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TRAINER MANIA

by
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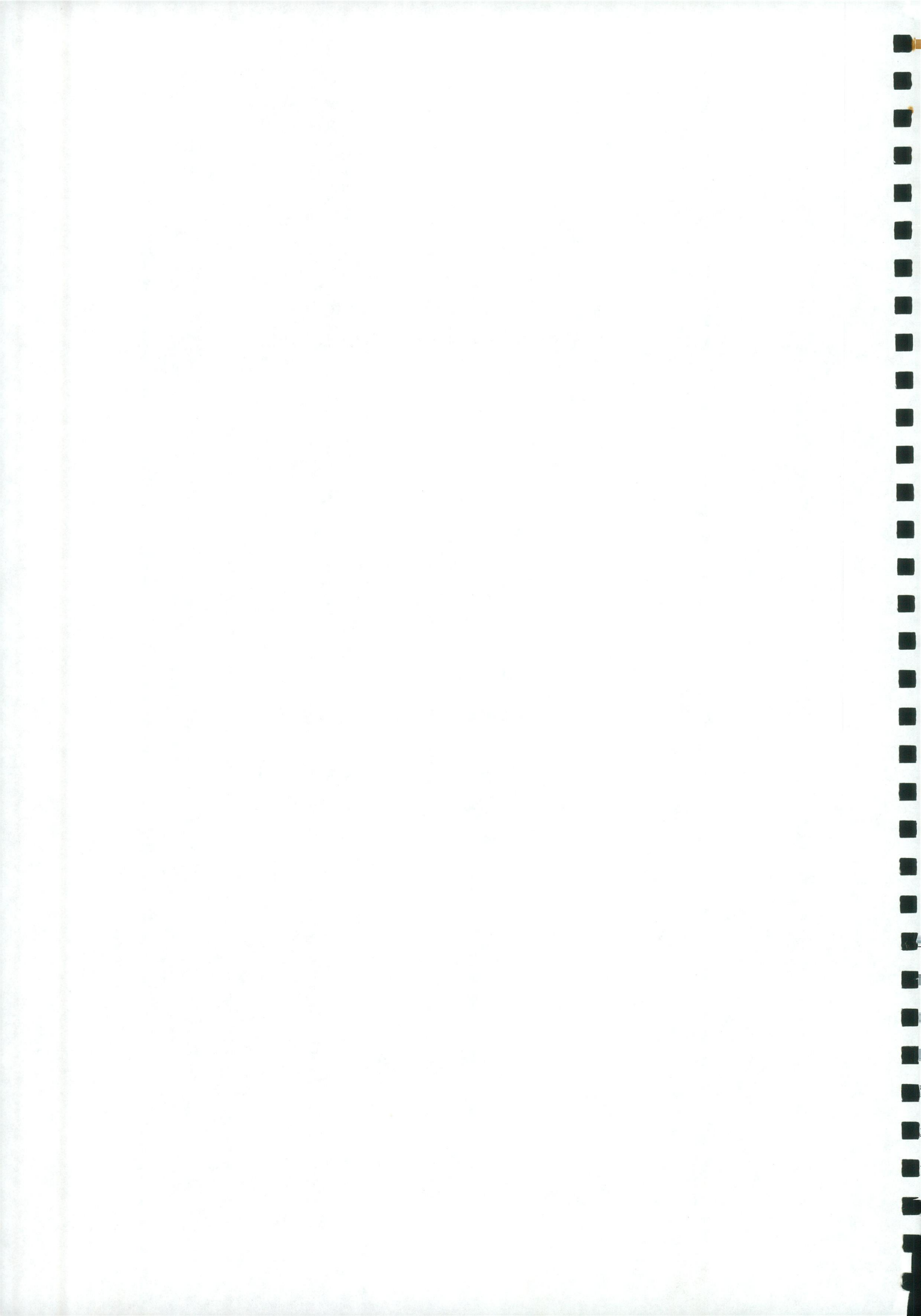
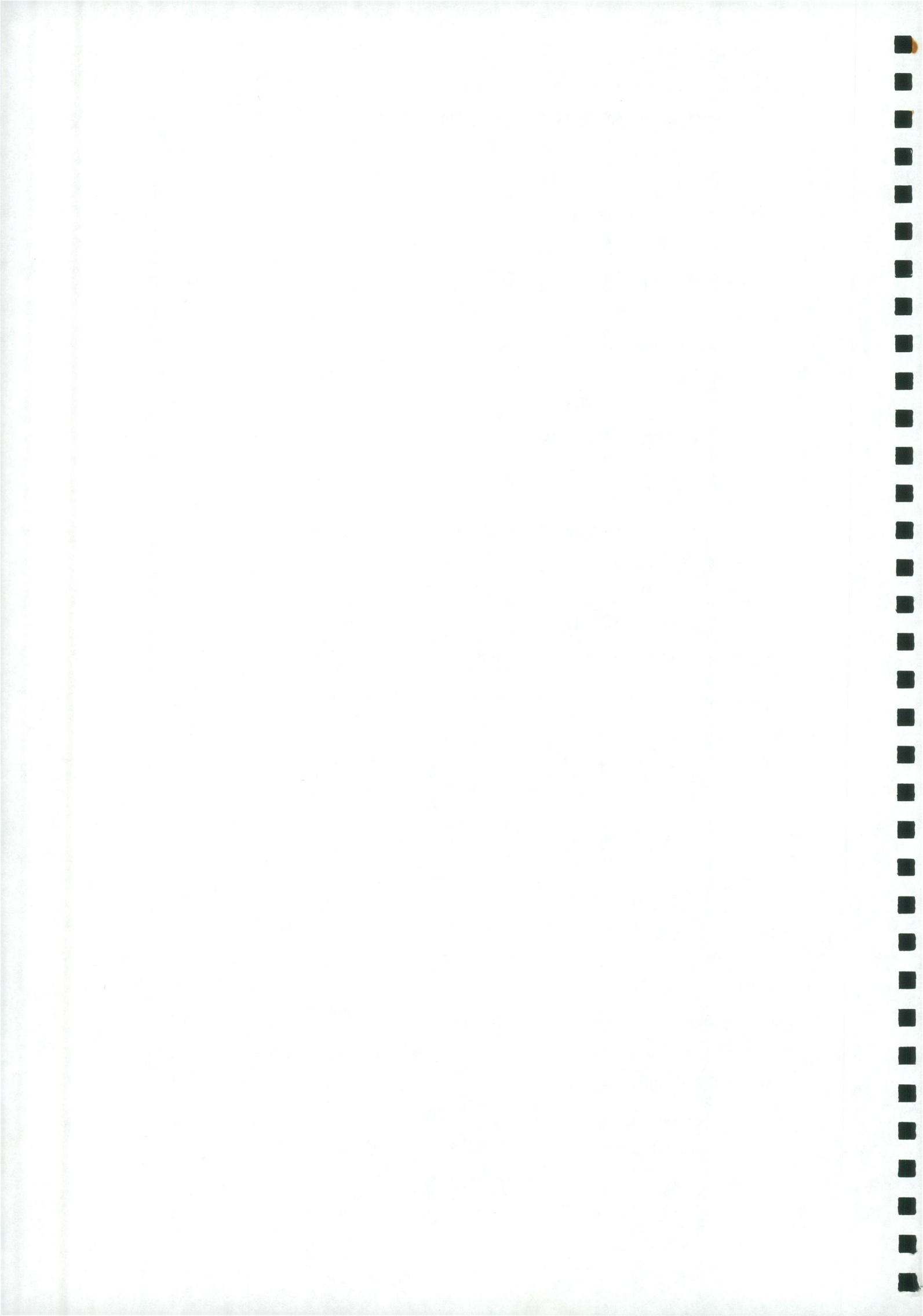


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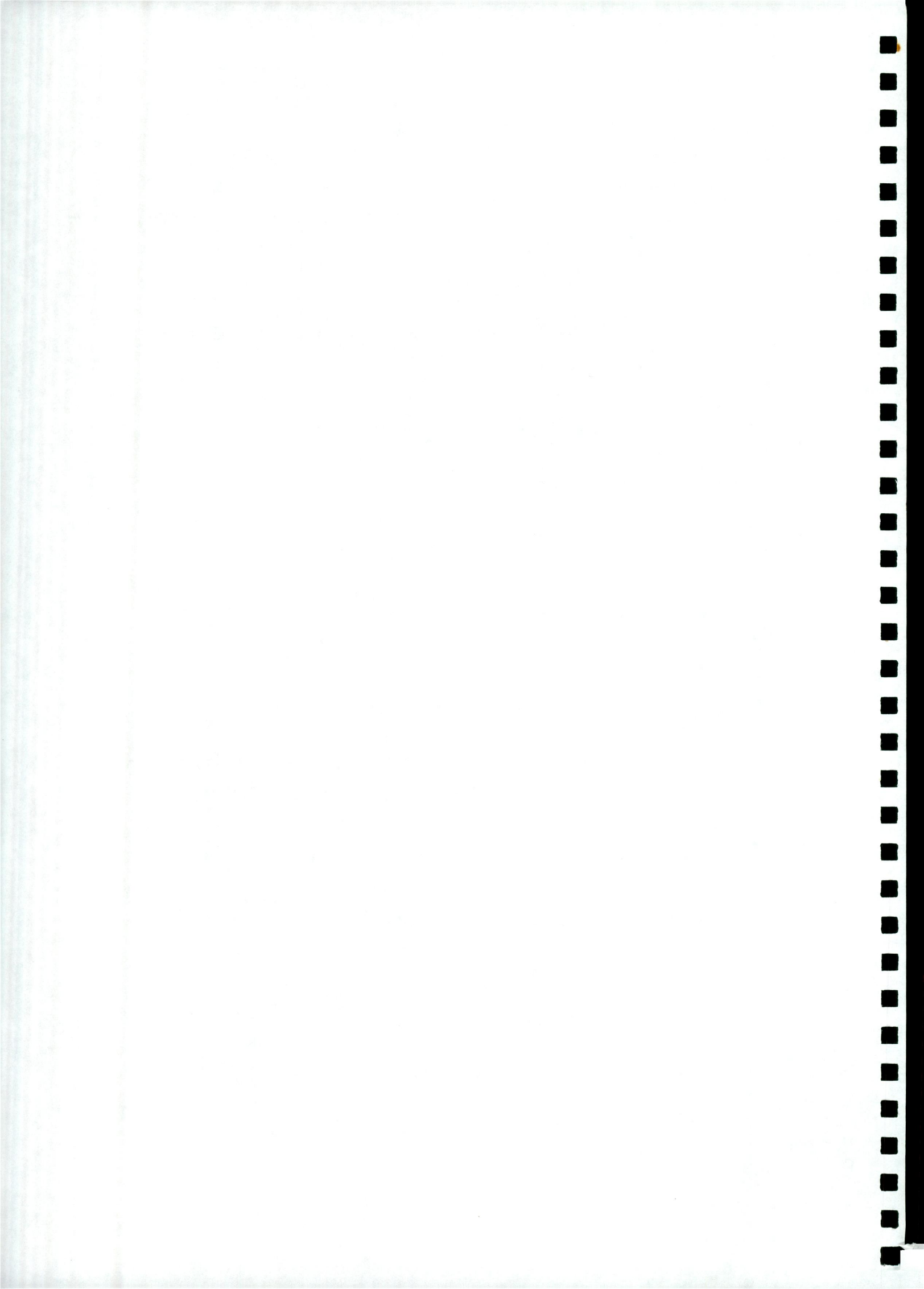
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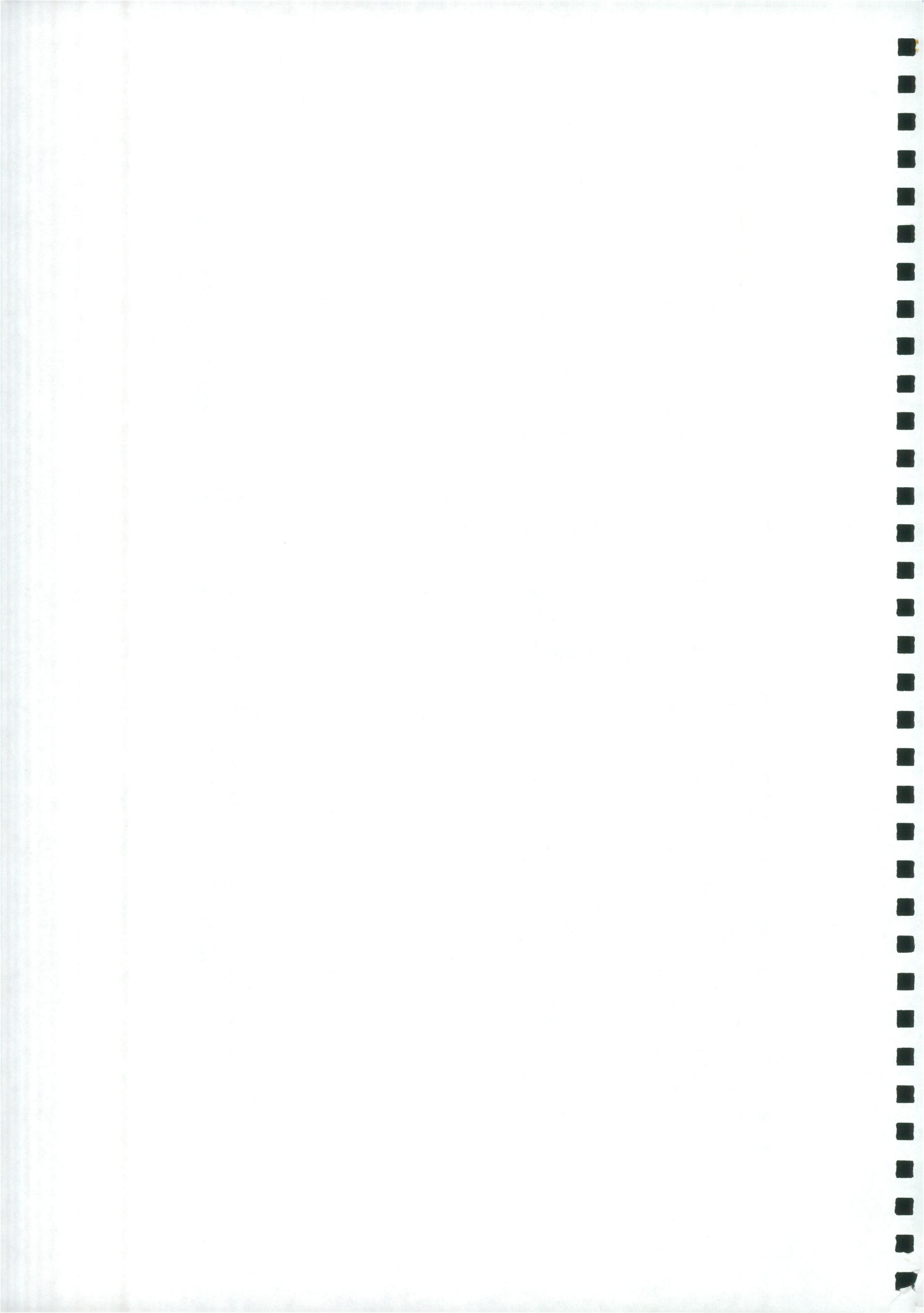
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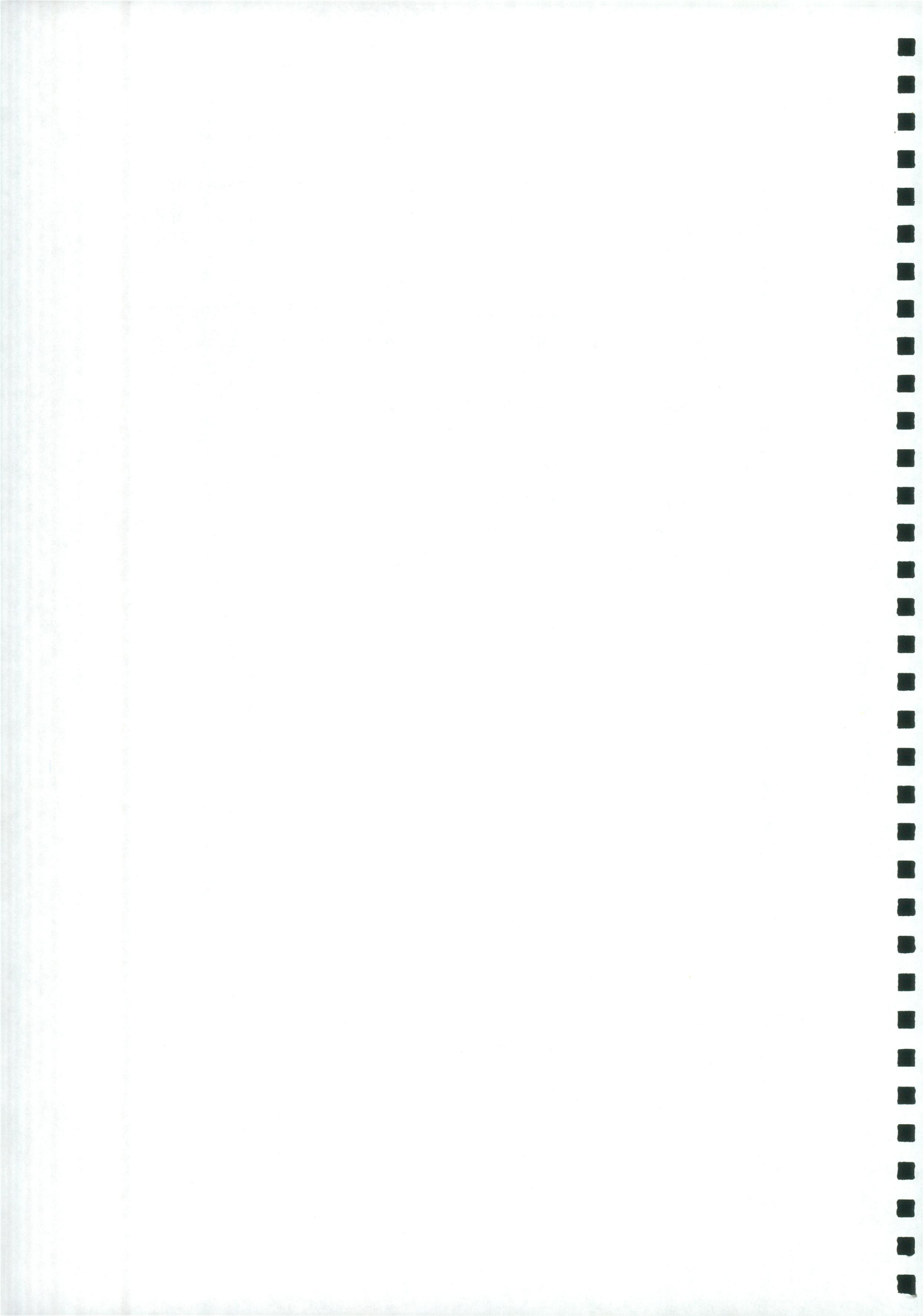
Arnotts, Henry Street.

Champion Sports, O' Connell Street.

Marathon Sports, Grafton Street.

Lifestyle, St. Stephens Green Center.

and finally my tutor Dr. Nicola Gordon Bowe.



INTRODUCTION

The growth and popularity of athletic footwear has spread extraordinarily quickly over the past two decades, on the street as well as the track and playing fields. This business has boomed so rapidly due to a number of factors, such as new marketing techniques, technological progress and the introduction of different cultural societies to accept new sports.

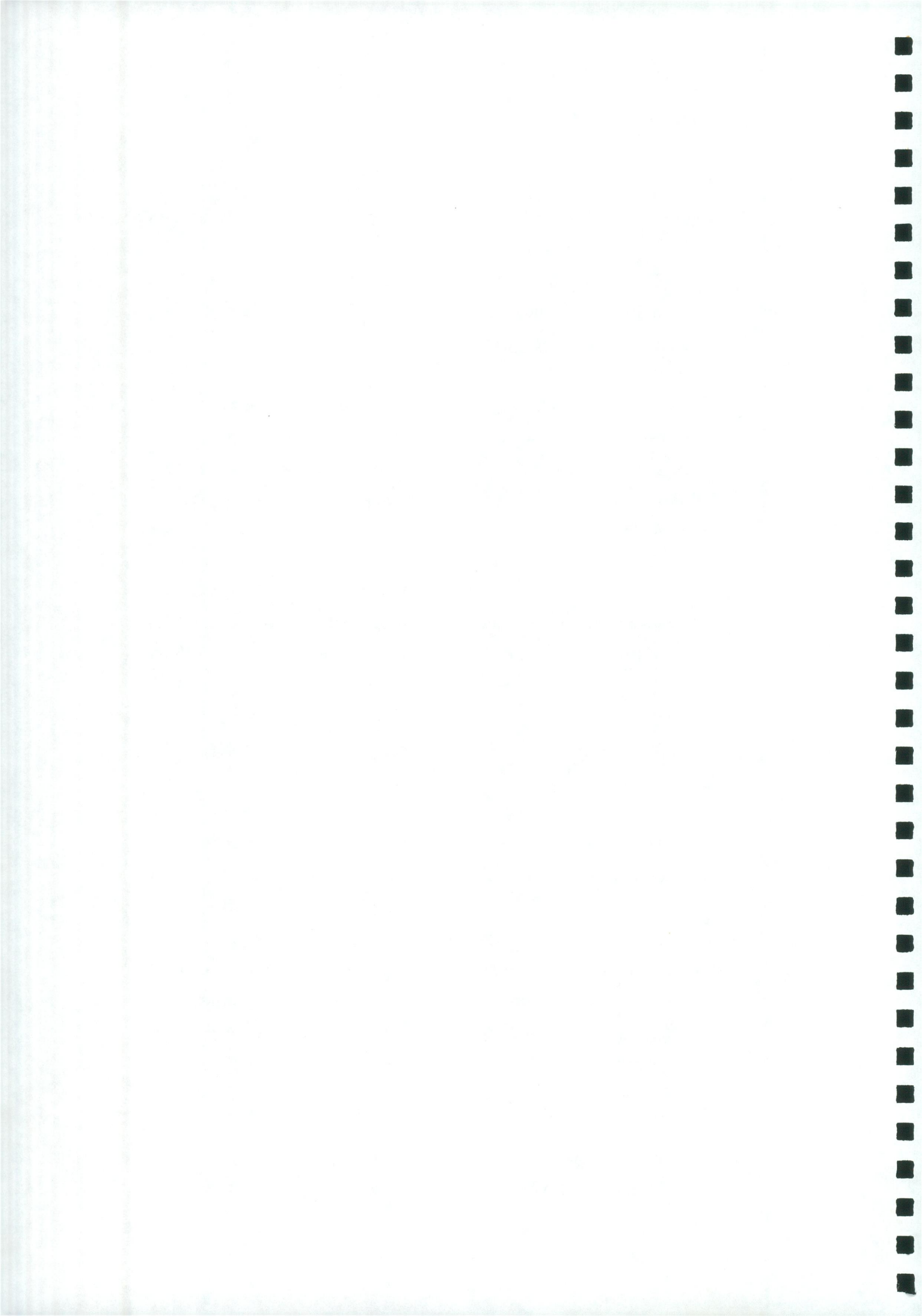
Designs which were originally intended to improve the speed and performance of athletes on the track have gained a highly marketable 'street cred'. Eighty percent of all trainer sales are to fashion conscious youth aged between eleven and twenty-four years old who have never seen an athletes track. (Moore, 1991, pg. 23).

The emergence of sportswear becoming fashionable began at the end of the sixties when the standard of living was rising in the western world. In the Seventies, which was labelled the 'me decade' (Strasser and Becklund, 1991, pg. 267) a new generation of young people emerged who began to identify themselves by brand names.

The trainer war had begun, and the company which became the most successful sports company in history was Nike.

Their success is largely due to their unique advertising and promotional campaigns, using the worlds number one sporting personalities for example Michael Jordan , who is seen not only as a sporting figure but as an influential role model amongst inner city youth.

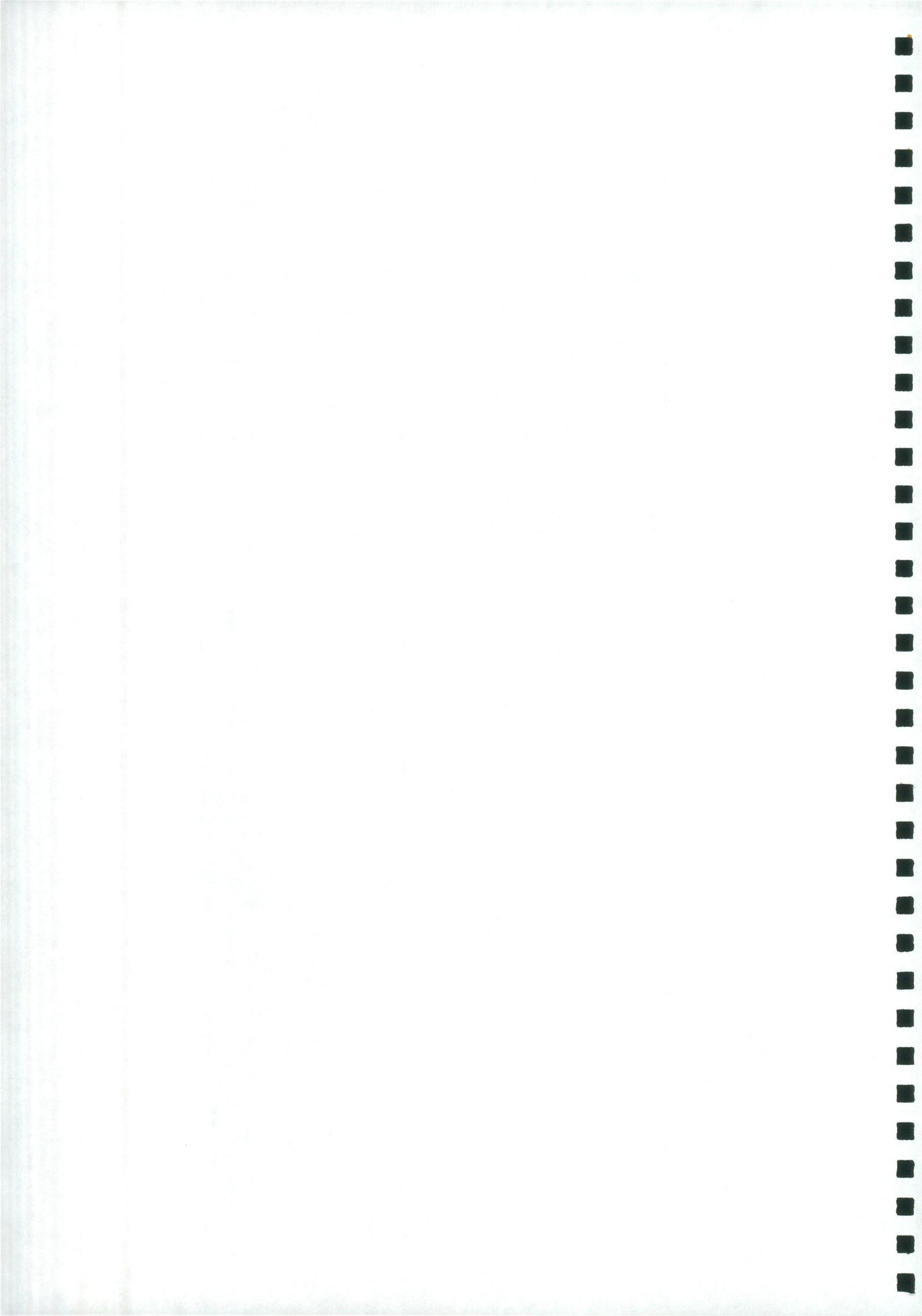
Due to many of Nikes advertising campaigns, there has been an upsurge of violent attacks on youths who wear and shops who stock this brand. What makes youth so obsessive about trainers?



The opening chapter will look at the history of athletic footwear, dating back from Roman times to the 1990's, and the rise of the top athletic sports shoe companies especially over the past three decades.

In chapter two, I will discuss the trainer has developed as a fashion accessory, and the violence and crimes related to the possession of these products.

In chapter three I will discuss the trainer manufacturers endorsement of top athletes and their marketing techniques.



CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY OF THE TRAINER

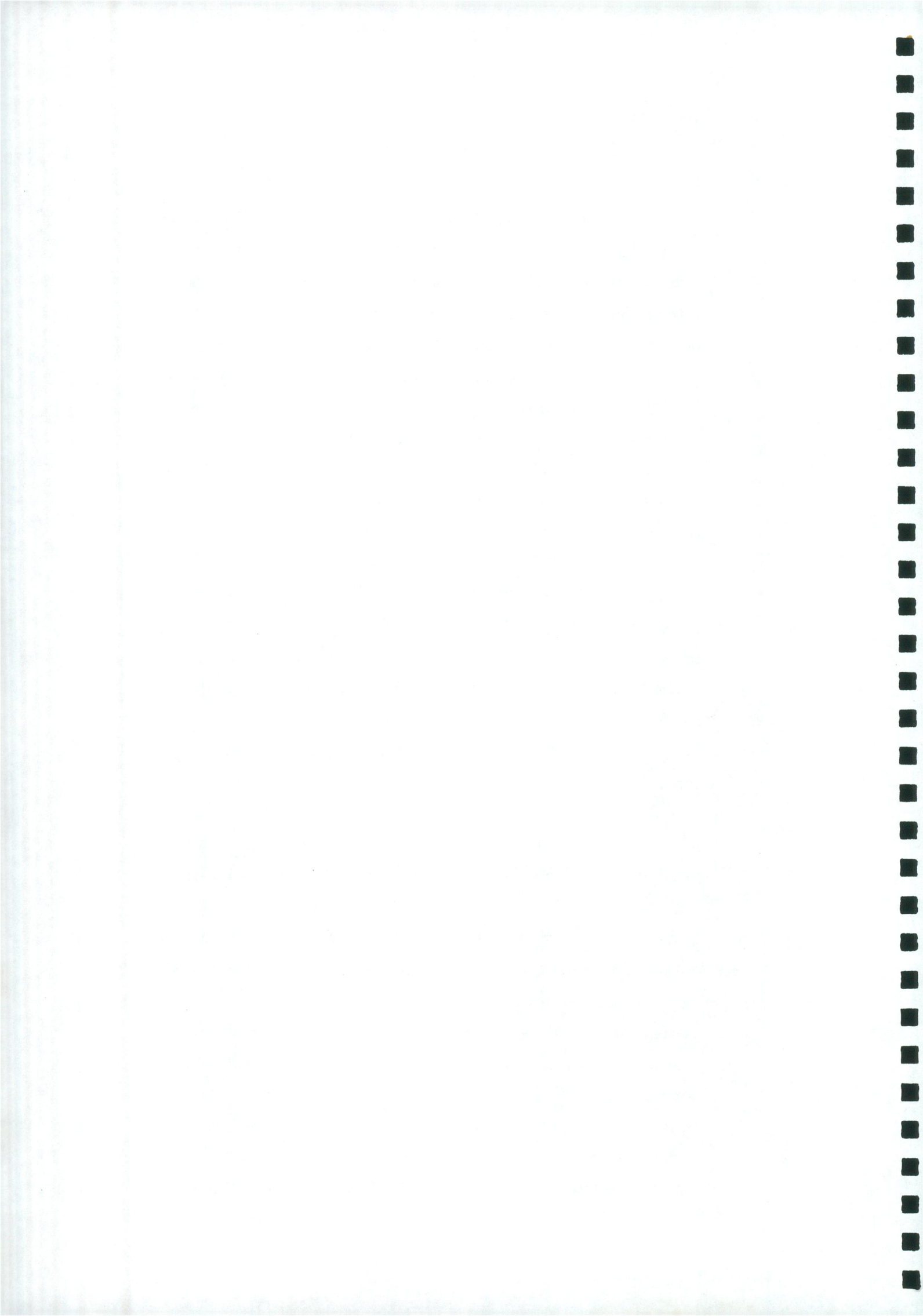
The earliest form of sport shoes is believed to have begun during Roman times (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 3) i.e. when the Romans began to transfer elements of footwear which were once used for protection into specialised footwear, such as weapons against their opponents. Running shoes known as 'gallica', appeared in a publication which was issued by the Roman Emperor Diocletian (248-313 A.D) (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 3). These were a type of sandal with a single sole of Roman or French design.

In early Greek running races which were held by the Peloponnesus tribe in Olympia, contestants ran barefoot. (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 3).

In the first Olympic games which were held in Greece in 776 B.C. (Cheskin, op. cit, p.3), Coroebus of Elis, the winner of the 5,000 metres ran barefooted (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 3). However, by the end of the first Olympic era, Greek athletes were wearing a type of sandal called 'ligula' or 'krepis' (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 3). These were later adapted by the Romans and called 'crepida' or 'soccus' i.e. a sock.

A Vatican vase painting which dates back to 480 B.C. shows the introduction of sandals on female runners (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 3).

The earliest recorded shoes were often thought to have magical qualities, making rough surfaces smoother and scorching sands bearable. (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 2). Therefore, many legends and stories came about telling of shoes miraculous properties, for example the winged sandals of Mercury. Ancient mystic symbols such as the horseshoe and clover leaf designs were advertised on trainers in the early 1930's, and more recently, in 1972, Nike chose the symbolic name of the Greek goddess of victory, which has been a good omen for them since they have become the most successful



athletic shoe company in history.

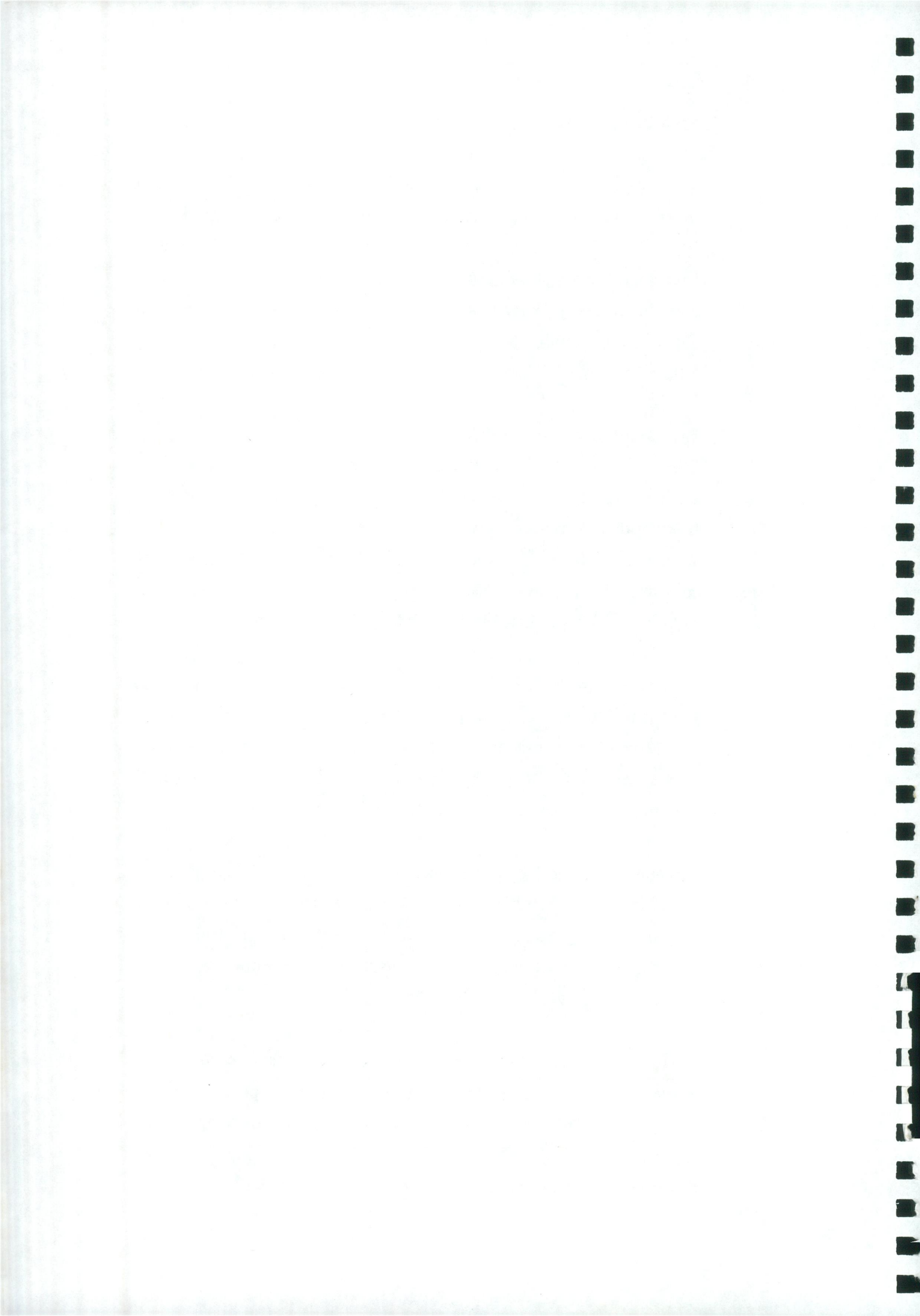
The earliest forms of shoes are thought to have been the sandal or platform type of shoe, and the moccasin or wrapped-under-the-foot type of shoe (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 3). The earliest model of boot was then modified by the Egyptians who designed an inward curving sole. These early forms of shoe making were stylish and functional rather than comfortable, but all shoes were symmetrical i.e. no lefts or rights.

It was not until the twelfth century that handmade welted construction such as lock stitching existed. Several shoe features such as methods of underfoot shoe cushioning were developed thousands of years ago when travellers used to place layers of soft wool or moss in their shoes to cushion their steps. In the sixteenth century, a French monk St. Feutre, compressed hair and wool together to form a felted insole for long distance travellers.

In America, in the late Sixteenth century before the invasion of the white man (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 4), tribes in South America discovered how to extract a milky latex fluid from the hevea tree and, by pouring it over a clay cast on an open fire, they learned how to form basic rubber shoes (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 4).

It was not until 1751, that rubber was introduced to Europe, by the British who sneaked seeds of the hevea tree back to London to be grown in tropical greenhouses at Kew Gardens with the intention of later shipping them to parts of their Empire such as India and Malaysia (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 4).

In the sixteenth century, pumps were one of the earliest forms of lightweight shoe designed for jugglers and dancers performing in the courts of European monarchs; these were later developed into the rubber plimsoll shoe in England. This type of shoe, which was modified into the first popular sports shoe, also became



fashionably worn on the street, known as the plimsoll in England and the sneaker or gym shoe in America.

The shoe industry entered a new dimension with the invention of the sewing machine and equipment to roll sole-leather and sew soles to uppers. Prior to the 1860's, shoes were all hand cut and stitched. Mass production did not begin until 1863, when Isaac Merritt Singer further developed the sewing machine. In 1839, Charles Goodyear had discovered the process of curing rubber and in 1868, the first flat-soled rubber canvas shoes manufactured were used as running shoes.

However, it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that mass production of specialised athletic footwear for the general public came about . In 1909, one of the largest companies to specialise in running was the A.G. Spalding Co., an American company producing shoes for the marathon, high-jump, hurdling and cross-country running. Rubber as well as traditional leather soles were used adapting kangaroo leather for uppers with other soft leathers such as russet (ostrich) and buckskin (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 6).

In 1868, the popularity of the tennis court game led to the development of the vulcanised canvas rubber tennis type sneaker, later adapted as running and tennis shoes. Between 1850, and 1900, the sports shoe became part of a look which played an important role in the fashion of that time and grew in popularity amongst both men and women of that day.

Machinery was invented in 1882 by Jan Ernst Matzlinger which made rapid duplication of shoes possible that had originally performed by hand. By 1890, heel and toe plates, which before were soled unattached, soon became a basic part of the shoe. The fit and comfort of shoes were improved due to changes in materials and better construction methods, such as the 'Goodyear welt' and

NEW! For Dress and Sport

Cork Welt Sports Shoe
 —Strong white canvas
 —Rugged drill lining
 —Light cork welt
 —Wool and heels
 —Leather sole for skate clamps
 —Good flexible inside
 A NEW sports shoe light weight and comfortable. Built with extra width. Good for a long time. Good for spring and other sports.
 —Wide widths. State size.
 Order one half size smaller than leather shoe.
 MEN'S AND BIG BOYS' SIZES 8 1/2 to 12
 Small sizes 8 to 10
 76 H 9518 98c
 76 H 9519 89c

Serviceable Sports Oxford
 —Fine, strong, white canvas uppers
 —Full lined with smooth white drill and leather like cork-welt sole
 —New, contrasting leather-like trim, collar, leather insole
 —Light and comfortable
 —Vulcanized rubber sole
 —Wide toe and extra depth
 —Appearance of three separate, overlapping sections
 —Wide widths
 —State size
 Order one half size smaller than leather shoe.
 MEN'S AND BIG BOYS' SIZES 8 1/2 to 12
 Small sizes 8 to 10
 76 H 9520 89c
 76 H 9521 85c

Double Eagle Superior Quality Throughout!
 —Rugged, heavy canvas uppers with strong lining
 —Double "Double Eagle" sole with bumper ridge all around
 —High grade sturdy shoe that can wear continuously through long, strenuous work
 —The extra high bumper edge will hold the shoe steady on uneven ground
 —Wide widths. State size
 Order one half size smaller than leather shoe.
 MEN'S AND BIG BOYS' SIZES 8 1/2 to 12, also 12 1/2
 Children's sizes, 2 to 8
 76 H 9522 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9523 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9524 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9525 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9526 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9527 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9528 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9529 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9530 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9531 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9532 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9533 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9534 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9535 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9536 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9537 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9538 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9539 White Canvas Pair 89c
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 76 H 9546 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9547 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9548 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9549 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9550 White Canvas Pair 89c

79c BOYS' SIZES

Last Spring 73c 59c MEN'S SIZES

Canvas Work Shoe \$1.39 BOYS' SIZES

Mohican-Outstanding Bargain Leader!
 —Heavy, serviceable, full lined good canvas uppers
 —Heavy, white drill, long service rubber sole
 —Double fastings—greater strength—white wool pull laces
 —Heavy bumper top gives extra protection to shoe
 —Wide toe and extra depth
 —Appearance of three separate, overlapping sections
 —Wide widths
 —State size
 Order one half size smaller than leather shoe.
 MEN'S AND BIG BOYS' SIZES 8 1/2 to 12
 Small sizes 8 to 10
 76 H 9551 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9552 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9553 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9554 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9555 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9556 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9557 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9558 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9559 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9560 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9561 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9562 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9563 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9564 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9565 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9566 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9567 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9568 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9569 White Canvas Pair 59c
 76 H 9570 White Canvas Pair 59c

Made Like a Leather Shoe
 —Rugged, brown, mottled canvas uppers with drill lining
 —Tough, thick, rubber outsole
 —Half bellows tongue keeps out dirt
 —Wide toe and extra depth
 —Air-cushion rubber heel
 —Wide widths. State size
 Order one half size smaller than leather shoe.
 MEN'S AND BIG BOYS' SIZES 8 1/2 to 12
 Small sizes 8 to 10
 76 H 9571 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9572 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9573 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9574 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9575 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9576 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9577 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9578 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9579 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9580 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9581 White Canvas Pair 89c
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 76 H 9585 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9586 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9587 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9588 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9589 White Canvas Pair 89c
 76 H 9590 White Canvas Pair 89c

Sears 289

1 The beginning of the 'sneaker era' from a 1935 Sears, Roebuck Spring Catalogue.



2 One of the original Converse "All-Star" models. High-top basket-ball boot, 1917.

the asymmetric shape of shoes i.e. a left and a right. In the 1890's, cleats (fastenings) were introduced, consisting at first of pieces of sole leather glued together and nailed both to the heel and soled of the shoe.

In 1896, the rubber heel, which was discovered by accident as an added under foot cushion was first used by Humphery O' Sullivan, an immigrant Irishman from Lowell, Massachusetts.

In the 1860's, when 'pedestrianism' became popular in America, which influenced the development of flat soled sports shoes, and the end of the century, pedestrianism i.e. marathon races, was the rage on both sides of the Atlantic.

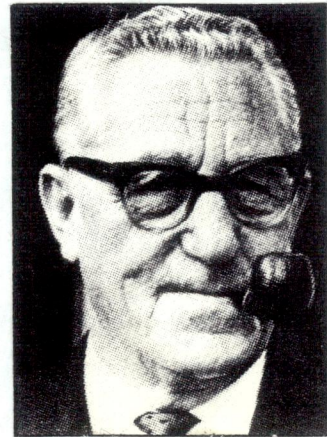
After stories of blisters, taped toes and blood stained shoes during these races, the search to find more comfortable flat-soled running shoes began; this led to the development of the flat-soled canvas rubber plimssole, the sneaker. In the 1940's, during the Second World War, surprisingly enough there was a boom amongst the specialised sport shoe companies in America's domestic market (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 10). The basketball shoe (Fig. 1), nicknamed the 'sneaker', became famous due to its comfort, it's long lasting qualities and low cost. The Sneaker, along with classic blue jeans, was to become one of America's biggest post-war youth symbols. Two significant sports shoe companies at the time were Converse (Fig. 2) and Keds who began a popular fashion look in the 1940's and 1950's.

The rise in popularity of the trainer as a fashion accessory took off dramatically in the 1950's, when all of Elvis Presley's dancers in the film 'Jailhouse Rock' (1957), wore sneakers. (Moore, 1991, pg. 23). These inexpensive canvas shoes soon became more stylish and updated when seen on film and rock and roll stars such as James Dean and Buddy Holly. Then in 1970, an American artist, Claes Oldenberg, made a large piece of sculpture in the form of a gym



3

Adi Dassler, founder of Adidas.



4

Rudi Dassler, founder of Puma.



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Kihachiro Onitsuka, founder of Tiger.

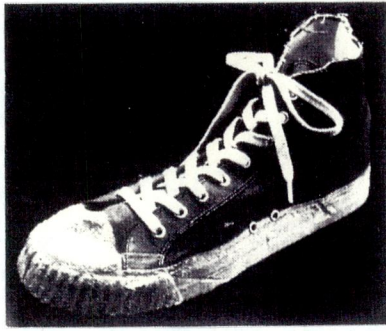
shoe, proving that the 'sneaker' was finally recognised as an important part of the American way of life. "*It's a lasting symbol of the great American contribution to world culture; it's casual, egalitarian and accessible*" he said (Moore, 1991, pg.24).

Before the twentieth century, people were concentrating entirely on economic survival, and since the necessity of earning a living was of uppermost importance, leisure time was a rarity. The majority of people worked long shifts, six days a week, in either industrial or agricultural fields of work. Due to the lack of athletic facilities, both outdoor and indoor, sport was not very popular and was mainly for the rich.

However, since the 1920's, the average hours worked weekly have declined which in turn gives the worker more time to devote to leisure time activities. The standard of living has improved dramatically with household appliances cutting down on the workload in the home, along with improvements in telecommunications and public transport, on the whole giving the average family more money to spend on their increased amount of leisure time. Television has also played a major role in increasing the public's interest in sports.

In the 1950's, Adidas and Puma (formerly the Dassler Brothers in Germany, (Figs. 3 and 4) until their split in 1948) in Europe and Tiger (Figs. 4 and 5) (which was later to become Nike) in Japan, were two small companies which were to form a major segment of the sports footwear business, introducing major sport shoe marketing, advertising and early biochemical shoe design.

In 1968, after the Mexican City Olympics had been televised world-wide, Adidas claimed that 80% of all the Olympians had been wearing it's shoes. Due to this type of advertising, along with increased leisure time and health awareness began a sports shoe mania that took sports shoes from the gym and track onto the



5a Marquis Converse, founder of Tiger.

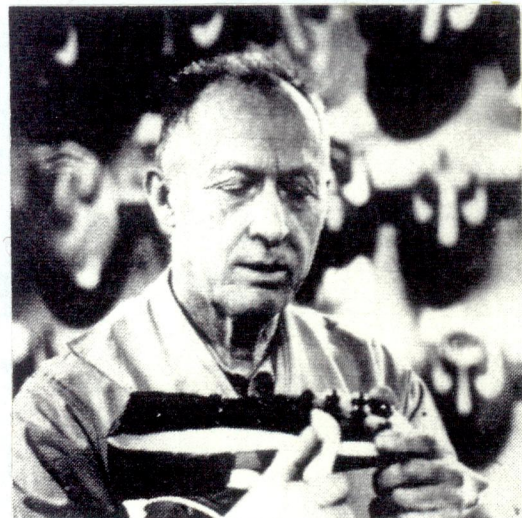


6 Tigers first entry into sports shoes. Basketball model from 1951.



The classic high-cut and the later low-cut versions of Chuck Taylor's vulcanised rubber, canvas basketball shoes.

8 Bill Bowerman at work on his revolutionary Waffle Shoe.



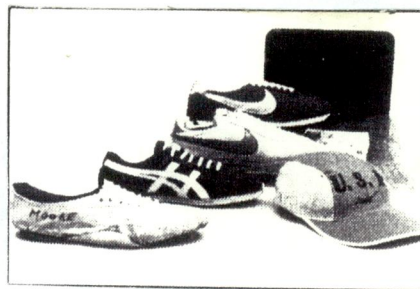
streets, forming a new athletic fashion look.

In the late 1960's, and early 1970's, West German sports shoe companies had the monopoly of the American market. Their prices compared to those of the Americans were extremely competitive due to their new styling and better functional qualities which helped them to dominate the American market for the next decade. The American shoe companies, on the other hand, were slow to adjust to new techniques like vulcanised rubber soling on cleated footwear instead continued with traditional welted types of shoe construction which they considered to be safer and cheaper than experimenting with new lighter and more functional materials. Adidas in Germany, were always one step ahead with the introduction of their shell sole basketball shoe in 1968, and their PVC and PU soles in the early 1970's.

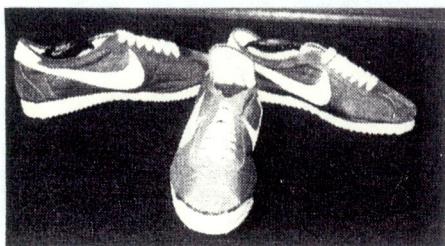
Converse in America, (Figs. 6 and 7), dominates the basketball shoe market over all other brands like Pro-Keds, P.F. Flyers and Red Ball, while Adidas had been quietly working on a new leather basketball shoe known as the 'stitched shell sole construction'.

Until the running boom in the late 1970's, the European companies remained on top until American companies like Nike and Pony started to bring out new ideas in America, and competition was hotting up.

In 1960, Bill Bowerman (Fig. 8), (who was later to form Nike), began designing track shoes in Oregon, which began to break team records amongst world class runners in the University of Oregon. He teamed up with another runner, Jeff Johnson, and together they came up with new concepts such as nylon uppers and full length cushioned midsoles for running shoes. They later teamed up with Phil Knight to form Nike in 1971, and made innovative breakthroughs in sports shoe design with the introduction of the 'Waffle-sole' (discovered while using a waffle iron), air cushioning



- 9 Nike's first models of training shoes in the early 1970's after it's founders broke from Tiger.



- 10 Early Nike models of training shoes from 1972.



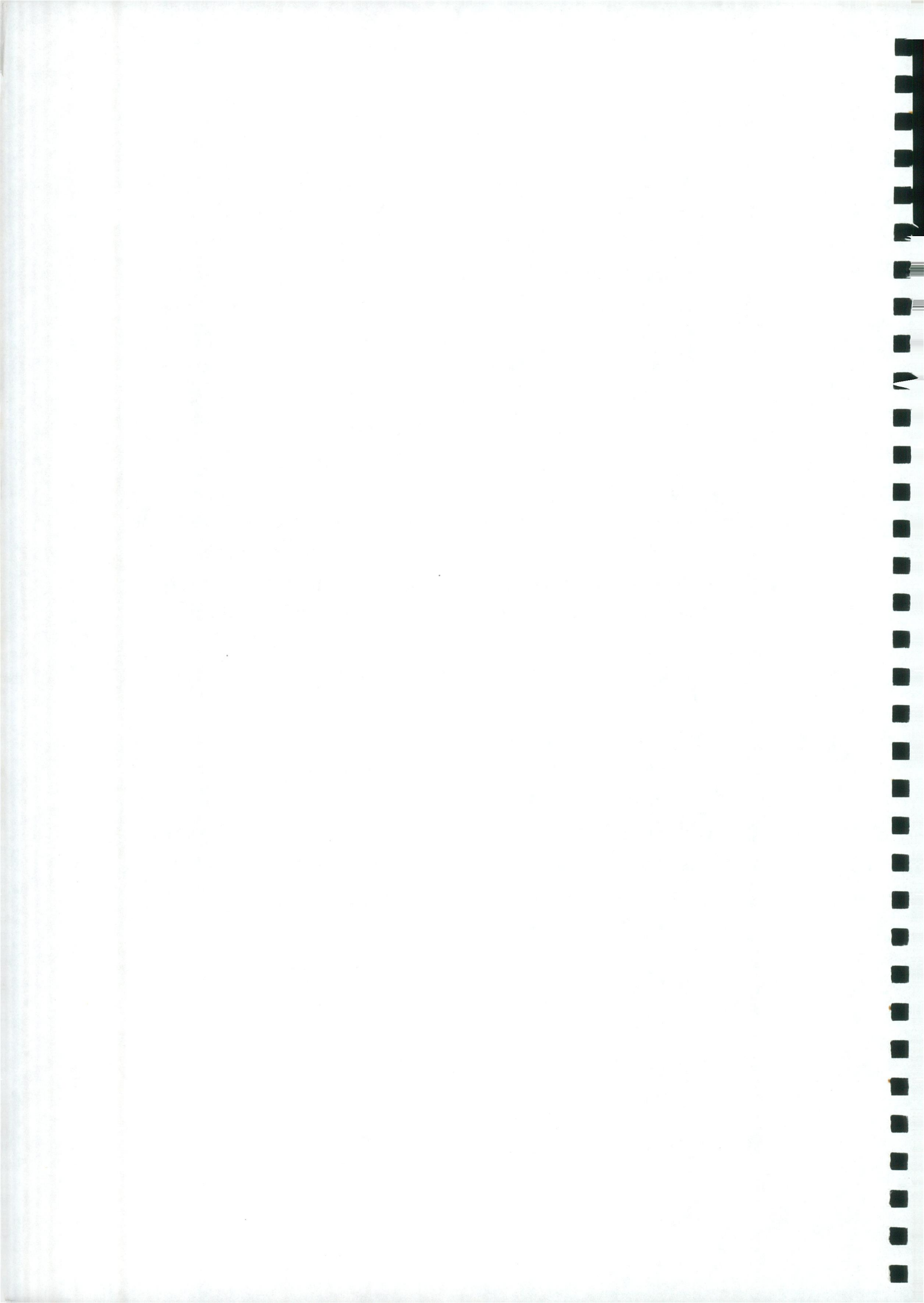
- 11 New Balances "Tracksters" running shoe from 1967.

and variable width lacing systems (Figs. 9 and 10).

The design of the basic trainer upper has changed little over the past 50 years. It still consists of ten functional pieces (although to get look right, 30 or so pieces which fit into trainers have no function whatsoever), although the quality of shoes has been dramatically improved due to major technical advances. Designers have had more freedom to create comfortable and supportive trainers thanks to the ever increasing new range of materials such as sorbathane, polyurethane's and EVA (ethanol vinyl acetate) as well as numerous new foams and nylons.

The 1980's, saw the athletic shoe industry reach new heights with the introduction of biomechanics (which studies the pressures and stresses of the body in action), enabling designers to understand the best way to protect running feet from repeated impact with the ground. New Balance is an American company, which produced the very first wide based trainer designed on orthopaedic principles (Fig. 11).

Demands for sports shoes in the last two decades have escalated so rapidly representing about 30% of overall sales in the retail sporting goods trade (Moore, 1991, pg. 24). It is estimated that one in every 12 pairs of trainers sold today are functional whereas one in nine are of mere sports appearance. Eighty percent of all trainer sales are for the fashion conscious, who never see an athletes track.



7 **FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE**

Cheskin, Melvyn P.

'The Complete Handbook of Athletic Footwear'.

U.S.A., Fairchild Publications, 1987.

Moore, Sue,

'Trainer Mania'.

Designing, no. 29, Spring 1991.



12 Model of Air Jordan basketball training boot.

CHAPTER TWO

TRAINERS AS A FASHION ACCESSORY, AND THE VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH THEM

For many New Yorkers, especially Afro-Americans their choice of footwear has become a matter of life or death. Everybody wants to be seen wearing the latest hi-tech models, and these style conscious youth are prepared to save or indeed steal up to £150 or more to get hold of a pair. What was initially designed to improve performance on the athletes track has now become the ultimate fashion accessory, but why are fashion crazed teenagers prepared to kill for these distinctive designs?

On May 2 1989, in Maryland, (Leith, 1990, pg. 3), a 15 year old boy, Michael Thomas was found dead. David Martin, a 17 year old boy was charged with first degree murder. However, the strangest thing about the murder was how the murderer unlaced the boy's trainers and ran off with them. Thomas's shoes were top of the range 'Air Jordan' basketball boots, (Fig.12), worth \$115.50. (Leith, 1990, pg. 3). Apparently Thomas was so proud of them that he even kept the cardboard box that they came in as a special shrine in his bedroom with the price tag still inside. His grand-mother had told him not to wear them to school and ironically Michael was reported to have said, "*Granny, before I let anyone take these shoes, they'll have to kill me.*" (Leith, 1990, pg. 3).

This unusual act of violence is a result of effective and clever marketing techniques, forcing teenagers to want their shoes no matter what the price.

In Detroit, in 1985, a 13 year old boy Shawn Jones was shot (Leith, 1990, pg. 3). He had been 'pimp -rolling' along in his 'Fila' trainers when accosted by five youths. 'Fila' makes the fourth or fifth most desirable trainers on the market today. Their top model the 'Convertible' begins at £64.99 and it's attraction is the fact that



13 Four men in baseball influenced sportswear.

you can take the top off the ankle support if you want your trainers to look less ostentatious. The 'convertible', if you think of the glamour of the car that young male youths would associate with it, is clever and effective marketing.

The violent attacks continued. In January 1988, in Houston, Texas, there was a fatal stabbing incident after an argument over a pair of tennis shoes. In Detroit, in 1989 and in Philadelphia, in 1990, two schoolboys were murdered for their 'Nike' trainers. At the time in America, Nike's advertising slogan (Leith, 1990, pg. 3), promoting their brand of Nike 'Air Jordan's' was 'Get some, get some, get some get some.'

The point about trainers these days is that they must look brand new, a term they use is 'box fresh', one scuff and you are pressurised to buy a new pair.

In 1991, in Clarke County, South-side, Chicago, they had over 900 homicides; 101 of these were directly related to sport-wear, the majority of those being 'Nike', 'Air Jordan' products. ('Trainer Wars', 1991).

Sportswear has become a symbol of American culture and values. One of the biggest markets that the sports companies are targeting themselves towards is the Afro-American youth market which although one of the poorer markets financially, is very vulnerable and a good choice for street credibility. These inner city youths are what can be described as the sports companies' 'bread and butter' market, estimated to be worth at least \$500 million annually.

Black street style, (Fig.13), which often begins in inner cities ghettos, has been termed an alien culture, but is very influential amongst youths of all nationalities world-wide. Black style is the combination of dress, music, language and mannerisms, but one



14 Girl with bomber jacket.

important factor is their sense of colour co-ordination. It is a culture whose style is ostentatious, which creates an exclusive identity for a race who desperately want to achieve a sense of community, following the abolition of slavery and acceptance into the real world. However, this infatuation with black style and culture had begun back in the 1950's, when white teenage sub-cultures had believed that black style gave an element of danger and excitement to their mundane life-styles.

In the 1970's, the so called 'Style Wars' had begun (Ash and Wilson, 1992, pg. 19). In the Bronx, New York, a Jamaican disc jockey called Kool Herc, was responsible for the emergence of 'rap' and it's 'hip-hop' culture and one of the first groups to appear was 'Soul to Soul', (which represented spiritual and musical style). Both movements had originated from the street and dealt with issues such as racism and narrow mindedness.

The black street dress and style that have appeared over the past few years makes such a strong visual statement that it strongly influences the fashion that youths wear world wide.

Hip hop dress, which is a very mixed form of dress, has become an international style in the last ten years. It has developed through many different styles for example, the 'teenybopper' to 'home boy' to 'hard rocker' to Afro-centric Hustler' to 'Superfly' to 'Daisy Age' to 'Cosmic' (Ash and Wilson, 1992, pg. 92). All these looks, which were originally founded in America were the previous trivial styles which led the way to what is now known as casual dress.

Leisure wear boomed amongst rich and famous Americans, due to designers such as Norma Kamali who was doing innovative things with sweat shirting. However, 'Home Boys' and 'Fly Girls' turned what began as a respectable style into one which was rough and ready. Designer 'shiny' track suits and straight or customised bomber jackets soon developed into a laid-back, sloppy, tubular



15 Neneh Cherry

appearance with long tee-shirts, sweat pants or knee length shorts and baggy jeans with the latest high-tech status symbol trainers, never worn without a base-ball cap. This look was then topped off with the odd gold tooth, an abundance of gold rings, chains or medallions with large metal symbols such as flashy dollar signs (Fig. 14).

For once, a street uniform was never so easy to wear. Everyone looked ridiculous with their x-tra large hooded tee-shirts worn on the skinniest teen-age builds, base-ball caps with enormous peaks that managed to cover teenage acne, trainers with hundreds of superfluous details the tongue that rolled out at the front, but although the look was androgynous, for once it did not matter. Female rap artists such as 'Salt 'n' Pepa' and 'Neneh Cherry' (Fig.15), have added an element of sexuality to this style. The combination of sports inspired styles have led to the decline of the designer wear syndrome.

In the 1970's, before the days when labels were born on the outsides of shirts, people used to be identified by their religious or political beliefs, or by their origins. By the late 1970's, they began to identify themselves by brand names. People wanted labels, and shoes and clothes with the right labels which were considered to be a cheap form of prestige. In the last two decades, the peer pressure amongst youths to fit into, or be accepted within a gang has enormous, and has often resulted in violent attacks or crime. In New York alone, there are about 400 different gangs, the total membership of which is believed to be anywhere between 10,000 and 40,000 (Morris, 1988, pg. 143). A typical gang in Brooklyn or the Bronx (Fig. 16), might occupy a territory only a few blocks long, taking care to avoid neighbouring streets occupied by a rival gang. Members of the more established gangs can be recognised by the wearing of the gangs distinctive colours with specific logos attached to their clothing. One of the functions of these gangs is to defend their neighbourhoods from criminal activities of outsiders.



16 Still from the film "Juice".

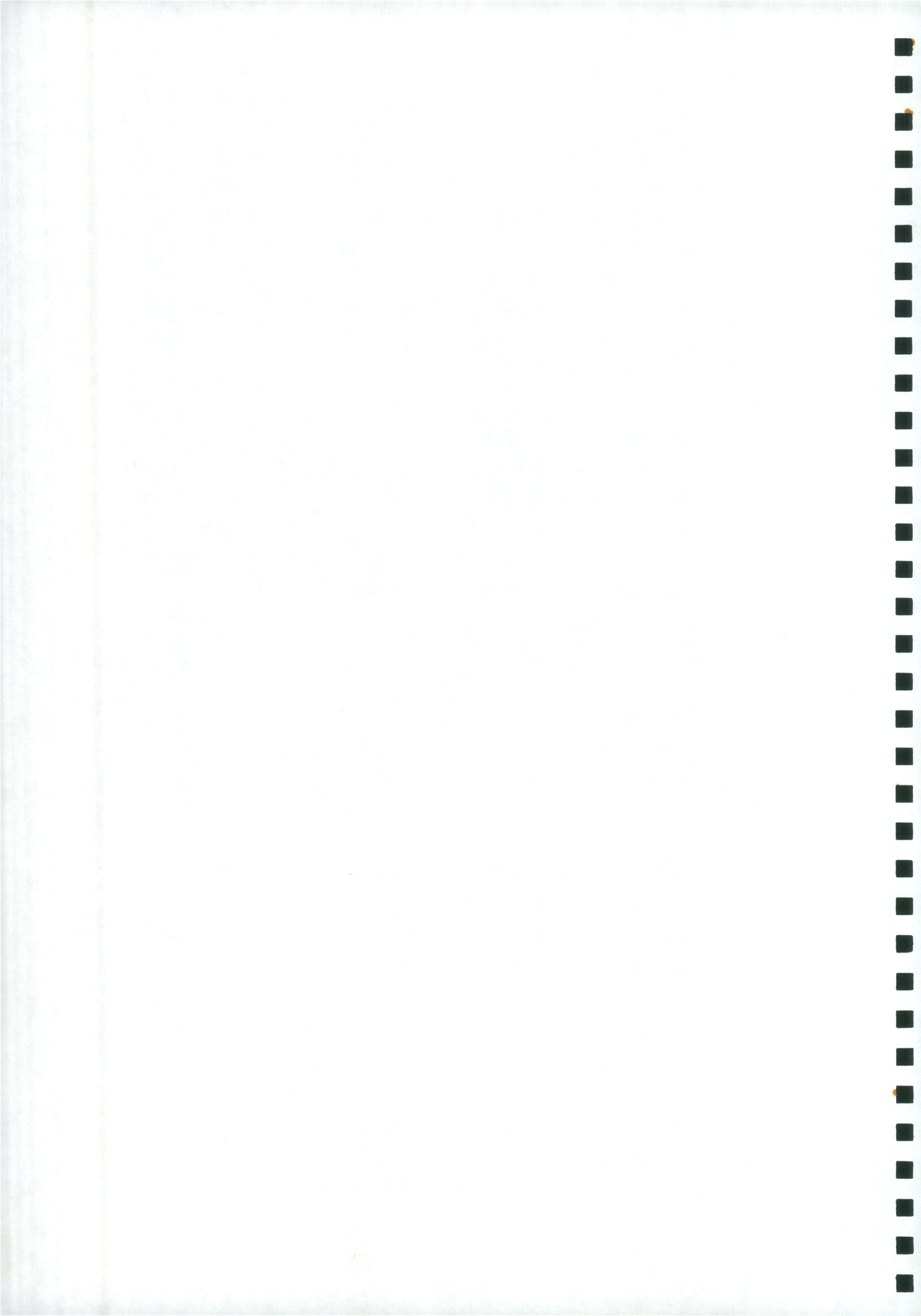
They talk about the 'brother-hood' which exists between them, of protecting the community and of helping the poor and the oppressed. Realistically however, many gang members control local narcotic sales and distribution and protection rackets amongst local shop-keepers. Virtually all gang members carry weapons such as shot-guns, machetes, switch-blades knives and base ball bats. Gang members speak of 'heart', i.e. the courage to stand up for oneself and one's group and to defend the reputation and image of the gang.

Sport shoe advertising plays on the glamour of athletic prestige and the ostentation of machoism, which is what the gang culture is based on. The aggressiveness in Nike's promotions appeals to the male youth markets, especially in the low income gang oriented markets i.e. the Afro-Americans, Hispanics, Afro- Caribbean's, Latinos and indeed the inner city youths on this side of the Atlantic. When times are hard, killing becomes a legitimised mode of behaviour.

The trainers on their feet have become a statement about these youths' positions within a gang or community. They now represent symbols of contemporary American culture, values and image - the ultimate hard funk accessory.

The number of violent attacks related to the much sought-after Nike trainers has prompted a black New Yorker city preacher (Moore, 1991, pg. 24), to call for a Nike boy-cot in an attempt to stop the growing escalation of crime.

Crime related to sports shoes is carried out on this side of the Atlantic but not to the same degree as in America. All over England, young boys lust after high tab sports gear. Unlike America, they are not, as yet, killing each other, as they do not have the same access to hand guns, but they are still being mugged. The University of London did a study in 1989, on



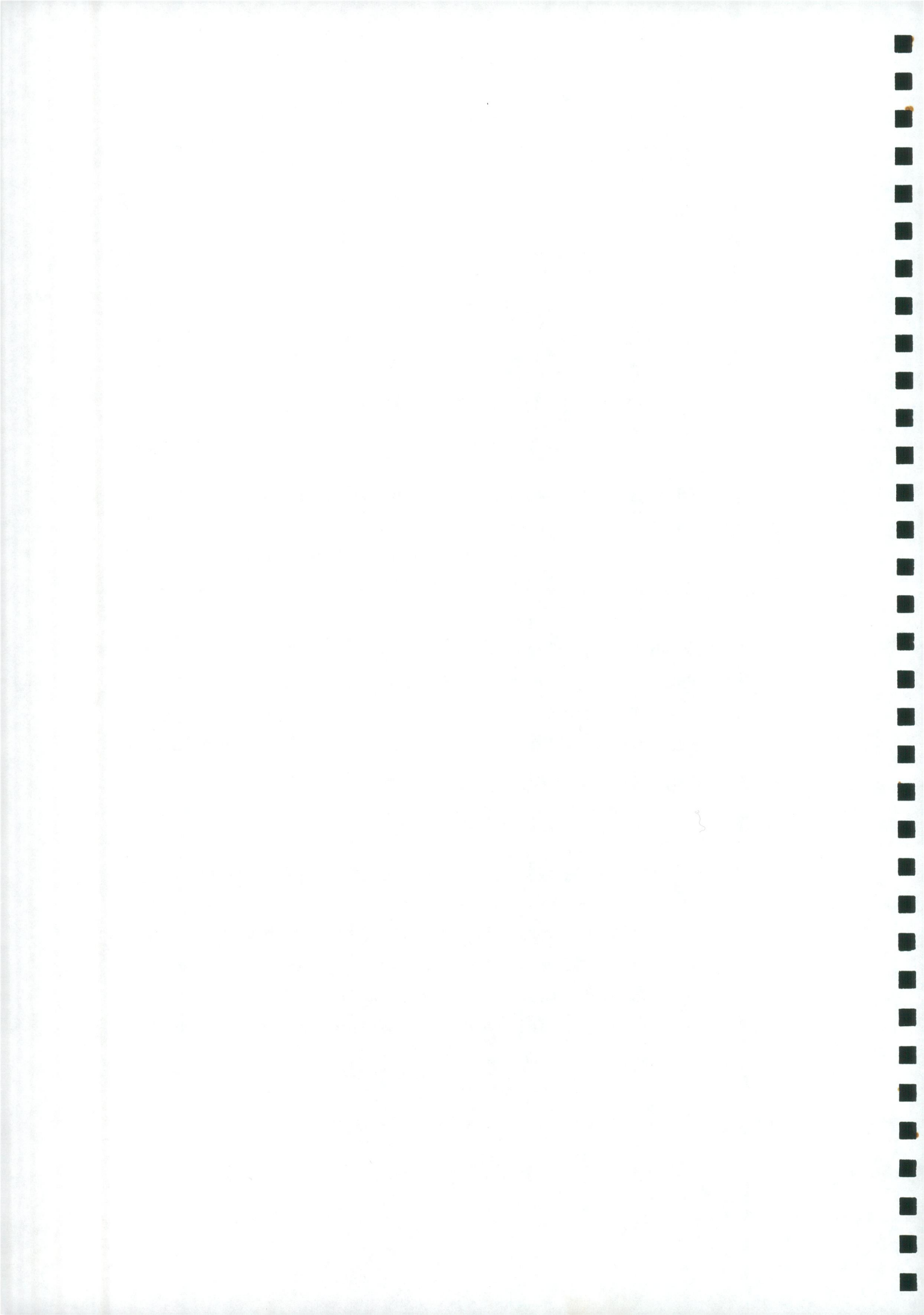
muggings in the Lambeth area in London (Leith, 1990, pg. 4). It was discovered that the main motive for mugging was not for cash or jewellery but instead designer sports-wear i.e. trainers and track suits.

Why do youths want expensive trainers so badly? Why has sportswear become so fashionable among young urban males? Why is an estimated 70% of designer sports-wear never used for sport? (Moore, 1991, pg. 24). Why are so many youths wearing trainers worth £100?, and the big question is- where do they get their money from?

Trainers are seen amongst these youths to be expensive status objects. They are advertised using the most aggressively masculine images of sport incorporating a lot of sweat, muscle, grunts of effort and in the end -victory.

So who is their prime consumer? Well it is youths who know a lot about training shoes but nothing about sport. Their taste is based on two factors; price and rarity. The fact that many of the high priced models of Nike trainers are often sold out is an intentional ploy in leading sports shops. Scarcity of these products means individuality and therefore it increases demand.

Crimes, such as robberies and murders which are related to sports-wear cannot be entirely blamed on companies such as Nike, but involve economic and social problems within these communities. However, high-tech trainers have in the last decade been elevated to the same status as the 'Gucci' watch etc. and have become teen-icons, due to glossy advertising and clever marketing and promotional techniques.



FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

Ash, Juliet and Wilson, Elizabeth.

'Chic Trills'

London, Pandora Press, 1992.

Leith, William:

'Pump it Up'

The Independent on Sunday, 8 July 1990.

Moore, Sue,

'Trainer Mania'

Designing, no. 29, Spring 1991.

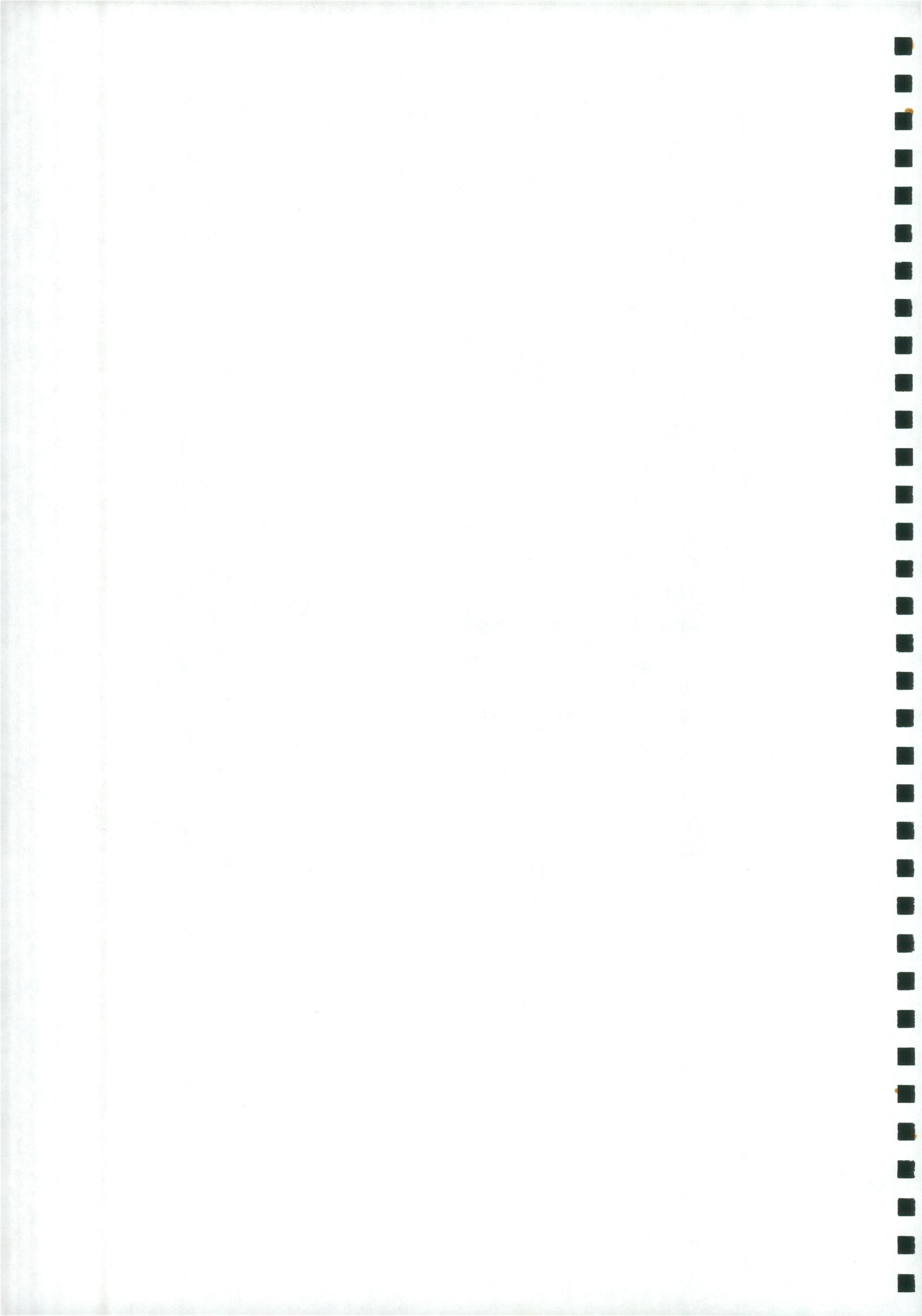
Morris, Desmond:

'Tribes'

Octopus Publishing Company, 1988.

'Trainer Wars'

Wee Picture Production, Channel 4, 1991.



CHAPTER THREE

MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND ENDORSEMENTS

When you look in general at the footwear people are wearing in the streets, in most cases it is hard to tell who makes the shoes or of what brand they are. However, when you look at a running shoe you can immediately identify brand names even at a distance.

Everyone who wears these shoes is in turn advertising them. If a world or national champion is wearing a certain make of shoe, he is in fact advertising the brand because all who watch this person perform will recognise the visual brand-mark. The fact that a 'star' is wearing a certain brand often says more about the company than they can say through their media advertising on the basis that, if a typical consumer thinks that if a brand is good enough for a professional athlete or world champion, therefore it must be good enough for them.

In the late 1960's, not one of the top four international athletic shoe brands, including Nike, used the services of a professional advertising agency to launch themselves when they were beginning to rise in popularity, but instead they preferred to rely on word of mouth and let their highly visible logo's speak for themselves.

Companies, like Nike, used highly visual sports personalities to promote their products and in return they got regular front page advertisements and hours of television exposure, all without directly paying for it.

There is a general consensus (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 64), that endorsements by star athletes increase shoe sales and have a positive effect on the consumer's purchasing habits.

Endorsements for sport's shoes first began in 1880, when Daniel O'



17 Nike's first tennis endorsee was Illie Nastase.

Leary, a famous pedestrian i.e. a marathon runner, was used in an advertising campaign promoting boots made by Mc Swyny's of New York (Cheskin, 1987, pg. 64). Basket-ball stars were sought after in the 1930's, when the Spalding Co. paid Kiki Cyler jr., for endorsing its product.

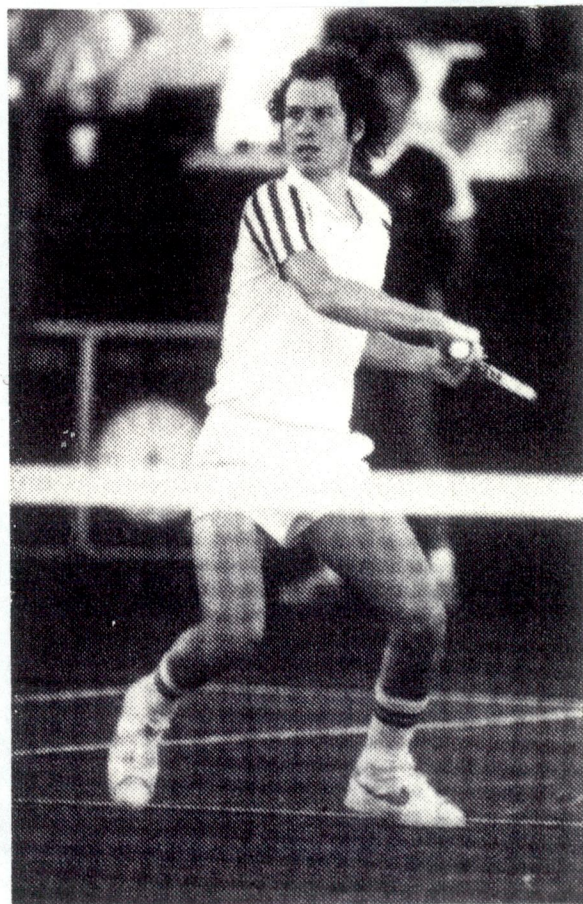
As the sports shoe market reached a new pinnacle in popularity in the 1980's, every athletic shoe company wanted to promote itself with a winning image. As the sports shoe market has become saturated with different names, companies have turned to price and value as another promotional approach to attract consumers. In the case of Nike trainers, the fact that many high priced models are often sold out is intentional, scarcity creates a sense of individuality and increases the demand for the trainer (Leith, 1993, pg. 4).

Today, leading sports shoe companies have divided up their advertising budgets, 50% of which goes directly into media advertising and the other half is divided up among endorsements, donations, direct consumer promotions and public relations (Cheskin, 1987, p. 64).

In the early 1970's, Nike believed that promotions and endorsements were a better form of recognition than advertising. Seeing the Nike logo on the feet of famous runners said more about the brand than any words you could put in an advert.

When Nike employs a person to endorse their products, they are also employing the persons unique characteristics. That is why, in the early 1980's, Nikes choice of personalities for their endorsement policy were cleverly chosen.

Their first professional endorsement was tennis player Ilie Nastase, (Fig. 17), a Romanian nick-named 'Nasty', who was well known for his commitment and bad temper.



18 Tennis star John McEnroe.

Nike would look back on this early endorsement at it's first step in a highly successful marketing campaign that turned it's 'bad boy' athletes into counter-culture heroes who sold shoes" (Strasser and Becklund, 1991, pg. 134.)

John Mc Enroe (Fig. 18), nick-named the 'Super Brat', was sought after next, in time for Wimbledon in July 1981. Mc Enroe's temper tantrums, use of foul language, stomping on rackets and yelling at lines men, drew the crowds and thus appealed to Strasser (Nike's advertising manager) who said, "*he was the wunder-kind who argued with umpires and lines-men, upsetting the civility of Centre Court*" (Strasser and Becklund, 1991, pg. 322), because it was Nike's logo that Mc Enroe was wearing, and therefore gaining them extra advertising time. That year, Mc Enroe had beaten Bjorn Borg and won his first Wimbledon title. Nike's ads then bore head-lines above tennis shoes that said "Mc Enroe Swears by Them" and "Mc Enroe's favourite four letter word".

On this side of the Atlantic, in 1991, Nike chose the controversial cricketer, Ian Botham to endorse it's products. Botham was not only great at his sport, but was a blonde, handsome, wild athlete, who was known to drink and womanise. Because of his outrageous behaviour, he has continuously filled the head-lines of London's tabloids like the 'Sun'. In that same year, Botham single-handedly took out Australia in the 1981 test series.

Another star that Nike endorsed more recently was Ian Wright, 'Mr. Angry', the England and Arsenal mid fielder. Interestingly enough, Wright recently served three match bans for punching an opponent on the head during a match. He now appears in Nike's new BAFTA award-winning advertisement.

Andre Agassi, had been on Nikes books since he was 14 years old. As Mc Enroe aged, Agassi was signed up, not only because he rated number 6 in the top 40 athletes, but for his sex appeal, and




19 Michael Jordan in 1984, signing the most successful athletes' endorsement in history.

In 1986, Nike signed up Bo Jackson. What attracted them to do so was the fact that Jackson was not only a professional foot-baller, but also a professional base-baller, a one in a million athlete. Nike offered Jackson a \$100,000 contract for three years. He was just what they had been looking for -an all rounder, who they chose to promote their 180 cross Trainer, (Fig. 20), suitable for several sporting activities.

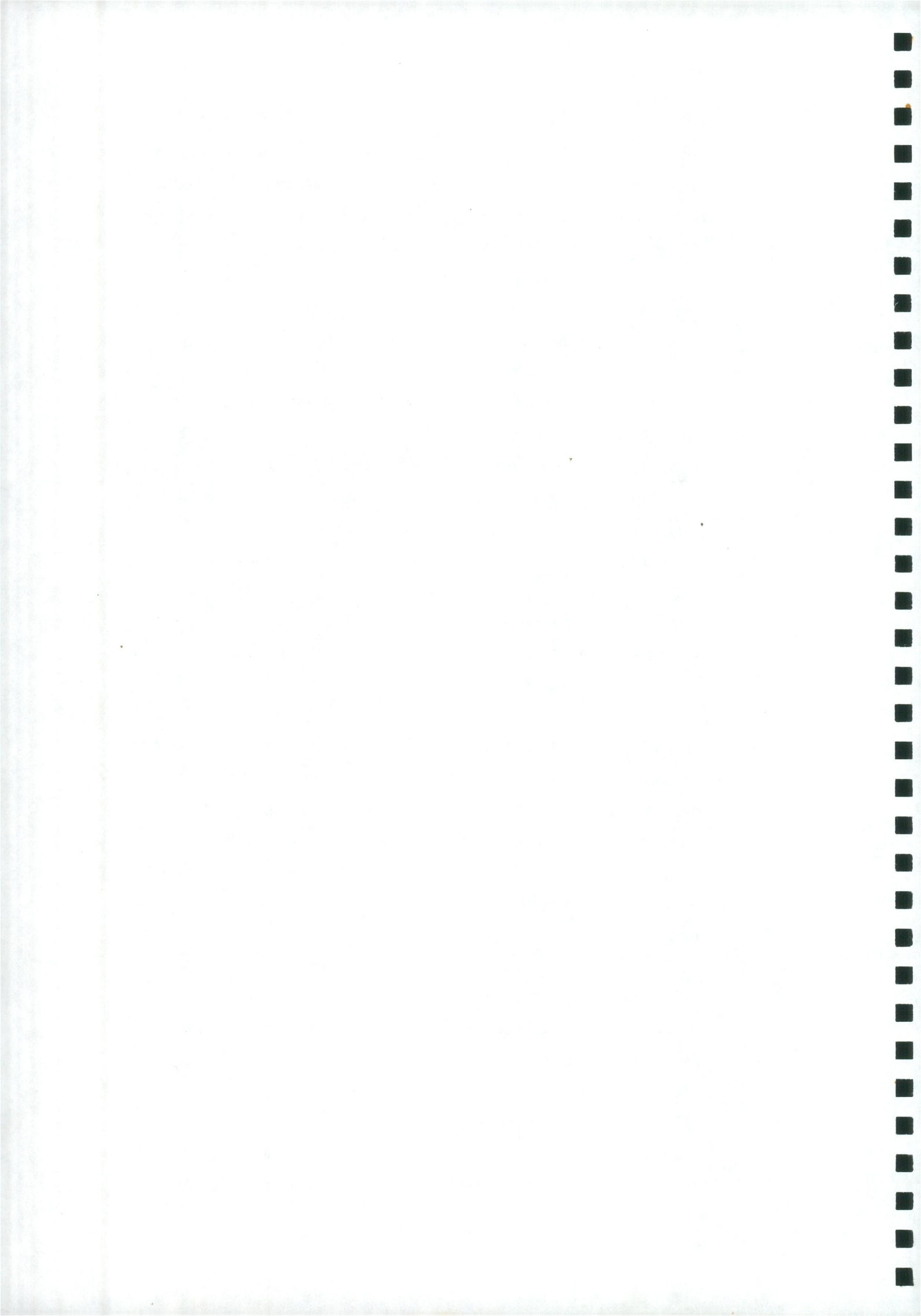
Nikes advertising agency, Wieden and Kennedy, came up with a promotion for Jackson, the 'Bo Knows' adverts, incorporating endorsed stars from different sports- Michael Jordan, Ian Botham and John Mc Enroe, commenting on Jackson's ability to play at any sport, and therefore insinuating that he knows what is best for the consumer.

Rival sports companies then followed suit, like Reebok, who have recently endorsed basket-ball player Shaquille O' Neal, to promote their trainers.

At the age of 20, 'The Shaq', (Fig. 21), as he is known, is worth £46 million worth of deals, including Spalding Sports, Action Toys, collector cards and most recently Pepsi-Cola. O' Neill now promotes the new Shaq- Attack range of shoes and clothing, including the 'Shaq Pump Graphité coolmax' trainer, for which Reebok have been rumoured to have paid \$10 million to have him endorse.

"Shaq's the perfect figure head for sport. Young, talented, successful, exciting to watch. Be in no doubt, he'll sell us shoes." - Steve Bracewell, Reeboks brand manager. 

The key to his success, unlike most of Nike's controversial endorsees, is his charm, humour and modesty, making him one of the nicest youngsters in sport. O'Neal, like most up and coming



his outrageous fashion sense. (At Wimbledon in 1991, he was refused play when he arrived out on Centre Court wearing 'pinkie whites'. However, he went on to win the Wimbledon title in 1992.) In 1985, Nike offered Michael Jordan a \$3 million five year endorsement (Fig. 19), (the third highest in history), along with a range of boots and clothing on which he received royalties. Nike had had their eye on Jordan for years, even before he was the number one basket-ball player, he was however exciting to watch.

Jordan was formerly an Adidas endorser, but when he asked them to match Nike's price, they could not.

Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls, is considered to be the most famous sports-man in America today, (Kinnersly, 1993, pg. 21) and the greatest basket-ball player ever. Due to America's obsession with sport, Jordan is seen, not just as another top sporting figure, but instead, has been elevated to the status of a superstar.

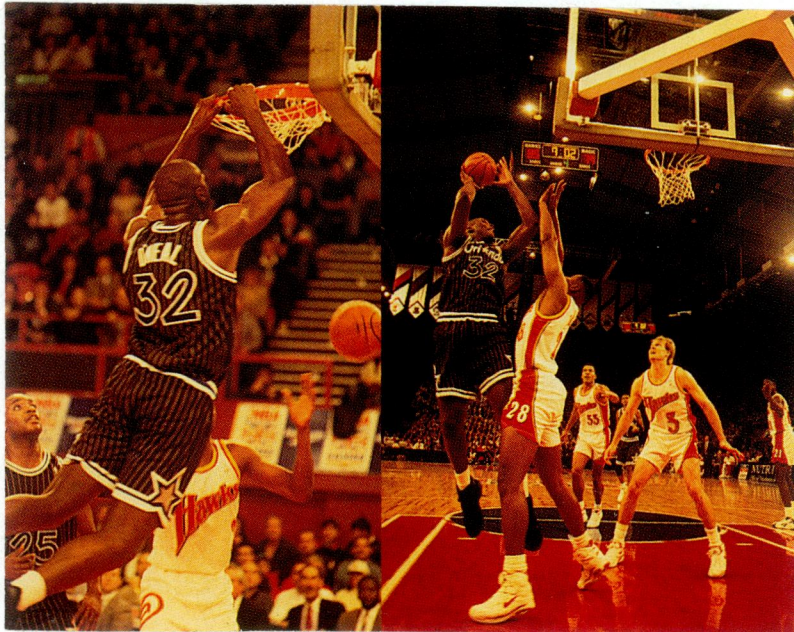
Jordan is considered to be an influential role model, appealing to young inner city youths, which prompted Nike to develop a sub-brand incorporating Jordan, which was the first time ever for them. They came up with the logo 'Air Jordan' which was to become their best seller world-wide, and a status symbol for many street gangs.

Jordan, who is a member of America's basketball Olympic gold-winning 'Dream Team', earns £2.6 million per annum, and from Nike an estimated £13.5 million per annum endorsement fee.

Nike has helped Jordan to become the first super-star of the trainer era. As soon as Jordan's shoes hit the shelves, they were sold out. On the first day alone, 30,000 pairs at \$65 a go 'Trainer Wars', Wee productions, Channel Four, 1993), Jordan mania had arrived and was here to stay.



20 Model of Nike's "180 Cross Trainer".



21 Basketball star Shaq O' Neal.

sport's stars is well educated, with a degree under his belt, and has been tutored on how to deal with the media. O' Neal himself knows exactly what these deals mean,

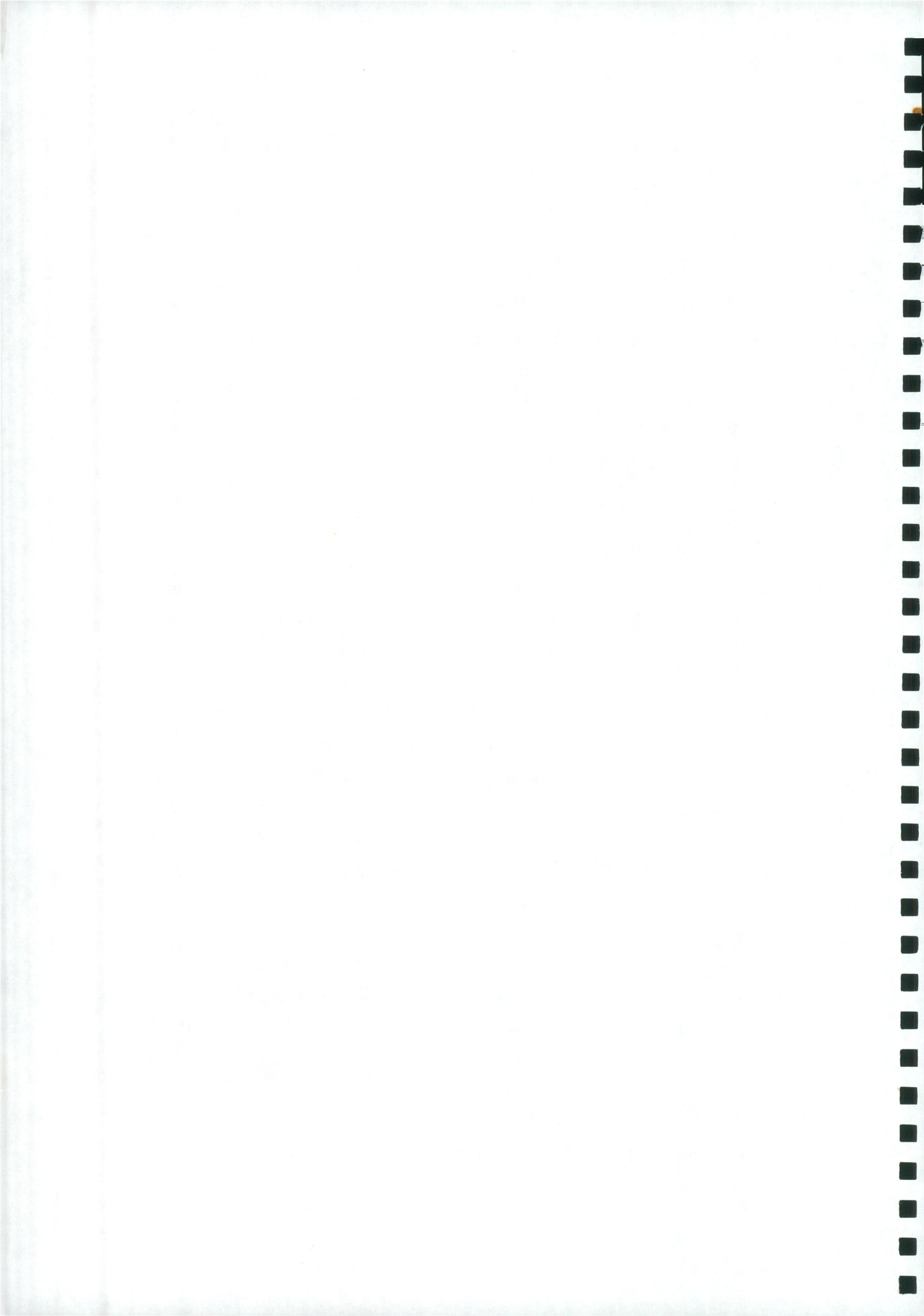
"A sneaker was just a sneaker, until I was ready to go pro. Then I discovered a sneaker is definitely more. It's financial security. The public is tired of the rude sports star who won't sign autographs; they want to cheer for the nice guy. Sport is more than just a business, it's show business". Alex Martins, director of media relations with Orlando Magic (Kinnersly, 1993. pg. 25).

ADVERTISING TRAINERS

One popular trend in trainer advertising, is the use of film directors, in which Nike's advertising agency Wieden and Kennedy, set the ball rolling. They chose cult film director Spike Lee, famous for his long running 'Just do it' and the 'Bo knows' cross trainer campaigns for Nike. Lee, who is well known for his strong views on discrimination against the Afro- American communities, targeted towards the black lower class market, has created controversy, particularly for his 'Jordan' advertisements, for which Nike was accused of being the cause of a spate of violent muggings in black urban area's. (Leith, 1990, pg. 3) Spike Lee appears in his 'Get Some' television commercials, has been by the press, especially the New York Post (Leith, 1990, pg. 3, who accused him of "*fanning the flames of consumer lust*"

Lee has however, been extremely influential over American youth in a positive way, for example, Spike Lee's 'Stay in School' campaign in 1990, and since a large percentage of their youth market come from single parent families, they are encouraged to treat their 'heroes' like Jordan as father figures.

Wieden and Kennedy certainly have a formula which works and have made Nike advertising the most widely admired world-wide.

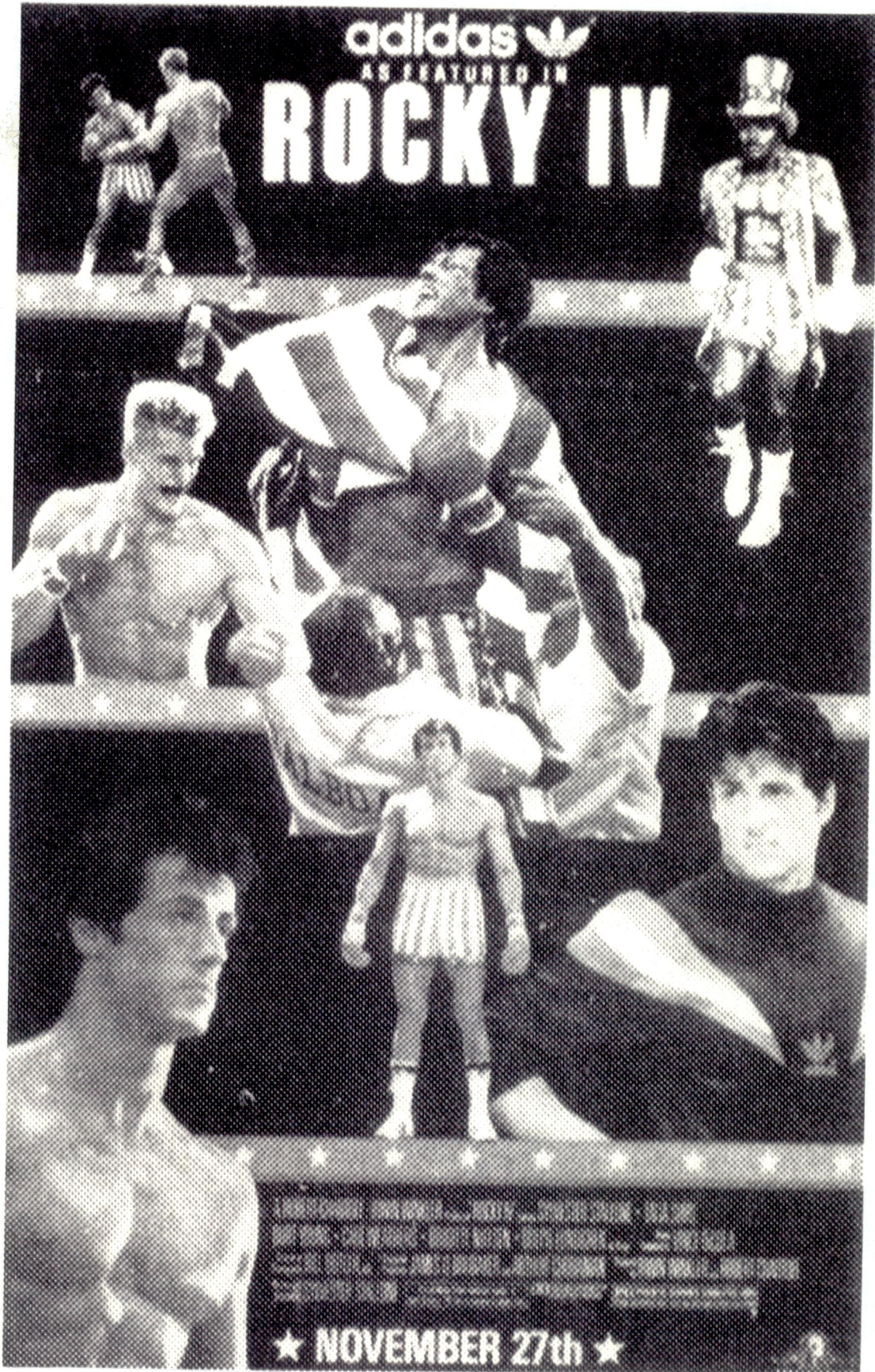


For years, Reebok played it safe and ran very insipid ads, which in no way matched up to those being produced by their rivals- Nike. Hence they approached an advertising company called Chiat-Day, in 1988, to see could they do for Reebok what they did so successfully for Nike.

The director they worked with was the controversial photographer David Bailey. Bailey's commercials for Reebok sports shoes caused such trouble and were so effective that a New York fan hurled a fire hydrant through Macy's department store window in order to steal the trainers and posters. The Reebok 'Let U.B.U', campaign in 1989, contained whacky images with witty voice overs of Ralph Emerson quotations. Soon kids were quoting from the Emerson essay 'Self Reliance', with phrases like "insist on yourself; Never imitate". This became one of their most successful commercials to date. Reebok's next two commercials-'The Globe' and 'Human Sculpture' in 1989, were extremely experimental which filmed people doing the strangest things totally unrelated to sport in any way.

Even though the companies were far from Chiat-Days best, competition against Nike was so intense that Reebok had to buy time until their new product the 'Pump' came onto the market. Therefore to keep themselves on the public's minds, Chiat-Day had the tough job of coming up with an advertising campaign that in fact did not even show their trainers.

As the marketing war between the sporting giants continues, a relatively new company 'L.A. Gear' has come onto the market to sell shoes for non-sporting purposes. Their colours tie in with seasonal trends and their image is based on the Californian lifestyle. Their advertising campaigns show tanned people, walking along a beach, smiling a lot. More recently, they have begun to endorse pop stars in an effort to win the trainer fashion



22 Adidas promotional poster for the film "Rocky IV".

market.

Reebok's advertising campaigns in the 1990's, have become more exciting and thrilling, for example, 'The Edge' which shows a young man running along the steel girders of an uncompleted building, bringing to mind non-sporting images of fear, risk and knife blades.

Their aim in the future is to find a way to sell trainers that is not just athletically oriented similar to that of Nike whose advertising has become so subtle, that they are no longer promoting the shoe but instead their image, for example, one of their advertisements showed a group of kids running along the street barefooted, which is similar to techniques used by Benetton's advertisers, who can afford to leave the product out of their advertisements completely and still get their message across.

Placing branded shoes in box office films has become huge business in recent years; one example is Sylvester Stallone's 'Rocky' series (Fig.22), throughout the 1980's, in which Adidas designed his warm up suit and then promoted its product with posters and tee-shirts. There are several leading sport shoe companies who have full time public relations personnel working on film placements continuously for fees on a par with those of television advertising rates. These films are viewed on average by 50 million people world-wide (Cheskin, op. cit, p. 74) and the manufacturers are then allowed to use film 'stills' in their advertising campaigns.

Nike was on of the first athletic shoe companies to use such promotional techniques in the late 1970's (Strasser and Becklund, 1991, pg. 299), when Nelson Farris, their promotion and advertising manager gave some kids pairs of trainers for a skateboard film, and they told actress, Farah Fawcett about them. She was given a pair of 'Senorita Cortezes' trainers to film a skateboard scene in the television series, 'Charlie's Angels'. When



23 Puma and Adidas vintage trainers.

female viewers of the programme saw Fawcett skate-boarding on screen in red 'Swooshes' (Nikes logo), there was an immediate boom in Nike sales. In just one week, all the most popular sizes were sold out, and all that it had cost Nike was a pair of free shoes.

In the late 1970's, Nike hired a stuntman, Stan Barret to give away trainers on the films sets to those who fitted film stars such as Burt Reynolds.

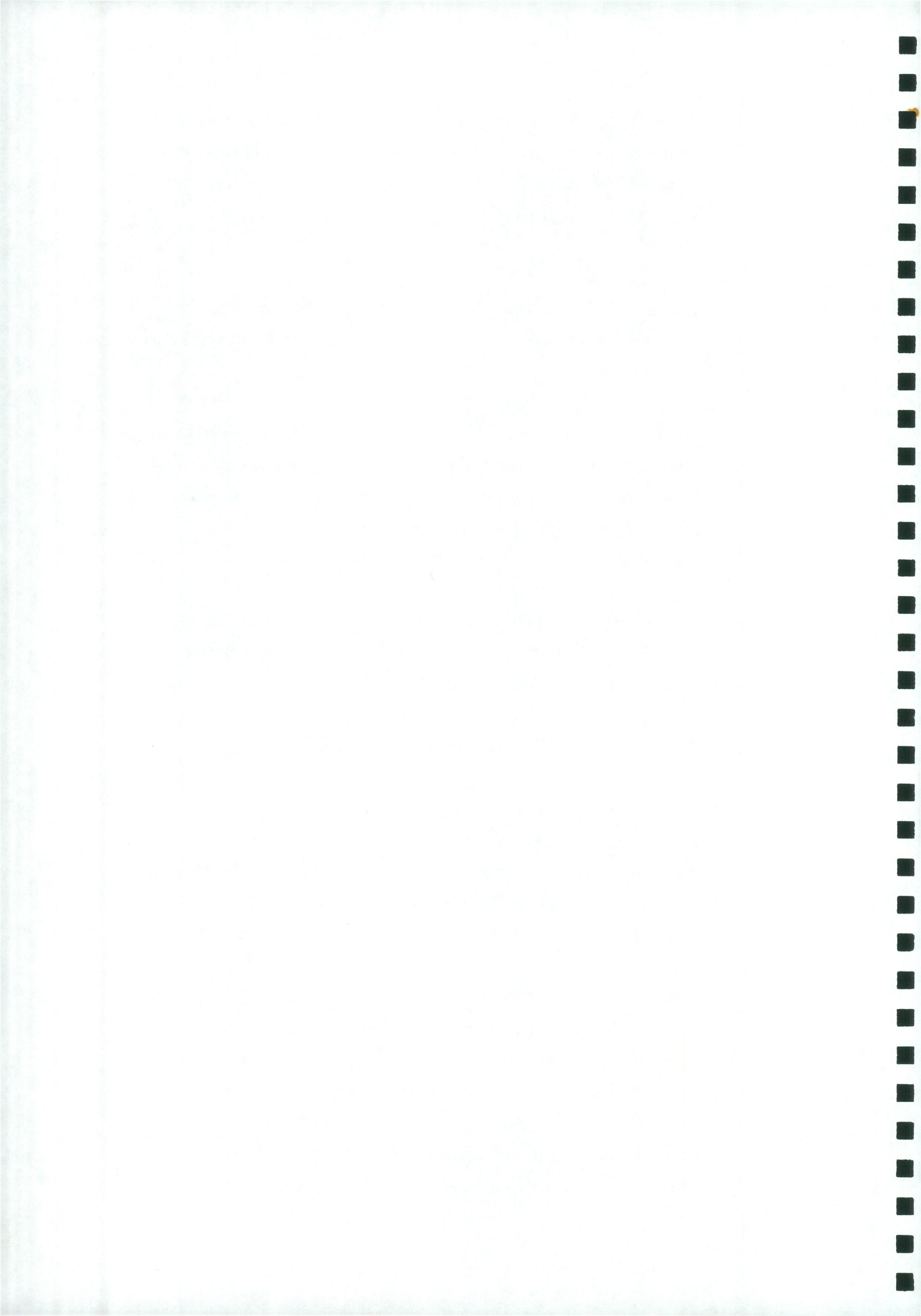
Soon, television series throughout the 1970's such as 'Starsky and Hutch', 'Barnaby Jones' and even 'Lassie', all had Nike trainers appearing in episodes. Lee Majors jumped in them in the 'Six Million Dollar Man', and even the 'Incredible Hulk' wore customised green trainers with thick black soles.

In the 1990's, Nike trainers have graced the feet of 'Bat-man', President Bill Clinton, U.S astronauts and even more unusual characters such as Pope John Paul II.

THE REVIVAL OF THE VINTAGE TRAINER

While companies like Nike and Reebok are battling it out in their television trainer war, spending millions of dollars on international advertising campaigns, in the early 1990's, there has been a revived demand for no-tech Puma and Adidas vintage trainers.

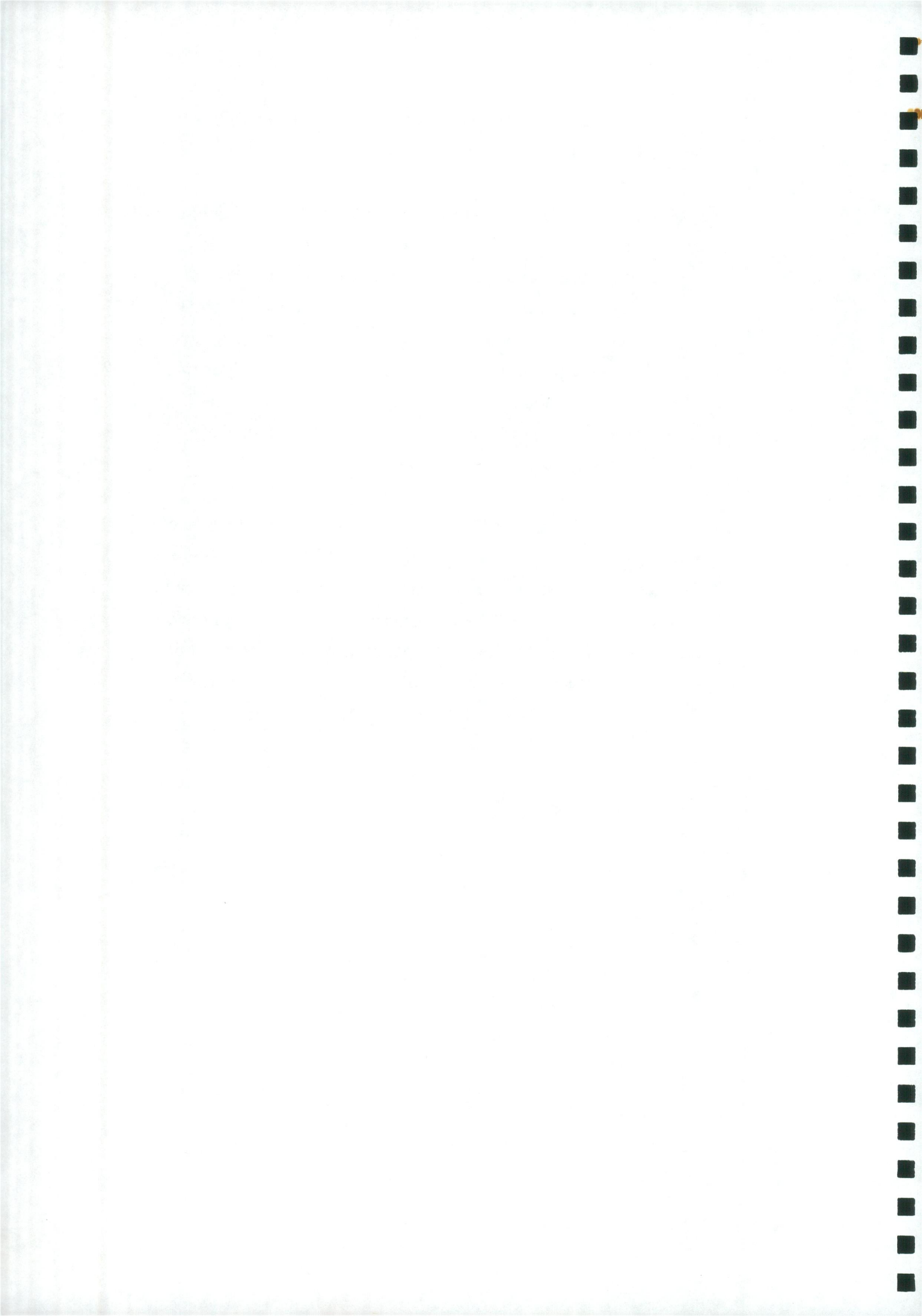
Adidas recently hired the film director David Lynch to make a new television advert for their latest model of trainers in an effort to improve their image, selling to the youth market against others like Nike and Reebok. However, ironically enough, while Adidas were attempting to make their product more street-wise by entering into the hi-tech inflatable footwear market, the most sought after trainers amongst teenagers were the plain vintage,



old style Adidas and Pumas (Fig. 23), that looked more like plimsolls when seen next to today's trainers.

This old school shoe revival is not an entirely 1990's phenomenon, but began in the early 1980's, when rap singers such as 'Run DMC', a U.S. rap band, began praising these trainers in a song called 'My Adidas'. In the late 1980's, on the streets of London and in night-clubs, fat laced Adidas 'Superstars', otherwise known as the 'Shell-toe' shoe, were in vogue and, more recent celebrities such as singer Madonna, actress Sharon Stone, and model Kate Moss can now be seen wearing their 'Puma Skates' in every possible photo shoot. (Palmer, 1993, pg. 100).

For the true trainer-spotter, money is no object since there are pairs rumoured to be sold for £600 in one shop in Japan (Palmer, 1993, pg. 99). Ironically, these plimsolls are selling both here and across the Atlantic for the same prices as 'box fresh' trainers and since they are slightly difficult to attain there is an element of exclusivity attached, therefore making them status symbols amongst teenagers of the 1990's.



FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

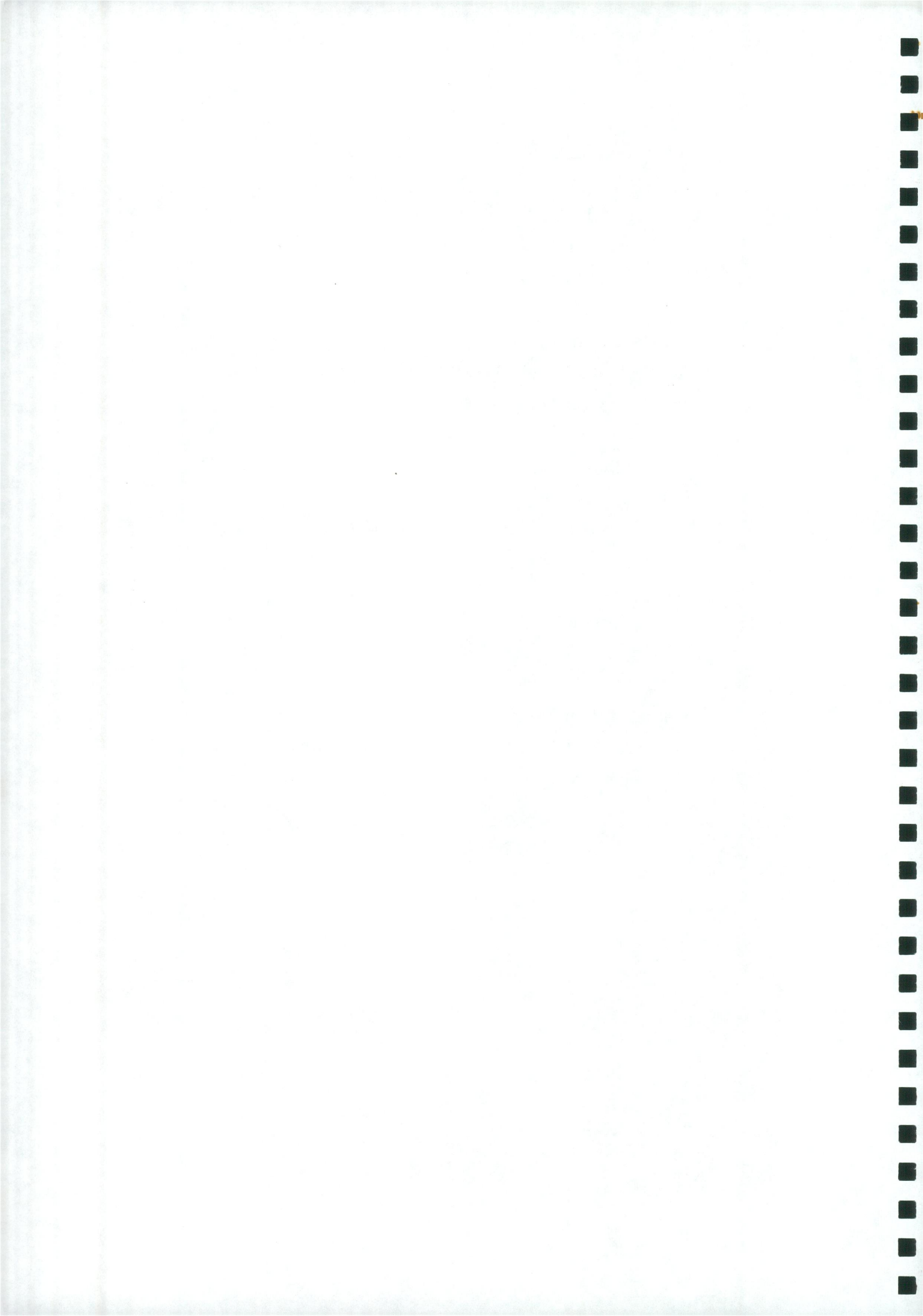
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CHAPTER FOUR

INTERVIEWS

I interviewed

(a) former shoe designer, Frances Mc Donagh, (and current head of the Fashion and Textiles department in the National College of Art and Design, Dublin), to discuss her views on the development of the trainer as a fashion accessory and how it has affected the current shoe industry.

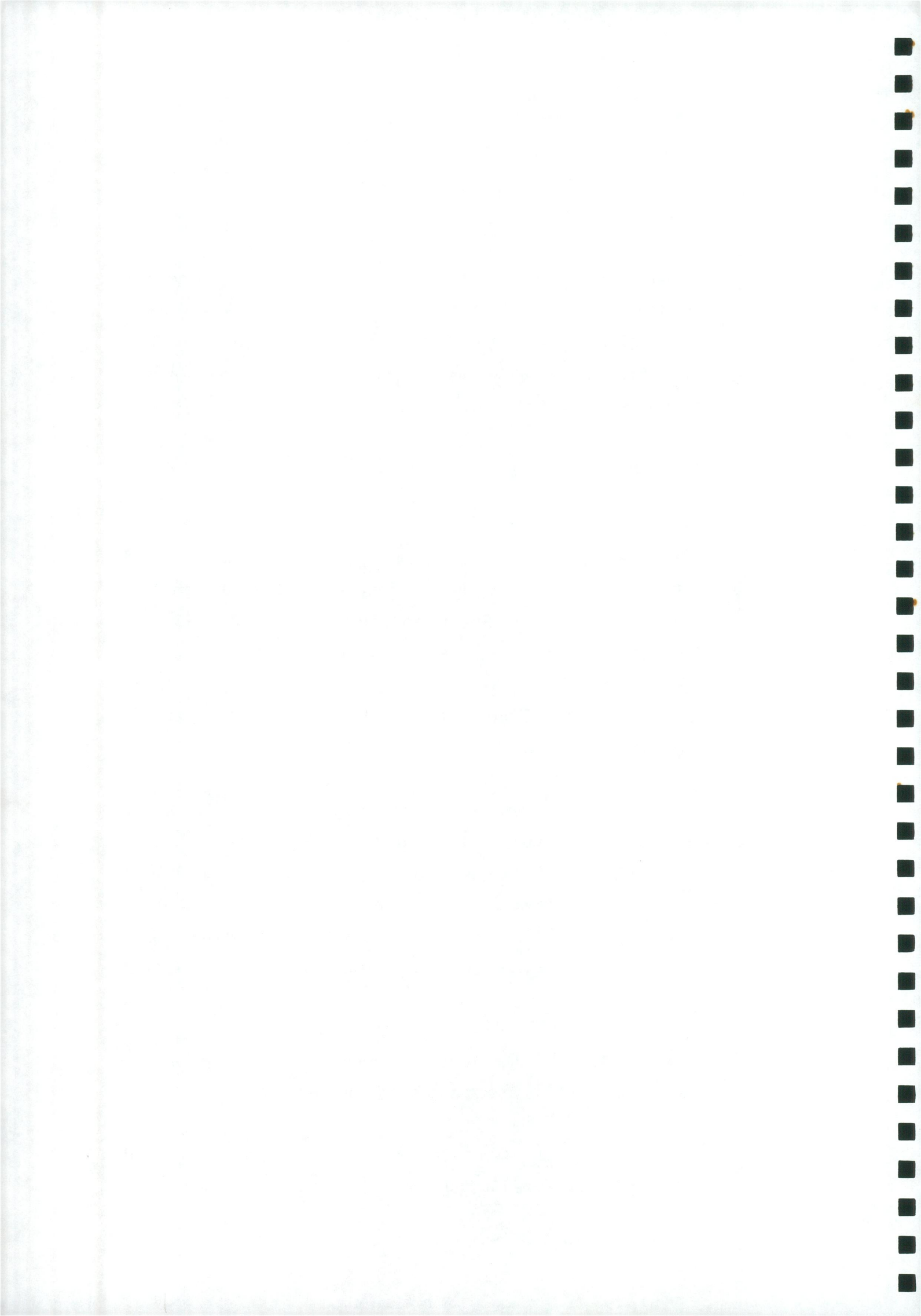
(b) Brian O'Neill, former proprietor of 'Winn Stanley's' footwear company, and current proprietor of 'Skipper' footwear in Dublin.

(c) I chose four sport's shops in Dublin's city centre, and interviewed the store managers to discover the differences in their customer profiles. Two are situated North of the Liffey (Arnotts, Henry street, Champion Sports, O' Connell street) and two are situated South of the River (Life-style, St Stephens Green Centre, Marathon Sports, Grafton street). All statistical information is supplied by the interviewees.

When asked if trainers were bought more as a fashion accessory than for genuine sports reasons, all but one store agreed. Life-style caters for an older customer, the average is 30 years old, 70% of which are middle class and have a genuine interest in sport. However, North of the River, Champion Sports believe that only 1 in 10 pairs of trainers they sell will never be worn for sporting purposes.

The effect that the boom in trainers had on the conventional shoe market both in Ireland and abroad was enormous.

When Ireland first entered the E.E.C. in 1973, there were around 4,000 people employed in the shoe trade and about 25 factories in

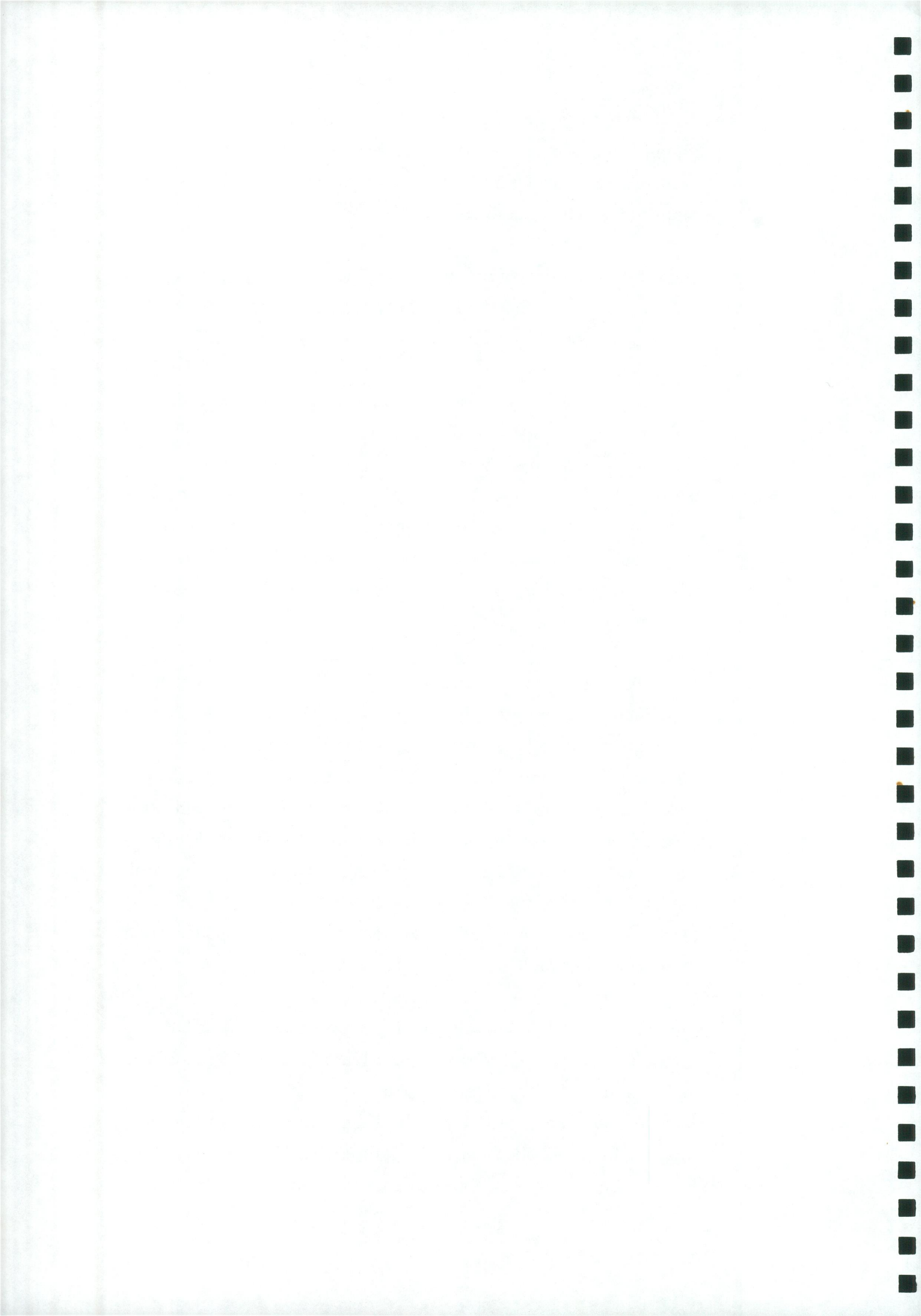


all. Today, there are only about 450 people left. The amount of shoes imported in the 1970's was approximately 35%, but unfortunately now figures have risen dramatically to at least 95%, many of these being trainers.

Ireland's shoe industry was not only affected by cheaper models of 'Knock off' shoes from the Far East, but also by countries within the E.E.C. like Spain and especially Portugal. These affected us badly due to their low labour costs, (a 1/4 of the price of a pair of shoes), overheads, (the price that foreigner factory workers are being paid in a month is equivalent to what an Irish worker would earn in a week, but Irish workers would also receive a production bonus'), and materials, (1/2 the price of a pair of shoes) coming from the same countries. The small size of Irish factories could not cater for the machinery needed to produce trainers such as injection moulding methods for which you also need high investment.

In order to compete with these cheaper imported shoes, Irish manufactures must produce products that other countries are not making satisfactorily. However, in Ireland the advantages that we have over the competition are that, people on the whole are encouraged and make a conscious effort to buy Irish: and after sales survive is very important in that, if an Irish retailer has a problem, he knows that he can get satisfaction, since the Irish tend to look after their customers very well. If we did not have these advantages, the Portuguese alone could knock out the Irish shoe trade completely.

The shoe market in Ireland has had to reach a certain balance between conventional footwear and trainers. The future of the footwear industry in Ireland is gradually shrinking. In order to survive, the Irish shoe industry has had to diversify rather than compete in established markets, Skipper Footwear, for example, make specific types of footwear, i.e. they manufacture men's



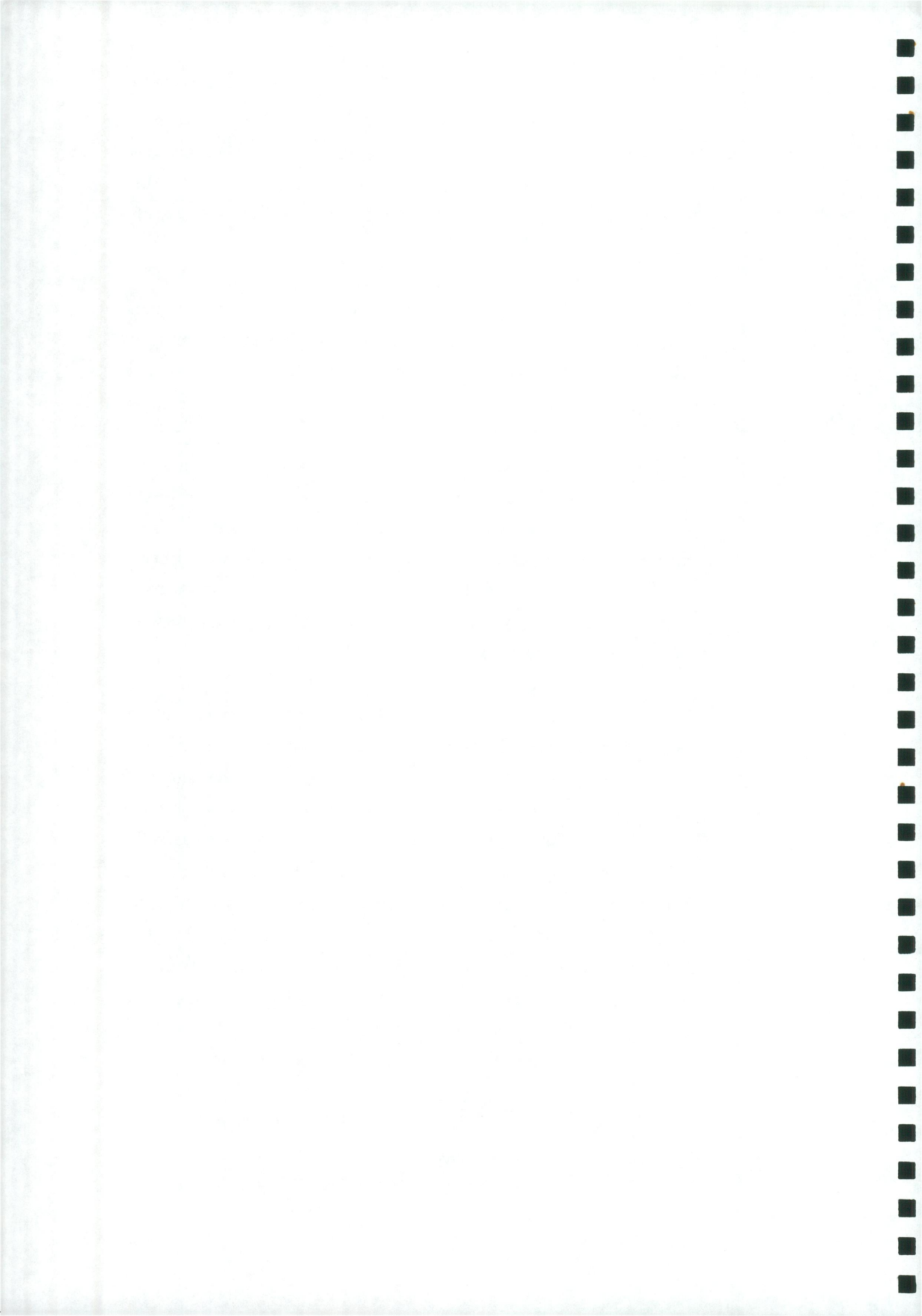
walking shoes in the winter and throughout the year make a range of golf shoes in 14 different styles. Brian O' Neill has been involved in making shoes since 1953, and he is so dedicated to his work that he will continue making shoes even if he is not making a profit doing so, in order to keep the industry alive in Ireland.

When asked if people put style before comfort when buying trainers, everyone agreed. Champion Sports believe that teenagers will purchase shoes either too small or too big for them in order to have the latest styles.

Mrs Mc Donagh believes that there has always been an element of people wearing the wrong sized shoes. When she sold shoes in the 1970's, people would insist that they took a certain shoe size, for example a four when they were really a five, so you would bring out the size five and say that it was a small fit "There's always a huge element of vanity, there has to be, controlling one's vanity for one's health has always been an issue," she says.

Trainers made out of man- made fibres which, are not polymeric, are unhealthy for peoples feet. A trainer could have as many as 6-8 impermeable layers of material on the upper part of the shoe and the bottom half is made of E.V.A. (Ethanol Vinyl Acetate) or some other form of rubber. As a result, there is no breathing space for the feet, encased in their own perspiration all day. As a result of this, there are many people in Ireland today with a foot condition that they will not recognise as being anything strange, but the skin on their feet will be shiny. Trainers are usually more comfortable to wear than conventional shoes. This is deceptive to people who wear trainers for non-sporting purposes and think that the more comfortable the shoe, the healthier they are for one's feet.

There are, specific levels of acceptance within the design of trainers, even though in general, most sports-shoes look no different form the next brand. Frances Mc Donagh, disputes the

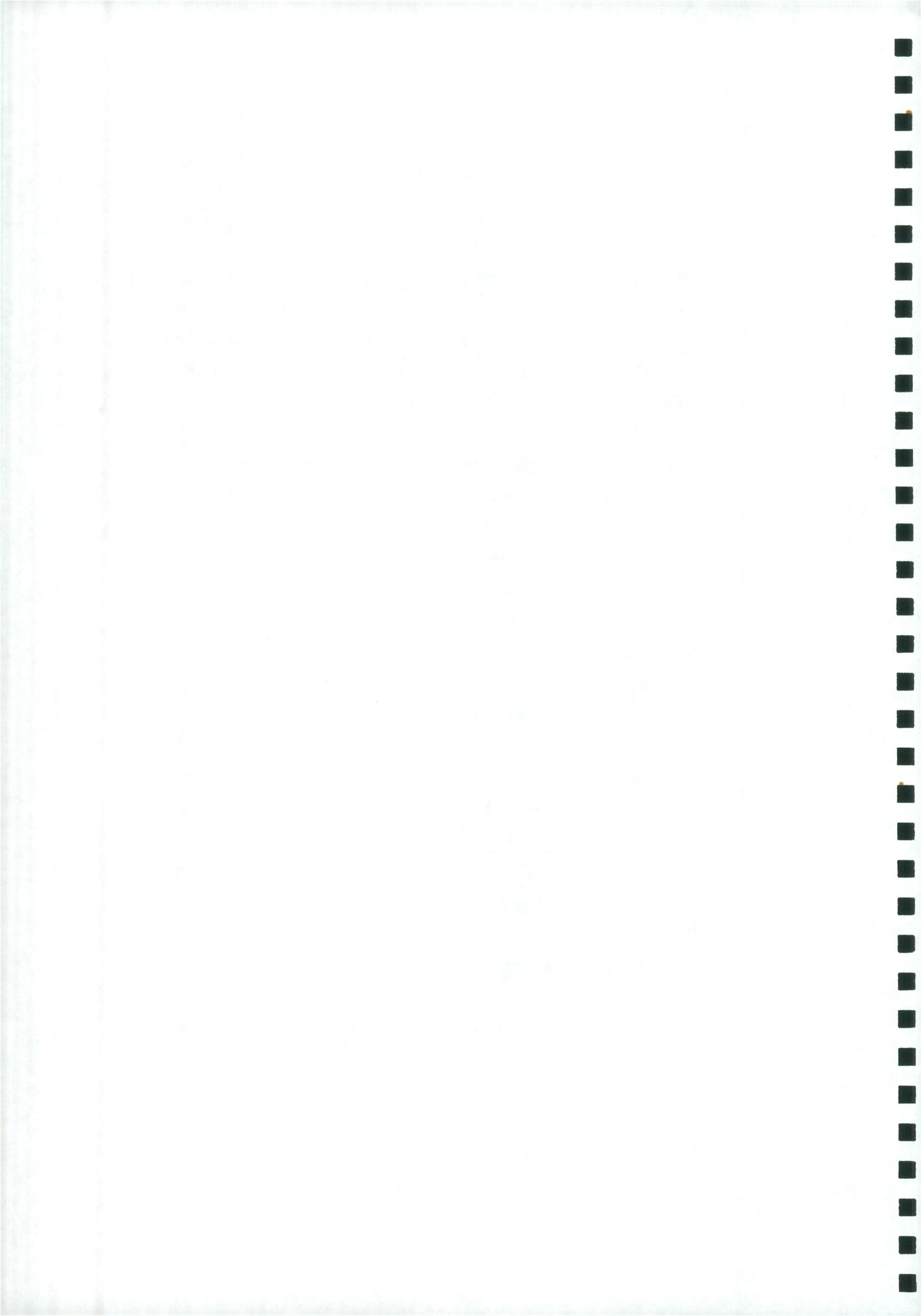


fact that I have stated earlier, that 30 or so pieces that make up a trainer have no function whatsoever. Instead she believes that every part of a piece of footwear has a function in terms of its overall performance. You could say that a lot of labels are gimmicks, but the overall cut and pieces within the footwear are all essential. The element of fitting in footwear is crucial. In general, you cut to a 32nd of an inch accuracy in conventional footwear, but with trainers it is a 64th of an inch, so technically the sizing and grading is immensely precise, so there is no room for error in its construction.

One of the latest trainer shoe companies to appear on the market is L.A. Gear, originally based in Los Angeles. They saw the trainer as a fashion item and that is how they treated it in their advertising and marketing. Teenagers who buy trainers in 'Champion Sports', (north of the River), already have their minds up and will buy the higher priced high-tech models regardless of what their staff advise, In 'Life-style', (south of the River), consumers are older, and will seek advice from their staff as to which trainer is suitable for whatever sport.

Frances Mc Donagh being a shoe designer, does not think that trainers are remotely attractive or stylish. However, as part of the anti-fashion look of the 1990's, trainers look much more suitable worn with most clothes today than a lot of conventional foot-wear would look with these clothes.

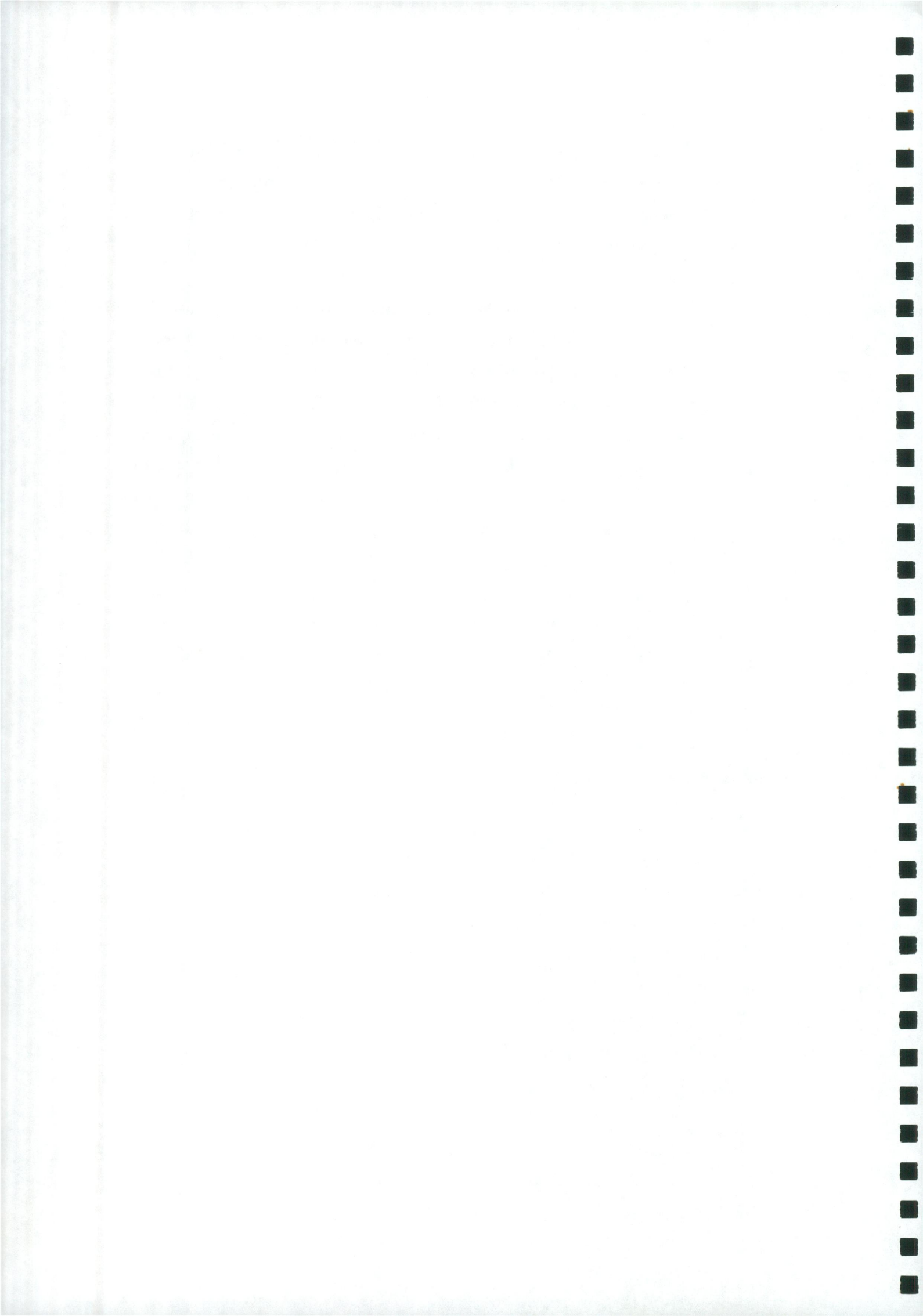
When asked if the 'trainer mania' is a fad or will it last, people had mixed opinions. Frances Mc Donagh believes that since trainers have in the market place for over 30 or so years, they have become like jeans, 'Doc Martins' or the tee-shirt, a classic item of attire which would never have been worn by men or women earlier in this century. However, since the revamping of the 'work-wear' look, there is less sexing of clothing, and instead more androgynous look.



The trainer industry is going through a transition, where the chunky look hiking boot, with its heavy sole and stitching, is taking over, although Brian O' Neill believes that they will probably never hit a grass field.

When asked if trainers or just certain brands of trainers are getting a bad image especially on the street, most people agreed that it was not the trainer itself, generally it is not an aggressive looking shoe, unlike the 'Doc Martin', but its wearers may be and it also depends on what is co-ordinated with the trainer. Frances Mc Donagh believes that any product which is picked up by a gang element, is bound to get a bad image. It is not however, going to stop trainers from being worn, as the high-tech models have become a status symbol amongst teenagers.

Trainers have become part of the way of life at the end of the century, and there is no sign of them disappearing over night.



CONCLUSION

The violence and crime associated with sports-wear products such as Nike 'Air Jordan' trainers are influenced by these companies advertising techniques. Through their use of aggressively masculine images of sport incorporating a lot of sweat, muscle, grunts of effort, and by way contrast the non-sporting images of fear and risk, Nike were accused of "fanning the flames of dangerous lust" (Leith, 1990, pg 4.).

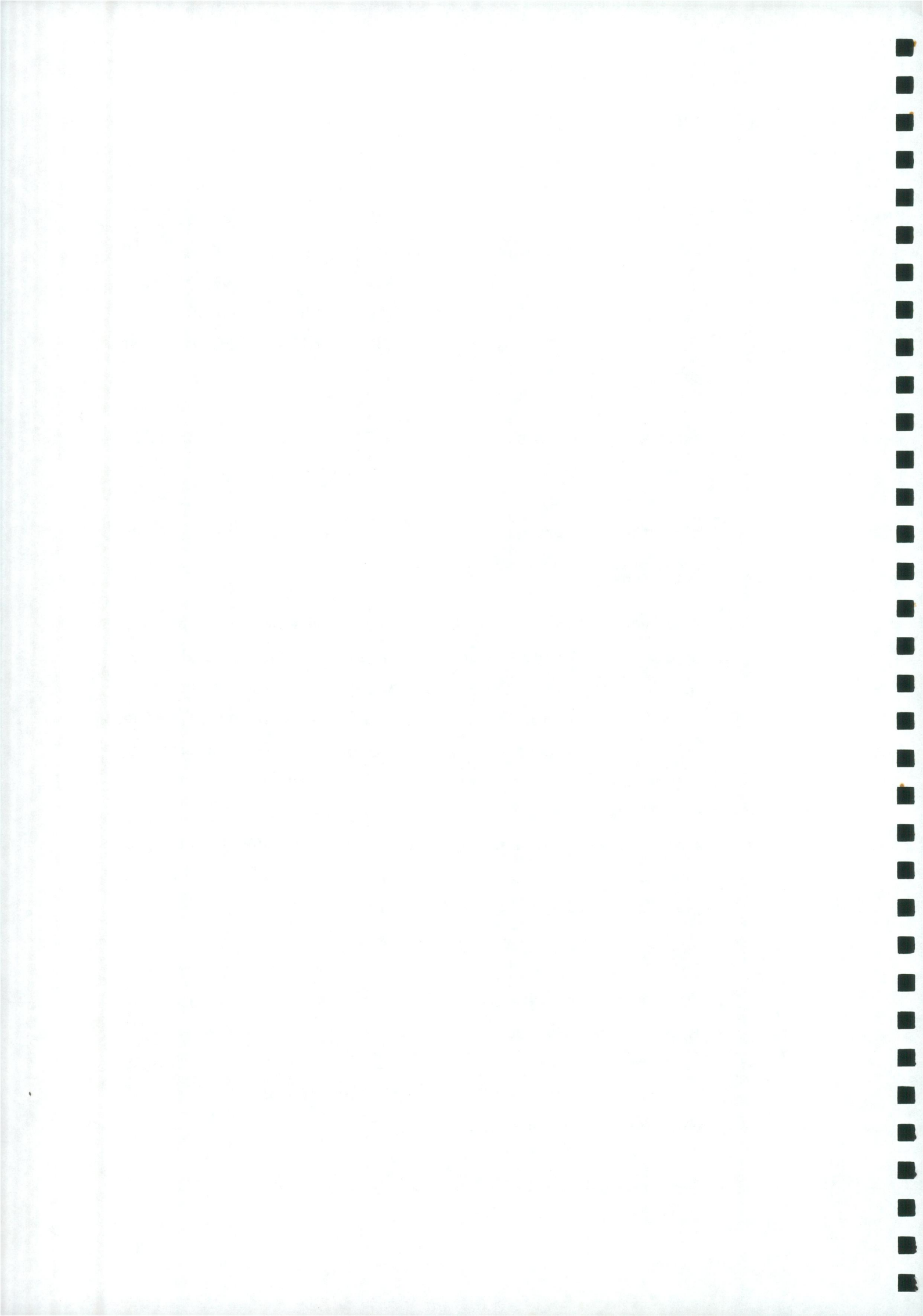
Sport's shoe advertising plays on the glamour of athletic prestige and the ostentation of machoism, the basis for gang culture. Trainers, within these gangs have now been elevated to the status of teen icons, representing these youths' positions within a gang or community, and thus becoming the ultimate hard funk accessory.

However, sports-wear companies cannot be entirely blamed for sports related crimes, since it involves the economic and social problems in these urban communities. Any product which is picked up by a gang element is bound to get a bad image on the street, since it becomes a form of uniform in certain urban areas. It is just bad luck to which ever company this happens to.

Due to the endorsement of top sporting athletes, sport is not just a business, but it is now show-business, paying highly visual sports personalities scandalously large sums of money.

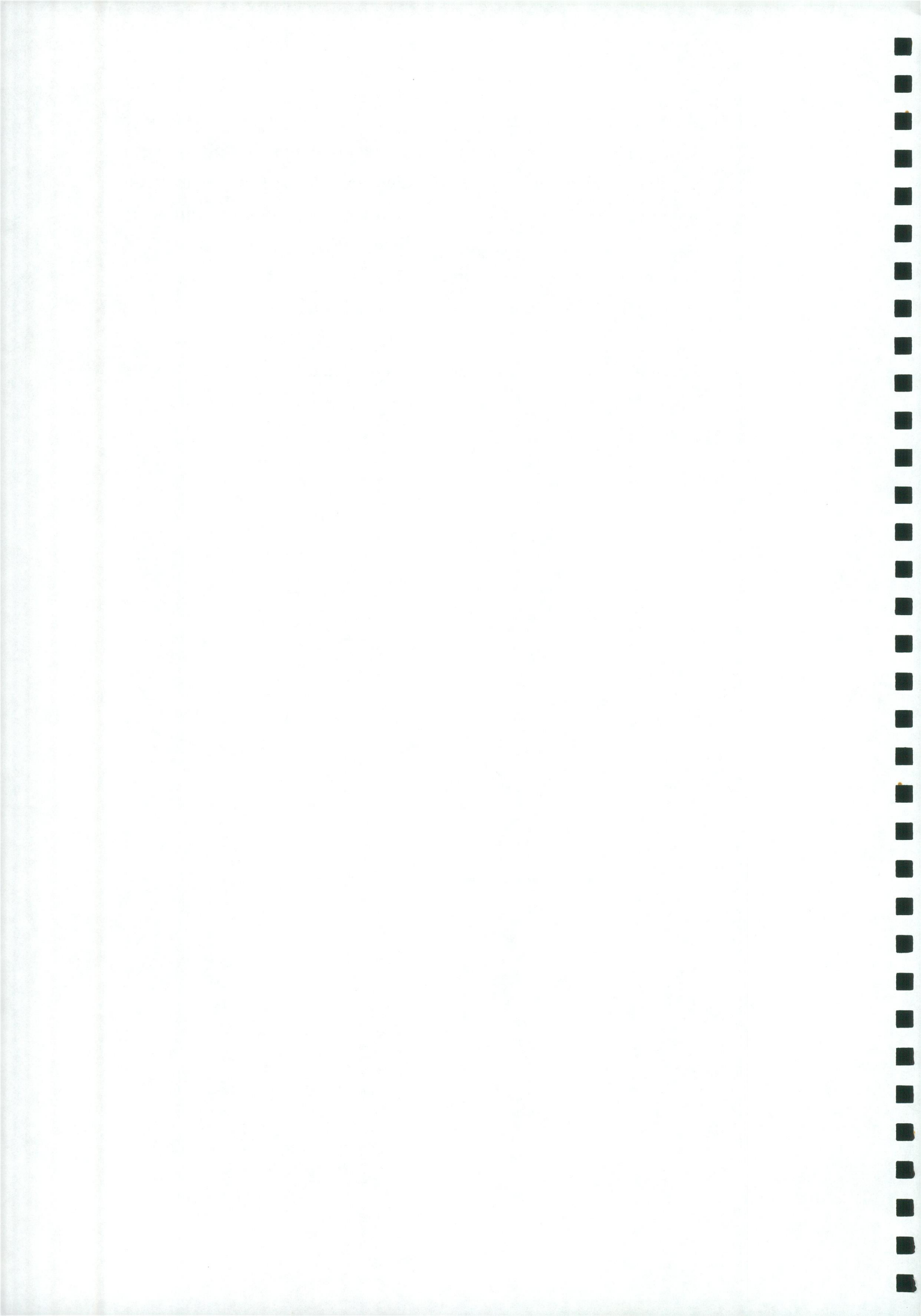
Nike's controversial choice of endorsees have added an element of humour to their advertising campaigns with slogans such as 'Mc Enroe Swears By Them'. When they employ a person to endorse their products, they are also employing that person's unique characteristics. Since then most other leading sports shoe companies have followed suit.

Trainers have become a classic item of clothing over the past three



decades along with the Doc Marten and the tee-shirt. However some high-tech sports shoes have become synonymous with images of violence through their association as standard attire for gang members. The high-tech shoe, usually with abundant gimmicks, appeals to teenagers, though on the whole older people do not find it remotely attractive or stylish. For this end of the market the chunky, no-tech hiking boot is now more popular.

Fashion and taste will ultimately keep changing, but as long as the public has time to devote to leisure activities, the trainer will remain popular.



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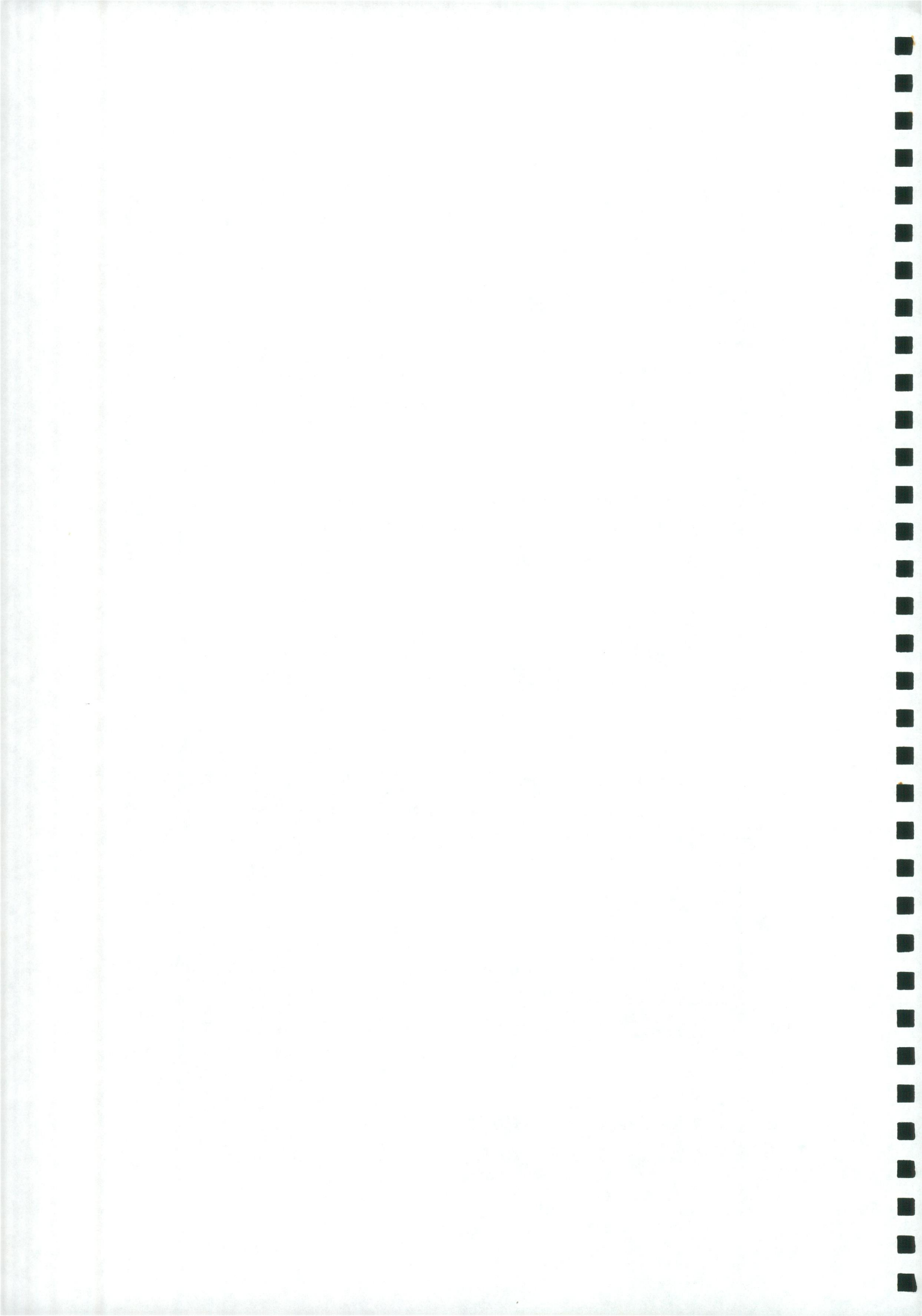
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