is perhaps in order. According to Varga, in Hellenistic times, there were two streams of thought (starting circa 500 BCE), the

³ Varga uses the terms “late modernity” and “postmodernity” interchangeably. Other writers choose to use one rather than the other. For the most part, the definition amounts to the same. Anthony Giddens (1991) uses the term “high modernity” to refer to the radicalization of modern trends. Similarly, Sarah Franklin defines “postmodernism” as “carrying modernist practices to the extreme” (S99). In this thesis, “postmodernity,” “high modernity,” and “late modernity” will be used interchangeably.

Protagorean and the Pythagorean. In the former, it was thought that gods had the image of human beings, and thus the body was worshipped as a model of perfection. The importance of physical beauty and physical fitness was epitomized in the reverence of the gymnasium. It was believed that only through physical discipline could one lead a moral life. In the Pythagorean stream, the soul was introduced as the immortal aspect that was linked to the Gods, as it ascends to heaven upon death. In the Greco-Roman tradition as a whole, reality was a system split between reason and desire (which were themselves anthropomorphised in mind and body). Later, the medieval tradition of Christian monasticism, incorporating the Pythagorean idea of the soul's superiority to the body, introduced the idea of the original sin, which included "not only the consumption of the fruit of knowledge, but also the sufferings of the body" (Varga 212-213). The sinful body thus required the discipline of diet, meditation, and constraint (Turner, *Body* 21). In addition to being controlled and disciplined, the flesh was often tortured as a means of accessing the divine (Varga 213).

This ascetic emphasis on suffering as a means to salvation has carried forward into American Protestantism, and particularly among the "seemingly disparate" current of American groups such as seventeenth century New England Puritans, Progressive Era New Thought, and late twentieth century evangelical diet preachers who believed that "fit bodies ostensibly signify fitter souls, whose prayers appear, particularly, perhaps exclusively, suffused with wonder-working power" (Griffith 6). Even though the power of religious institutions has declined, and their role of transmitting values and providing individuals with a sense of identity has been submerged by other institutions, certain religious streams of thought still influence the way the body is viewed in postmodern

society (Varga 214), and religious messages can still be seen in American diet culture (Griffith 3). Madonna's personal trainer, Ray Kybartas, once an overweight underachiever, became trainer to the stars and manager of the original Gold's Gym in Venice Beach, California. He preaches that "fitness is religion," and urges others to "keep the faith" (qtd. in Griffith 11). He and Madonna even call their personal workouts "Church" (ibid.). The similarities between fitness regimens and physically devotional ones are endless, discipline being the common theme among them; and, "a plethora of academic writing has described modern fitness and diet practices as evangelical or conversionist in tone" (ibid.). According to Griffith, these "practices comprise identifiable rituals in the modern religion of the perfect body" (12).

Griffith traces the history of food abstinence as "one of the most enduring and elastic (Christian) devotional practices aimed at bodily discipline" from the Middle Ages, when the flesh was completely renounced, through to the Protestant Reformation, when the body was less an instrument to salvation and any renunciative practices were the accompaniment to general spiritual devotion (24-28). Autobiographical accounts of "I once was fat but now I'm thin" were popularized through the books of Luigi Cornaro and George Cheyne (these two being the most famous, writing in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in Italy and Scotland respectively) (41). Self-control was the central theme in religious writings about fasting practices (Turner, *Body* 166), as "health was a religious obligation" (Griffith 41). Fasting raised prayer to higher levels of power because it provided a certain clarity that could not be achieved the closer one was to satiety, and thus to the sin of gluttony (31). Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, discourses of fasting in America became more and more tied to the rhetoric of medicine

and a medical discourse of “health benefits,” which included “increased longevity,” that helped legitimize it in the mainstream (39-40). By the nineteenth century, fat (and not simply gluttony itself) had become associated with “sin and corruption” (41).

The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution changed the way the body was conceived because governments were faced with a concrete situation: the labouring body and how to feed it. But, as governments had to find solutions to the problems of ill and hungry workers, especially those in the military, the labouring body came to be measured and understood (and thus disciplined) quantifiably in terms of “calories and proteins” (Turner, *Discourse* 167).

Following the Industrial Revolution, there was a scientific and intellectual focus on energy that is emblemized by the discovery of the Laws of Thermodynamics, and, more importantly, the Second Law, entropy - or the loss in overall energy in the transfer of energy from one body to another. According to Anson Rabinbach, the metaphor that drove scientific and political understanding of the labouring body was that of the human motor, and the movement of its muscles and nerves was seen as needing to be synchronized with that of the industrial machine. Fatigue was thought to be the only obstacle that stood in the way of infinite productivity of *labour power*, a conceptualization of work only in terms of energy expenditure, unrelated to moral purpose, livelihood, or skill (2-5). The idea of labour power was a “totalizing framework that subordinated all social activities to production,” which was typical of a society that “idealized the endless productivity of nature” and wanted to make the “human project of labour” akin to a “universal attribute of nature” (4). Conversely, within this discourse,

idleness was seen as the “primary sin of capitalism” (29). Technology was supposed to make “corporeal work obsolete,” displacing work’s centrality from the core of social identity, which has always been tied to the body, and replacing it with leisure and consumption, as suggested by some authors Rabinbach discusses in the conclusion of his book, such as Daniel Bell and Anthony Giddens (296-297). For his part, Rabinbach sees this displacement of work from a focal to a more marginal aspect of human corporeality as more of a conceptual shift rather than a material one, and as the result of the disappearance of the paradigm of the “human motor” that understood muscles to be the *perpetuum mobile* of industry (300). This thesis will show that, despite the fact that leisure and consumption, rather than paid labour, have become central to individual identity, the body-as-a-machine metaphor is retained in the conceptualizations of running offered by *Runner’s World* magazine.

From the Industrial to the Consumerist

Max Weber argued that the process of modernization was actually a process of rationalization - of the secularization of culture and the intellectualization of life through the introduction of science that was used to calculate and regulate bodies in the interest of greater efficiency. This “rationalization project” was an “ethic of world mastery” that involved the control of the flesh (sexuality and passion) and the subordination of the mind (by training and education), both of which were achieved through “the evolution of techniques of regulation of bodies through the use of dietary practices and other medical regimens” (Turner, *Body* 23). Capitalist enterprise required a trained and disciplined, and thus productive, labour force. Asceticism became important, not only for the training of monks or for the absolution of the sins of the flesh, but, more generally, for the efficiency

of a labouring body (28). Thus, religious notions of asceticism were replaced by medical regimens. In this way, science became simultaneously linked with asceticism and with capitalism. The social concern with the body switched from one focused on its interior (and the regulation of its passions) to one that focused on its exterior and its medical well-being (29).

According to Turner, without this shift of focus onto the exterior of the body, for which a certain secularization of society was *a priori* necessary, consumerism and its aesthetics would not have been possible. “Consumer culture opened up endless opportunities for experimentation with innovative and deviant lifestyles” (Turner, *Body* 32). Likewise, according to Featherstone, “within consumer culture, the body is proclaimed as a vehicle of pleasure: its [sic] desirable and desiring. And, the closer the actual body approximates idealized images of youth, health, fitness and beauty, the higher [is] its exchange value” (177). And, whereas the traditional religious model of dieting aimed to suppress sexuality (among other passions) and thus to regulate the interior body, the new consumer culture aims to increase the body’s sexual appeal and thus its exchange value (Turner, *Body* 32). The institutions of medicine, and nutritional and exercise science, that in modern religious Western society underscored and endorsed religious ideals, are now used to legitimize a consumerist aesthetic discourse by promoting a healthy lifestyle of diet, exercise, and abstinence with the aim of prolonging longevity (36). “Health” is conflated with “fitness,” and the latter is equated with “narrowly defined gendered bodily ideals” (Dworkin and Wachs 2). The introduction to celebrity trainer Ray Kybartas’ book *Fitness is Religion: Keep the Faith* says that

"Fitness is a lifelong pilgrimage. And like religious pilgrims, all who seek health must commit themselves to the journey" (1).

The Postmodern Body and the Subjective Turn

Across the trajectory of modernity starting from the Industrial Revolution, the body (at least for Pierre Bourdieu) was seen as physical capital, directly associated with the labouring body's exchange value (Shilling 114–115). Its aesthetic appearance was often the direct result of its location within a hierarchy of social class, in which working class men were supposed to have muscles, and in which middle and upper classes sought to keep skinny. But, the economic changes associated with high modernity have brought with them a decline in traditional manual labour jobs, along with a reduction in the amount of strength needed to perform the ones that do exist. In post-industrial North America, muscularity and thinness, two separate aesthetic ideals of the "body project," have become "semiotically divorced" from class connotations (Gill, Henwood, and McLean 40). This is one example of what Shilling means when he says that high modernity has individualized the body, making it a bearer of privately symbolic, rather than class-based, meaning (115-120). Whereas at one time bodies, and specifically athletic and muscular bodies, were valued for what they could (get paid to) do, the body now, at least for Shilling, gets its physical capital from how it looks. Its exchange value is as unfixed and uncertain as the aesthetic ideals it strives to emulate, which are themselves always vaguely and ambiguously conceptualized, and, more importantly, always just out of reach.

Sciences such as dietetics provide people with a framework within which to assess their habits so as to judge how "healthy" they are. As such, they empower people

with the tools to pursue their “body projects,” but they have failed to provide people with objective metanarratives of “value to guide [their] lives. Instead, there has been a gradual privatization of meaning in modernity” (Shilling 2). This “privatization of meaning” does not, of course, exclude secular forms of spirituality, a phenomenon which Heelas and Woodhead see as linked to what Charles Taylor calls “the massive subjective turn of modern culture” (qtd. in Heelas and Woodhead 2).⁴ This is a shift from the use of socially external referents (such as those provided by moral codes and the social roles that reproduce them) to more subjective ones to mark one’s experience, or from “life-as [something]” to “subjective-life” (2-3). Institutions that have failed to move in a “person-centered” direction have not been able to evolve into the mass culture of the late modern stage. This is because these institutions (including traditional religion) “subordinate subjective life to a higher authority of transcendent meaning, goodness and truth,” while spirituality “invokes the sacred in the cultivation of unique subjective-life” (5).

This decline of formal religious frameworks as a source of guidance and ontological and existential security residing outside the individual has been accompanied by, among other shifts, the effacement of overarching social and political narratives which guaranteed everyone a fixed social position.⁵ What has resulted is a massive rise in individualism, which can no longer be understood without an analysis of the power invested in consumer culture to ascribe symbolic value (Gill, Henwood, and McLean 39).

⁴ Although the term “secular spirituality” is not used in Heelas and Woodhead, the source in question, it is used here so that it may be contrasted with “spirituality” as used in Christian circles to express “obedience to the will of God” (Heelas and Woodhead 5).

⁵ The word “formal” is emphasized here so as to not contradict the fact that religious values have found their way into postmodern consumerist pursuits that seem aesthetic in nature, such as fitness.

The tendency of high modernity, as found in the discourses of this consumer culture, has been to place ever more importance on the body, and on its maintenance and upkeep, as constitutive of the self (Shilling 2). Some of this upkeep is related to scientific discourse, and the current knowledge provided about how to combat disease. This scientific discourse is at once tied to a trajectory of the “historical processes of secularization, medicalization, and regimentation,” which regulates the body, and at the same time fused with a liberatory ethos of aesthetics and pleasure (Turner, *Body* 39). Although these two currents seem antithetical to each other, the simultaneous regimentation and liberation of the body “are part of the profound set of cultural contradictions within modern capitalism” (ibid.). This particular contradiction is attributed to the fact that, during the Industrial Revolution, secular capitalism appropriated religious notions of asceticism in order to ensure a disciplined workforce. At this point, ascetic notions of restraint (both moral and nutritional) became concerned with the outward aspects of corporeality (i.e. social behaviour) rather than the internal ones (i.e. absolution from sin). This shift from the focus on the external aspects of the body in mainstream discourse was a necessary precursor to the hedonistic promises offered by consumer culture (Featherstone 171-177). This thesis will analyze the manifestation of this simultaneous regimentation and liberation of the body, which draws upon both ascetic and hedonistic traditions, as it appears in *Runner's World* magazine.

Postmodernity and Leisure

The rise in leisure time, which in modernity led to the growth in consumer culture, has, in late or postmodernity, in addition to being shortened by an increase in overtime hours and ways of keeping in constant touch with work via technology, been

accompanied by the pressure to use that leisure time to make oneself more attractive (and thus employable, among other things). This “ongoing project” of working on the self leads to what Micki McGee calls a “belabored self,” a self that is always incomplete, constantly searching to better itself through self-help literature, and diet and exercise plans endorsed by “medicine” or by celebrity ethos (12). If the individual’s identity is never complete, then neither is its body: its body is constantly *becoming*, a “project” to be worked at and (re)accomplished (Shilling 4).

Not all authors see the pursuit of leisure as inseparable from discourses of consumerism. Csikszentmihalyi claims that certain activities offer neither overtly external rewards nor the need for hedonistic consumption. He gives rock climbing as an example of such an activity. It simultaneously challenges one’s capabilities and enhances the “self.” His ethnographic study of thirty mountain climbers found that their experience was one that transcended ego boundaries and created a sense of timelessness for the climber (74-76). Through the execution of their sport, the climbers claimed to have reached levels of self-understanding and self-integration, along with a comprehension of their place in the cosmic order and a sense of oneness with that order and with nature. Some climbers even reported that they use climbing as a metaphor for life (96-97). Most importantly, however, rock climbing puts them in a state of “flow” in which they are neither bored nor anxious, and this state of “flow” is what defines a true state of leisure and separates it from one filled with consumptive pursuits (Wearing and Wearing 14). Van der Pool, however, feels that such a definition of a true state of leisure avoids the issue that all hobbies require consumption, at least in so far as their pursuit

makes certain purchases necessary, and that leisure and consumption are thus so deeply interwoven that one presumes the other (190).

Exercise as Leisure

Before the Second World War, exercise as a leisure pursuit was politicized as a means of forging a strong citizenry. After the Second World War, exercise became depoliticized and individualized. With the rise in free time, and, more specifically, leisure time, exercise became “recreational.” Rather than emblematic of faith in progress or national allegiance, the health club boom that reached a peak in the 1980s was driven by notions of personal motivation and enjoyment (Sassatelli 397-399). In the context of Western capitalist societies at least, the discourse of personal enjoyment has always been tied to one of commercialization:

As research on the United States has shown, the shift in emphasis from the political to the individual, from collective rules to individual desires, has been accompanied by commercialization. In fact, working out in the gym is a clear example of how physical discipline is not the exclusive sphere of state power, or disciplinary institutions, but can also be part of a commercial environment. (398)

The commercialization of techniques for disciplining the body implies, however, that people need to pay for the time during which they exercise. By offering the consumer a contract in which he or she can always decide that the gym is no longer needed, the fitness industry emphasizes choice and is thus underscored by a rhetoric of “personal willpower” (Sassatelli 399). “In today’s collective consciousness, a more docile and more useful body is an enhancement of the individual, who, before being a

subject, citizen or worker, is first and foremost a sovereign sacred entity from which desires and choices emanate” (ibid.).

Lifestyle and Identity

The argument over whether or not leisure pursuits actually lead to the formation of identity (Wearing and Wearing 4) or whether they, much like seemingly almost every other act of choice and thus supposed agency, involve consumption (van der Pool 189) is made moot by Giddens’ assertion that, in conditions of high modernity, “we have no choice but to choose” (81). That is, if we choose not to choose, the choice is made for us: there is a price to pay for not undertaking “body projects.” According to Bourdieu, the body is a form of physical, cultural and social capital (Varga 226), and an “unfinished entity” (Shilling 127), whose exchange value is unfixd, but somewhat pre-determined by that body’s social location on various axes (class, gender, sexuality, etc.) and the resulting predispositions to certain embodied behaviours, opinions and tastes. This is what Bourdieu calls the *habitus*, “a structured and structuring structure,” or the system of dispositions that, along with one’s past and present experiences, shape one’s present and future practices (Maton 51).

The exterior of the self is the product of “routinized practices, the routines incorporated into habits of dress, eating, modes of acting and favoured milieu for encountering others” (Giddens 81). Each small decision a person makes during the day is part of his or her (perhaps unconscious) decision about how to act, how to present oneself, and thus who to be. These choices are defined as “lifestyle,” or the “integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfill

utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity” (ibid.).

The notion of lifestyle is often linked to the activities of consumption because a lot of the personal choices one makes, especially with respect to self-presentation, are linked to consumer choices: what to wear, what products to use to do one’s hair, etc., as are one’s leisure choices (Giddens 82). Lifestyles tend to involve a “cluster of habits” that are not “out of character” with each other. They thus provide continuity and ontological security. This cluster of habits is influenced by group pressures, namely the norms of the group to which people belong (both in work time and in leisure time), and by the visibility of role models, which can come either from the group itself or from the mass mediated dissemination of that group (82–83).

Discipline and the Mind/Body Connection

Probert, Leberman, and Palmer use the results of ethnographic research performed in New Zealand in 2006 to discuss how bodybuilders understand their own behaviours (both within and outside the sport). Their results showed the contradictory identities that emerge when one “becomes” a bodybuilder (this is different from when one first starts training at a gym). The ones who took it the most seriously saw it as a “lifestyle,” rather than a sport. The authors use Giddens’ definition of the term “lifestyle” - as that which not only fulfils “utilitarian needs . . . but gives . . . material form to a particular narrative of self-identity” - in their discussion (qtd. in Probert, Leberman, and Palmer 23).

However, this particular lifestyle requires that one rigorously follow a scripture of discipline and self-betterment through self-control, and thus it comes with a dark underside: an aesthetic and nutritional obsession that is only the illusion of control. Alan

Klein, one of the most cited scholars on bodybuilding, discusses how, through these rituals of discipline, along with the cultural ideology whose aesthetics they highlight, the body of the bodybuilder is actually a Foucauldian docile entity (99). According to Foucault, “discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies” (139). These bodies are not controlled by being forced to perform actions suggested by an ideology. Rather, they act “freely” within the constraints of the ideology that also gives them their subjecthood.

Probert, Leberman, and Palmer’s criticism of Klein is that his argument is based upon Cartesian dualism and that it thus fails to take into account other approaches to the mind-body connection, especially in the realm of sports, where “the connectivity of the body and mind is not only recognized, but it is valued and advocated” (Probert, Leberman, and Palmer 20). Alongside bodybuilding as studied by Probert, Leberman, and Palmer, other athletic practices, such as martial arts, have also been understood to improve “the whole individual and not just physiology or appearance” (McDonald and Hallinan 187). “By working on their bodies, [all these agents] also worked on themselves as holistic beings” (Probert, Leberman, and Palmer 20). This same mind-body connectivity can be applied to the teachings of Sri Chinmoy, the Indian spiritual teacher who is known for organizing the longest footraces and bike races in the history of the world, and whose followers compete in these races, receiving no monetary compensation for these multi-week events, and hoping only to achieve what Sri Chinmoy calls “self-transcendence” (Shaw 62-70).

Postmodernity and the Limits of the Body

It has been suggested that sociological analyses of “body projects,” in their separation of mind and body, have perhaps taken for granted the actual abilities of the body, choosing to emphasize instead its docility. Sarah Franklin claims that the body has been “hidden” in cultural discourse by the “mind” and by the fact that the body is presumed to be a “natural object” (S96). Mauss elaborated upon how all bodily movements are a product and semiotic reiteration of the culture to which a body belongs. Bodily techniques are assembled “by and for social authority” and become embedded within cultural tradition, which they then reproduce (Mauss 474). Therefore, what seems to be biological fact is already inscribed by culture. Franklin defines postmodernism as “carrying modernist principles to the extreme” (Franklin S99); and so athletic training in a postmodern context involves “presumed-to-be natural bodies [being] conditioned to the extreme of their potential in order to achieve fitness” (S101). The athletic body must preserve its integrity (i.e. by not taking performance enhancing drugs), but it must surpass its own limits again and again (by constantly breaking its own and others’ records). The natural body is a “limit.” Aesthetically, this limit demarcates the beautiful and the grotesque, as is evident in mainstream opinions of (male and female) bodybuilders and extremely muscular female athletes. Morally, this limit defines how to use the available resources of exercise science and its material culture (training, nutrition, and specialized training accessories), without breaking the moral code of sportsmanship. Postmodern sport, according to Franklin, involves the attempt to transgress the “natural” limits of the body in a way that is still within aesthetically and morally acceptable confines (S102–104).

In the context of contemporary discourses and practices of running, we can note how technology (for the purposes of this discussion, loosely defined to include commonplace items such as running shoes and specialized clothing) is often understood to be capable of extending the natural limits of the running body. As shall be discussed in the second chapter, this notion is disseminated by *Runner's World* magazine, where technology is offered as a means of aiding the running experience. But at the same time, the magazine offers a seemingly contradictory vision of running as an ascetic practice.

Religion vs. Spirituality

Before we return to the relationship between consumption and identity, it is necessary to further elaborate on the idea introduced earlier about the place of religion in postmodern society, and, in particular, its displacement by spirituality. Heelas and Woodhead distinguish between religion and spirituality by saying that the former is “bound up with the mode of life-as – indeed it sacralises subjective-life...thus involv[ing] subordinating subjective-life to the ‘higher’ authority of transcendent meaning, goodness and truth,” whereas spirituality “invokes the sacred in the cultivation of unique subjective life” (5). Spirituality is “subjective in the sense that it involves often intense experiences (of joy, awe, sorrow, gratitude, etc.), but objective in the sense that it is focused on something which is and remains external to and higher than the self” (ibid.). Elsewhere, Paul Heelas defines “spiritualities of life” as “not [being] the life of a transcendent theistic God, but the life embedded within the here and now. A life...which can only make a true difference when it is experienced by the self” (1-2). These spiritualities offer a relief from the “experiences of engulfment, of invasion” that have become the *sine qua non* of capitalism (2). They “appear to be opposed to the restrictive, the regulatory, those

impositions of external sources of authority which are served by formal rules and regulations” (3). But are they capable of “responding to the ‘iron cages’ of capitalism” (ibid.)?

Spirituality and Capitalism

In *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion*, Jeremy Carrette and Richard King do not see the shift from religion to spirituality as necessarily positive. According to them, since the Enlightenment, religion has been more and more relegated to the realm of the private sphere, and, in the later stages of modernity, this process has become intertwined with the global spread of corporate capitalism (13). “Spirituality” is now sellable to the masses in the form of Western appropriations of Eastern traditions, such as yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Feng Shui, or Reiki (16). Are we to assume that spirituality is just a tool used by capitalism to sell people an identity and peace of mind, thus encouraging the primary “sin” of capitalism, namely consumptive self-interest” (Heelas 3-4)? Or, can we place the onus on the user (consumer?) of a given spiritual practice (i.e. yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Feng Shui, Reiki, etc.) to determine whether he or she is “delving within oneself to experience the primary source of the sacred, namely that which emanates from the meta-empirical depths of life in the here-and-now” (5)? Does one find that spirituality flows through one’s life to “integrate, harmonize or balance” him or her, to “draw one’s mind, body and spirit into a whole by way of the sacralisation of the body cum-subjective life,” and, most importantly, to make life into a craft, rather than letting it “drain away by using it up for the sake of the consumptive” (ibid.)? Or, are people using (consuming!) these paths to spirituality for the sake of hedonistic pleasure (because they need to feel good) and identity construction

(because they need to feel good about themselves), entering into a New Age community and following its norms and role-models, as Giddens would suggest, and, in so doing, building a lifestyle which forms the narrative of their individual identities (Giddens 82-83)?⁶

To strengthen their argument, Carrette and King say that “privatized spirituality emerges...as the new cultural Prozac bringing transitory feelings of ecstatic happiness and thoughts of self-affirmation, but never addressing sufficiently the underlying problem of social isolation and injustice” (77). Heelas, however, claims that, even if this be true in part, “cultural Prozac is not the be-all and end-all of privatized spirituality” (20). He feels that an argument such as Carrette and King’s fails to address the reasons for the user’s participation in the spiritual undertaking in the first place (ibid.). Heelas and Woodhead’s ethnographic case study of “the spiritual revolution” in the British town of Kendall did just that. In their surveys of the general population there, they found that people participated in the spiritual “well-being culture” for a variety of reasons (given in order of response rates) including, but not limited to: health and fitness, spiritual growth, stress relief, personal growth, pleasure and enjoyment, time out of daily routines, to meet like-minded people, and for emotional support and human contact (90-91). Spiritual undertakings that help foster a mind-body connection are found across an otherwise “relatively secular and widespread culture of subjective well-being,” of which health clubs and other vehicles of the fitness industry are a part (Heelas 171). Most members of these facilities are not even aware that the spiritual dimension is being offered with the “more:” more health, more beauty, more happiness, more ability to deal with stress

⁶ The term New Age is here defined loosely. This could involve something as commonplace as a yoga class at a health club. For some possible examples of what would qualify, see Heelas and Woodhead (7).

(ibid.). Later in this thesis, I shall explore running as it is presented in *Runner's World* magazine as part of this “relatively secular and widespread culture of well-being” (ibid.). I shall explain how this publication offers a spiritual dimension to its readership, and discuss the implications of this spiritual dimension’s immersion within a capitalist discourse that is at once ascetic and hedonistic.

Running: Collective and Individual Identities

This is perhaps the right moment to revisit the question critical to the rest of the thesis, namely: How does outdoor running - which, beyond the obvious (though questionable) need to own running shoes, can be seen as separated from the capitalism of the fitness industry - relate to the “spiritual revolution”? Running can perhaps be separated from the tenets of capitalism (which, for the sake of argument, could then be called running in its purist form).⁷ But, it is impossible to paint a holistic picture of capitalism without including the omnipresence of sports equipment stores, and, more specifically, specialized running stores, such as the Canadian chains The Running Room and The Runner’s Den, where running equipment experts help runners find shoes and clothes for perfect individualized comfort. It is impossible not to talk about the price of race registration, particularly for marathons, which in both Canada and the USA can cost over \$100, or of corporate sponsorship both for the race itself and for people choosing to run the city’s corporate-sponsored races for charity, and, not to mention, the proliferation of charity races as fundraising attempts for NGO’s and other humanitarian efforts. How can one miss the large numbers of runners gracing the streets of more affluent parts of the

⁷ Many runners call trail running a “purist form” of running; interestingly, many trail runners call mountain running a “purist form” of running.

city, sporting brand name running-specific and seasonal gear, and wearing high-tech GPS watches and heart rate monitors, plugged into their iPods, or even using the earpieces to their Blackberrys or data phones? On a seemingly less commercial level, however, it is also difficult not to take note of the hoards of runners running together, whether as friends or as part of an organized club such as The Running Room. Or, if one lives in a city that hosts a marathon, it is likely impossible to ignore the frenzy and the excitement of what seems to be a very collective experience, where participants appear so much to be living in a moment of true and transcendental happiness, and where hedonistic consumption seems far from their minds.

This idea of sports offering a collective community-based experience is further elaborated on by O'Connor and Brown in their ethnography of weekend "pack" or group cyclists as "neo-tribes," that is to say as "partial or temporary micro-groups held together by ties that emphasize an emotional commonality" (84). The neo-tribe exists on three spatial planes, and membership to the group is dependent upon all three: the geographical space of the ride (i.e. just "being there"), the normative space, which is created by commonplace actions and gestures that become the unwritten code according to which one has to behave in order to belong; and lastly, an identity space, in which "belonging is made through a process of identity manufacturing and impression management" (89). The latter aspect of the neo-tribe is where, depending on which group one has chosen to ride with, one has to ride, dress, and talk like a cyclist. Membership to the group rests upon these three criteria- and class, race, and gender are (supposedly) not an issue.

The groups themselves are quite arbitrary. In O'Connor and Brown's study, they were determined based on riding level. Determining someone's level is, to some extent,

quite subjective, and determining one's *own* level even more so (which is what the cyclists in the group ride had to do). The levels themselves are named quite ambiguously: "the fast bunch," "those who would like to be in the fast bunch but can't quite keep up," and "the steadier ride" (83). These are categories created for the purpose of the leisure activity. However, outside of the leisure activity, not only can cycling ability act as a kind of capital, but a cyclist may carry over his or her cycling identity into other parts of his or her life and may behave more confidently because of his or her cycling achievements. Giddens might argue that, if cycling is important to a cyclist, he or she may make decisions throughout the day that unconsciously reflect the fact that they are a cyclist. These decisions include one's choice of friends, one's choice of movies, nutrition, bed time, etc. One thus takes on a cycling "lifestyle" (81). It is important to stress the fact that the categories used to demarcate the sub-types of cyclists could be based on anything other than riding level, or on riding level plus another one or more variables, ranging from the more general (such as one's preferred type of bike, whether one enjoys ascents, etc.) to the more specific (such as what types of neighbourhoods one frequents). These variables by which the cyclists are categorized could be constructed by the cyclists themselves, but they could just as easily be constructed by the owners of the clubs that organize the bunch rides, or, more pertinent to this thesis, by the "consumer capital" the cyclists acquire in order to increase their cultural capital, such as cycling accessories and magazines. This thesis will explore how sub-categories of runners are created and disseminated by *Runner's World* with the interest of recommending "specialized" accessories to the various types of runners.

Running in a Socio-Historical Context

Although endurance contests and multi-day races had previously been popular in the 1800s, there was a widespread fitness craze in North America in the 1920s that included not only running but also boxing and weight training for both men and women. This latter fad ended with the Great Depression. From then until the late 1960s, exercise was not something in which the affluent and middle classes partook, beyond the occasional golf game for men, or a few exercise segments on daytime television aimed at housewives, which were related to changes in fashion and the introduction of the halter top and the bikini (Kolata 41-43). Exercise was shunned by the youth countercultural movements that set the standards for beauty and fitness, and, if done at all, was seen as something that should not be strenuous. Competitive sports - and running especially - were frowned upon and perceived to be reserved for boxers, who generally belonged to the lower classes (44). In fact, working class men partook in high-intensity and somewhat dangerous sports such as auto racing, boxing, or weightlifting, the former two to relieve the stresses of daily life, and the latter not only to more functionally be able to perform manual labour jobs, but also to “mark” themselves as being part of the working class (Shilling 114–155). In 1968, Dr. Kenneth Cooper was responsible for revolutionizing the exercise movement with his book *Aerobics*, which encouraged sedentary individuals to try to run for twelve minutes daily, each time trying to surpass their previous distance, until they could run at least a mile (which was considered poor, but passable on his fitness scale), or 1.75 miles (considered excellent) (Kolata 23-25). Jogging then became something practiced by more affluent people, which contrasted with the more dangerous or intense (and strength-based) sports practiced by the lower classes.

As was stated earlier, the evolution of modern life into postmodern life has changed the class-based relationship individuals had with their own bodies. Although it is Africans in developing countries who still excel at running on an international level, running in North America has supposedly evolved into a classless sport, in which people are awarded merit based on their dedication and performance and little else. I shall not beg the question here, though it asks to be begged, that the entry fees for races and the rising cost of equipment prevents some people from fully participating in the running community. In fact, organized races and specialized gear are just two of the elements that help to create and hold together the running community. This synthesis of the running community can, however, also be achieved by other modes - which is where this thesis shall now turn.

Running in Spiritual Contexts

Running concurrently exists in non-mainstream contexts and even in spiritual modes. Spiritual here is understood as that which “emanate[s] from the depths of subjective life” and which is “able to make a positive difference to subjective life and the life around us” (Heelas 17). Two examples of such spiritual modes of running are the Marathon Monks of Japan and the Sri Chinmoy athletes. The Marathon Monks practice Tendai Buddhism and use running as a means of enduring suffering so as to reach a state of non-attachment, or ego transcendence. They are also known as “Running Buddhas” and they seek the “greatest prize of enlightenment in the here and now” (Stevens vii), which is defined as the “stopping of all mental processes” and “an imperturbable state of mind beyond delusive thought,” achievable through the perfect union of motion and stillness, of meditation in running (13). Sri Chinmoy, the recently deceased Indian

spiritual guru, organized some of the longest races in the history of the world, including non-stop and multi-day swims, runs, bike treks and triathlons, the most notable of which is the 3,100 Mile Self-Transcendence run, held every year in New York for several months, or however long it takes for the participants to complete the distance in a half-mile loop around a designated neighbourhood (Shaw 62). The race supposedly teaches its runners to live in and fully appreciate the present moment since the future, and especially the end of the race, seems almost unintelligible. It also teaches them what their “base natures want,” which is different from “what advertisements on television tell [them they] want” (participant qtd. in Shaw 67).

Although, as we have seen in the examples above, running can serve as a means of enhancing spiritual experience, and in those two particular cases, is the *sine qua non* of spiritual experience, running is not necessarily a spiritual undertaking. Furthermore, these less mainstream examples of running seem, at least on the surface, to be in direct contrast to the glossed pages of *Runner's World* magazine, which feature pictures of “cut” athletic bodies sporting the latest running apparel, and offer runners advice on how to set personal records, get the most out of a marathon experience, train most effectively, fuel for and after a run most efficiently, etc.⁸ Often, the authors of the magazine articles conflate the advice itself with the products they claim will help the runner achieve the things offered in the advice. However, drawing on Paul Heelas' discussion in *Spiritualities of Life* regarding whether New Age practices are “opposed to the restrictive...regulatory...impositions of external sources of authority which are served by

⁸ The images of “cut” bodies do not resonate with the fact (well-known and accepted among the running and bodybuilding communities) that cardiovascular activity will not make one toned. In anything other than 20 to 45 minute spurts, depending on individual metabolism, such activities actually have a catabolic effect on the body.

formal rules and regulations...[thus] responding to the 'iron cages' so widespread within mainstream society and culture" (3), or they "encourage the primary 'sin' of capitalism, namely consumptive self-interest" (4), I will embark upon a discussion about whether or not *Runner's World* magazine manages to retain any of this potential for spirituality in its rendering of the sport.

Methodological Considerations

It having been established how the magazine will be read theoretically, it can be stated that, methodologically, the specific analysis of the primary sources of the magazine involves demarcating the articles into four categories: accessories review, an overview of the latest running gadgets and apparel for the season; nutrition advice; training advice; and feature stories involving personal accounts of running. The approach that is used for this is content analysis, a "research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson qtd. in Clarke 113). My demarcation of the article types focuses on *qualitatively* noting the occurrence of different classes of words; therefore, the specific type of content analysis I undertake is simply a variation of quantitative semantic analysis. This is to be distinguished from sign-vehicle analysis, which counts the number of times a specific word is mentioned, and from pragmatic analysis, which classifies signs according to the probable effect they will have on the audience (Andren 56). The key words selected for each section have to appear in both the first paragraph of the article, and in at least two consecutive paragraphs within the text.

It is important to keep in mind that this research only offers an insight into how running is presented in this one publication, and, in doing so, focuses on the intent of the

communicator only, thus performing a type of pragmatic analysis (Andren 56). Unlike other types of pragmatic content analysis, this study does not inquire into how the articles are received by the audience - that being, the “imagined (running) community” that is both created and addressed by the magazine. The reason that reception does not form a part of this study is simply that there is no way of knowing how the messages encoded in the publication are decoded by its readership without conducting an ethnographic study of a sample of readers. Also, this thesis stems from the assumption that the audience is created by and contingent upon the rhetorical contexts in and by which it is addressed. This is an idea that will be introduced in the sub-section below; however, it is important to state at the outset that the semantic analysis performed in this thesis is what has led to the use of interpellation as one of the central theoretical themes. The other central theoretical theme presented is that of the simultaneous restriction and liberation of the body that is found within postmodern capitalist discourse, which is itself a conflation of capitalism’s ascetic history and its hedonistic present. This thesis will show how this dichotomy regarding the body is found within *Runner’s World* magazine, and how the demarcation of the articles into these four categories was instrumental to reaching this conclusion because, although some of the contradiction between bodily discipline and bodily pleasure occurs within certain categories, much of this contradiction appeared across categories. The training section itself at once presents a “soft” version of running that will prevent injury, and a regimented prescription for acquired pain tolerance. This latter aspect of the discourse is contrasted with what is offered by the accessories review section, which is a type of running whose difficulty can be minimized by the acquisition of certain items. The hedonistic purchasing of

accessories can also be contrasted with the restrictive approach to diet offered by the nutrition section.

The Creation of Audience

Benedict Anderson offers a historical analysis of the origins of national consciousness. He attributes nationalist identity to the availability of mass-produced books and newspapers. On these terms, members of an emerging public also had access to a world beyond their everyday recognition, thus situating themselves diachronically and synchronically in unity with other individuals beyond their perceptible realities. Anderson claims that this imagined spatial and temporal link between individuals and the rest of the nation developed national consciousness and thus nationalism (25-33). It might be a bit of stretch to say that subcultural movements and the formation of a subcultural identity also rely upon the same mass mediated information about others outside of one's immediate or even extended reality. But, the "consumer capital" of special interest magazines, such as *Runner's World*, does just that (Mansfield and McGinn 53). It creates, in this case for the runner, a reference point and a connection to other runners, and thus re-enforces (or enforces, depending on the interpretation) the identity of the runner.

To use an analogy from an unrelated field, Judy Segal, citing a genealogy of both popular and medical conceptions of the migraine, gives the example of the discovery of Imitrex, the first of the triptan family of migraine medication, and the first pharmaceutical remedy for migraines which turned the *migraneur* from an (untreatable) "personality" to a controllable patient with a clearly medical "condition" which itself thus simultaneously went from mystical to banal (54). Through GlaxoSmithKlein's

marketing campaign for Imitrex - a promotional video featuring a woman with polished fingernails injecting a concealed syringe into her unblemished thigh – migraine patients were made to believe to be in “control” of their condition (56-57). This promotional video not only gendered the migraine condition, it also interpellated or hailed (in an Althusseurian way- as shall be discussed shortly) these female migraine patients as discursive subjects belonging to an ideologically constructed group. Segal cites Walter J. Ong as saying that “the writer’s audience is always a fiction” (Segal 38). Likewise, Maurice Charland, writing about the *Parti Québécois*’ 1979 “white paper” on Québec sovereignty that addressed the French-speaking population of Québec, argues that “audiences do not exist outside of rhetoric, [but are] merely addressed by it...[and] the very moment of recognition of an address constitutes an entry into a subject position to which inheres a set of motives that render a rhetorical discourse intelligible” (232). This thesis is not going to advance an argument that running does not exist outside of *Runner’s World*, for that would be an outrageously post-structuralist assumption that would make moot the very discussion over whether or not the running presented in this publication has any potential to offer a liberating spirituality. Rather, the point surrounding ideology and audience is brought up simply to underscore why the audience will not form part of the analysis. It is not the scope of this work to determine how the magazine is received by the actual running community, but to say that the publication offers something to a running community that it once creates and re-creates (interpellates). Interpellation is one of the key motifs of the content analysis to be performed in the following pages, where we shall see how it enables authors to establish a relationship with the runner (i.e. by hailing them as a runner). Althusser said that “there

is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects” (159). Thus, in order for ideology to perform its functions, to execute its political desiderata, subjects must be created. However, these subjects are “always already ideological” (164). They have been hailed and re-hailed (interpellated) by other engines of ideology *ad infinitum*. That having been said, whatever is presented in *Runner’s World* is part of a complex matrix of pre-existing cultural beliefs, and this analysis will therefore not be a criticism of the publication so much as of the discourses of consumerism and body management of late modernity which the publication only helps to disseminate.

The “imagined (running) community” is the audience that is created not only through the synchronic connections between runners offered by the magazine, but also by the common spatiality of the race or communal running experience. An analysis of the personal accounts of running as found in *Runner’s World* will reveal how this publication frames the subjective runner’s experience. On this basis, I shall try to assess whether, from the point of view of the communicator (i.e. the publication), running, *qua* mainstream practice that is engaged in both solitarily and with the “running community,” has any potential to be a form of spiritual expression.

What this thesis finds in its analysis of the first three types of articles (accessories review, nutrition, and training) is that the running that is presented in the magazine is locked in a contradictory discourse of asceticism (i.e. training and diet regimentation) and consumption. For, although the publication offers its readers strict nutritional guidelines and insists that they must learn to tolerate pain, and, although the metaphor of the body as a machine is present throughout, the approach to training intensity and frequency sometimes promotes a “soft” version of running: one that will keep the runner from

becoming injured. This softer approach to running is further perpetuated in the review of the accessories, which *Runner's World* claims will not only help the runner run better, but will ensure maximal comfort. Thus, on the one hand, readers are told that, in order for running to become a rewarding and fulfilling achievement, they must devote themselves to it through nutritional and training discipline and the tolerance of pain. But, on the other hand, readers are also offered a myriad of (consumer) options with which to maximize the comfort and minimize the effort of their runs.

Finally, through the analysis of the personal stories, this thesis will uncover the meanings that runners ascribe to running according to *Runner's World* magazine, and show that these meanings are coupled with the runner's true ability to find and experience the spiritual in running, thus potentially making any arguments about capitalism and consumption moot. It will open up the possibility that "body projects" can perhaps co-exist with what this thesis shall call "mind projects" and "soul projects;" however, they may co-exist in such a way that makes it difficult to separate them.

Chapter 2: *Runner's World*

The purpose of this chapter will be to analyze four different types of articles in a selected corpus of *Runner's World* magazine that spans twelve months, from June 2008 to May 2009. A semantic analysis is performed to highlight the different themes brought out by each section and to discuss their ideological underpinnings.

The readership of the American edition of *Runner's World* magazine (which bears the tagline “The World’s Leading Running Magazine”) spans the entire globe, although the UK, Australia, and France have their own editions. In Canada, it is the most accessible running magazine, and the one that is the most known by the non-running public. This is despite the fact that there is a Canadian publication, *Canadian Running*, and another much more scientific American publication, *Running Times*, that are often available alongside it in specialized magazine stores. In terms of general exposure, even many non-runners have heard of *Runner's World* and it is the first magazine beginners will often buy (something that is attested by the fact that there has been an article devoted to beginner running in almost every issue from the twelve that have been studied).

In an article on the transgression of natural limits in women’s bodybuilding, Mansfield and McGinn describe “consumer capital” as a vehicle for the transmission of “products and pseudoscience” relating to a particular subcultural interest. They use the example of *FLEX*, *Muscle & Fitness*, and other bodybuilding magazines that “hurl” messages at the bodybuilder of “‘natural’ steroids and potions of various ‘natural’ kinds” (53). This is done both through advertising for these products, and through the pictures of extremely muscled, “veiny” bodybuilders with fake tans and full body waxes that are

placed beside descriptions of their workout routines with the underlying message of *do this and you'll look like that*. Mansfield and McGinn's analysis of these magazines shows that "a large part of bodybuilding discourse [could be seen] as over-determined by a steroidal imagery and an absent center of magical and illegal drugs" (ibid.). In other words, there are two contradictory themes being relayed by the discourse, one relayed visually (that of chemical enhancement) and one relayed textually (that of working hard to get results). These themes are so fused together that someone naive to the bodybuilding community would equate the aesthetic image with the training regimen, and not with the supplementary drug regimens. However, as most people who work out quite seriously can attest, the kind of regimens advocated by these bodybuilders (twice a day workouts for six days a week, for example) would lead even the most talented of athletes to not only to injure themselves but to overtrain and thus stunt muscle growth.

Like *FLEX* and *Muscle & Fitness*, *Runner's World* magazine is also published for a specialized market of athletic enthusiasts. It is similarly a type of "consumer capital," which, for the purposes of this thesis, will be defined as that which is acquired via the exchange of economic capital by those who hope to increase, from its usage, their own cultural capital. In this case, one could argue the runner hopes to gain "insider secrets" of the sport and to thus become a better runner. However, as the analysis of the articles unfolds, it will become clear that the type of cultural capital that the publication promises to increase for the reader is problematic to define – this is because of the fact that the aesthetics of the capitalist ideology within which the publication operates merge the ideals of athletic prowess and aesthetic perfection.

Just like bodybuilding magazines feature cover photos and articles on famous contest winners like Lee Labrada, Jay Cutler, and Rich Gaspari, *Runner's World* features cover photos of Lolo Jones (team USA Olympian in hurdles), Kara Goucher (middle and long distance runner), Ryan Hall (American record holder for the half-marathon), David Goggins (extreme endurance athlete), and other celebrity runners. This cover story usually involves some insight into how these elites train, eat, and stay motivated. Sometimes, however, the magazine cover features pictures of "everyday" runners: males with washboard abs and chiselled arms, shoulders, "traps," and chests; and skinny yet toned young females whose legs look more like they have just been performing high intensity sets of squats rather than having gone for a run. The ensuing discussion of *Runner's World* magazine will strictly be a textual semantic analysis, and will not involve a discussion of the images contained in the articles (or in the ads for that matter); it is important to note, however, that the images on the front cover send certain messages to naive or novice runners, who might believe that running (and running alone) will make their bodies chiselled in this way. The truth, however, is that achieving and maintaining a "gym body" is the result of regular weight training, diet, and some regular type of high-intensity cardiovascular activity, and the rigidity with which this combined regimen needs to be followed in order to be effective is often dictated by genetics and little else. Most athletes already have good genes, but most athletes, regardless of what sport they play (swimming perhaps being the only exception), look the way they do for reasons that are not attributed strictly to the practice of their sport. In fact, a "runner's diet" is the exact opposite of a muscle-building, and especially a toning ("cutting") diet,

and the typical 4:1 carbs to protein ratio is reversed when bodybuilders are preparing for competition.

For the purposes of this semantic analysis, the types of articles were demarcated into four categories, namely, nutrition advice, training advice, reviews of running accessories, and personal stories. Nutrition advice and training advice could be thematically grouped together as “advice” articles. The former give runners tips on what and how much to eat both pre-and post-run and in general, while the latter provide insight into the ideal types of workouts to perform, and with what intensity, length, and frequency one should perform them. However, semantically, these types of articles had so little in common as not to be able to warrant placing them in the same category. The third category, reviews of running accessories and apparel, provides runners with an overview of what shoes, hats, shirts, shorts, and pants and coats (depending on the season), along with watches and heart monitors, are newly available from different manufacturers. And, the fourth category, personal stories, features in-depth autobiographical or biographical accounts of runners’ experiences with the sport. Although, as we shall see, word patterns were qualitatively analyzed in order to group articles into one of four aforementioned categories, the magazine itself provides pre-categorized sections and sub-sections that are repeated in each issue. “GEAR” is one such section, and, needless to say, most of the accessories review articles selected came from this section. “FUEL” and “Fridge wisdom” are two such sub-sections of another regular feature, “Personal Best,” and many of the articles selected for the nutrition section came from there. Training advice generally came from other sub-sections of “Personal Best,” namely “Mind + Body” and “Training.” Personal stories came from

two sources: regular or semi-regular columns (“No Need for Speed,” “The Newbie Chronicles,” and “Life & Times”) and cover stories devoted to an inspirational anecdote about a runner.⁹ For the most part, these cover stories were the longest articles in each issue.

As the foregoing already makes clear, *Runner's World* divides the magazine into regularly appearing features and columns, but these do not correspond directly to the categories proposed for their semantic analysis. In some cases, a single article could fall into more than one category of this semantic analysis. The “GEAR” section of the magazine, for example, always features testimonials by runners who have tried the accessories that are being discussed. These testimonials are often followed up by (albeit short) personal anecdotes from runners, such as their proudest running moment (for e.g. “running in the Boston Marathon the year after I graduated [from Boston College]” (runner qtd. in Greene and Fredericksen, *Fall* 108)) or their motivation to run (Greene and Shorten, *Spring* 80). In such cases, I have analyzed these testimonials as part of the accessory review article to which they are attached, despite their personal quality. Sometimes, however, an article from a certain magazine section or sub-section will repeatedly make use of certain key words or phrases such that it warrants placement in a different semantic category other than the obvious one. An example would be an article on personal weight loss stories, which chronicles the actual nutrition and exercise plans of individuals as much as the emotional and motivational details tied to weight gain and loss (Goldman, *Runner's* 60-73). Another such example is a feature column in one issue

⁹ These cover stories are unrelated to the runner featured on the cover; the story is merely mentioned on the cover, always just below the center right position.

that speaks openly about a runner's dependence on data from his GPS (Global Positioning Systems) watch (Sagal 62). In cases like these, the semantic categorizations became somewhat problematic. I shall therefore offer a caveat that the articles have been categorized in the proposed fashion simply in order to aid in the analysis of an otherwise intimidating corpus. That having been said, there are many sections and sub-sections of the magazine that my own demarcation will not include anywhere, such as "Race and Places" (a review of different road and trail races), and "I'm a Runner" (a back page interview with a celebrity or public figure who also happens to be a runner).

Before a general discussion of the discourses presented by the magazine, and the ideology that is underscored by these discourses, is given, each of the categories will be reviewed separately, and their own specific discourse(s) analyzed.

Accessories Review

This section is named as such so as not to be confused with the "GEAR" section of the magazine. As was stated earlier, certain articles from sections of the magazine other than "GEAR" have been placed here because of their semantic content.

Generally, for membership into this category, the article had to make repeated use of certain words that were synonymous with, a synecdoche for, or adjectival of "clothing" or "accessories," including such terms as "apparel," "shoes," "GPS watch," "hat," "gloves," "fashion," etc. Thematically, several similarities can be found across the articles on running accessories. Firstly, there is an emphasis on comfort and options that promise to remove any unnecessary discomfort caused by uncontrollable factors (such as weather) or side effects of running (such as chaffing). Secondly, the articles suggest customized products for certain categories and sub-categories of runners whom

they, in turn, interpellate; these categories are then used to create the need for the accessories being discussed. There is also a tendency to invest in the running accessory the power to aid or even enhance the running experience by making it somehow easier. By encouraging the use of accessories as an extension of the running body, these articles put into question the very idea of the body's limits, or of the "natural" ways of surpassing those limits.

The June 2008 edition of *Runner's World* contains an article called "The Match Game," which features a variety of clothing (shirts, hats and shorts) that one could cut out and place on pictures of a male or female runner dressed in sports undergarments. Although the clothing is pre-categorized for a type of training ("Go Fast," "Run Easy," and "Train Inside" for men, and "Go Long" and "Hit the Trail" for women), the reader is encouraged to mix and match the different tops and bottoms (Jhung, *Match Game* 106-108).

Building upon this idea of customization, the idea of comfort and accessorization as an extension of one's running ability is introduced. The *Saucony Elite Singlet*, designed for "go[ing] fast" according to the magazine, offers a "generous cut around the armholes which makes [the runner]....feel like there [is] nothing holding them back" (Jhung, *Match Game* 106). In addition, "the breathable mesh side panels give sweat a place to escape, and flat-lock stitching all around minimizes chafing" (ibid.). The shorts that are to match this top, the *Asics Spur Race Short*, "create a racy feel that makes them ideal for a 5-K," and their "short cut made testers go faster" (107); they also contain "two mesh holster pockets that are easy to access even while running at tempo" (ibid.). In both these descriptions, a type of running is named (in this case fast running or tempo

running), alongside its corresponding accessory that makes that particular type of running easier, and, in so doing, becomes an extension of the runner's "natural" running body.

Needs are also named, and, if the runner has never thought before about that particular need, created. The *Asics Spur Race Shorts* are described as containing "two mesh holster pockets that are easy to access even while running at tempo" (Jhung, *Match Game* 106). If runners were to get something out of their pocket without needing to stop a run, they are obviously not reaching for keys or a gym card, as this would imply they are ending their run anyway, either to go home or to the gym. They might, however, be reaching for an energy gel which they wish to consume while running, or their music player, in order to be able to change a song. Runners might not consider it an issue to stop for a few moments, as they would undoubtedly have to do this in a race situation anyway, at each of the fuel stations. However, when the ability to access something quickly is presented as a solution, the problem of not being able to do so in the first place is simultaneously created.

The "run easy" category features the *Sugoi PSR Short*, whose "loose casual fit...take the edge off hard workouts and puts [the runner] in the mood to take it easy during recovery sessions" (Jhung, *Match Game* 107). Again, a category is named and then an example is given of how the apparel made for this category would help a runner run. The need is created for a piece of clothing to wear specifically on "recovery runs" (runs that are performed a day or two after a very intense training session), a category of running that the runner may not have previously considered when selecting running apparel.

The third category of men's apparel that the article covers is "Indoor Running," for which the treadmill-designed *Golite Drimove Lite Sleeveless* t-shirt is recommended because it "kept testers dry and cool on the most intense treadmill runs, even when the AC was off" (Jhung, *Match Game* 107). Similarly, the *Under Armour Fuel Shorts* are "made of a quick-dry polyester which makes them versatile enough for the treadmill" (ibid.). These types of shorts are further made useful for indoor running because the "three pockets gave testers secure places to stash an iPod and gym card" (ibid.). Even if a runner distinguishes between different types of training/running (tempo running, distance training, speed intervals, etc.), they may not have thought of treadmill running as its own category. This is because all of the aforementioned types of running can also be performed on a treadmill. The runner would thus not have considered buying shorts for indoor running because that category had not necessarily existed for them prior to seeing it in the publication.

For women, one of the running apparel categories that is created is "Go Long," and it is suggested that this type of running, usually associated with boredom, fatigue and sweat, should be accessorized with the *Reebok Smooth fit Carchardon Tee*, which "channel[s] excess heat and sweat away to keep you cool and odor-free for hours in the summer sun" (Jhung, *Match Game* 108). In addition, "several testers noted how comfortable this seamless shirt was during the most rigorous training sessions" (ibid.). The *Adidas Adistar Short*, also suggested for this type of running, feature a "boy short liner [which] eliminated chafing and provided some muscle-support- a plus when the mile markers hit double digits" (ibid.). If the shorts support the muscles, they make it easier for runners to carry themselves to where they want to go. The shorts thus become

an extension of the runner's leg and of the runner's natural abilities. The bottom line: "whether they were training for a 10-K or marathon, our female testers unanimously loved how the stretch-woven shell fabric stayed dry, even in humidity" (ibid.). Running, often associated with sweat and pain, becomes comfortable and, of all things, dry.

There is a similar article on winter apparel found in another issue's "GEAR" section. "Foul Weather Friends: Essential Apparel to Help You Face the Chilly Season" features the advice that the key to the "delicate balance" of dressing for winter running (i.e. neither under nor over-dressing) lies in "wearing layers that offer the right mix of insulation and breathability" (Jhung, *Foul Weather* 103). Although the gear is not divided by types of running (despite the fact that the same type of training that one does in the summer can continue into the winter), the emphasis is still on comfort and, in this case, warmth. The *ASICS Thermopolis LT Half Zip* jacket is "soft as cashmere [and]... keeps your core warm and dry" (104). Another jacket, the *New Balance NB Storm Striker 2.0* is "stretchy enough to give with every arm swing" and it "has a hood that detaches via small, light magnets instead of zippers, saving both weight and hassle" (ibid.). The *Nike Performance Knit Beanie* contains a ponytail opening in the back for women to be able to put their ponytail through (ibid.). Instead of creating or using different "types" of running and creating a need for having different types of clothes for these "types" of running, the authors use pre-existing weather conditions to create a need for clothing that is versatile enough for more than one condition. The *North Face Windstopper Hybrid Vest* can be used as a vest on mild days, but is "great under a thin jacket for added insulation in arctic conditions" (105). The *Brooks Aireplex Stretch Jacket* "can handle anything from a dry snow to a light drizzle;" it has a vented back

panel that “increases breathability” and a “fleece-lined collar [that]...adds comfort” (ibid.). The *Saucony Boston Pants* offer “stretchy comfort” and “slim-at-the-ankles cut” which, with their “lengthy leg zips” make “them easy to pull on and off with shoes on” (ibid.). The *Saucony Ultimitt* can be used as a glove “on mild days,” and a mitt on colder days, giving the runner “the best of both worlds” (104). Similarly, the *Sugoi Zap Jacket* is not only both “wind- and water-resistant,” but features neon green with reflective markings ideal for night running (ibid.).

The article featured on the page following “Foul Weather Friends” also reviews pieces of clothing, this time for “big and tall runners” (McDowell, *Measuring Up* 106). The *Asics Velostretch Long Sleeve* has “extralong sleeves and thumbholes [that] bridge the gap between gloves and a jacket” (107). The *Athleta’s Ultra Run Pants* have a “fashionable cut” which means “[runners] can wear them to do yoga and even errands” (ibid.). Multi-function “leisure clothing” or “sports clothing” is further demarcated to create the need for clothes for more specific types of activity: yoga clothes, running clothes, casual clothes that are presentable outside the house, etc. In this example, like in previous ones, clothing is categorized and sub-categorized to create needs which are then promised to be satiated by the item in question.

If anything is the pinnacle of winter comfort, it is the treadmill. The February 2009 issue’s “GEAR” section features a review of treadmills which, “when weather turns nasty, can literally save [the runner’s] running” (Jhung, *Insider* 86). The article compares different treadmills that testers had tried for stability and smoothness of transition between speed and incline settings (interestingly enough, these are the things you cannot control outdoors). One treadmill, the *True Fitness PS800*, even “allowed you

to change the cushioning of the belt” (87). One tester said he “liked all the workout options,” and generally “testers liked the quick keys for easy speed and incline changes, but several noted that there wasn’t a quick ‘zero incline’ key to bring the angle down” (ibid.). For all the runners who “dread the monotony of [the] treadmill,” the *Pacemaster Platinum Pro VR* offers six distance-based courses based on famous runs, such as the Tahoe rim and the Appalachian trails, and 16 other pre-programmed workouts offering a “much needed variety” (ibid.). It also has a negative incline, which makes it possible to perform downhill training. One tester said that “the incline transitions were so smooth [that she] almost didn’t notice the deck going up and down” (ibid.). Another, however, said that “the frame of this upgrade still shook a bit too much” (ibid.). Lastly, the *Sportsart TR21f* has “numerous speed, incline, and program buttons which make on-the-fly adjustments so convenient.” Given as a downside, however, is the fact that the easy to use console has a “frustratingly simple” display, “with distance only measured to a single decimal place...and no option to show mph instead of per-mile pace” (88).

The fixation with the accuracy and detail is further annotated in Peter Sagal’s December article on “GPS Obsession.” Sagal calls himself a “GPS addict” because his GPS watch provides him with “an amateur athlete’s most precious commodity,” namely data (62). Garmin makes a series of GPS watches which every runner who chooses not to completely ignore gear knows how to distinguish. The Garmin series, which the company has added to every few years, started with the *Forerunner 205*, a bulky, 2-lb basic watch with a minimalist display that will quite accurately display one’s elapsed time, distance, current speed (or lap speed), calories burned, along with his or her maximum pace for a particular run even if he or she only maintained it for a second.

Garmin continued with the *Forerunner 305* (the same as the *205* except in red, and featuring a heart rate monitor). And, in 2008, Garmin came out with the *Forerunner 405*, a sleeker version of the watch (which also includes a heart rate monitor). Sagal recently switched from the *205* to the *405* and complains that, although the satellite reception is a lot better with the latter watch (i.e. he no longer has to “run with [his] wrist raised to the heavens in the hopes that being two feet closer to the satellites would help its reception,” the lack of buttons sticking out of “its smooth fuselage” means that one constantly has to keep touching the screen in order to change settings (ibid.). Sagal was so consumed by data that, if he finished what he knew was a 20-mile run, and the GPS watch did not yet read 20-miles, he would keep running until it did. “There’s always a danger when the run starts to serve the data, rather than the reverse” (ibid.). In the world of amateur competitive running, it is not enough to run well and fast, to pre-mark a distance that is 5 or 10 or even 42 kilometers and to use a regular watch to measure one’s time. Runners need to know exactly how fast they are going at any given point and exactly how much they have traversed, measured in hundredths of a kilometer and second. Differences between runs can typically be very qualitative, as is evident in the demarcation of runs suggested by the “GEAR” section articles of *Runner’s World* magazine (which include: running long, running fast, running for recovery, etc.). Thanks to the accessory devices, however, differences now become not only quantifiable, but divisible in myriad ways, and measurable according to “objective,” yet technologically-dependent, parameters. Whereas previously runners might have compared the time taken to complete the first quarter or half of a run/race with the other segments, now they have the option of turning each quarter mile into a “split” against which to compare their

performance. Prior to the introduction of distance watches, pace was dictated by feeling and by mental measurement based on some pre-established landmarks found at quarter- or half-way points of the total run. The GPS watch has become an extension of runners' learned ability to gauge how fast they need to run to finish a course in a desired amount of time: an ability that formerly would have required not only knowledge of one's route, but also access to a normal watch or a stop watch, as well as a sense of intuition built from performing 400m, 800m or mile-repeats on a track at different paces.

Similar to the ways the summer clothes are treated in "The Match Game," shoes are also discussed (and reviewed) in shoe review articles that are featured every few months in the "GEAR" section. The October 2008 issue devotes its "GEAR" pages to trail running shoes. The authors begin by saying that "At its purest, trail running is about exploring less cultivated paths- everything from clambering up gravel slopes to splashing across marshy tracks" (Greene and Fredericksen, *Solid Footing* 101). Similar to the above-mentioned articles on clothing, certain themes run throughout the pages: the demarcation of running, or, in this case, runners into categories; and the perpetuation of the belief that gear, in this case shoes, can help make running easier for the runner, therefore becoming an extension of the runner's body. The shoe section of the magazine typically features a review of anywhere from eight to fifteen shoes, and each shoe is reviewed in a paragraph featuring *Runner's World's* opinion of the shoe, followed by a "type of runner" for whom the shoe is recommended, and a quote from a tester. The shoes are then rated using three small graphs, each indicating the *Runner's World* rating for the shoe in terms of three criteria: cushioning, flexibility and responsiveness, or, respectively, how soft/firm the midsole is, how much energy it takes to flex the shoe at

toe-off, and how smooth a shoe moves from heel-strike to toe-off (102). Based on these categories, the publication is able to recommend the shoe for runners based on weight (as lighter runners generally need more flexibility and less responsiveness). However, in the concluding sentences of each shoe type, a more specific recommendation is also given. Much like the categorizations created by “The Match Game,” these categorizations are constructed quite arbitrarily, but based on pre-existing running terminology so that runners, who may never have considered a certain category before, recognize that particular category and perhaps see themselves reflected in it. It is interesting to note that the following examples all follow the same sentence structure, and begin with the words “Recommended for runners who...” followed by an adjective or adjective clause placed within the structure somewhere. The examples include: “recommended for runners who favour less technical trails and need a superstable everyday trainer” (102); “recommended for trail runners who also mix in a little pavement pounding” (ibid.); “recommended as a training or racing shoe for...runners who like to tackle a mix of trail surfaces” (ibid); and, “recommended for runners who like to feel the trail underfoot and want a minimal shoe with great traction” (103).

In the various shoe review articles, the different authors emphasize comfort and stability and relay how the three features of the shoe (i.e. cushioning, flexibility and responsiveness) either aid the runner in running more smoothly, quickly, or easily, or refrain him or her from doing so. The *Adidas Adistar Salvation* is described as “hav[ing] a slightly wider sole to provide a more stable base from which to toe off” (Greene and Shorten, *Spring* 66); similarly, the *New Balance 1224* “has been reinforced with additional overlays to better wrap the arch and lock down the foot, giving the shoe extra

stability. These overlays are now welded instead of stitched to reduce chafing” (Greene and Fredericksen, *Fall* 110). To add to this shoe’s ability to help the runner, “a more durable foam now sits under the heel, with small sections cut out of it. These holes help drop the weight of the shoe by nearly half an ounce, with no effect on rearfoot softness” (ibid.). Similarly, a newer model of *Brooks Axiom* is “built on a new last that curves upward slightly in the forefoot for a more natural feel as the foot moves from footstrike to toe-off.” (108).

In general, the testers quoted in the magazine showed an appreciation for the comfort and assistance provided by the shoe, saying that certain shoes were: “perfect with a roomy toebox and good support in the arch and heel” (Greene and Shorten, *Winter* 88); “very stable...with good arch support and flexibility” (86); and “an exceptional go-fast trainer” (Greene and Fredericksen, *Summer* 98). The *Asics-Gel Phoenix* is described as having a “cushioned ride” (Greene and Shorten, *Spring* 70).

In both the *Runner’s World* review and the wear-tester review, there is a tendency to invest the shoe with a certain agency: a power to both perform and thus help the runner; or to underperform, and thus hinder, the runner. The back of the outsole of the *Brooks Adrenaline GTS 9* is rounded to “catch the foot earlier in the gait cycle so it lays down more evenly on the floor” (Greene and Shorten, *Spring* 70). A wear tester said of the *Asics Gel-Kayano* that they “performed well on long runs” (ibid.). The *Salomon Speed Comp*, a trail shoe, was described as being “light, fast, and nearly slipperlike” (Green and Fredericksen, *Solid* 103), while the *New Balance 840* was described as “having the grip of a mountain bike tire” (ibid.), and the *Adidas Supernova Riot* as having a “fantastic combination of stability and comfort” (102). The *North Face Chinscraper*,

named after a steep section of the Wasatch Front 100-Mile Endurance Run that climbs 5,000 feet in 5 miles, is described as “having the protection, and, more important, the traction to live up to its name” by *Runner’s World* and, by a tester, as “providing sure footing on wet trails” (104). Similarly, criticisms of a shoe revolve around what the shoe is not able to do to ease the runner’s experience. Shoes are described as being “stable but [having] weight [that] could be reduced a bit,” as having a “heel [that] could be softer” (Green and Fredericksen, *Fall* 106), and as “fit[ing] well overall, but [needing] more room in the toebox” (Green and Shorten, *Spring* 66). When a shoe is recommended for a type of runner, the emphasis is on comfort and on easing the running experience, as is evident in such phrases as: “the shoes’ midfoot bridge is now below the arch to help ease the transition from footstrike to toe-off” (Green and Fredericksen, *Solid* 102); “the larger stability plates in the heel enhance the shoe’s cushioning” (ibid.); “the midsole plates move slightly on top of each other to support the foot regardless of how it lands on the trail” (ibid.).

The “Spring Shoe Guide,” found in the March 2009 issue, also creates categories of runners for whom the authors claim the shoes are recommended, including: “big runners who need plenty of motion control (Greene and Shorten, *Spring* 66); “big, flat-arched runners who need extra support or room for their orthotics” (ibid.); “runners with normal to low arches looking for a shoe with good stability” (ibid.); “runners who need a stable, well cushioned shoe” (70); and “runners who prefer performance shoes” (ibid.). There was also a tendency, in the quotes of the wear testers interviewed, to “personify” the shoe, investing it with the ability to help or hinder a run, as though it were acting as a free agent: “[they] gave me the stability I need” (70); “they provided stability without

being overly heavy” (ibid.); “they performed well on long runs, interval workouts and tempo runs” (ibid.). The idea being relayed here is that the shoe is a natural extension of the runner’s body, and that it aids the runner in completing a (certain type of) run, much in the way that a specialized prosthesis would help an amputee. The other idea being relayed is that the gear (i.e. the shoe) provides anchorage (in the form of stability and reliability) in an otherwise overly fluid world. Since the gear is acting as an extension of the body, what Shilling says about one wishing to have “some effect on the size, shape and appearance of one’s body” when one “feels unable to exert influence over an increasingly complex society” most certainly applies (6).

In “Blazing a New Trail,” the trail running shoe guide found in the April 2009 issue, shoes are set apart from each other based on what type of trail they are made for: “some shoes are best for level terrain, while others excel on slick muddy tracks” (Greene and Shorten, *Blazing* 101). Needs are again created via the categorization of runners, this time through the use of the “if clause:” “if you like to charge up mountains, you need a shoe with deep treads and rugged protection” (ibid.), and “if you split your time between pavement and trails, you should look for something that provides a comfortable platform across even footing” (ibid.). In addition, when the authors state that the *New Balance 875* are “recommended for runners who...are in need of top-notch traction and an excellent fit,” they create needs that are not necessarily new, as these qualities have undoubtedly been requested of a shoe by runners before, but that are, rather, obvious because they should be required of every shoe (103). Indeed, who would want to buy a shoe that had less than excellent fit and bad traction? The shoes are again personified and invested with the power to help the runner perform: “it had strong traction and felt very

responsive” (ibid.); “it handled a wide range of terrain well” (ibid.); “it had the perfect blend of stability and flexibility for me” (102); “[it] overcame mud and soft ground with ease” (103); and, “it handled every winter condition well but the thick, upper might be a little warm in the summer” (102). This last example confirms the fact that, in addition to telling runners that they should expect an accessory to aid their running, *Runner’s World’s* also tells runners to seek maximal comfort when running.

Overall, what is noted in the accessories review articles is that runners are interpellated into categories and types, each of which is offered customized gear to help make their running experience more comfortable. By saying that a certain accessory does something for a certain type of running, the authors of *Runner’s World* are saying that, if one performs that type of running, then one needs that accessory. For example, the *Saucony Elite Singlet* is “designed for going fast,” and thus offers “a breathable mesh which makes [the runner] feel like there is nothing holding them back...[because even] sweat [has] a place to escape” while the matching shorts “minimize chaffing” (Jhung, *Match Game* 106). The implication here is that, if you “run fast,” then you need something that “minimizes chaffing” and “gives sweat a place to escape.” The need that validates a constructed category is thus created through the use of common running knowledge (i.e. there is such a thing in running as “going fast,” which is further emphasized by the training articles). For “going long,” shorts are offered that “support the muscles,” thus offering the runner the prospect of running longer and keeping a certain pace for a longer period of time (108). The accessory makes the running experience easier, and, in so doing, becomes an extension of the natural athlete’s body.

The accessories not only aid the running experience, but offer comfort even when such a thing seems impossible, as in the case of running in extreme heat or cold. Running, which has the potential to be something ascetic - a means of disciplining the body in order to either attain spiritual enlightenment or construct a more perfect physique - is turned into something easy and comfortable, something to which effort must be put but an effort which can be minimized if the right accessory is purchased. In this way, running becomes commercialized because runners are made to rely upon certain purchases in order to facilitate their activities.

Nutrition Section

Although all of the articles in the nutrition section of the analysis came from the *Runner's World* "FUEL" section, and its succeeding one-page sub-section called "Fridge wisdom," very specific semantic criteria were developed for entry into this category, namely the occurrence of words pertaining to the science of nutrition, or dietetics as it was once called. These semantic elements were further demarcated into two categories: namely first-level nutrition and second-level nutrition. The first-level nutrition terminology includes words such as "calorie," "protein," "carbohydrate," "fiber," "fat," "vitamin," "mineral," along with the names of the vitamins and minerals themselves (rutin, Vitamin E, magnesium, etc.), and basically consists of the basic components of food (Weight Loss Advisory). Second-level nutrition includes words which are not self-contained within the science of nutrition, but are used both within the scientific discourse and in the vernacular to relay messages about nutrition. These are terms that are "thrown around" in popular discourse surrounding diet and nutrition labels, yet few users are sure as to what exactly they refer. For the most part, these words are quantifiers. These

include, but are not limited to “serving size,” “a cup,” or “1/2 cup,” “a handful,” etc. These two word categories lead to two different observations about the discourse(s) contained within the magazine, namely that: through the combination of the terms classified as belonging to “first-order nutrition” and a certain type of sentence structure, the authors are able to assert an authority about nutrition; as this authority is established, the authors are then able to offer prescriptive sentences in the imperative mood (to runners) about what, how and when (and even why) to eat using terms from the “second-order nutrition” word category.

“Fridge Wisdom” is a monthly column that offers runners nutrition tips. The one contained in the June 2008 issue dictates how to make a perfect salad, or, rather, what ingredients the perfect salad needs to contain. “A well-assembled salad has everything your body needs to recover from a hard run: carbs to restock glycogen stores, protein to repair tissue damage, vitamins and minerals to boost your immune system, and antioxidants to help fight inflammation in sore muscles” (Applegate, *Salad* 58). It tells runners to use different ingredients in favour of old favourites, listing, in each case, the reasons to switch: oil-and-vinegar combinations instead of fat-free dressing; lean meat or fish instead of fried or breaded sources of protein; or avocados instead of bacon. In each case, the number of calories in the recommended ingredient is given (“20 calories per ½ cup of fresh vegetables,” for example), along with the recommended serving size in number of cups or tablespoons (ibid.). Salad greens, even though negligible in calories, should be capped at 2 cups, vegetables at 1 ½ cups, protein at 1 cup, avocado at ½ cup, and dressing at two tablespoons (ibid.). All of this information is relayed in a simplistic way. A few words are placed into a few sentences, each under three sub-headings

(“Out” for the rejected ingredient; “In” for the preferred ingredient, with a short explanation of why this ingredient is preferred; “Mix + Match” for how to put more than one kind of preferred ingredient together, along with the total portion size). The “In” sub-section lists vitamins and minerals that the preferred ingredient contains (ibid.).

Other nutrition articles are also demarcated into sections and sub-sections, utilizing simple headlines along with the listing of vitamins and minerals, and an explanatory clause of why each is beneficial. This textual and sentence structure is repeated throughout the articles. In “The Nut Case,” an article featured in the June 2008 “FUEL” section, each of the featured nuts are discussed under the sub-headings “Why,” “How,” and “One Ounce,” the latter of which lists the nutritional information found in a one ounce serving of that type of nut. The sentence structure in the “Why” section for each of the nuts is immensely repetitive: (type of nut) contains (type of mineral/antioxidant, etc) that may help/aid/ in (medical benefit). Examples include: “Walnuts are very rich in plant-based omega-3 fatty acid ALA...ALA decreases inflammation that can damage arteries and may help reduce the breakdown of bone” (Noxon 55); “Almonds contain fiber which prevents some of the nut fat from being digested and absorbed” (55-56); “One serving of almonds provides 35 percent of the Daily Value for Vitamin E, a powerful antioxidant that may help protect against diseases such as Alzheimer’s” (56); “Peanuts also contain resveratrol, the same phytochemical found in red wine thought to protect against heart disease” (ibid.); “[Pistachios] are high in lutein, an antioxidant typically found in dark leafy vegetables that’s been shown to protect our eyes from macular degeneration” (ibid.); “Compared with other nuts, pecans have one of the highest levels of phytosterols, a group of plant chemicals that may help

protect against cardiovascular disease” (ibid.); and “Hazelnuts have the highest nut level of folate, a B vitamin known to reduce the risk of birth defects. Research indicates that it, along with other B vitamins, may also lower the risk of heart disease, cancer, and depression” (ibid.).

The March 2009 “FUEL” section had a similar article to the June one on the “Power Salad” that talks about replacing “healthy stanbys” with even healthier alternatives (Kadey 34). An example is swapping salmon with barramundi because the latter “packs more omega-3 fatty acids...which reduce internal inflammation,” and “lower body fat...when combined with exercise” (ibid.). Peanut butter should be replaced by almond butter because the latter “packs more bone building minerals like magnesium, calcium, and phosphorus” (35). Cooking soba noodles is encouraged over spaghetti because the former contain the “phytochemical rutin...[which] may halt the expansion of body-fat cells and lower blood-fat levels” (ibid.). Bison is favoured over beef because of its high iron stores that are “needed to produce haemoglobin, which carries oxygen to your muscles to help power your stride” (ibid.).

In addition to telling runners what foods to choose, *Runner's World* also offers articles on how best to choose these foods. The October 2008 issue’s “Fridge Wisdom” section offers advice on how to choose grocery store muffins or make them oneself. The author’s pointers are: “look for low-fat” versions to save on calories, or, when baking, replace half the oil in the recipe with applesauce or plum puree; watch portion size; choose whole grain varieties (i.e. the first few ingredients should contain whole grains or fiber); and look for (or add) nuts and fruit, despite their large calorie contents, because

they, respectively, “provide heart healthy fats,” and “are packed with antioxidants” (Applegate, *Stud Muffins* 44).

The April 2009 issue’s “FUEL” section contains an article called “Custom Order: What, When, and How Much Should You Eat Post-run? That Depends on the Workout.” The main idea of this article is that athletes have a 30 minute “glycogen window” during which they have to begin refuelling their body so as to have sufficient glycogen levels for the next workout and begin to repair damaged muscle tissue (Shea 37). There are exceptions, of course, such as short runs (of 3 miles or roughly half an hour), and late-night runs. The article is sectioned off into “5 common post-run situations,” each of which contains a name of the situation (“You’re Starving after a 3-miler”/“You ran long and hard and you’re tired”/“You Feel Queasy”/“You ran at night, and bedtime looms”/“After a 45-minute run, you’re short on time”) and what to eat (“Eat this:”), a paragraph detailing what to eat in the situation and why (37-38).

The January 2009 issue’s “FUEL” section contains an article called “Weight Training: Setting Realistic Resolutions Can Help You Shed Pounds for the Long Run.” It offers the reader more “realistic” resolutions that can be set in lieu of the typical “I vow to lose ten pounds” type. These resolutions are really tips for how to lose weight in the only effective way, that being gradually and without reducing calories so much so as to send the body into metabolic shock. The resolutions are: “eat breakfast every morning,” “plan to eat,” “take notes,” “nix late-night noshing,” and “think like an athlete, not a dieter” (Goldman, *Weight Training* 40-41). Each of them is coupled with a scientific or psychological explanation as to why this is the preferred course of action. Eating breakfast every morning “kicks your metabolism into high gear” (40), while

planning meals ahead of time (even by a few days) will ensure that “you always have fresh vegetables on hand” and don’t “end up ordering take out because you are starving” (41). Taking notes means that you keep a log (no matter how informal) of your meals and, more importantly, snacks, so that you start to recognize eating patterns over the weekend or weekdays (like always snacking before dinner, or always having chips when you watch TV) (ibid.). Each elaboration/explanation is done using the imperative mood: “Try to eat between 150 and 300 calories for the first meal, and get a mix of carbs and protein.” (ibid.); “make a big pot of soup that will last a few days, or grill up chicken and vegetables for multiple dinners” (ibid.); “stock your freezer with precooked meat and precut veggies” (ibid.).

The latter two resolutions (“nix late-night noshing,” and “think like an athlete, not a dieter”) contain examples of the use of interpellation in the explanation, in which the runner is hailed as a runner (Goldman, *Weight Training* 41). “Weight-conscious athletes often skimp on daytime calories, only to end up craving high-calorie foods late at night” (ibid.). Runners are told that it is imperative for them to spread calories out. Otherwise, “it’s going to affect your workout” (ibid.). “Your friend who ‘works out’ at aerobics twice a week might get away with a meagre 1,200 calories a day; you, *Runner*, cannot. Depriving yourself of calories will slow down your metabolism and sap your energy, damaging your weight loss and running efforts” (ibid., emphasis added). The author goes on to say that “While dieters tend to drop weight fast only to regain it, athletes need to focus on slow, steady weight loss... [because this] will provide energy for training while bolstering your chance of keeping the weight off for good” (ibid.). Readers are also told not to “ditch carbs in an effort to get lean: Doing so will drain glycogen supply

preventing you from running as long or as hard as you want” (ibid.). The example is given of Barbara Lewin, RD, a sports nutritionist, who adds high-quality carbs to every meal and snack of her athlete clients, kick-starting their weight loss (ibid.). The author of the article hails the runner and, after doing so, offers him or her advice that is presented as being runner-specific.

Another such article that hails the runner in its offering of nutrition advice appears in the April 2009 issue. It is a cover story devoted to weight loss and running, or, rather, the correct way for *runners* to lose weight. The author updates seven popular weight-loss strategies to meet a runner’s needs to “drop pounds for good.” The strategies are then discussed in such a way so as to underscore the importance of the revised approach to dieting for the runner. One such strategy is to re-think the “low fat diet” (Goldman, *Runner’s* 62). A lot of people go on low-fat or no-fat diets which, if they work, do so only because, by reducing fat, one is reducing the total amount of calories consumed by a significant amount. Only two of the four reasons given for why runners should include fats in their diet (“Here’s why runners should include fats in their diet”) actually involve running: reduction of injury, and decreased joint pain (ibid.). The typical weight-loss strategy involves almost daily slow jogging (to burn fat); runners’ bodies, however, are very efficient at using oxygen, and repeatedly running one distance at one pace will, over time, come to burn less and less calories because one’s metabolism has already adjusted to the effort (64). The publication recommends different types of workouts such as intervals (running a number of miles or half-miles at various distances, both very fast and quite slow), hills and longer runs (ibid.). Dieters often cut carbohydrates out of their

meals because, if one's muscles don't use the sugar energy that is carried to them immediately, it gets stored in fat cells, leading to weight gain. Runners, however:

need carbs because they're our main source of glucose, a sugar that our brains and muscles use as fuel. Most glucose is stored in muscles and the liver as glycogen and used as energy when we run. But the body can only store a limited amount of glycogen, so if you haven't eaten enough carbs, you'll literally run out of fuel. (66)

Most dieters are encouraged to cut 500 calories a day in order to lose one pound a week. However, runners are encouraged to "reduce calorie intake based on personal needs" (Goldman, *Runner's* 67). This is because, on a calorie deficit, one cannot work out as intensely or for as prolonged a period as one previously did, and, if one does, it will lead to the loss of muscle mass. Calorie deficits are to be adjusted based on training schedules and following a maxim of "trim - don't slash" (ibid.).

The May 2009 issue's "FUEL" section features an article called "Snack Smart: Eating the Right Foods in between Meals Is Key for Any Running Situation," which also bases its main points on the difference between runners and non-runners. Many people, dieters especially, "think that snacks mean junk" (Bastone 43); however, "for runners, snacking is a valid nutrition strategy [because] it helps us fuel up for workouts, get a variety of nutrients, and spread calories evenly throughout the day" (ibid.). The Registered Dietician to whom this quote is attributed is herself listed as being a runner. Another scientific source that is cited is Kelli Montgomery, a coach and nutrition consultant in Connecticut. "By going for fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthy fats, runners can get nutrients they may have missed at meals" (44). "But it's important

to know what to choose,” she adds, because “some foods offer runners the most benefit at particular times” (ibid.). The rest of the article is then broken down into four snack situations that might call for a “snack attack:” pre-run, post-run, pre-meal and bedtime. Each section offers a description of the situation and options or examples of what can be chosen as a snack. The description of the situation is runner-specific and calls on the identity of the reader who will hopefully see him or herself reflected in the pages: “If you’re like many runners, your workout often takes place hours after your last meal. Morning runners haven’t eaten since last night’s dinner, and late-afternoon runs take place long after lunch” (ibid.); “Even if you had a meal before running, you may be hungry afterward- especially if you ran long and hard and your muscles need fuel” (ibid.); and “if you have a long run in the morning, you may need more calories before bed” (ibid.). In the “Pick This” paragraphs, the imperative mood is used throughout: “Save half of your turkey sandwich at lunch for later as a snack with juice” (ibid.); “Try a fruit-and-yogurt smoothie” (ibid.); “Try portion controlled dessert like frozen yogurt” (ibid.).

Generally, throughout the nutrition articles, authorities, from registered dieticians to sports nutritionists to personal trainers, are called on to support the advice. For the most part, however, no more than a name and a title is given, along with a testimonial of what worked for their runner clients and why. Additionally, the distinction is always made between runners and non-runners, and, in the process, the runner is hailed into the dietary discourse. “Your friend who ‘works out’ at aerobics may be able to get away with a meagre 1,200 calories a day; you, Runner, cannot,” and “dieters tend to drop weight fast only to regain it, athletes need to focus on slow, steady weight loss” being

perfect examples of runners being compared to non-runners and somehow made to seem better (Goldman, *Weight Training* 41). The truth is that what is said of runners could be said of anyone planning to mix diet and exercise into a weight-loss plan; obviously, the more one exercises, the more one can eat and still enter into the same calorie deficit, which should be reasonable and safe so as not to provide a metabolic shock to the body. When, in the May 2009 article ‘Snack Smart,’ the author says that “[by] go[ing] for fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthy fats, runners can get nutrients they may have missed at meals,” she could be referring to anybody (Bastone 43). The pre-run and post-run snack situations are obviously runner-specific (however, they could very easily be applied to any exercise regimen), whereas the other categories (pre-meal and bed-time) could be applied to anyone. The emphasis is on carbohydrates and replenishing carbohydrate stores because it is runners that are being addressed, and what is thus being offered is a traditional sports diet which runners already know about and recognize. When this information is relayed in a message that is intertwined with his or her (repeated) interpellation into a running identity, the runner affirms what was already known, already ingrained. It is “obvious...right...true” (Althusser 167). The nutrition advice then becomes sound and valid and *Runner’s World* magazine becomes an authority on what is actually a highly controversial subject.

Training Section

Most of the articles for the training section of the analysis came from the “Personal Best” sub-sections, namely “Training” and “Mind + Body.” The name of the former sub-section is self-revealing. Appropriately, it speaks about different types of workouts: interval training; tempo runs; track work or speed work; long runs, and

variations of them (to be used should one be pressed for time or want to challenge the body in a different way). This section discusses the frequency with which all such workouts should be performed, how best to prepare for them, and types of cross-training that would make them more effective or easier to perform. The other sub-section, "Mind + Body," as the name suggests, contains information about the more psychological aspects of running, such as mentally preparing for a race, facing self-doubt, and overcoming lack of motivation. There were few exceptions to the fact that the training articles came from the "Personal Best" section, although one came from the section "The Pack Rules:" a double page spread devoted to quotes from runners organized by the themes chosen for that particular article. In the February 2009 issue, runners were encouraged to "tough it out" during a difficult run (Lee 72-73). Another article reviewed came from a feature story that could have been analyzed as part of the "personal stories" section. However, it fit the criteria detailed in the following paragraph and was therefore included in the training category (Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 120-125).

Articles that were placed in the "training" section of this analysis made use of "coaching" vocabulary. This vocabulary consisted either of imperatives that mimic a pep talk a coach would give before a race or game, such as: "stay focused," "stay calm," "have a plan," "go short/long," "push harder," and "believe you can," or of modal verbs followed by the promise of improvement, such as: "can improve your workouts - and your mood," and "can make you stronger, [or] less injury-prone."

There were several themes common to the training articles. First, there was an emphasis on a mind-body connection, and of the mind being able to control the body, but

only if properly trained (whereas, without proper training, the mind “gives in” to every hedonistic desire and discomfort of the body). Connected to this disciplining of the mind is the necessity of learning to tolerate physically tough situations (such as a marathon, injury, or extreme weather conditions) and pain. Contrasted with this is the promotion of a type of running that keeps running fun (rather than difficult), and allows one to avoid boredom and overuse injury. Lastly, the training articles seemed to underscore the belief that running is able to provide an escape from the mundane by unlocking certain experiences to which humanity has become closed off as a result of the easy comforts of modernity.

In an article on yoga and running, found in the aforementioned monthly subsection “Mind + Body,” it is stated that:

Yoga offers an added benefit that can enhance performance: improved mental focus. It teaches you to be in an intense situation- perhaps deep in a backbending pose- and to bring awareness to your form and your breathing to make the situation manageable, [which is a] skill that is invaluable when at mile 18 of 26.2. You’ll learn ways to cope which will benefit you as an athlete and in life. (Rinkunas 50)

“Why do we Suffer?” is a feature article which reads like a personal story, but, because it features advice on training “smarter” and hurting “less,” as well as “mentally outsmart[ing] pain,” such as: “train at race pace,” “prep for pain,” “push your limits,” and “find an accomplice,” and thus engages the reader/runner in a coaching type dialogue, it has been placed in the training category (Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 120-125). The author, Christie Aschwanden, describing her experience of running the

Pikes Peak Ascent, a race that covers 7,815 feet of elevation over a half-marathon (13.1 mile) distance, says that when a spectator yelled “looking great, you are in eighth place,” all of her pain disappeared, and what once seemed like an impossible stretch of ascent became not only pain-free but pleasurable (122). The spectator’s positive feedback changed her mind’s perception of the pain, from a negative barrier to a positive sign of potential success, because of her high placement in the race. The negative self-talk that she had experienced changed to a more positive tone and this alleviated the tightness in her lungs and muscles. She offers her readers the advice that negative thoughts need to be reframed the second one becomes aware of them. Instead of focusing on how tired one is and thinking that he or she will never finish, let alone do well, one needs to refocus those thoughts into positive ones - i.e. seeing the tiredness or the pain in one’s legs as a positive thing, because it means that “[one] must really be working it” (124).

As important as it is to focus on positive self-talk, which can help change the way one views pain (turning it into something symbolically positive), one must also learn to accept such pain: “the person who knows suffering is coming, and who expects and embraces it, will do better than someone who’s scared of it” (Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 124). Additionally, Aschwanden speaks of what is known as the Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE), which is a variable number on a 1 to 10 scale determined by one’s hydration and glycogen levels, the weather, the course, and any injuries one is sustaining. Most importantly, however, this RPE changes with perception of an “endpoint.” This is why runners are able to sprint the last kilometre or two of a marathon, long after they have hit “the wall.”¹⁰ The author thus advises the readership to

¹⁰ “The wall” is the point in the marathon when the body runs out of glycogen and has to use its own fat/muscle reserves as a fuel supply. Unless an athlete has trained beyond this point, the shift is

visualize the race/course in segments smaller than its entirety (i.e. “manageable chunks”), in order to trick their minds into being able to handle the more difficult stretches of a race or long run (ibid.). One is to tell oneself that he or she just needs to keep pushing until the top of the next hill, instead of the far-off finish. She also advises the reader to turn the anticipation of pain into signals that the end is near and to use this as a cue to start to “push harder” (ibid.). She goes on to quote Andy Jones-Wilkins, a perennial top-ten finisher and the Western States 100-mile Endurance Run as saying that “the person who knows that suffering is coming, who expects it and embraces it, will do better than someone who’s scared of it” (ibid.).

In an article “Beyond the Burn,” Ed Eyestone claims that training above one’s lactate threshold can teach his or her body to “push harder for longer periods of time” (30). The lactate threshold is the point at which lactic acid, a waste product of anaerobic exercise (or aerobic exercise that has become anaerobic because the speed at which the runner is running forces his or her body to burn glycogen without oxygen), begins to build up in the muscles. This is experienced as a burning sensation, most often in one’s legs (particularly in the quadricep muscles), but it can be true for any part of the body that is engaged in the intensity of the motion. The author recommends learning to “deal with the burn” by purposely running above a level where the burn is felt for several intervals of more than 200 meters (at 90% of all out effort); the body will thus be taught to more efficiently process lactic acid and to use it as a fuel (ibid.).

experienced as severe fatigue and a heavy feeling in all of the limbs because the body is not used to performing well in athletic events when this other energy source is utilized. This shift typically occurs at the 20 mile or 32 km mark of the 26 mile (42 km) marathon (Switzer and Robinson 200).

Similar to how the body can be trained to work above the lactate threshold, the mind too can be trained to work above one's pain threshold, that is to surpass one's comfort zone. In her lengthy article, Aschwanden also mentioned that "the same kind of intervals that up your lactate threshold also improve your pain tolerance because they teach your brain what it feels like to approach your limit and keep going" (Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 125). The act of keeping going "is both a physical and psychological process- your body adapts to the exercise, while your mind learns to cope with the discomfort and develop confidence that you can handle the pain" (124).

Aschwanden goes on suggest to readers to "find a pain community," or "an accomplice." This is because people with similar goals to the runner can guide him or her through intense and gruelling physical rituals, and thus help him or her "open up to the possibility that pain can be a source of pleasure and enjoyment" (Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 124). Although she suggests that most peak performances (especially elite ones) are principally the result of focus, determination, and what one could describe as an almost zen-like trance state, most outsiders wonder why runners would put themselves through such torturous ordeals as running a sub-3 hour marathon or doing 2000 meter sprint repeats on the track in the blistering sun. Her answer: "That's part of the allure. Pain is not just a necessary evil; it's a fundamental part of the process. It's part of the reason you go out there. You want to feel your lungs burn a little, to feel your quadriceps get fatigued. It's part of feeling that you're alive out there on a run" (125). Running, for many runners, she claims, "represents a turning away from society's obsession with numbing pain or medicating every discomfort," and a dissatisfaction with

and refusal to endorse an “anaesthetized way of living” (ibid.). Aschwanden further states that:

Long distance races also serve as rites of passage. You go into a race with a sense of self, and in the process of encountering this really uncomfortable pain and suffering, you’re forced to look in the mirror and find out ‘*What defines me? Am I a person who perseveres? Am I able to endure?*’ You may emerge at the end as a qualitatively different person, and that’s something you carry over to the rest of your life. (Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 125)

Aschwanden’s first marathon was a high-altitude trail race, and, in anticipation of the end, her endorphin levels rose and she was ready to “push it.” However, she had been wrong in assuming that the rest of the course was downhill. Before that became the case, there was still a slope to tackle, which was a bunny ski slope in the winter, but now “looked like Mount Everest” (Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 125). Overwhelmed and ready to give up, a realization struck her: “this was life - there was no way out but the path before me” (ibid.). Knowing she “hadn’t come this far to quit,” she “put her head down, took a deep breath, and gave [herself] over to the pain. This was what it felt like to be alive, right there, right then, in that place, and [she] embraced every sensation” (ibid.).

The section “The Pack Rules” features quotes from runners on a pre-selected topic that are further divided into sub-topics. The February 2009 issue featured 10 tips for “toughing it out.” The magazine took note of many quotes provided in various polls on their website and organized these quotes according to ten rules for getting past pain

and suffering in a run or in a race, essentially giving the readers ten reasons not to give up. Generally, the advice given was the same as that given by Aschwanden, especially the parts about training one's mind to perceive a run in segments rather than as a whole entity, thus tricking it into lowering one's RPE, visualizing one's success in an effort to get endorphins going, thereby minimizing pain sensations, and, finally, repeating a motivational mantra. The magazine quotes one runner as repeating Lance Armstrong's famous quote "Pain is temporary; quitting is forever" (Lee 73), a variation of the Latin saying *dolor transit, gloria aeterna est* [pain is transient; glory lasts forever].

One thing on which Aschwanden does not elaborate that this article does was the idea of losing oneself in one's thoughts in an effort to make the time pass. In order not to focus on what hurts, many runners focus on the things they can control, such as their breathing, or on relaxing certain body parts, such as their shoulders or hands, which tend to get tense when people run, and think about the body parts that don't hurt (even something as simple as their fingers) (Lee 73). The achievement of this meditative state is essentially the point at which the mind wins "the battle between mind and body" (runner qtd. in *ibid.*).

This idea of "winning the battle" carries over into many of the articles studied. "Shrink Rap," featured in the "Mind + Body" section of the November 2008 issue, contains parts of an interview with a sports psychologist who works at the Toronto Marathon. She once helped talk a runner who was going to run the race dressed in a chef's hat and carrying a cake (in order to advertise his restaurant) from dropping out of the race due to pre-race anxiety. She told him to "repeat a mantra" and thought up one on the spot "You know you can do 18 miles...after that it's *a piece of cake*" (Averett 49).

In addition to helping runners figure out mantras to repeat, sports psychologists help runners “through visualization strategies... [to] calm prerace jitters” (ibid.). Not all advice needs to be given last minute before a race; in fact, some words of wisdom are offered in the article for runners to take into account regardless of whether they are planning on running a marathon or “just looking to increase their weekly mileage” (ibid.). This practical advice includes the importance of knowing one’s route, so that the mind will know at what points to conserve energy (i.e. a hilly part of the course is coming up) and when to go hard (i.e. when the end is near or when a downhill part is approaching). The magazine also suggests carrying something that reminds one of why he or she is running, such as a talisman (50). Additionally, runners are told to relax and to use positive imagery (such as when 1972 Olympic Gold medallist Frank Shorter imagined his legs as bicycle wheels) in order to stay positive. This latter point includes “think[ing] back to successful moments in [one’s] running career, perhaps the first time [he or she] made it to the top of a steep hill, and how powerful that made [him or her] feel” (ibid.). Or, as one runner suggests, runners could keep a list of mantras, funny anecdotes and memories of family and friends. “You need to be your own cheering section...[and] any positive energy you can drum up will help carry you through” (ibid.).

Similarly, in the April 2009 issue, the “Mind + Body” section contains an article called “Train Your Brain,” which disseminates the idea that “running is the ultimate power vacation- [because there are] no Blackberrys, no kids, no bosses...It’s just time to get away from everything...[and]have complete solitude” (runner qtd. in Douban 45). The problem, however, is that most runners are thinking about many things that will distract them from getting the most out of their workout, and thus from maximizing the

running experience. This implies that the publication assumes that running should be an experience that, while integrated into one's daily life and lifestyle (as defined by Giddens), is somehow sacred in the sense that it needs to be separated from anything negative or mundanely quotidian.

The article goes on to give four examples of things that can be done with the mind in order to get one of the "best things you can get out of running," which is a "release" (Douban 46). However, the caveat is given that each of these things - namely organizing, problem solving, wandering and pondering - when overdone, or done in a way that results in negativity taking over, is counter-productive to the running experience, and can "suck the fun out of your run...[and] also compromise your performance" (ibid.). The advice that is given to runners who are letting negativity overtake them as they run (which would defeat the purpose as "we run to feel good") is to "give [themselves] permission to leave [their] woes behind until after [their] run" (Douban 46). If they are tense, they are to take a mental inventory of all of their body parts, ensuring that they are relaxed, so that the problem they may be overthinking does not start to manifest in their running form, thus compromising their performance. If they find themselves distracted, they need to talk themselves back into paying attention on their pace and form (ibid.).

One might assume that the discourse that runs through the publication with respect to pain tolerance and mental control of the body would go hand-in-hand with a very rigorous and painful approach to training itself, one that embodies the old saying "No Pain, No Gain." However, upon close examination of the articles selected, it seems that the opposite is true. The magazine endorses a gentler approach to running, one that

keeps running fun, while allowing the runner to rest, recover, and avoid boredom or injury.

Although I do not wish to belabour a list of training methods available to runners beyond those which are already discussed in my corpus, it should be noted that it is a generally accepted fact in the running community that the staple of the training week for any distance at or over a half-marathon is the long-run. Usually performed on one of the days of the weekend, with a rest day before and after, this type of run mimics the race situation by preparing the runner for keeping a steady pace for a high number of miles. The maximum number of miles run on any given long run should never meet or exceed the length of the race; but, at least one to three runs of 80% of the length of the race should be performed no more than three to six weeks (depending on the distance) before race day. In the language of runners, this type of run is known as “going long.” If anything symbolizes the necessity of runners to be able to both focus and use their mind to fend off boredom, it is the long run. If there is one thing about running that mimics meditation, the long run would be it. Some runners love it and look forward to it all week, while others dread it.

The “Training” sub-section of the “Personal Best” section of the April 2009 issue features an article that comes as a blessing to all long-distance runners who detest the long run. “The dread of the long run was huge. All week I would fret about how I would get it done” says a runner from British Columbia who was training for the Boston Marathon while juggling single motherhood and a nursing career (qtd. in Fitzgerald, *Shortcut* 25). The author admits that, in a busy schedule, a long run becomes an event in itself, with rest required before and after. What he suggests, instead, is that long, slow

mileage isn't the only key to marathon success. In fact, he feels that it is just as efficient to replace some of those long runs with more frequent runs of 10 to 14 miles; the same level of fitness can be built with less risk of injury. "Spread[ing] mileage evenly throughout the week" makes one "less likely to get bogged down with fatigue" (ibid.). When it comes to optimum performance, injury-prevention is key, as is the overall quality of the runs. Kevin Beck, a New Hampshire-based running coach, ran a marathon in 2:24 with the longest training run having been just 17 miles; he says the long run "should not be more than 25% of a runner's total weekly mileage" (qtd. in Fitzgerald, *Shortcut* 28). This is how to ensure that one avoids injury. Fitzgerald's alternatives to a long run done at or just below race pace include: the "fast-finish run," which is performed by running 8 to 12 miles at conversational pace, followed by 2 to 3 miles at a fast (i.e. half-marathon or 10 km) pace; the "90-minute blast" which, after a 10 minute warm up, involves running at a race pace effort; and, lastly, the "divided long run," which consists of 20 miles split over two days, the second of which the runner will be so fatigued from the first that he or she will get the same endurance benefits as from one long run (28).

There is a sub-sub-section in the "Training" section of the "Personal Best" monthly feature that is present every couple of monthly editions or so called "The Starting Line: Tips for Beginners from an Easygoing Coach." The February 2009 section contains an article called "Ready for More: Run a Little Faster and Farther-without Getting Injured" that is dedicated to beginner runners who want to improve their speed and distance "without risking injury" (Galloway 28). The columnist, Jeff Galloway, suggests that beginners should perform speed work or track work in the form

of 400 meter repeats (which is equivalent to one lap around the track) at a “slightly faster than usual pace,” doing four speed laps in total with a recovery walking lap in between each (ibid.). Once they have built up to six laps, they should attempt a time trial of a full mile (i.e. 4 laps around the track or on the road) to see how fast they can run a mile. In terms of increasing distance, he suggests that runners add a quarter mile to the longest distance they’ve run in the past two weeks with a 2-minute per mile slower pace than usual. The beginner runners are to alternate the long run with a 3 mile (5 km) run every other weekend. Lastly, they are to enter a race to give themselves a goal to work towards (ibid.).

This slow progression in running is also advised of more seasoned runners on the previous page of the very same issue in an article called “Step It Up: The Best Ways to Take Your Running to the Next Level, No Matter What Your Goal” (McDowell 26). In addition to emphasizing gradual increase in mileage and speed, the article instructs runners to increase (or decrease) these two things to prevent themselves from being bored. That is, readers are told to “go short if [they] are used to going long” and to “go long if [they] are used to going short”. The former shift would be done to build speed and the latter to build endurance (26-27).

Runners are also encouraged to perform treadmill workouts in order to “gauge what pace [they] could be pushing at” and to “give [them] confidence in [their] next race” (McDowell, *Step 27*). Basically, if runners are used to running 10-minute miles, they can force themselves to complete two 9-minute miles in a row so that they are able to run at this pace when they are racing. This idea of pushing one’s body is contrasted with the idea of needing to fend off boredom, which would not be necessary if one were

pushing one's mind also. In order to fend off boredom, runners are encouraged to "hit a button every quarter mile: speed, incline, etc." and to "run marathon pace during TV shows and 10 km pace during commercials" (ibid.).

Runners are also encouraged to "keep a training log to give [them] insight into why things are going well or badly" (McDowell, *Step 27*). One runner is quoted as saying: "I've logged almost 500 miles with my water-bottle belt... [and] seeing the miles add up is motivating to me" (ibid.). In this article, just like in the ones analyzed in the accessories review section, the gear is seen as aiding the runner and making running more pleasurable for him or her. Runners are told to "use [their] gear," including a heart rate monitor, which will be able to tell them if they are overtraining or improving, according to how their heart rate fluctuates while running the same pace over different days, a GPS device, which will "help [them] make more subtle adjustments" to their pace, and a music player, which will help keep them motivated and having fun (ibid.).

The September 2008 issue's "Training" section features an article called "Balancing Act: The Best Regimen Includes Speed, Distance, and Days Off. The Trick Is in the Mix" (Douglas 29). It speaks about the regimen of Tom Ryan who, with age, could no longer handle 60 to 80 miles a week anymore; therefore he realized that "the key was to get the most out of the mileage [he] could do" (qtd. in ibid.). Running Coach Greg McMilan, whose athletes range from beginners to Olympic hopefuls, says this focused approach is a smart way to train. He says that runners should "determine how much [they] can run, based on the rest of [their] life and need to stay healthy...then make [their] training as race-specific as [they] can with that time" (qtd. in ibid.). Each week should include a mix of tempo runs, intervals, cross-training, distance, and rest. Each

type of training is performed with a function. Tempo runs, or running at a “comfortably hard” pace, performed at least once per week train the body to run at faster speeds before lactic acid builds up. Speed interval repeats help runners achieve speed, which improves finishing times and leg strength. For marathon runners, repeats should be about a mile. Long runs build endurance and, for marathon distance training, these runs should be 20 to 22 miles long. Lastly, days off and cross-training are important to help avoid injury (30).

In the September 2008 issue, the “Mind + Body” section contains an article called “Think Fast: Yes, You Need to Train Your Legs, but It’s Really Your Brain That Dictates Your Pace.” Perfecting one’s pacing - trying to run a certain distance in the shortest amount of time possible without falling apart- is “a tricky art” (Fitzgerald, *Think* 39). That’s because “even when we watch the clock, we run largely by feel: we decide whether to speed up, slow down or hold steady based on how much discomfort we *think* we can handle” (ibid.). Research done in South Africa and cited in the article states that “your brain reads what’s going on in your organs, tissues, and cells while you’re running, and then uses that information to get into the right rhythm at the start of a run and then fine-tune your pace as you go” (40). The article goes on to say that “Learning how these internal sensors work is the key to becoming a better pacer and stronger runner” (ibid.). H.V. Ulmer, a German researcher, is quoted as saying that when you begin a run “your brain works backward from there, calculating how hard you can push yourself and still complete your workout” (ibid.). This phenomenon is known as anticipatory regulation, which means that “your brain anticipates what you are doing and anticipates when you are going to be done. You slow down not because you are hot, but in anticipation of

being hot” (ibid.). In one study, cyclists performing time trials in hotter temperatures dropped their pace before their core body temperature rose to a high level. How can runners overcome this anticipatory response? “By mimicking race conditions by running a certain pace over a certain distance, your brain will begin to learn that you are capable of running past fatigue while your body will come to experience fatigue less, sending less of a signal to your brain to slow down” (ibid.). This is because the mind is conditionable, like any other body part. Thus, according to the article, repeated negative split training, or accustomizing oneself to running the second half of a run faster than the first will teach the mind that, when the body is tired, this is not the time to slow down, but rather to speed up (ibid.).

This conflation of disciplined and “soft” approaches to running seen in the training articles tells runners that they the need to learn to tolerate pain yet develop a training plan that will allow for rest and recovery. “The person who knows that suffering is coming, who expects it and embraces it, will do better than someone who’s scared of it” (Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 124) is complemented by advice to train “at or above your lactate threshold” - to “feel the burn” (Eyestone 30). It is the mind, according to the articles, that carries one forward in these difficult sections of a race or run. It is the mind that must be taught “to cope with the discomfort and develop confidence that [one] can handle pain” (Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 124). This is because “pain is a fundamental part of the process. It’s part of the reason you go out there. You want to feel your lungs burn a little, to feel your quadriceps get fatigued. It’s part of feeling that you’re alive out there on a run” (ibid.). Running, for many runners, “represents a turning away from society’s obsession with numbing pain or medicating every discomfort,” and a

dissatisfaction with and refusal to endorse an “anestheticized way of living”

(Aschwanden, *Why Do We Suffer?* 125).

By contrast, however, many of the training articles offer “shortcut” methods to ultimate fitness. Instead of doing a 20-mile run, *Runner’s World* claims that a runner can get by on fewer miles with more intensity (Fitzgerald, *Take* 25-28). The fact that more intensity might actually be more painful than long, slow, mileage notwithstanding, it is the long, slow mileage that really puts the mind to work and forces the runner to find ways of escaping boredom and monotony. In short, it is the long slow mileage that has the greatest chance of helping the runner enter the realm of the spiritual, of allowing them, as Heelas would define it, to “delv[e] within oneself to experience the primary source of the sacred, namely that which emanates from the...depths of life in the here-and-now” (5). So, on the one hand, there is a stoic approach to disciplining the mind to ascetically tolerate pain, and, on the other, an emphasis on softening one’s physical training so as to avoid injury, and boredom: two things which a well-trained mind should be able to handle.

Personal Stories

The personal stories category consists of two types of articles, those in the first person, namely monthly columns, and those in the third person, namely cover stories that elaborate upon a runner’s story and focus on certain themes. Most of the other articles in *Runner’s World* magazine are written in the second person, i.e. addressing the runner (as discussed in the foregoing), or are speaking in the third person about runners in general. The personal stories, however, all speak about one runner, or, in certain cases, one close group of runners. A very large amount of space could be devoted to detailing each of the

personal stories selected for review. However, for the purposes of this analysis, the articles shall be grouped according to three main themes: training the body like a machine, yet being careful to ensure to take care of it properly (and this includes allowing it certain decadent indulgences); the development of and belief in a runner's identity; and, lastly, the belief that running is something transcendental to mundane life. These three themes are sometimes brought out by first person accounts and sometimes by third person accounts of the personal story; in the latter case, it is the narrator who attempts to bring the reader toward a certain (preferred) reading of the text.

The October 2008 issue featured a cover story about Tom White, an Olympic level collegiate athlete who had settled down to become a doctor and cross-country coach in a small town in Colorado. He had injured his leg in a motorcycle accident in his twenties and was now suffering from a degenerative condition that was giving him pain. The pain worsened when he ran and was even starting to bother him when he walked (Barcott 92). It was after reading about Amy Palmiero-Winters, who had set a world record for the fastest marathon time for a U.S. amputee, that he first considered amputating his own leg so as not to experience the pain he had been experiencing for twenty years post-accident (93). The author, Bruce Barcott, describes in detail what Tom White, post-amputation, had to suffer through just to learn to walk again, let alone run. He was discouraged. The stump ached from the stress he placed on it when he tried to walk. "As a distance runner, he was used to training his body to move with exquisite efficiency, to think like a machine that turned calories into endurance and speed. Now he had to apply such thinking to every moment of his waking life" (Barcott 117).

Tom was used to seeing his body as a machine, but “he couldn’t imagine the carbon-fiber contraption ever feeling like a natural part of his body” as he told his wife “I don’t see how I’m ever going to run on this” (qtd. in Barcott 117). He rejected the idea that the leg was an extension of himself: “I felt like a man with a clunky hunk of metal on his leg. A clunk of metal that pinched and hurt” (qtd. in *ibid.*). He met his hero, Amy Palmiero-Winters, who said that her prosthesis was very comfortable and that she did not notice it, thus inspiring him to continue trying (*ibid.*).

The narrator tells us that Tom White’s story “raises profound questions about identity, athletics and the human body” (95), thus asking the reader to shift any questions they themselves may have raised while reading the text to this one.

Having framed the scene, the narrator continues: after deciding to persevere because Tom “took his fears and stuffed them in a locker in the far corner of his mind,” knowing that “if he was going to get through this, had had to stay up, focus, and be positive” (Barcott 96). He taught himself to run again, very slowly. He first started with “just two minutes...[which at least] wasn’t walking. And it didn’t hurt. And he couldn’t keep the words from racing through his head: *I can run!*” (118). He kept running, adding 30 seconds to his total time every day. After several months of struggle, the path ahead was starting to open up. Tom White, once able to do a 4:02 mile, trained his body through very hard work to at least be able to run again. He learned to tolerate the discomfort of his prosthesis and learned to use his stump and it as one unit. In so doing, his prosthesis became an extension of his body, a replacement part for a highly functional machine. “By mid-June, Tom was running for 14-minutes at a stretch. Then, almost overnight, his stump lost a huge amount of sensitivity - as if his

nerves had been set to volume 8, then turned down to 3” (123). Tom was a machine that had become highly functional (again) through effort and hard work and determination, and through learning to withstand pain. “The pain never went away. Every step had hurt. But Tom had trained himself to ignore it, to make it white noise” (98). Under the guidance of Palmiero-Winters, White purchased a prosthesis more suited for “pavement pounding,” which he found to be a much better fit, or a better replacement part if you will (116).

When he ran his first race again, a 10K, he planned on walking some of it, and running some of it. But something took over. “And that’s when he felt it- a little bit of that old rhythm” (Barcott 124).

When he was a kid, before the motorcycle accident, the rhythm of running was his biological clock. Back in those days, if he ran long enough, with proper mind frame and respect, he could slip into the rhythm and transform his body’s movement into a mystical experience. It was like a scene from childhood, a sense-memory of which he caught just a trace up there among the edelweiss. That’s what he missed the most, all those years. That’s what he gave his left leg to get back again. (Barcott 124)

At the end of the race, as he embraced his family, he felt something else too: the collective nature of the racing experience. This involved not only of the euphoria of his own run, but the euphoria of all the runners who had pushed and persevered: of runners who now, post-race, “caught their breath, greeted their loved ones and checked their times” (Barcott 124). “He savoured the world opening up around him and the feeling, once again, of being whole” (ibid.). Running, in Tom White’s story, becomes something

transcendent, something that brings people together, “put[ing] inner life to work...[and] cultivat[ing] what it means to be alive” (Heelas 3).

In the March 2009 issue, the cover story is about Matt Long, an Ironman triathlete, firefighter, and Ground Zero survivor, who, during a transit strike in NYC, had ridden his bike to work one morning only to be hit by a chartered bus. He was so badly battered that he lost 48 units of blood, or six times the amount in a body of his size.¹¹ His pelvis was broken, as were all of the arteries surrounding it, and his colon was so damaged that he had to wear a colostomy bag. He also had to relearn to walk. There was a titanium rod running through his left leg, supporting his shattered tibia and femur. Metal screws kept the bones of his left foot in place, and, resultingly, his right leg was two inches shorter than it had been before the accident, a side effect of his broken pelvis. His abdominal wall and right abductor muscle were basically dead, and he could raise his right shoulder no more than 90 degrees. However, it was his fitness that had saved him, as that “was what contributed to his survivability. His body was resilient enough to withstand such a metabolic insult” (Butler 91). For years, he felt sorry for himself and longed for his days of athleticism to which he had had to say goodbye. He shunned the word “disabled athlete,” but was searching for “a way to be Matty Long again” (95).

The article’s author tells the story of how Long ran the NYC Marathon, for the second time, this time as a “disabled athlete,” interspersing the history of Long’s recovery with a present tense telling of his trek through the course, of which “each minute...equates to 160 footfalls. The three gnarly hammer toes curving into the bottom of his left foot sustaining a total of 37,000 poundings” (Butler 96).

¹¹ Long was hooked up to a constant transfusion as kept bleeding.

Although “it is rare to see someone with such challenges to the body come back and try the marathon,” his sports physiologist says that Long “has a great attitude. He was an athlete before he came (to NYC) and he still is” (qtd. in Butler 106). This idea of being an athlete is what carried Matt through the rigorous training sessions, which he had to reduce because he had torn his right labrum, the ring of cartilage around the hip socket, due to the position of his pelvis when he ran. He also came to accept himself as a “challenged athlete,” at first having anticipated starting the marathon with the 38,000 other runners (108). But, three weeks before the race, he changed his mind. While he had first been in the hospital recovering from his injuries, he received a letter from a physiotherapist who said she would be honoured to work with him and help him become a runner again, as she mainly worked with disabled athletes. Long says that “he was pissed” but that he’s “come to accept the term ‘disabled athlete’” (qtd. in *ibid.*). He knows that he can’t do the things he once used to do, but, if he finishes the race (the NYC Marathon), he would “be an athlete again” (qtd. in Butler 105). He had initially decided to run the marathon to prove to everyone that he “was OK again,” but soon realized that running a marathon “wouldn’t make him whole again” (108). “His first step out of bed would still be excruciating each morning as if he were stepping on broken glass.” And he would still “come home each night to stacks of hospital bills” (*ibid.*). But as he approached the finish line, he was steps away from being connected to that person again: his former athlete self, who would run 8 miles of an 18 mile run at a 6 minutes/mile pace (89).

Another personal story chronicling not only runners of the NYC Marathon but also the importance and omnipresence in one’s life of an athletic identity is “The

Professor and Mr. Laid-Back Run into Trouble” in the November 2008 issue. This article, written in the first person by Josh Dean, tells the story of how he had promised his father he would run the next NYC Marathon with him. His father is, above all else (a history professor, a loving family man, and an avid traveller) a runner. “For 30 years he has punished his body again and again, with no reward beyond a bagful of finisher’s medals, a wall of photos, and some silly trophies” (Dean 93). “Surely, there’s some pleasure in it. It’s just too difficult to imagine otherwise” says Josh (ibid.). Wanting to understand his father, and to better connect with him, and romanced by the marathon-mania in NYC one year, he asked his father if they could run the race together the following year (ibid.).

Josh Dean chronicles the history of his father’s running, which had started around the time of his divorce from Josh’s mother. Running “helped [him to] clear his head and to realize that as bad as things seemed, he had much to be happy about” (94). His hobby quickly turned from a simple diversion into a passion, an ephemeral break from the mundane. He has run 70 marathons and ultramarathons, often placing in his age group, running at least four times a week every week without fail, and having the same innocent joyous reaction every time he crosses the finish line of a race, as if it were the first time. When they met up for an 18-mile training run, his father told him he wasn’t looking forward to it. “Of course you are, [Josh] thought to [himself]. You’re a runner! I mean, all these years, you just keep doing it. For me, it’s become an obligation. I never look forward to it” (96). David, however, has trouble explaining why he runs, except to say that “I have to...it’s like a job...I love to eat and I love to drink. I have a gargantuan appetite and I love to drink beer” (qtd. in ibid).

The father and son had done one training run together - of 18-miles - and, during the marathon, every step after that mark was “unchartered territory” for Josh, “every inch of [his] legs feeling like it was being pounded with a meat tenderizer” (Dean 98); but, as the miles increased, the running became easier. Around mile 23, Josh wanted to speed up; but his father, recovering from an injury, couldn’t. For the last mile, there was no pain. Josh “felt elated...began to choke up, and [his] arms felt al little tingly” (ibid.). Months later, Josh was still running, even though “not far or with the same sort of regularity;” and, when asked to give a reason, he can’t quite come up with one (122).

The February 2009 issue features an article called “Running from Trouble: Homeless Addicts Take on the Half-Marathon.” They called her “Runner Girl” (Chillag 77). She ran through the bad neighbourhood of Philadelphia almost daily and passed the homeless shelter on her morning route. They soon became friends - her and this group of men - and she asked herself “Why do I get to be the runner, and they have to be the homeless guys? Why can’t we all be runners?” (qtd. in ibid.) Skilled in public relations, she founded Back On My Feet, a not-for-profit organization that helps homeless people get their lives on track and secure employment, housing, and continued education if they prove themselves reliable enough to come to training sessions and run the Philadelphia Half-Marathon.

Runner Girl’s name is Anne Mahlum. She was no novice to the idea that running could help someone. Her father had gambled away their family’s house and savings, and, when he first told her that he had a problem, she laced up her running shoes and went for a run. She had run for sports before, but this was the first time that running meant something. “Keep moving,” she told herself, “Just keep moving” (qtd. in Chillag

80). She ran every day after that, and it became her “daily therapy” (81). It is important to note that it is the narrator who uses this term and not Anne herself, thus helping to frame the theme of running as something that transcends, and that can offer a relief from reality, no matter how negative or mundane. On her own website for Back On My Feet, Anne has written:

Running feeds my mind and soul; it is my daily therapy and it is because of running that I can fly. Each step reminds me that there are no unreachable dreams just like there are no unsolvable problems. There is just our limited perception of what is possible and only I get the luxury of determining what's possible for me. (Back On My Feet)

Anne also says that “throughout the years running has not only been [her] best friend, but it has taught [her] some of the greatest life lessons...Life is about choosing different roads and [her] program teaches the importance of choosing the right roads lined with opportunity, hope and happiness” (Back On My Feet). The narrator has done a good job of relaying her exact sentiments.

She saw a lot of her father in these homeless men, who start each run with a huddle and a prayer, to thank the Lord for “this morning and this run...and for keeping [them] safe on this run” (qtd. in Chillag 78). The article chronicles individual aspects of each of their stories. Abdullah Dorch is a recovering crack addict who was once an aspiring musician. He said he was never really a criminal, but had to commit crimes to get drug money. He was in denial about that aspect of his identity and spent years of his life misleading people, even loved ones. But running, he has found, “is one thing you can't con. You can't flash a smile at a distance race and tell it you did the long runs

when you didn't. You can't convince a marathon you've trained: if you haven't, it will reveal your lie" (qtd. in Chillag 81).

Just as Anne had wished, the homeless guys soon became runners. They learned the lingo, and one of them quoted Lance Armstrong's "Pain is temporary. Quitting is forever," showing his novice nature as he referred to him as Neil Armstrong (Solomon qtd. in Chillag 80). They still call every distance race, including their half-marathon, a "marathon;" and, Mike Solomon, who had become a crack addict after his wife died of alcoholism, yells out in the middle of a fast portion of the half-marathon: "It's like I'm doing a buttllick," meaning "Fartlek" (a Swedish word for "speed-play" in which runners take turns setting the pace for every mile) (81). When they first began running, they could not comprehend the distances: "Two miles?!? We're running two miles?!!" (qtd. in Chillag 80). Now they were about to run 13.1 miles. As Dorch gets ready at the starting line, urinating into a cup for the second time in five minutes, he knows that "he's a runner now...no matter what happens next." A runner who "knows about nipple chaffing and black toenails" (Chillag 82). And, after he finishes, he realizes that all groups have their own vocabulary. When he says at a Narcotics Anonymous meeting that he's been sober for a year, he is understood and all the recovering addicts in the room respect him for that. When he tells another runner that he ran a half-marathon, he "often gets a hug as a response" (Chillag 99).

A year ago, when the Lord put me on a path, I didn't think it was actually going to be a road. What I love about running is not knowing where it's going, not knowing how it's going to end. I'm kind of a thrill seeker and that

used to get me into trouble before, but not anymore. I no longer have to worry about looking over my shoulder. (Dorch, qtd. in Chillag 96)

Anne believes firmly in the power of running to change people and situations. In her eyes, running is a “test for living. There are all these metaphors. You’ve got to move forward, one step at time. You can see progress” (qtd. in Chillag 82). She believes in the dedication it takes to “make it in a job can be witnessed in training” (qtd. in *ibid.*). And so, once a member demonstrates a commitment in running, Back On My Feet helps get him educational scholarships and job training. Recently, the organization began to make housing assistance grants to get members into a home of their own. But, Mahlum adds: “Whether it’s dealing with a new job, family, or living on your own, you’re going to have to take that first step. There are no shortcuts. Running can help you understand that” (qtd. in Chillag 99). A lot of the program members still train. Some have finished a marathon; some have a large number of work and family obligations now, but “still hit the road whenever [they] can. Running, it seems, has become a part of [them]” (*ibid.*).

Christie Aschwanden, author of the previously discussed “Why Do We Suffer?”, also detailed her friend’s attempt to finish The Wasatch Front 100 Ultramarathon. Greg Hanscom is her “suffer buddy” (Aschwanden, *Flight* 78). This is her term for someone with whom she has withstood gruelling training sessions and races, and with whom she has embraced suffering, while at the same time not feeling alone in it. They met during a cross-country ski marathon, crossing the finish line inches from each other, both saying “man that was fun!” (78). Greg and she established a bond based on suffering because “to suffer is to feel alive” (*ibid.*). Together, “they push themselves harder than either of [them] can manage on their own. It works that way when [they] run too...any fool can

push themselves to pain, but it takes a suffer buddy by your side, breathing down your neck to find out what you're really capable of" (ibid.). In this ultramarathon, Christie accompanies him for 30 miles as a pacer, whose role is to run beside him and ensure that he does not quit. What pushes him through to the final stage of the race is the pair of bumble bee tights that she makes him wear which, because of previous races in which he was successful when he wore them, he believes are good luck. Christie and Greg both "knew the only power the bumblebee tights possessed was from the two legs inside them, but what is any good luck charm, really, but a way to channel your own inner strength" (83)? Even though Greg never made it to the finish line (he came to the last aid station just seconds after the cut-off time), the author "had come to believe that a friendship and a pair of tights could make anything possible, even a feat as absurd" as running an ultramarathon with little training in distances that long except for "a love of suffering" (84).

This love of suffering is further discussed in one of the January 2009 issue's personal stories called "Twilight of the Mountain God." It is a story about Rick Trujillo, a lesser known trail running champion, who has won such prestigious races as the Hardrock 100 Endurance Run, an ultramarathon that traverses the southern San Juan Mountains in Northwestern Colorado. He has become a sort of legend among ultramarathoners, who claim that his training method is the "Dumb Dog," which involves running as fast as he can up a mountain until he collapses, and that he eats nothing but Oreos and Mountain Dew. They call him a "Zen master, or idiot savant of mountain trails" (Friedman 89).

Trujillo's philosophy on gear and training contradicts most of what we find elsewhere in *Runner's World* magazine. He doesn't care about accessories, or even for shoes. When he finds a pair that fits, he buys as many pairs as the store has in stock. He says that "people who focus on mileage and time are idiots; people who race for records and fame are greedy, self-centered idiots" (Friedman 89). He doesn't consider it a huge achievement that he has won the Pike's Peak marathon, a race that climbs 7,500 feet over the first 13.32 miles, five times, or the fact that he set the speed mark for ascending Colorado's fifty-four 14,000 foot peaks at age 47. Trujillo doesn't care for corporate sponsors, or prizes, romanticizing instead the time when mountain running was "simply a matter of going higher, and harder, and faster than anyone else...and of developing "an appreciation for pain and its transformative power" (qtd. in Friedman 91). "Getting outdoors and testing yourself against the elements - that was the point" (113). And so are "the joys of pain and the pleasure of running alone in an uncaring landscape [that will] wipe you out in an instant if you give it a chance. That's part of the appeal...not knowing if you will come back" (Trujillo qtd. in Friedman 113). As he got older and became plagued with a back injury from a mining accident, he dropped everything to move back home to the mountains because "running relives stress in [his] life- physical, emotional, all kinds of stress." He refused jobs that took him away from the mountains. Basically, he stayed away from hot and flat places because "the mountains were his home. Running in them would be his salvation" (93). Salvation is not something he believes is possible for all of the "sue-happy lawyers and fancy-food eating pansies and Gore Tex-wearing clock-watching, mileage-counting joggers running in simple, easy circle. Easy isn't the road to happiness" (qtd. in Friedman 119).

The other January 2009 personal story couldn't be a bigger contrast from Rick Trujillo's. It is another first-person narrative, much like that of Josh Dean, speaking of a friendship founded on running. When Sara, the narrator, first met Clare in California, she was intimidated by Clare's super-muscular quadricep muscles and the fact that she had just completed an Ironman distance triathlon. They began running together, and Sara found that Clare pushed her to run faster than she normally ran, despite the fact that they talked the entire way through their run. Together, they signed up for what Clare promised was a "downhill marathon," with which they planned to qualify for Boston, and after which they planned to go to a spa. Clare "has a credo: 'Pamper! Pamper! Pamper!' [for] she does not believe in running a marathon if there is no spa involved afterwards" (Corbett 76). For Clare, "the body performs, the body gets its payback [sic]" (qtd. in *ibid.*). In preparation for the Utah marathon, the "downhill marathon," they went to a massage therapist weekly because "[their] glutes had earned it, after all" (*ibid.*).

Sara says that "any friendship that is based on running is, in essence, about accrual - of time, of miles, of intimacy built over a lot of small steps forward...it can seem merely enjoyable, until you need it for more" (Corbett 77). She recounts the day when her mother was killed in an accident. Clare came to see her in New England, in her depressed near-catatonic state, to literally "peel her off the floor." Clare put running shoes on her and gently pulled her out the door, "not needing to say a word about why it was necessary to go out and breathe" (*ibid.*). Going out and breathing is a metonym for running. Sara speaks without going into great detail about how the years that have passed between her and Clare have not separated them. They live in opposite ends of the

country and their running is less frequent, but they still call each other after every run, and, sometimes, with an ear piece, even during a run (ibid.).

Among other things, Sara credits Clare for teaching her optimism because “if you want to see it this way, life is something like a downhill marathon. You have to believe it’s easier than it is. Or at least it helps to have a friend who views it that way” (Corbett 77). Reflecting on the fact that most of her close friendships in life were based on running, she says that “women who run...configure and reconfigure like constellations moving across the sky” (78). She adds that “maybe it’s that we’re all wrapped up in the same cosmic downhill-but-not-really marathon and more than anything, we just don’t feel like doing it alone” (ibid.).

Several other personal stories are worthy of mention. “Separate Ways” (from the June 2008 issue) tells the story of a married couple, the husband being a runner and the wife a non-runner. As things grew distant between them (“empty and boring,” as she claimed), she too began running, “her workouts [soon becoming] more and more intense” (Cohen 76). “The worse things grew between us, the greater the effort Julie put into her workouts, saying ‘I need to get my run in’” (ibid.). Adam felt as if he were hearing his own voice in his head as “running was the only anchor [he] had left,” and he was clinging to it for dear life (ibid.). But “though [their] lives were moving in parallel, [they]’d lost what had once connected them” (ibid.). He accompanies her to her first race, a 5K she finishes in just under 30 minutes and, as “she drove for the line, racing to cross...[he] could feel his whole body tense, his heart quicken, like it was [him] out there” (ibid.). He “didn’t cry, but could feel tears for these days when, no matter how

little they shared,” they “still found new common ground.” Julie “was a runner, just like [him]” (ibid.).

The September 2008 issue’s “No Need for Speed” column by John Bingham features an article called “Gold Medal Moments: You Don’t Have to Be an Elite Athlete to Understand the Olympic Spirit.” In it, Bingham recalls hearing a speech by Frank Shorter, winner of the Gold Medal in the 1972 Olympic Marathon. When asked how his victory felt, Shorter replied that it feels the same for everybody: that “gold-medal performances happen at every level of running” (qtd. in Bingham, *Gold* 52). Bingham gives the example of the middle-aged mother who tries to get back into shape and balance her personal needs to do this with those of her obligations to her family (just like elites must do), and, in so doing, runs a sub 5-hour marathon, of the overweight teenager who finishes his first 5K, and of the middle-aged smoker who, warned by his doctor that he must change, must now find the courage to stick to a healthier lifestyle. Bingham says that “ours is a wonderful sport. Unlike nearly every other athletic endeavour, running brings every ability level- fast or slow- together to share in one common goal- to stand on the starting line and test our strength, our courage, and our spirit” (ibid.). Furthermore, “if we face every obstacle, overcome our fears, and push our limitations, we can emerge victorious. And then, like Frank Shorter, can too can have our gold-medal moments” (ibid.).

In his January 2009 column, Bingham writes about becoming a runner, using the analogy of the Internet revolution. At some point, e-mail hit a tipping point - it went from novelty to necessity, became something we could not imagine ourselves *not* doing. It was like that with running for Bingham, once a 43-year old overweight ex-smoker who

could not identify himself as a runner because “runners were thin...and enjoyed every run,” two things that did not apply to him (Bingham, *Up and Over* 52). When he started to participate in races, he noticed a slight shift in his attitude. He met a huge collective of like-minded people, who had the same concerns about pacing, nutrition, and accessories. Rather than “feeling apart from the running community, [he] began to feel a part of the running community” (ibid.).

“That was the tipping point.” He realized that the only requirement for being part of this community was to run. He “didn’t have to run fast,” and he “didn’t have to run great.” He “just had to run.” “And that’s when running became a part of who [he was], not just something that [he does]” (Bingham, *Up and Over* 52). The “tipping point,” the point at which running becomes inseparable from one’s routine life, is different for everyone. It “may be the first time you log 25 miles in a week, or when you start to look forward to your long group run on Saturday. Or when, after returning from a run, you realize you did not once look at your watch” (ibid.). He encourages his readers, no matter how unmotivated they may be that their “tipping point is out there...push through tough times and you’ll (undoubtedly) find it” (ibid.).

For Bingham, running also serves as stability. In his December column “Point to Point: Reflections on Running from One Journey to the Next,” he says that, at 60, his relationship to running has changed. He is no longer interested in the latest apparel or in beating his previous race times. Rather, he relies on running as an anchorage because “no matter where [he is] or who [he is] with, [he] can get out and run” (Bingham, *Point* 56). He is less naive about life too, and uses the metaphor of running to relay this:

I don't believe anymore that life is an out-and-back course. I don't believe that I've circled the cone and am headed to the finish. I don't believe that what was hard will be easy in the second half. I believe now that life is a point-to-point course and that we don't have any idea what that distance is. We don't know how far we'll have to go or what we'll find around the corner. We don't know if the next few miles or years will be flat and fast or rolling. And, for sure, we don't know where the finish line will be. (Bingham, *Point* 56)

The March 2009 issue of *Runner's World* features "Life & Times," a column by Cabel Daniloff in which he writes about, in this particular case anyway, his recovery from alcoholism over a decade ago. Since then, he's been haunted "by who [he] used to be- [and] the people [he's] wronged;" and, "on the days [he doesn't] run, it's worse [sic]" (Daniloff 48). He finds his sole salvation in running. "I don't know whether I'll ever fully calm the waters of my past, but the steady drumbeat of my feet on the ground and my arms sawing through the rain help. For an hour at a time, I'm in a place where I can forgive myself" (ibid.). Running in the rain, Daniloff does not feel alone. He "spies another runner, head down, footfalls splashing....Both of them on their own, drenched, chasing things that perhaps can never be caught. No longer [is he] running from [his] demons, but running to look them in the eye" (ibid.).

The personal stories offer examples of the potential of running to liberate the runner from the mundane, with running also serving as a form of "collective experience" that transcends superficiality and gives people an insight into something deeper than material reality. Running is something integral to the sense of self-worth and overall

sense of self that the athlete would go to great lengths to preserve. It is the reason why the runners in the personal stories persevered the way that they did. Tom White cut off his leg, and then suffered through the agony of learning to run again, in order to be able to “slip into the rhythm and transform his body’s movement into a mystical experience” (Barcott 124). And, Matt Long endured “three gnarly hammer toes curving into the bottom of his left foot sustaining a total of 37,000 poundings” just to be able to cross a marathon finish line. Not in record time at all, but merely finishing it meant he could “be an athlete again,” and thus “be Matty Long” again (Butler 96).

For those athletes who have not lost the ability to run and thus do not need to struggle to get it back, there is the conscious knowledge that they must keep doing what they are doing without being able to give anyone a reason, except for, as Tom White says, “the feeling of being whole” (Barcott 124). Running becomes so fused with the identity of the runner in these stories that it becomes part of the everyday lifestyle choices that he or she makes (Giddens 81); however, as (almost) everyday as it is, running offers the runner a glimpse into something else. For Anne Mahlum, who founded Back on My Feet to help the homeless men of Philadelphia, running is a metaphor for life because “there are no shortcuts- running can help you understand that” (qtd. in Chillag 99). It is a metaphor for success, and she believes that the same dedication needed to “make it in a job can be witnessed in training” (ibid.).

As we have seen in the stories, running at once brings people together: fathers with sons, ex-wives with ex-husbands, and a recovering alcoholic with the demons of his past. However, running can also serve to isolate someone from other people, should that be what they choose. Rick Trujillo is such a person, and his story that stands as an

antithesis to the accessories review articles and nutritional and training advice offered by *Runner's World*: “easy isn’t the road to happiness” (qtd. in Friedman 119). But despite this iconoclastic view of running, Trujilo still gets the same thing from running all of the other runners featured in the personal stories get: “salvation” (93).

In sum, running forges friendships that transcend time, or familial obligations, as in the case of Sara and Clare, who train hard, but believe in the pampering, the more covertly consumerist, aspect of the “wellness” industry criticized by Carrette and King (1-29) and written about by Heelas (1-22). Unlike Tom White, who saw his body as a well-functioning machine, Sara and Clare see their bodies as productive and performing, yet fragile enough to warrant special care and attention. They may never experience self-transcendence by pushing past the physical boundaries of what they think their bodies are capable of, of what bodies are indeed capable of, as presented in the case with Sri Chinmoy’s runners. But they will most certainly see running as something transcendent to the mundane: a metaphor for the life they prefer to live in good company, a hard-yet seemingly easy life (“downhill yet not really marathon”) that friendship somehow makes easier and better (Corbett 78). And, just like running buddies turn you into a stronger runner, they can also make you into a stronger person; and running provides a chance “to go out and breathe” like nothing else can (77).

Chapter 3: The Track to Enlightenment?

For Stephen Hunt, the driving question is whether or not the New Age movements resist or conform to hegemonic capitalist culture (154). He concludes that, although there is a tendency towards the latter, one can find aspects of both in New Age spiritualities. According to Carrette and King, New Age modes towards spirituality, such as yoga, “have been recoded in terms of modern psychological discourse and the individualistic values of the western society from which the mindset originates,” thus losing any countercultural potential they may have had in the first place (117). What the authors are saying essentially is that New Age practices have been incorporated into capitalist ideology and are used to disseminate that ideology.

This thesis did not stem from the claim that running is necessarily a New Age pursuit that has been commodified by the media in which it is disseminated, in this case the “consumer capital” of *Runner’s World* magazine. Rather, it stemmed from the belief that running has the potential to offer spiritual liberation in keeping with the way New Age spirituality has been defined by Paul Heelas, namely as that which allows one to experience life in the here-and-now and as that which liberates one from the mundane (5). The inquiry of this thesis was inspired by the reasons given for partaking in New Age endeavours by the participants in Heelas and Woodhead’s Kendall project: most notably, the foremost reason, “health and fitness,” and the third-ranking one, “stress relief” (Heelas and Woodhead 91; Heelas 141-2). Seeing that these two reasons, along with many others listed (such as “time out of daily routines,” “to meet like-minded people,” etc.) were also reasons for people to embark upon a fitness regimen, this thesis asked the question of whether it is possible that other fitness pursuits could also lead to

the seeking and finding of “spiritual growth,” as was the second most popular reason for exploring New Age avenues given by those in the Kendall project study (ibid.). In essence, the answer was already known to be “yes,” for if yoga, which has been “detached from the culturally-specific belief systems of Asia” (Carrette and King 117), could still offer, according to Heelas and Woodhead’s ethnography anyway, the hope for “spiritual growth,” then why could not running - also a corporeal endeavour involving a great deal of involvement of the mind - do the same? Unlike Heelas and Woodhead’s ethnography, the inquiry presented here offers no insight into the actual reasons why runners partake in running in the first place. Offered instead are two interrelated analyses: the study of a single, specialized publication, a type of “consumer capital,” with which runners invest the hopes of furthering their own cultural capital; and, an interrogation as to whether, according to this publication, running is seen as having the potential to offer any spiritual development. Of course, the type of cultural capital that the readership attempts to acquire through the reading of *Runner’s World* may vary. Without performing an ethnographic study of the readership, there is no way of ever knowing why runners around the world continue to buy and read the magazine. However, by looking at the types of articles presented to the reader, and the specific content these articles contain, there is a noticeable conflation of the different types of cultural capital referenced in the publication.

First, as demonstrated in the foregoing analysis, *Runner’s World* places an emphasis on running ability itself: on improving speed, endurance, and strength, as is presented most notably in the training articles. Running ability then becomes the type of cultural capital that the publication promises to aid the runner in acquiring. One might

argue that running ability serves as type of capital because of the reverence with which athletes are regarded in society, and the general belief that they achieve better health and longevity than the average population. However, this explanation is problematized by the fact that, in postmodern society, fitness and athletic prowess have been conflated with a certain aesthetic, namely the “gym body” (Kolata 230; Dworkin 103-105; Dworkin and Wachs 2). The omnipresence of this “gym body,” not just in *Runner’s World* magazine, but in many other media not specific to the world of fitness, promises the runners not only the ability to increase their athletic potential, but also, indirectly, the acquisition of a certain physique, which has become semiotically inseparable from the idea of athletic performance itself.

This intertwining of athletic capital and aesthetic capital is further demonstrated in the nutrition articles. Diet and nutrition is simultaneously presented as something which can aid the runner in running more efficiently and recovering faster, as well as that which can help him or her in his or her weight loss efforts. The weight loss advice is presented in a runner-specific way, i.e. in a way that the publication claims will help the runner both lose weight and maintain the intensity of his or her workouts without having to worry about achieving too high of a calorie deficit so as to lose muscle mass. The line between increased athletic performance and aesthetic betterment is thus blurred when the authors of the nutrition advice articles focus on the *runner* rather than on the *diēter*. The accessories review section similarly seems to offer the runner help in acquiring different types of cultural capital, namely better athletic performance and, at the same time, better fashion. Better athletic performance is promised through accessories that aid the running experience and take the gruelling pain away from running. However, when this promise

is critically analyzed, it is impossible not to consider that what is also being promoted is an aesthetic version of running, a running that is fashionable and affiliated with brand names. Good style and a lean physique both serve as types of cultural capital because, in the logic of capitalist aesthetic ideology, they allow one access to economic advancement and thus grant his or her voice more legitimacy (Murphy 147).

This thesis is in no way attempting to make the claim that the readers who read *Runner's World* are only searching to better their fashion and physique, or to attain and dress up a "gym body." Nor does this thesis deny the fact that most runners probably consult *Runner's World* to become better runners and to learn more about the community to which they belong. However, just as Carrette and King say about yoga, running has become "recoded in the terms of the individualist [capitalist and aesthetic] values of the...society" from whose ideology the magazine originates (117). Just as yoga has become "secularised, de-traditionalised and oriented exclusively towards the individual," so too has running become interwoven within the ideology of the fitness industry which is itself inseparable from the ideology and aesthetics of consumerist capitalism (ibid.).

Ideology, according to Stuart Hall's interpretation of Gramsci, does not tell people what to think, but it, rather, limits the range of thought that people may have. Messages are encoded in such a way so as to ensure their decoding will stay within a specific range (Hall, *Encoding* 136). However, the encoding itself takes place within the "closed circle" of ideology, which is self-supporting, thus making certain things seem self-evident and obvious because they function as a "given" in an equation that is otherwise unfounded. It is, therefore, neither the sender nor the receiver of any message that is guilty of either perpetuating or believing the ideological, but it is simply that both

the encoding and decoding of the message is, in the case of *Runner's World* anyway, conditional upon the “logic” of the ideology of capitalist aesthetics (Hall, *Rediscovery* 77–78). This ideological framework of capitalist aesthetics within which the magazine’s messages are encoded underscores an ascetic approach to diet and a hedonistic approach to fashion, fusing bodily regulation with bodily liberation, and thus becoming “part of the profound set of cultural contradictions within modern capitalism” (Turner, *Body* 39).

Sarah Franklin wrote about the limits of the “natural” body, and its usage of whatever resources, scientific and otherwise, are available to push these limits without transgressing them, to break records without breaking the rules of breaking records (by drug-taking, etc.) (S95-S106). The gear and nutrition sections of *Runner's World* magazine offer runners suggestions of what could aid them in extending the limits of their “natural” bodies, and, in so doing, make running easier. In the nutrition section, runners are given lists of foods that are good for them and, as was shown, these lists are accompanied by an explanation of the nutrients contained in the food and why they are important for runners. Often, what is presented is an alternative to something less fit for the runner and his or her lifestyle, which would thus inhibit him or her from extending nature as much as they could extend it.

The idea of the body having limits which are able to be surpassed through the use of technology can be linked to Industrial notions of the labouring body, which was conceived of as having the machine-like infinite power to produce (Rabinbach 2-5). This metaphor is retained in postmodern consumer conceptualizations of the running body, but it has been modified. In Tom White’s case, his prosthesis serves as an extension to the *perpetuum mobile* of his rigidly disciplined limbs, and, with proper

training, he was able to learn to use this prosthesis in harmony with the rest of his body. For Sara Corbett and her friend Clare, the body is a machine that performs and, in so doing, gets its payback, its time at the spa (Corbett 76). In the latter case, the regimented discipline required for marathon training and running is fused with the (liberational) culture of “subjective well-being” (Heelas 173; Heelas and Woodhead 171).

This fusion of regimentation and hedonism can be seen further in the “Training” section, which, on the one hand, urges runners to learn to control their bodies through their minds, thereby reaping the benefits of pain tolerance. On the other hand, it promotes a “soft” approach to running. Instead of insisting that running has to be intense and arduous, *Runner’s World* cautions its runners to progress in their training slowly, building up both speed and distance in small increments so as to avoid burning out (Galloway 28).

This softened approach to running stands in contrast to the examples of spiritual modes of running mentioned in the introductory chapter of this thesis. The Marathon Monks of Mount Hiei, for instance, are able to withstand pain for days upon days of running with very little food and water, let alone rest, entering into a trance-like state in which nothing matters but the motion of the present. Similarly, participants in Sri Chinmoy’s 3100 Self-Transcendence Run are able to focus only on and exist solely in the present because the end seems so far away that it cannot be conceptualized, and thus ceases to be part of the runners’ temporal reality.

Is it really necessary for running to be so painful in order for it to be a means to spiritual liberation or enlightenment? Not at all. That is not what this thesis is arguing. Rather, it is merely the case that there are many thematic fusions at play in the discourse

of *Runner's World* magazine which serve as examples of "the profound set of cultural contradictions within modern capitalism" (Turner, *Body* 39). There is a merging of running as a "body project" with diet and fashion as "body projects." In terms of the restriction/liberation binary, the former has the potential to be emblematic of both, while the latter two are, generally, restrictive and liberational in nature respectively. Running itself is at once offered as the regimented, disciplining undertaking of a machine-like body, and as the gentle, accessorized, and pampered pursuit of the body at leisure.

Beyond this contradiction, *Runner's World* also offers a subjective view of running. What then is running for the runner presented in *Runner's World*? Is it about "testing our strength, our courage and our spirit" (Bingham, *Gold* 52)? It seems that every runner featured in the personal story believes this in so far as their actions speak for this belief. Some others (Aschwanden and her friend Greg, the 100-mile ultramarathoner) might say that it is about the love of suffering, and others yet might say that it is about doing something that is "inseparable from who you are," and about "finding a collective of like-minded individuals who...have the same concerns...[and thus about] being a part of the running community" (Bingham, *Gold* 52). Running is equated with stability because "no matter where you are or who you are with, you can get out and run" (Bingham, *Up and Over* 56). Running is about knowing "you are not alone" (Daniloff 48). Even as you "sweat out your demons" and "are on your own," there is a community of runners, each fighting their own battle or running because they have to, because their very identity depends upon it (ibid.). It is important to note that the running community that is presented in *Runner's World* magazine remains a fictive community. When this thesis discusses runners' identities, it does so within the rhetorical restrictions

of the text in which this community exists and by which, as has been argued, this community is created.

In *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality*, André Comte-Sponville, after going into elaborate detail about what spirituality means to a variety of non-Western religions, such as Taoism, describes his own experience of spirituality, of living in the present moment:

Occasional moments of grace where we cease hoping for anything other than what we are doing (and this is no longer hope, it is will). Moments when nothing is missing, when there is nothing to either wish for or regret and when the question of possession is irrelevant (because having is replaced by being and doing)- this is what I call plenitude. To achieve it, one need not spend endless hours meditating...It can be in sex...when all that remains is pure pleasure. *Or in sports, the miracle of the second wind, when all that remains is the pure ability to run...* (164, emphasis added)

Perhaps what the runners in *Runner's World* experience may not be exactly these "moments of grace," but, despite its inseparability from a discourse of consumption and hedonism, the running that is presented in the magazine seems to offer something meaningful to the runner, at least in so far as conveyed by the sender of the message. As much as it is a "body project," running remains a "soul project" and a "mind project," and thus perhaps the runner, in consuming what capitalism has to offer, actually consumes capitalism for the sake of something more fulfilling. In this sense, the runner presented in *Runner's World* is not "buying wellbeing," as suggested by Carrette and King and argued against prolifically by Heelas, but "*finding* wellbeing," no matter how many running shoe stores and organic food stores he or she has to pass and stop into along the

way. What is seen in the pages of *Runner's World* is that most runs offer something that transcends the simple pursuit of bodily perfection, and what they offer motivates the runner to run - in all kinds of weather and with all kinds of gear. The latter may serve to keep running exciting, but, in the end, it is the running itself that keeps the runner lacing up their, albeit expensive, shoes.

If Carrette and King's argument, that New Age practices have been incorporated into capitalist ideology and are used to disseminate that ideology (117), is taken into account, then *Runner's World* magazine, in offering a more spiritual element in its personal stories section, seems merely to be sending a message encoded within the "closed circle" of its capitalist foundation. However, if one chooses to see this as an overly simplistic explanation, as Paul Heelas might, one would say that what *Runner's World* is offering is, in addition to a capitalist discourse of bodily regimentation and liberation, an alternative to or reprieve from the ascetic and hedonistic pressures of postmodern consumerism and thus a form of resistance to the very dogma that it is enacting.

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