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RECREATING MAN:
HUNTING AND ANGLING IN VICTORIA, CANADA

by

Richard P. Manning, B.A. [hon's]

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Canadian Studies

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

April 6, 1994

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"Recreating Man: Hunting and Angling
in Victorian Canada"

submitted by Richard Manning, Hons. B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

For the "gentleman sportsman" in 19th-century Canada, recreational hunting and angling were sports that embodied medieval notions of strength, wisdom, aggressiveness and dominance. Having evolved as a mechanism to bolster masculine and class identities, the genteel European sporting tradition was adopted by Canadian sportsmen to counter what were perceived to be the emasculating tendencies of modernity. As was the case for most members of the international sporting fraternity, Canadian sportsmen saw themselves as participants in a "timeless" ritual that relied on the wilderness experience as a means of informing manhood.

The European tradition also had a few adherents in the United States, but by the 1890's, the "myth of the frontier" gave birth to the cult of the "buckskin" hunter -- an American sporting sub-culture that explored primitivism as a means of exercising manhood. Canadian sportsmen were not immune to this phenomenon, and by the end of the 19th century the dominant European tradition in Canada was tinged with a North American mind-set that saw primitivism as a valid way of experiencing wilderness. Thus the sporting culture that emerged in late 19th-century Canada used both "old world" and "new world" sensibilities to explore the relationship of masculinity to nature.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
CHAPTER	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. NATURE AND LEISURE IN THE MODERN ERA.....	15
2. FROM SURVIVAL TO PLAY: THE BIRTH OF THE SPORTING IDEAL.....	37
3. HUMANISTS, HUNTERS AND THE DEFENSE OF SPORT.....	59
4. RITUAL, SYMBOL AND THE SPORTING MYTH.....	78
5. PRIMITIVISM AND THE QUEST FOR MANLINESS.....	96
6. CLASS, COMPETITION AND THE POWER OF CULTURE.....	117
CONCLUSION.....	131
NOTES.....	145
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	161

INTRODUCTION

Man is by natural instinct a sportsman. Since Nimrod hunted through post-diluvian forests and Diana through those of mythology, the pursuit of game has been to mankind one of the most delightful pas-times and keenest enjoyments. The fisherman with well worn tweed and favourite "fly", winding his way at early dawn to the cool brookside, where the spotted silver of the trout flashes in the shadows, considers himself the happiest of mortals. The hunter in corduroys, shouldering his ideal breech-loader with his trusty retriever at his heels, as he listens for the "whir" of the grouse, the "houk" of the wild, goose or watches the thin line of ducks in the sky, would not change places with a king on his throne.(1)

At the turn of the 19th century, sentiments of this kind were common in sporting literature. They revealed a belief among sportsmen(2) that hunting and angling were more than just leisure pursuits -- that they were in fact essential to one's full masculine development and well-being. There was also an implication that the sportsman was a truly blessed and fortunate individual, for he had found a kind of happiness of which even those in otherwise better circumstances were unaware. The joy of communing with nature through an ageless ritual was something that Victorian sportsmen rarely took for granted.

The kind of fulfilment that hunting and angling provided for the Victorian sportsman had a special premium

in the latter half of the 19th century. As western societies began to suffer the negative effects of urbanization and industrialization, a number of social problems heightened collective anxieties about the future.(3) The modern way of life undermined pastoral and religious sensibilities, placed people in unhealthy slums and workplaces, and left them at the mercy of science and its technical wizards. In this stressful and unstable environment, forms of recreation that emphasised immutable values and a healthful lifestyle were particularly appealing for Victorians. For hunters and anglers, sport promised a deeper understanding of wilderness, and a chance to re-discover the primal relationship of man and nature.

The purpose of this study is to examine the sub-culture of the elite hunting and angling enthusiasts in Canada as they defined their gender identity through European and North American sporting traditions. Although the Victorian sporting fraternity must be viewed in light of the class, racial, national, and other similar dynamics that informed society, these dimensions of the sportsman's world were often less significant than was his gender identity. The Victorian hunter and angler sought wilderness in an effort to discover and test his manly attributes. Unlike urban life, which was thought to sap men of their virility, nature was considered to be the true measure of a man.

Even though the elite Victorian sportsman generally

held civilization in low regard, it nonetheless provided him with a culturally acceptable vehicle for accessing nature. Therefore this study must consider the various national sporting traditions that made the journey of self-discovery possible. As we will learn, Canadian sportsmen generally pursued game in the fashion of the English country gentleman. Towards the turn of the 19th century, however, this tradition was slightly altered by a "typically North American" interest in primitivism, and less "formal" approaches to recreation.(4)

The idea that the study of recreational hunting and angling can provide insight into how Victorians adapted to modernity is not one to which historians, either in Canada or abroad, have paid much attention. Only on rare occasions have Canadian historians made mention of hunting and angling, and when they have, it has been an incidental reference which was used to add colour to a particular setting.(5) The general lack of scholarship in this area would seem to suggest that hunting and angling were nothing more than eccentric diversions that helped to feed Canadians as they went about making "real" history. Even among leisure historians, where one might expect to find an interest in the cultural implications of hunting and angling, there has been very little work. The small number of leisure historians that write about Canada have devoted

their studies to more conventional forms of sport, such as hockey or Olympic events. While there are several works which attempt to address the history of hunting and angling in Canada, the history of the sportsman is more fully developed in the United States.(6)

Beyond the scope of hunting and angling, however, there has been considerable interest among Canadian scholars in the importance of wilderness in shaping our national culture. For example, such notable Canadian historians as Harold Innis, Donald Creighton, and J.M.S. Careless have argued that Canada's economic structure, and thus our cultural fabric as well, has been dictated by our geography and natural resources.(7) W.L. Morton acknowledged this fact when he argued that "[The] alternate penetration of the wilderness and return to civilization is the basic rhythm of Canadian life."(8) It stands to reason then, that if one examines the relationship that Canadians have had with the land in both work and play, something will be revealed about our essential character. In regards to this study, we shall see how the masculine ideal dominated the national identities of sportsmen both in Canada and abroad.

The central role of gender identity in the ethos of the Canadian sportsman poses some problems in defining the scope of this study. Since it cannot be argued that the gender ideas of Canadian sportsmen in the 19th century were

remarkably different from those of their peers in Britain and the United States, it is necessary to consider sporting experiences beyond Canadian borders. Only through these comparisons can we begin to understand the larger forces that shaped Canadian sporting culture. Furthermore, we must remember that Canadian sporting enthusiasts in the 19th century were members of an international community. Their values concerning nature, gender, class and race were essentially held in common with those who lived abroad. It is also worth noting that the equipment and techniques they used, as well as the literature they read, were also largely of an international nature.

Limiting this study to the experiences of elite individuals is a further point which requires explanation. In Victorian society, the term "sportsman" referred almost exclusively to members of the upper class. Victorian sportsmen saw themselves as inheritors of the medieval sporting code with its chivalrous link to the European nobility. Despite some laudable efforts on the part of a few sportsmen to include the lower classes in their fraternity, the "sporting ideal" was not shared, nor for that matter did it have many adherents outside the upper class. Given the insular nature of this fraternity, and the fact that they could afford the time and print to develop and express their ideas, the sub-culture of elite sportsmen provides a unique opportunity to understand the nature of

Victorian wilderness recreation. This does not imply, however, that lower class Victorians did not take part in recreational hunting and angling. But when they did, it was also because they needed the food. More importantly, however, their poor economic condition did not allow them to look at a trout as something to mount on a wall, or leave rotting on the shores of a lake as too many "sportsmen" did.

It is perhaps necessary at this point to discuss the sources that have been used in the examination of this topic. The secondary literature falls essentially into four categories: theoretical sources pertaining to Victorian conceptions of nature; discussions on the writing of leisure history; sociological studies relating to rituals, myths and symbolism; and finally, historical works that describe various aspects of hunting and angling, as well as the social context that surrounded them. In all but the final category, a substantial amount of literature exists. Thus the importance of the primary materials in this paper is far greater than their number would suggest.

The primary sources for the paper are composed of the sporting magazines, Forest and Stream and Rod and Gun in Canada (hereafter Rod and Gun); histories and travel literature that mention wilderness sport indirectly, such as Anna Jameson's Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada (1838); and anecdotal sporting biographies. The two magazines provide the bulk of the primary material and offer

a fairly decent, well rounded perspective on the topic, due to their large readership(9) and the space they devoted to letters to the editor. Both Rod and Gun and Forest and Stream relied on correspondents who, in most cases, lived in the area about which they wrote. This was undoubtedly intended to keep travel expenses and salaries down and to ensure a high level of expertise on whatever subjects were covered. In a sense, these magazines were written by their readers; this ensured that the editors were always in touch with the values and interests of the sporting fraternity.

The editorial perspective of the two magazines differed only in that their mild nationalist rhetoric addressed the character of separate countries, and that the American one, Forest and Stream, gave more Canadian coverage than the Canadian Rod and Gun gave the Americans.(10) What they shared was an interest in promoting proper sporting techniques and habits, a desire to instruct their readers on conservation and safety issues, and the goal of keeping their readers abreast of new sporting opportunities and technologies.

In regards to the depth of primary research carried out in consulting the magazine sources, every weekly issue of Rod and Gun for the years 1899-1905 was read for this paper. Twenty were selected from the years 1905-1920 for further reading. About seventy random samples were examined from Forest and Stream between the years 1880 and 1890.

The first Chapter of this paper considers the two major themes that provide context to Victorian wilderness sport: attitudes towards nature and leisure in the modern era. The chapter begins by describing the character of the 19th-century "cult of wilderness." As the negative implications of the industrial revolution and urbanization became more readily apparent, Victorians turned back to the land with nostalgia, in search of simpler, more stable, and more wholesome ways of life. To varying degrees and with different recreative and artistic methods, they constructed a positive and nurturing image of nature, one which sharply contrasted the old negative and fearful "pioneer," or "pre-modern" conception.

From the perspective of leisure one learns that technological innovations, improved transportation, and a restructuring of the work environment all led to improved leisure opportunities for Victorians. Within the middle and upper classes there was, as well, a fear of "idle pastimes," which necessitated elaborate justifications and reforms for all kinds of leisure. Among scholars of leisure history there are two debates which have a direct bearing on sporting history. The first concerns the extent to which various forms of leisure eased or exacerbated class relations. The second debate concerns the meaning and nature of "pre-modern" or "traditional" forms of leisure.

Unfortunately the international literature on leisure history does not really consider wilderness sport or its impact on Canadian culture.

Chapter two concerns the historical development of hunting and angling from survival pursuits to leisure activities. One of the earliest societies to undergo this change was England, the birthplace of the code of sportsmanship and sporting arts. In this chapter the influence of chivalry on sporting is described, as well as the relationship between it and the maintenance of gender, class, and national cultures. The English sporting ideal will then be followed to the United States and Canada. In these countries, small pockets of sporting culture based on the British model were in existence by the 18th century, even though the vast majority of the population at that time was too busy surviving to ponder the leisure capacity of hunting and fishing. Nevertheless, sportsmen in this period recognized that the wilderness of North America and its native inhabitants would impose some changes on the European sporting model.

The medieval code of sportsmanship entered a new phase in the late 19th century. Chapter three explores the growing importance of codes, rules and sporting regulations as well as the sharp distinction sportsmen drew between themselves and "pot hunters" -- those individuals who needed to hunt in order to survive. Sportsmen in the later

Victorian years also became more sharply aware that there was a segment of genteel society which was adamantly opposed to sport. The background of the humanist mind-set is briefly discussed here in order to contrast the views and ethics of the sportsmen. It was to defend themselves from animal welfare advocates that sportsmen emphasized the "cultured" dimension of their pastimes. This was undoubtedly a factor that dissuaded Canadian sportsmen from exploring and publicly articulating the primitive "masculine" pleasures of hunting in the way that the American "buckskin" hunters did. Yet even in their efforts to reform themselves, they felt obliged to reflect deeply upon the significance of hunting and angling. Thus, this chapter also serves as an introduction to the basic question of why Victorians chose to pursue game as a sport.

Having addressed what might be described as the more public dimension of wilderness sport, chapter four examines the ritualistic, symbolic and mythic aspects of hunting and angling. Wilderness sport is treated here as a socializing force wherein the participants discover their gender identity through structured, "ritualistic" actions like trip preparation, storytelling, and competition. In sporting ritual, sportsmen pass on their knowledge and experiences to initiates, vie for improved status, and pit themselves against wildlife and nature, all in an effort to establish their identities as sportsmen. Furthermore, by engaging in

such rituals, hunters and anglers re-enact the roles of earlier generations of sportsmen, thereby investing themselves in a historic sporting tradition. In Canada for example, sportsmen could imagine themselves as heirs of the pioneering tradition of the explorers and voyageurs. Hunting and fishing along Canada's historic waterways evoked a mythic image of a more vital age when men were thought to be masters of their own destinies.

It is in the spirit of tradition and ritual that the objects of the sport -- firearms, tackle, clothing, trophies and art -- take on special symbolic meanings. An examination of these artifacts and how they are used will show their function as a kind of "currency" or common link among sportsmen.

Hunters and anglers in the 19th century also demonstrated an appreciation for all kinds of sporting literature, as well as for an oral tradition which favoured embellishment, humour, heroism and the telling of stories which were patterned on a classical adventure, or quest, narrative. Here one finds a valuable tool in understanding the aspirations of hunters and anglers. This topic also raises the question of whether sportsmen simply construct mythic tales for their own amusement or whether they actively pursue a mythic experience when they engage in sport.

In the 19th century, recreational hunting, and to a

lesser extent angling, were almost exclusively male pursuits. Chapter five considers more closely the relationship between gender identity and wilderness, looking mainly at how men approached sport as a test of their virility and manliness. The sportsman's search for masculinity was made all the more difficult because his fear of effeminacy was not exclusively based on anxieties about the unhealthful aspects of urban life. Sportsmen sometimes suspected that the frequent absence of a father figure in their early upbringing caused them to internalize the feminine qualities of their mothers, sisters and nannies. Thus we can interpret sport as a war that men waged against the female within, and against nature as a symbol of maternal control. What is curious here is that many sportsmen began this struggle in their adolescence, when they belonged to what one historian has described as "boy culture."⁽¹¹⁾ As a means of exercising independence from the domestic, "feminine" sphere, and rebelling against paternal influences which emphasised discipline and responsibility, boy culture was the prime socializing force in the development of male gender identity. The similarity between boy culture and sporting culture suggests that adult sportsmen re-discovered the benefits of boy culture and used them to develop their gender identity. It is possible, then, that as they were freed from the obligations and constraints of work and home life, Victorian sportsmen

enjoyed a hedonistic sense of wild independence that indulged whatever adolescent qualities they retained.

Victorian sportsmen rarely spoke about such beliefs; it is through their actions that the notion of masculinity is made clear. But involving oneself in wilderness sport was for many enthusiasts only a partial exercise of manhood. What these men sought was an immersion in a primitive lifestyle: a taste of barbarism and a confrontation with nature which was of truly heroic proportions. The exploits of muscular Christians like Theodore Roosevelt set a standard of masculinity which other sportsmen sought to achieve. Of critical importance in understanding this notion of masculinity is the meaning vested in trophies. As objects of what were often obsessive pursuits, trophies embodied the virility, skill and tenacity of their owner.

In chapter six, the sportsman's views on class and race provide some further insight into how he distinguished between himself and those he most frequently came in contact with in his pursuit of sport. Given that Victorian sportsmen were almost exclusively members of an affluent class, they faced the potential for conflict and misunderstanding whenever they encountered farmers, backwoodsmen, guides, poachers and pot hunters. A critical factor in the sportsman's relations with these people was that the locals often possessed the best information on habitat and sporting technique. Consequently, Victorian

sportsmen were at a disadvantage and had to cultivate good relations if they sought success in their sport. More importantly, gentleman sportsmen were also faced with the unsettling notion that the local men, by virtue of their closer relationship to the land, were more rugged and independent than they were.

The attitudes of the Canadian sporting fraternity in regards to "manly" wilderness sport can only have meaning in the context of the major developments of the modern era. But as we turn now to an examination of Victorian attitudes about leisure and wilderness we must acknowledge that the fundamental character of wilderness sport takes its shape not from the consequences of the industrial revolution, but from a primal process of surviving in nature. In hunting and angling, more than in any other form of leisure, there seems to be a desire (perhaps unconscious) to recreate the vital sense of fulfilment and security that comes from surviving in the wilderness. These feelings were at the core of the conventional concept of manhood in the 19th century.

CHAPTER 1

NATURE AND LEISURE IN THE MODERN ERA

Yonder lies our young sea village--
Art and grace are less and less:
Science grows and beauty dwindles--
Roofs of slated hideousness!(1)

Tennyson's reservations about science and technology issued from a widely held sentiment among educated Victorians that modernity carried with it many unanticipated problems.(2) Few could fail to notice the blight of urban poverty and decay, the difficulties in reconciling religion with scientific advancements in biology and geology, or the hectic and stressful pace of industrial life. To be sure, there was much enthusiasm about, for example, the smaller world created by improved transportation and communications, and the list of labour-saving innovations that grew daily. And the weight and power of technology was awesome, whether seen in impressive structures like the Crystal Palace and the Eiffel Tower, or felt in the pull of giant locomotives. Furthermore, science and reason could free liberal-minded people from superstition and blind faith. But the movement of society from a rural to an industrial base was happening so quickly that those who were affected in western cultures were hard pressed to adapt.

In these uncertain times people sought out remnants of pre-industrial life which were comforting, enduring and invited participation. They clung to pastoral festivities and leisure customs far into the 19th century, and resisted "rational" forms of workplace organization and attempts to reform their "coarse" habits. Most importantly, however, the traditions they fought to preserve were the products of a life lived in close association with nature. Thus the language of criticism that focused on modern living was steeped in natural reference, or at least a mythical remembrance of it. Coleridge speculated on this construction of myth when he wrote, "We receive but what we give/ and in our life alone does Nature live." (3) Ironically, Coleridge's statement endows people with enough free will to create nature -- a very rational and modern proposition which challenges God's role in creating the universe.

The most direct and typical criticisms of modernity were aimed at city life and showed the contrast between it and natural living. Human beings were at the mercy of the urban machine and could only escape it with education and improved opportunities for wilderness recreation. This was the premise for a number of sporting magazines that emerged in the latter part of the 19th century. An editorial in Rod and Gun made the following claim:

In these days the country has been discovered anew. No fact of contemporary life is more

significant or more hopeful than this return to nature, for a breathing space, of those whose daily walk is in the tumultuous city streets; it bespeaks saner views of life and presages a healthier type of manhood for the future.(4)

The re-discovery of Canada through its wilderness would develop into a kind of rite of passage for its nature lovers -- a means for understanding our pioneer history so that we could move on to full industrial development. Yet even in the 19th century, there were those who foresaw the trampling of wilderness in the mad rush to reclaim a pioneer past and alleviate modern stresses. Commenting on the throng of holidayers in the Thousand Islands, one observer wrote in 1880:

But alas! their virgin splendour is rapidly passing away; the simple hearted indians, with their camp-fires and canoes, have been superseded by the selfish and savage white men with their villas and yachts and other modern abominations.(5)

This kind of reaction to the development of a tourist economy was sometimes simply a lament for the days when a select few could enjoy their own piece of wilderness without being bothered by bourgeois vacationers. But it does, however, reveal a widespread hunger for time away from the city.

While it was not always obvious in grievances that the clergy had about modern life, in the field of religion, nature provided the faithful with evidence of God's hand in creation. As a kind of compromise made by the scientific community, which through Darwin and the evolutionists had

challenged traditional conceptions of creation, the scientific study of nature promised greater reverence for God's work.(6) Moreover, a respect for and interest in nature would counter the moral decay which was thought to be rampant in urban life. Drunkenness, promiscuity, crime and materialism were not Victorian inventions, but they became more obvious when concentrated in the cities. A small but telling clue about how Victorians viewed their God in the light of modern uncertainties is the popularity at that time of shipwrecks as motifs in the visual arts. They represented the experience of man, who, having forsaken God, is left to struggle alone against nature.(7) Nature as God created it could be both beautiful and terrifying, but without His guidance it was insufferable.

The popular response to modernity was complex and concerned almost all aspects of human endeavour. Victorian attitudes towards nature, however, while informed by the crisis of modernity, were simply variations on themes that had been established centuries earlier. Whenever sporting enthusiasts took to the field, this developing conception of nature guided them in the exploration of their national, class, and gender identities. It is important, then, that we take a brief look at the origins and character of the Victorian "cult of wilderness."

Two of the earliest studies on nature and Victorian

society are Hans Huth's Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes (1957) and Roderick Nash's Wilderness and the American Mind (1967).(8) Both works successfully establish the importance of wilderness in building a unique national character and advance the notion that in the 19th century, America began to move from a negative "pioneer" response to the land to a positive "progressive" one. As Nash argues, early American settlers brought with them an old-world prejudice against, and fear of, nature. Nash claims that:

The Europeans knew the uninhabited forests as an important part of their folklore and mythology. Its dark, mysterious qualities made it a setting in which the prescientific imagination could place a swarm of demons.(9)

Furthermore, medieval Christianity saw nature as part of the earthly realm which the church sought to overcome. In the new world, then, nature became a mysterious and threatening force which must be conquered and ordered for the sake of survival and growth. The new world could only fulfil its potential as an Eden by rendering wild land pastoral, something approximating the bucolic character of rural England. Scholars of this subject both in Canada and abroad generally accept the notion that early North American settlers approached nature with antipathy. Early Canadian literature, for example, is considered to be rife with aversion to nature, and the notion of a "bunker" or "siege" mentality among settlers is widely accepted by scholars.(10)

From those Europeans who merely visited the Canadian wilderness, there were frequent comments made as to its inability to measure up to the picturesque qualities of pastoral Europe. In Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada (1838), Anna Jameson wrote, "The beautiful faith which assigned to every tree of the forest its guardian nymph, to every leafy grove its tutelary divinity would find no votaries here." (11)

But wilderness was feared as much for its physical appearance as for how it forced people to live. It quite effectively stripped away the veneer of civility that separated Europeans from savages. It was the perceived threat of disorder, primal passions and instincts that steeled some people's determination to think and behave just like they had in Europe. Thus the siege mentality was as much a defense against ideas as it was against the physical fact of nature.

For all that has been written about the negative pioneer perception of wilderness, there is evidence that Europeans might simultaneously have loved and respected it as well. Edmund Burke's 18th-century treatise on the sublime and picturesque ponders the aesthetic qualities of natural scenery in a way that reveals a great affinity for landscape. (12) As we shall see in the following chapter, Elizabethans held wilderness sport in high regard and wrote extensively on its relation to nature and British culture.

It is probable, however, that positive and enlightened attitudes towards nature came easily to the upper classes, who could afford to shelter themselves from its crueller aspects.

The "pioneer" view of the North American wilderness as brutal and unforgiving would re-emerge in the late 19th century among the "heroic" sportsmen of the "buckskin" tradition. The drama in which they saw themselves participating could simply not occur in a benign romantic wilderness. Thus they made use of pre-romantic notions in order to inflate the sense of danger and adversity in their sport. Secure in the knowledge that civilization was only a train ride away, they were free to mount an offensive against nature, whereas their ancestors took refuge in a psychological (or literal) garrison.

In the early 19th century, a wave of romanticism surged among the upper classes, fuelled by aesthetic notions of the sublime and picturesque, as well as by the transcendental philosophies of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. It was a time when the upper classes travelled extensively, seeking out beautiful landscapes in Europe and North America. In the literary and visual arts, God was the muse and nature his subject. This popularization of a "positive" attitude towards nature came only with the realization that society was gaining an upper hand over nature, thus posing a new problem in how people would relate to both. Thoreau

wondered if men could live so as to "secure all the advantages [of civilization] without suffering any of the disadvantages." (13) His ideal landscape represented the solution to this problem. The pastoral environment symbolized the domestication of wilderness; the triumph of man in revealing nature's highest potential. In this garden, one could transcend the obvious fact of nature and see a hidden beauty which re-vitalized the spirit. For Thoreau, however, raw nature was "savage and dreary"; it was "a place for heathenism and superstitious rites -- to be inhabited by men nearer of kin to the rocks and animals than we." (14) It may seem ironic that the father of transcendentalism -- the man who helped open the floodgates of early environmentalism --- could not abide nature in its basic form. His thought embodied the conflicting sentiments of a positive and negative nature. It was an important intellectual bridge which made it possible for Victorians to subdue and order nature in the name of conservation. For Victorian sportsmen, these conflicting visions of nature would be reflected in the tension between the European and North American traditions.

Even though the ideas of the transcendentalists and nature artists undoubtedly influenced the pattern of popular 19th-century thought, it was primarily through recreation that the Victorian "cult of wilderness" was exercised. Whether taking part in vigorous sport or simply relaxing at

a cottage, exposure to nature was thought to be very healthful. Doctors advised patients with consumption or "nervous" ailments to leave the unhealthy air and stresses of the city and spend a few weeks or even months at wilderness sanatoriums and resorts. For those seeking more active forms of leisure, camping, canoe tripping and mountain climbing had become popular forms of recreation by the end of the century. Fortunately for Canadians, our many rivers, lakes and mountain ranges made this country an ideal playground for an international set of travelling nature lovers.(15) But good health in the 19th century was elusive, and it required that a person take the initiative in finding a healing path. A Victorian wilderness enthusiast wrote, in 1899, that nature was "being sought by wearied and tired men; and being sought, is found to be a nymph not too distant and coy."(16)

The search for good health through nature coincided with the values of "muscular christianity."(17) This doctrine, espoused by notable physicians and exercise enthusiasts, claimed that it was a Christian's duty to develop his physique and guard good health as a sign of respect for God's creation of man. Furthermore, muscular Christians believed that the body and spirit were one, and that spiritual enlightenment could be discovered by allowing the body to reach its full potential. Vigorous wilderness sport, then, provided for spiritual growth insofar as it

fulfilled one's religious obligations to the body as well as providing for an appreciation of nature. Few sportsmen personified these beliefs as completely as did Theodore Roosevelt. He and his colleagues in the Boone and Crockett Club advocated muscular Christian ideas as strongly as they put forward the benefits of primitivism.

Wilderness sports like canoeing, mountain climbing and angling were thought to be especially conducive to communing with nature. An avid Victorian canoeist claimed that, "In a boat you are always an oar's length and gunwale's height away from nature. In a canoe you can steal up to her bower and peep into her very bosom." (18) Climbing mountains similarly brought one closer to nature (and hence God) by virtue of the participant standing up among the clouds. And the serious angler, in probing an unseen environment with lure, bait or fly is so completely devoted to his task that he in effect extends his awareness into the water, which represents the unfathomable and illusive character of nature. The sight of anglers deep in thought by the brookside prompted Thoreau to claim that "[The angler's] life itself passes deeper into Nature than the studies of the naturalist penetrate, himself a subject for the naturalist." (19)

The importance of the land in Canadian culture might not even have drawn the attention of historians were it not for the nationalistic rhetoric of Victorian wilderness

lovers. As increasing numbers of Canadians re-discovered nature at the end of the 19th century, they could not contain their enthusiasm about the developing nation. An editorial in the North Bay Times stated that the wilderness camping vacation was typically Canadian: "No other civilized country has a great north-woods combined with lakes and rivers, where the lover of nature can study her unadorned loveliness in all its grandeur." (20) By the turn of the century, enthusiasm for the Canadian wilderness could be found in sporting magazines, newspapers and the promotional materials of railways, resorts and outfitters.

Nationalistic fervour was so common in this literature that its value was inflated. A similar pattern can be discerned in the florid, Wordsworthian nature prose which had become a fad among everyone from journalists to advertisers and hack novelists. In an article on positive views of nature in turn-of-the-century Canada, George Altmeyer mistakes the popular cult of wilderness for genuine and deep love of nature. (21) He claims that from the mid-1890's to the first world war, the literary and recreational facet of the Canadian attitude towards nature was "positive and typically North American." (22) It may well have been positive in contrast to the malevolent views of early Canadians. However, its superficiality as a popular phenomenon, coupled with the fact that most Victorian recreationalists were exploiting "domesticated" rather than "raw" nature, calls

into question the meaning of a "positive" view of nature. The animal stories of Ernest T. Seton which Altmeyer cites might illustrate more of an interest in nature than an understanding of it. Furthermore, even if one considers the dominant view of nature in Canada as "positive," it would be unwise to label it as "typically North American." The romantic North American view of nature as nurturing and benign was in fact based on European sensibilities (particular aesthetic ones).

Beyond the fact that most historians of nature and culture see a gradual development from negative to positive conceptions of wilderness, they also share the desire to place this process within the framework of national cultures. A student of nature and culture, John Wadland claims that wilderness is one of Canada's most "enduring symbols of cultural uniqueness." (23) His ideas flow as a logical extension from the works of Canada's most notable academic historians. In the process of writing their economic histories, Arthur Lower, and Donald Creighton also tried to address the fundamental role of wilderness in creating a Canadian culture. J.M.S. Careless also saw wilderness (via Innis' staple theory) as a central dynamic of his Metropolitan-Hinterland thesis. Such conclusions are not unlike those of Roderick Nash, who states that "Wilderness was the basic ingredient of American civilization." (24)

Historians who have argued the importance of wilderness in forming the character of their nations have had to acknowledge the fact that land is the foundation upon which the unique characteristics of all nations are built. They must comprehend geography well, for if nature leaves a distinctive imprint on all nations, it is because of geographical variations. To differentiate the qualities of Canadians from those of Americans in this regard, one must consider the importance of the shield and its waterways, and how British pastoral sensibilities held fast in Canada whereas south of the border, they were being altered by the American revolution. It is perhaps on a more basic level that geography left a unique imprint on Canadian culture. In his study of the relationship between metropolitan and hinterland regions in Canada, Careless argued that the myth of the rugged and independent frontiersman, which had so captivated the disciples of Frederick Jackson Turner in the United States, had no real validity in Canadian historiography.(25) "Here," he stated, "rocks and wilds did not readily give way to the common man, or harsher expanses as happily become self-sustaining, individual homesteads. Writings on the Canadian frontier have made that very clear."(26) He concluded that "the agricultural frontiers that loomed so large in Turnerian perspectives were in no way as predominant in the vistas of the north."(27)

Perhaps the greatest appeal of nature for Victorians

can be found in the fact of its resistance to definition. As a nebulous concept it provided for a wide range of interpretations and left enthusiasts to make of it what they wished. Its sublimity could reaffirm their fatalism and sense of powerlessness, while its calm beauty revealed the caring presence of God. Nature provided Victorians with an alternative to the world they were making -- a world that paradoxically seemed beyond their control. On the other hand, nature gave every individual the choice of how to relate to it. The intellectual process of transcendentalism was subjective, whether practised by philosophers, artists or vacationers. Recreation, the other mode of communing with nature, similarly gave the participant as much freedom as social convention and personal habit allowed. Victorian attitudes about leisure and nature had in common the fact that they provided a measure of freedom and control for those who felt constrained by modernity. This inherent flexibility also made it possible for Victorian sportsmen to conceive of masculinity in whatever terms they wished. It could be exercised on the one hand through the European sporting model, with its emphasis in developing personal strength by adhering to a chivalrous code of behaviour. Conversely, the sportsman could claim that European codes were inappropriate in the wilds of North America, thereby legitimizing the indulgence of his "baser" manly instincts.

It is the element of choice in recreation that has

allowed leisure historians and cultural anthropologists to claim that their studies give a backstage perspective on the true, unrestrained values and aspirations of different societies. Let us now briefly examine the aspects of leisure theory and history which shed some light on Victorian wilderness recreation.

In The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England (1867), J. Strutt articulated what would become the prime justification of modern leisure studies. He argued that:

In order to form a just estimation of the character of any people, it is absolutely necessary to investigate the sports, and pastimes most generally prevalent among them. . . . [W]hen we follow them into their retirements, where no disguise is necessary, we are most likely to see them in their true state, and may best judge of their natural dispositions. (28)

Although J. Strutt's thesis on the value of leisure study convincingly argues the significance of leisure in any society, it is only partially correct. With the exception of solitary forms of recreation, is it correct to assume that people are guileless when they interact through leisure? Certainly one finds, in highly ritualized sports like baseball or fox-hunting, a code of behaviour which might mask one's "natural dispositions." But we do gain a glimpse of their nature by observing in which forms of recreation they choose to partake. A similar choice is not always available in economic life. What could be inferred

from Strutt's observation, however, is that disguises in leisure may be different from those in work or family life, thus giving the observer a wider ranging perspective on the subject.

The first step in discovering the meaning of leisure conventions has been the re-affirmation of its value for social studies and the search for definitions. Sociologists like Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton argue that recreation is an integral part of self-development:

"[People] can also create strong and complex selves by investing their psychic energy in activities that are usually called 'leisure'." (29) In a somewhat contradictory thesis, Chambers addresses the social importance of recreation:

As an institution setting its own goals, rules and practices for its participants, sport has the potential not only to reflect the prevailing societal values, but to also perpetuate and even reinforce them into an expected social order. Sport, then, exists as an institutionalized arena for societal behaviour, independent from those who participate in it. (30)

The conflicting images of the "strong and complex self" and the "institutionalized arena" represent the classic problem of divining free agency within dehumanizing social processes. As long as one speaks of leisure in the abstract, it is impossible to reconcile the debate. All that is evident is that recreation illuminates important aspects of both society and self.

Within the sub-discipline of leisure history there is a general consensus on how leisure developed in the 19th century. This basic thesis explains how Victorians were able to use wilderness recreation as a means of exploring gender or national identities. Historians have described how the industrial revolution allowed a distinction between work time and free time for urban dwellers. Filling this free time were a variety of "traditional" recreation habits such as drinking, bloodsports and games, as well as new forms of leisure which were made possible through the advent of improved transportation, communications and technology. In the industrial process, the "economy of time" or its effective use in competition conflicted with some popular forms of leisure. Consequently, "Irregular timekeeping, drunkenness and dissipation were rightly felt by many employers to be inconsistent with effective work." (31) Leisure reform into rational recreation became the order of the day. Disciplined, organized and healthful leisure was promoted by the middle and upper classes in an effort to expunge coarse and idle pastimes. The new work ethic allowed for leisure only when hard work, good conduct and responsibility had been demonstrated.

Although historians are generally in accord with this simple account of Victorian leisure development, there are two points upon which they disagree: the meaning of "traditional" recreation, and the interplay of the classes.

Both points are of relevance to this study in that the first attests to the power of leisure as a stabilizing force in the midst of modern uncertainties, and the second debate suggests that class tensions might have been moderated through recreation. Hugh Cunningham believes that historians have overemphasized the importance of the industrial revolution as a turning point in leisure habits. He sees examples of "traditional leisure" which survived late into the 19th century as evidence of continuity and stability in the face of rapid urban growth. "Many traditional sports and customs," he writes, "survived much longer than one might suppose, sometimes after their demise had been celebrated." (32) Not only does Cunningham eschew the notion of a leisure revolution or a vacuum left after the demise of traditional recreations, he even questions the meaning of traditional leisure. The singing, drinking, bloodsports and dancing of rural England, he argues, were probably destroyed in the 16th century by a combination of puritanism and capitalism. (33) His most insightful proposition relates to the reasons people cling to history and tradition even when they are deemed inappropriate. He states that, "The lived experience of the past was one necessary way in which people understand and live in the present, even in times of rapid social change." (34) This notion will be developed later, in the discussion of sporting ritual as a means of re-affirming the attachment to

tradition and a sense of place. Cunningham's basic thesis about the importance of continuity in leisure applies well in the study of recreational hunting and angling. The appeal of such sports is based somewhat on the feeling that one is engaging in a timeless ritual.

A further point on which leisure historians disagree is the relation between class and leisure. Robert Malcomson describes the "traditional" forms of English leisure that Cunningham finds problematic as a process that bound the governing classes to the peasantry.(35) By participating in festivals, holidays, recreational violence and drinking, the land-lord displayed his goodwill and common touch to the masses. As historian Geoffrey Best argues, the aristocracy and the poor were "never closer together than at the prize fight, the cockpit, the rat-catch, the racetrack, and the demi-monde saloon and casino."(36)

Fox-hunting is probably one of the most familiar examples of this phenomenon. In one of the few scholarly works on the history of the sport, David Itzkowitz claims that fox-hunting was

looked upon as a conservative force, which, by binding landlord, tenant, and labourer together and giving them a sense of belonging to the same community, acted as a counterweight to the forces of radicalism, urbanization, and industrialization that threatened the stability of that community.(37)

Wealthy landowners also knew that recreations of this kind allowed hard-working people to blow off steam, thus

reducing any tendencies to revolt. However, Malcomson claims that with the industrial revolution, the classes began to pursue different forms of leisure. Conventional scholarly wisdom states that the upper classes followed "respectable" forms of entertainment, while the lower class involved themselves in "rough" leisure. Furthermore, new opportunities for leisure offered a degree of autonomy to the working classes that had not previously existed. This model of recreational development places the upper and emerging middle classes in the position of regulating and reforming working-class habits. Fears that working-class leisure would infiltrate the pastimes of the upper classes, as well as the possibility that coarse and undisciplined recreation could lead to riotous behaviour in everyday life, were the driving forces behind the idea of control. Class tension, then, shaped the Victorian leisure dynamic in the way that it similarly informed working, political and social developments.

Even though historians like Cunningham see reform as a relatively classless phenomenon, they are sceptical about the idea that members of all classes participated equally in these kinds of pastimes. Coarse leisure may have in some instances brought members of all classes closer together, but that does not mean that class distinctions would have been completely abandoned. One Victorian described this problem when he was shocked to find that a tour boat on the

St. Lawrence river had been invaded by "promiscuous people." He was greatly dismayed by the fact that, "even your state room is made common property, and you may have a cut-throat for a sleeping companion." (38) In the chapter on class relations and wilderness sport it will become apparent that class distinctions frequently overshadowed any desires sportsmen might have had to relate to each other in a classless way.

The study of leisure has raised some compelling questions about its development in relation to technology and traditional cultural patterns. As an aspect of life over which people have a fair measure of control, it gives us a glimpse of how individuals would choose to develop themselves and how they have participated in the growth and maintenance of their leisure institutions. Only the most radically conservative Victorians eschewed progress of any sort. A greater number of them tempered their uncertainties about modernity with the belief that people and their pastimes should develop and change. But in an area where Victorians had a measure of control, they frequently chose the traditional and familiar over the new and unknown. In class relations as well, they again fell back upon conventional patterns of interaction.

Unlike forms of leisure that emerged for purely recreative reasons, hunting and angling for sport owe their existence to a fundamental means of survival. Undoubtedly,

the first sport hunters were the monarchs of ancient civilizations, who, in addition to providing food for their courts, pursued game for pleasure and to exercise and display their martial prowess. Given the "English" character of Victorian sporting culture, we must now take a look at the roots of sport among the nobility of medieval England. Here one finds the earliest writings on sportsmanship and the essential qualities that "gentleman" hunters and anglers were encouraged to cultivate. The birth of the elite English sporting tradition occurred within a hundred years of the successful colonization of North America. And for the very few inhabitants here who could conceive of hunting and fishing as sport, the English sporting tradition provided a foundation for the discovery of the North American wilderness. But as we shall see, in most parts of the continent, the rugged geography and particular social conditions emerging from it forced the development of new sporting cultures.

CHAPTER 2

FROM SURVIVAL TO PLAY: THE BIRTH OF THE SPORTING IDEAL AND ITS NATIONAL VARIATIONS

One of the earliest records of the English sporting tradition is The Boke of St. Albans, written in 1496 by Dame Juliana Bernes.(1) Her description of hunting, fishing, hawking and fowling as "absolute parts of music which make perfect the harmony of a true gentleman"(2) is illustrative of the perceived importance of sport in the eyes of her contemporaries. Her book spawned a genre of literature which instructed men on the proper cultivation of gentlemanly virtue and the techniques of sporting. This body of work gives historians an opportunity to assess the meaning of sport in English culture. It is likely that the notion of sporting as part of the national character of England began as a result of the Norman invasion. When the Norman kings conquered England in the 11th century, they brought with them a love of hunting that would transform the character and landscape of Britain for centuries to come. To fill their larders and satisfy their sporting interests, they established huge game parks across the land, some of which still survive today as parkland.(3)

The image of the king riding down deer on horseback with an army of courtiers captivated the minds of the

gentility. Five hundred years later, in 1563, Queen Mary took two thousand highlanders with her on a stag hunt in Scotland, where they bagged nearly four hundred deer in a few weeks' time. Amazed by this spectacle, one nobleman wrote: "Believe me, the whole body of them moved forward like an order of Battle." (4) The comparison of hunting to combat attests to the martial ancestry of sport in Europe.

Royal hunting excursions of the kind described had begun to take on a new meaning as early as the 15th century. The caste of knights *who* had served the church and crown under feudalism were losing their relevance as warriors and protectors. To maintain their code of conduct, which was seen as the glue that held the nobility together, sport became the vehicle for chivalrous behaviour. (5) Nostalgia and revivalism put chivalry into the sporting culture. But there were other reasons for the revitalization of sport that went beyond the simple desire to maintain tradition. The Victorians who decried the moral and physical degeneration of their age would have been interested to know that they were not the first generation to witness the negative effects that urban life had upon manhood. In 1579, Stephen Gosson expressed the fear that wholesome country recreations were being displaced by "effeminate, and foreign" pastimes in London. "In the good olde days," he wrote, "the exercise of the English was 'shooting and darting, running and wrestling'. But now all is given over

to 'banqueting, playing, piping, and dancing'." (6) Gosson provides one of the earliest examples of the fact that sport was thought to support and develop manhood. In most other cases, however, sport was described in this period as both a privilege and an obligation of a particular class rather than an expression of manhood. Nevertheless, the holistic view of the gentleman as a master of all things reveals an unwillingness, or inability, to distinguish between manliness and class. In essence, they were perceived to be a singular quality of the gentleman.

The negative influences of urban life in this period were also deemed to undermine the rural character of English culture. In 1622, James the first was so alarmed with the fact that the gentry were forsaking their obligations on the land for the lure of city life that he issued a proclamation which commanded "Noblemen, Knights, and Gentlemen of quality, to repayre to their mansion houses in the country." (7) If the King thought that such a proclamation would restore rural virtues and bring an end to the "London season," he was partly mistaken. The English gentleman that was being promoted in the sporting literature embodied both rural and urban virtues. He was a well-read and well-rounded individual who was just as competent at dancing and banqueting as he was at fowling and wrestling. Such qualities were indispensable if a gentleman was to demonstrate his intellectual and physical superiority over

the masses. Furthermore, the new culture of the sporting gentleman was developing, as do most sub-cultures, an intricate web of language and behaviour which was highly exclusive, and designed to admit only those nobles who were interested in learning its ways. Commenting on the division among "men of quality," Ben Johnson stated in 1616 that if:

a man have not skill in the hawking, and hunting-
languages now a dayes, I'll not give a rush for
him. They are more studied then the Greeke, or the
Latine. He is for no gallants companie without
'hem. (8)

There was also, of course, a certain element of commercial interest in such statements, for a writer of sporting etiquette could increase his sales by exploiting the desires of social climbers. Furthermore, this elevation of the sporting arts served to reform the negative image of enthusiasts that was being promoted by Puritans. The Puritans thought of sporting pastimes, especially hunting as the "rowdy pleasures of the Boorish country gentleman." (9) It was an image that would plague sporting enthusiasts into the Victorian period and beyond.

Although sporting culture was in full development in 17th-century England, the same could not be said for North America at that time. Certainly the number of individuals who could afford to engage in sport was very limited here. Nonetheless, European notions of sport and recreation found their way overseas and were adopted by small groups of

people in the United States and Canada. At the Port Royal settlement in Nova Scotia, Samuel de Champlain established the "Ordre de Bon Temps" in 1606. It promoted hunting and fishing as a way to get exercise and alleviate winter boredom.(10) In 1646, Governor de Montmagny of New France had a famous game preserve near Sorel that was conceded from the French crown.(11) The examples of Champlain and de Montmagny reveal that France, as well as England, was developing its sporting tradition in the 17th century. One might even surmise that Norman rule had left the seeds for a common sporting culture in England and France. The popularization of angling by Izaak Walton in the 17th century, however, was one of the key elements that helped to impart a uniquely national flavour to English sport.

In 17th-century New England, the greatest barrier to sport was not the lack of interested individuals but the weight of the Puritan work ethic. For the Puritans, any activity which did not lend itself to basic economic maintenance was a waste of time, and therefore bad. Moreover, hunting and fishing brought one too close to the wilderness. One historian writing on the Puritans has claimed that:

Under the prod of Calvin, Puritans feared the innate sinfulness of human nature would run rampant if left to itself in the moral vacuum of wilderness. Men might degenerate to beasts or worse on stepping into the woods.(12)

Nevertheless, step they did, and in increasing numbers

too. As early as the 1630's, a small clique of anglers and fowlers had begun to take trips around New England in search of game for sport.(13) Further, in 1732, the Schuylkill Fishing Company was founded in Philadelphia, leading some to make the dubious claim that it was the first fishing club in the English-speaking world.(14) Whether this raises doubts about the sincerity of the Puritans in condemning wilderness sport, or if their sermonizing simply went unheeded is not known. It has been argued, however, that Puritanism provided for certain kinds of amusements if these lent themselves to a work discipline or allowed for the physical and moral development of the participant.(15) Certainly, by the mid-18th century romantic notions of nature and the growth of wilderness sport would have challenged puritanical ideas about both nature and leisure. How could one object, for example, to an interest in nature which helped to reveal the hand of God? But it was the Puritan work ethic which endured late into the 19th century, that forced many sporting enthusiasts to emphasize the didactic aspects of hunting and angling.

In the period before the mass popularization of wilderness sport in North America, hunting and angling were rarely written about in terms of a sportsman's code, or the cultivation of virtue. Religious overtones, bucolic nature prose, attitudes on fair and "proper" techniques for bagging game, or the condemnations of urban life are hardly evident

in the literature. The period before the mid-19th century might be described, rather, as the "discovery" stage of recreational hunting and fishing. North American game and the hunting and angling practices of settlers and natives were described as curiosities. But the most common observations in this period related to the abundance of game and the ease with which one could bag it. This does not mean, of course, that the "sporting" ethos was non-existent in North America at this time. It may simply have been taken for granted, or overshadowed by the excitement surrounding the discovery of new territory. A notable exception to this trend can be found in the writings of Thomas McGrath, a settler and gentleman sportsman who lived in Upper Canada in the 1830's. McGrath wrote numerous and vivid accounts of hunting and angling in Upper Canada, describing everything from deer and bear stalking to the "family" sport of treeing raccoons and bludgeoning them with household implements such as potsticks, fleshforks and pokers. "This is the only hunting of wild animals," he wrote, "in which the fair sex partake; but on this occasion the entire family turns out: men, women, children, domestics, dogs, and company." (16) McGrath made a sharp distinction between this kind of bloodsport and the hunting in which he engaged. In a letter to friends in England he was critical of partridge hunters who shot birds on the ground:

Your poaching sportsmen whose main object is a supply for the table, and whose epicurean taste appreciates the delicious flavour of the bird, think this is delightful sport; but I cannot agree with them -- there is something inglorious in a sitting shot, that a true professor cannot brook.(17)

The English sporting code was also evident in fictional literature about hunting and angling in Canada. Although it was written with the English market in mind, Thomas C. Haliburton's The Old Judge or Life in a Colony (1849) tells the reader that, even in a colony such as Canada, one can find sportsmanship. "When I go a-hunting," says the protagonist, "I don't take furious dogs to seize a critter by the nose, and hold him while I shoot him, but I give him a chance for his life, and run him down myself; one is downright murder, but the other is real, generous sport."(18)

Two settlers who made occasional references to hunting and angling in early 19th-century Canada were William Dunlop and Samuel Strickland. In his settler's guide for European emigrants, Dunlop made the point that in Canada, hunting and angling were not merely leisure activities.

The gun and the fishing rod naturally suggest themselves, not merely as an innocent mode of passing an hour, but as the means of furnishing the family larder with the most savory part of its contents.(19)

Dunlop delighted in informing his readers about the unorthodox manner in which game was caught here. Hunting, angling, spearing, or netting fish at night with torches or

lanterns were methods that the settlers borrowed from the natives, and which did not conform to European practices. When game was needed to fill the larder, any necessary means were used. Dunlop made no attempt to disguise, for example, the brutality in this particular method of killing swimming deer from a boat.

You must, . . . either shoot him, knock him on the head, drown him by holding down his head with an oar, or seize hold of him by the seat, and make him tow the boat until he is exhausted, and can be mastered.(20)

The observations of Samuel Strickland, on the other hand, made greater mention of the abundance of game. In this passage, he impresses upon the doubtful reader the unparalleled opportunities for trophy hunting around the Kawartha lakes in Ontario:

To give my readers some idea how plentiful these wild denizens [deer] were, some years since, I need only mention that a trapper with whom I was acquainted and four of his companions passed my House on a small raft, on which lay the carcasses of thirty-two deer -- the trophies of a fortnight's chase near Stoney Lake. The greater number of these were fine bucks.(21)

Slaughter of this magnitude, when it happened at the hands of settlers, trappers, and market hunters, was once justified because it served the dietary needs of wilderness communities and provided hides for clothing. Public outcry over the decline in wildlife would only occur in the latter half of the 19th century when sportsmen came into greater conflict with locals.

Some of the earliest Canadians to discover the recreational opportunities of the wilderness were the fur traders. Until the 19th century, they pursued game almost exclusively as a means of survival. But by the 1850's, concerns over the poor health of clerks and administrators forced a re-appraisal of what had traditionally been seen as a menial form of labour. The journal of William Mason, a Hudson's Bay Company officer at York Factory, describes this new sentiment as it had existed in 1855:

Wednesday and Saturday are holidays for the young gentleman [sic], who generally set fox traps and visit them and hunt partridges on these occasions, principally for the sake of their health, which close confinement to the desk is calculated to injure. (22)

While it may have taken some time for the fur traders to realize the recreational potential of the Canadian wilderness, another central institution in the pre-confederation years had always acknowledged the benefits of wilderness sport. As historian Peter Lindsay argues:

While the influences governing the development of sport in Canada prior to confederation were many and varied, the paramount influence for more than a century after the Conquest was derived from the sporting examples set by the British army garrisons. (23)

Whether stationed in Halifax, Montreal or Toronto, army officers regularly hunted in order to provide their units with meat and to maintain their riding and shooting skills. (24) Sport also helped to bolster morale and fitness, especially when units were on garrison duty. But

the most enduring contribution to sport made by the British regiments was in the development of fox-hunting. Regarded at that time as the most refined form of English sport, fox-hunting not only served the recreative needs of the military, but also ensured that British culture in general would continue to be revered in the colony.

Prior to the mid-19th century, the finer qualities of the British sporting ethic also had a great influence in the United States. Early American sporting journals like Spirit of the Times (1831-1861) and American Turf Register (1829-1844) often quoted British sporting poets, and discussed at great length British developments in recreational hunting and angling.(25) In the southern states prior to the civil war, wealthy landowners took up the English ritual of fox-hunting with great enthusiasm.(26) Yet, as with most things European, Americans began to adapt the English sporting tradition to the conditions of their own society. By the turn of the century on the western frontier, patrician sport hunters could not avoid contact with market hunters and pioneer, "buckskin" hunters. These rugged individuals with their coarse manners and highly flexible hunting techniques challenged the European image of the genteel sportsman.(27) More importantly, they were the custodians of what might be called the "Daniel Boone," or "frontier," myth which emphasized the independence and self-reliance of the backwoodsman. American sportsmen were thus faced with a

conflict between the values which formed a part of their identity as refined, enlightened, and cosmopolitan gentlemen, and a growing nationalistic sentiment which focused on the American frontier experience. In response to this problem, a number of sportsmen immersed themselves wholeheartedly in the "buckskin hunter experience," the result of which would be the founding of such organizations as the Boone and Crocket Club later in the century.

If Canadian sportsmen in general did not succumb to their own version of the buckskin phenomenon, it is probably because the history of our wilderness areas did not support one (even if a burgeoning nationalist sentiment did). In discussing the validity of Turner's frontier myth in Canada, Careless has argued that:

[wilderness areas] really held few free agents whose backs were stoutly turned against the world outside in spite of common myths of pioneer self-reliance and forest born independence. There were, no doubt, the Get-rich transients, the wilderness seekers, the indifferent, or the incapable. But the majority of Canadian pioneers sought to re-create their world as fast as possible (though with more room and opportunity), looking to that world and remaining dependant on it in quite basic ways.(28)

The myth making process, of course, is rarely fettered by historical fact; and we might surmise that if Canadian sportsmen had wanted a buckskin tradition, they would simply have made one. As we shall see in the next few chapters, Canada did have its share of "heroic" sportsmen who fancied themselves as modern day explorers and backwoodsmen. Unlike

their American counterparts, however, they were unable to come together as a group and articulate a sporting sensibility that was linked to the nationalist rhetoric of their time.

The early years of recreational hunting and angling in North America represent the efforts of small groups of individuals to sample the rich variety and abundance of game in a largely unfamiliar setting. With the exception of easily accessible game habitats around well-established communities, sporting enthusiasts of this period had to be very affluent and adventurous if they wished to hunt and fish in a "virgin wilderness." By the latter half of the 19th century, however, several developments occurred which changed the character of wilderness sport in North America. The first, and perhaps the most significant, was the extension of railways into previously inaccessible hinterland areas. Popular magazines like Forest and Stream and Rod and Gun frequently emphasized the short travel times by rail from urban centres to lodges and resorts. (29) Not only did rail links allow greater numbers of sporting enthusiasts to experience wilderness, but the comfort that train travel provided meant that one need no longer have a hearty constitution or adventurous streak in order to access virgin wilderness.

A further development which had taken root by mid-

century and was becoming increasingly obvious was the realization that game species did not exist in infinite number. As early as 1830, Samuel Strickland had observed, for example, that the great number of salmon around the Bay of Quinte had begun to decline as a result of habitat depletion. He claimed that "The erection of saw mills on the creeks, and other courses, have tended materially to injure the fisheries." (30) In 1860, the explorer John Palliser was alarmed to discover that the vast herds of buffalo that he had witnessed on the prairie only three years before were no longer in existence. (31) Similar observations were made south of the border, where American sporting enthusiasts were quick to realize that the decline in game species was symptomatic of the passing of the frontier way of life.

By the 1880's, various provinces and states had begun drafting reports and legislation which was intended to regulate bag limits, open seasons, and methods for taking game. In 1892, the Ontario Game and Fish Commission issued a comprehensive report that drew on the observations and experiences of numerous sporting enthusiasts from across the province. The commission stated with some hyperbole that,

On all sides, from every quarter, has been heard the same sickening tale of merciless, ruthless, and remorseless slaughter. Where but a few years ago game was plentiful, it is hardly now to be found; and there is great danger that, as in the case of the buffalo, even those animals which have become so numerous as to be looked upon with contempt will soon become

extinct. In the many places where game formerly abounded, large cities stand today. The clearing of the land, the cutting down of forests, the introduction of the railways, the ravages of wolves and the indiscriminate hunting of the human assassins and the use of dynamite and nets have all contributed to the general decrease of game and fish of this land. (32)

Fortunately for the Victorian sporting enthusiast, the modern developments which the commission had criticised also made it possible for governments to actively take part in conservation measures such as large scale fish stocking. In 1888, the Canadian Superintendent of Fish Culture boasted that twelve hatcheries across the country had produced over 77 million trout and salmon frye. (33) But even though the decline in wildlife was obvious to anyone who called himself a sportsman, there were still those promoters of the sport who failed to accept their role in the process. One respondent in an 1899 issue of Rod and Gun in Canada made the ridiculous claim that,

until non-resident sportsmen woke up a few years ago, and began to hunt in this province [New Brunswick], the moose and caribou were simply dying of old age, or of indigestion brought on by over-feeding and want of exercise. (34)

Here we see an excellent example of the myth that sport is as good for wildlife as it is for the enthusiast. It provided a justification for the continued expansion of wilderness sports into previously inaccessible areas. Moreover, it allowed sportsmen to feel as if they were playing an important role as predators within a wilderness

ecosystem. Hunting and angling thus became an obligation as well as a right.

The involvement of sporting enthusiasts in the area of conservation coincided with a desire to promote Canadian wilderness sports, and tourism in general. Towards the end of the 19th century, numerous publications extolled the virtues of hunting, angling, canoeing and camping by playing upon nationalist themes of westward expansion and the pioneer experience. The Canadian Pacific and Grand Trunk railways ran regular advertisements in sporting magazines. "There is more sport to the square mile," said a C.P.R. advertisement, "along the lines of the C.P.R. than in any other part of the North American continent." (35) As a symbol of Canada's potential for dynamic growth, the C.P.R. enlisted sporting enthusiasts in the development of regional tourist economies that were emerging out west. The town of Rat Portage was described to sportsmen in a way that would have raised the eyebrows of its local population. "Mix Temagaming, Parry Sound and the Thousand Islands well together. Flavour with a dash of Constantinople and the Isle of Wight, and the result is Rat Portage." (36) There is an obvious impulse here to reinvent the image of what was essentially a typical rough and tumble frontier town.

In resort areas like the Muskokas and Kawarthas, where tourism had begun in the 1880's, there was by the turn of the century an established tradition of people recreating.

Promoters often played upon this by conjuring up a mythic past. A Grand Trunk Railway flyer from the late 1890's, dramatically evoked the sentiments of Muskoka cottagers:

Muskoka! Wherein lies the magic of that old Indian name? To those even who know her best, it means far more than can ever be expressed. To hundreds it is their summer home, rich with associations of purest happiness, of renewed health and new leases on life, rich with sweet memories of their El Dorado.(37)

Communities like Muskoka offered sporting enthusiasts a wide range of pleasures in addition to hunting and angling. By 1898 the more than 35 hotels and boarding houses in the area provided opportunities for parties, regattas, picnics and other social gatherings which served to broaden the appeal of summer holidaying.(38)

The development of certain tourist areas in Canada was aided in large part by an influx of American sportsmen in the last twenty years of the 19th century. During that period, game species in states like New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine were becoming increasingly difficult to find. Big game hunters from the eastern states were lured to New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario with the promise of primeval forests where, "the foot of man has never trod."(39) New Brunswick promoters were especially active in attracting American sportsmen by making claims such as the following:

While many other game localities have become over-run and desecrated by steam-boats, hotels and a general hunt for the mighty dollar, there are still to be found the untraded charms of the

forest primeval.(40)

By the turn of the century, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick as well as the C.P.R. and the Hudson's Bay Company had also had begun to set up promotional displays at sportsman shows in Boston, St. Louis, New York and Chicago. Stuffed game specimens were quite common at these events, but the most popular gimmick was the enactment of native rituals by Indians from Quebec and Ontario.(41)

Among some of the sportsmen, outfitters and lodge owners who had a financial stake in the growth of tourism, there was a belief that hunters and anglers from abroad not only helped in the development of a tourist economy, but that they sowed the seeds for other economic developments as well. In its opening address to its readers in 1899, Rod and Gun in Canada claimed a link between investment and tourism:

[T]he non-resident sportsman does not always merely come and go; he not seldom invests, and in those two notable instances of the Laurentides Pulp and Paper Company at Grand-Mere, Quebec, and the Grand Falls Power Company at Grand Falls, New Brunswick, we have object lessons of great industries with capital of millions, whose creation resulted solely from the fishing and hunting trips of prominent men from across the line.(42)

Thus it was felt by hunters and anglers who wished to see the growth of their sport in Canada, that they had a role to play in realizing the full economic potential of the country. At the turn of the century it was a logical argument to make, for like many other Canadians, sportsmen

wanted to be a part of the heady optimism that flowed from the dynamic growth of a new country. Such claims also helped them to portray themselves as socially responsible individuals who were maintaining and enacting the pioneer and explorer's legacies. The serious and fraternity-minded Victorian sportsman saw himself as more than just a recreationalist. The great irony in this process is that sportsmen both criticised and participated in developments which were injurious to nature, and hence to the sport they professed to love.

The visitation of numerous American sportsmen to the Canadian wilds solidified the international character of the Victorian sporting fraternity. Innumerable cross-border friendships emerged. And if one can judge from the continental representation of letters in both Forest and Stream and Rod and Gun, sporting periodicals on both sides of the border were organs of a continental, if not international sporting fraternity. Nonetheless, the influx of American sportsmen into heavily hunted and fished areas created some problems. Obviously, there were Canadian enthusiasts who felt that their rights to game species should take precedence over those of non-resident sportsmen. This principle was in fact recognized by provincial governments who made non-resident licences far more expensive than resident ones. One of the greatest concern of resident sportsmen, however, was the leasing of land to

American fishing clubs in Quebec and New Brunswick. An editorial from 1888 in Forest and Stream described a movement afoot in Montreal to dissolve American leases and replace them with Canadian and British ones.(43) The commentary concluded that Canadians would come to their senses when they realized the benefits of sound business relations and close friendships. These protectionist impulses in Canada probably had as much to do with a wider fear of continentalism and the negative influences of "republicanism," as they did with the desire to reclaim exclusive privileges. Moreover, they perhaps imply a desire to stave off the influence of an American sporting tradition. The protectionist impulse could certainly have been a step towards the development of a unique Canadian sporting tradition; one that was based on the English model, but adapted to Canadian wilderness and culture. The problem here was that the definition of "Canadian Culture," had just begun its awkward and unending development in the public discourse.(44) Some participants in the debate such as John Daffoe and George T. Denison, were avid sportsmen, but in the main, hunters and anglers in Canada did not articulate the role of hunting and angling here as part of a unique Canadian sporting tradition. Yet if our sporting tradition in the late 19th century was "colonial," it would at least have been distinguishable from the American and British traditions.

From its origins as an exclusive recreative pursuit in medieval times, to the later years of the 19th century when it became popularized, hunting and angling were considered a means of validating one's credentials as a man, and a gentleman. Not only did this involve the careful study of technique and nature habitats, but, once established in North America, sport also became a process of discovery and adaptation to new events and surroundings. Carried forward by the Victorian cult of wilderness, and all the boosterism, nature exploitation and mythologizing it entailed, wilderness sport was nonetheless an activity which sought to balance out the negative effects of modernity by emphasizing the simpler and more manly lifestyle of previous generations. But Victorian hunters and anglers soon discovered that modern urban life had produced a sensibility which could not accommodate the coarse and apparently brutal endeavour of killing animals for sport. Certainly, the ensuing debate was not as significant as the one between the Humanist social reformers and the "progressive minded" entrepreneurs and technocrats (who seemed blind to the hazards of modernity). But as a whole, both groups saw sportsmen generally as regressive eccentrics who criticised both urban and human, or humane development. In the following chapter, we shall explore how hunters and anglers responded to these criticisms, and consider the products of

self-examination that resulted.

CHAPTER 3

HUMANISTS, HUNTERS AND THE DEFENSE OF SPORT

No civilization is complete which does not include the dumb and defenceless of God's creatures within the sphere of charity and mercy. (1)

Queen Victoria

When the Queen of Great Britain expressed her views on the humane treatment of animals in 1887, she lent an air of legitimacy to an international movement that would profoundly change urbane conceptions of animals. By the end of the 1880's, societies for the protection of animals were establishing themselves both in Europe and North America. Not only did they seek to alleviate the sufferings and end the cruel treatment of work animals, pets, livestock and game species, they also concerned themselves with the plight of the urban poor -- especially children. Like those who immersed themselves in the Victorian cult of wilderness, humane reformers believed that modern urban life was inherently degenerative. It placed an unacceptable toll on any human or beast which could not defend itself. And though they primarily concerned themselves with the treatment of animals in urban environments, humane reformers, especially the more radical ones, challenged the ethics of sport hunting.

In most cases, animal welfare advocates did not make a

distinction between "buckskin" hunters and their more "refined" gentlemanly counterparts. Yet concerned sportsmen believed that to successfully challenge the humanists, they would have to support the refined European sporting tradition and play down the buckskin one. Thus without ever planning to, the humane movement helped to revitalize the European sporting ideal on a continent where it might otherwise have eventually died out.

Because many Victorian animal welfare advocates were also involved in the popular movement to rediscover nature, they understood the impact that appeals to nature could have in their arguments against sportsmen. Their most effective criticisms of hunters made use of this knowledge to play upon the sportsman's professed love of nature. Drawing from a wealth of 19th-century nature literature, a poem in a Toronto Humane Society publication described the power of art and reason in reforming the cruel values of sportsmen.

She quoted Burns' "Wounded Hare,"
And certain burning lines of Blake's,
And Ruskin on the fowles of air,
And Coledridge on the water snakes.
At Emerson's "Forbearance" he
Began to feel his will benumbed:
At Browning's "Donala" utterly
His soul surrendered and succumbed.(2)

If Victorian sportsmen had only to address humane societies in the defense of their pastimes, they might well have chosen to ignore such criticisms. But the humane movement symbolized a much greater phenomenon which had

begun to shape urban elite populations as early as the mid-17th century. At that time, a "good heart," had become, in the words of one historian, a "necessary genteel accessory." (3) A growing moral imperative required that "refined" individuals empathize with the sufferings of other individuals and forms of life. Furthermore, sports such as bull-baiting and cock-fighting revealed an almost pagan sensual indulgence that offended the common religious sensibilities of the time. In the eyes of reformers, they were a part of the traditional agrarian pastimes and rituals that would have to be eradicated if society was to progress.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, noted philosophers and essayists like Voltaire and Jeremy Bentham speculated on the suffering of animals. Replying to Descartes' assertion that animals were essentially incapable of feeling, Voltaire wrote, "What a pitiful, what a sorry thing to have said that animals are machines bereft of understanding and feeling." (4) Jeremy Bentham went even further, implying that animals had rights as well. He believed that since animals were capable of suffering, they therefore had the right not to be made to suffer needlessly. (5)

The notion that animals were worthy of humane treatment became even more firmly established in the public mind with the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species in 1859.

Darwin's thesis on evolution forced a re-evaluation of the relationship between humans and animals. If both shared a common ancestry, a choice would have to be made either to degrade the image of man, or elevate that of beasts. For those who chose the latter path, the eradication of cruelty towards animals would both raise the status of beasts and prove as well that human beings were not bestial. In this regard, the historian James Turner claims that,

Animal protection served as a sort of intellectual pacifier for the thousands of literate individuals who now had to learn to live with the idea of the cousinhood of man and brute. (6)

The rising status of animals in the Victorian period took its most illustrative form in literary works by authors such as W.A. Frazer and Ernest Thompson Seton. The popular genre of the animal story imbued animals with human characteristics. For the growing number of urban dwellers who were becoming ignorant of how animals existed in their natural state, the personification of animals allowed new kinds of conceptions to emerge. And some authors were not simply content to describe life in the wild from the animal's point of view. In W.A. Frazer's Mooswa and Others of The Boundaries (1900), Metis trappers are made the butt of many jokes by the animals. When one of their own is finally caught by a trapper, a bear cries, "We are not like man, who slays for the sake of slaying, and calls it sport!"(7)

This sort of moralizing was conspicuously absent in the works of one author of animal stories. Charles G.D. Roberts had no interest in seeing the world from an animal's perspective, and used them instead as vehicles for exploring the "systematic drama of conflict and resolution," in the natural world.(8) Literary critic Joseph Gold has argued that Roberts founded a distinct sub-genre of the animal story -- one which placed him outside the popular trend towards humanizing animals. Gold argues that "Roberts' animals never become pets, the reader is never allowed to lose his detachment and there is no compromise in the recorded events with the bloody process of universal natural law."(9)

Roberts' stories were probably held in high regard by the Victorian sporting community, because they conformed to the sportsman's conception of himself as a participant in the natural order of things. Unfortunately for sportsmen, Roberts was the exception to the rule. Most authors of animal stories helped to create an intellectual climate where the unfortunate condition of wild animals became a concern of those who advocated humane reforms.

Humane sentiment as it was understood in the 19th century was very much a product of modernity; as such, it undermined traditional understanding of how humans interact with animals.(10) The isolation of countless urbanites from the lifestyle of their country cousins was the main

prerequisite for the ascendance of anti-hunting sentiment in the late 19th century. In the moral vacuum that existed as a result from a break with the past, reason and humane beliefs dictated a new relationship with wilderness and animal life -- one that did not include a place for sportsmen.

As a means of differentiating themselves from food and market hunters, sportsmen had always emphasised the importance of fair methods of bagging game, rules for competition among hunters and anglers, and codes of proper conduct. But as they bore their share of criticism from animal welfare advocates and their sympathizers in the late 19th century, they began to re-discover the importance of the codes that bound their fraternity together. The wholesale slaughter of wildlife and public displays of brutal hunting and angling practices were common enough that they could not simply be denied. Victorian sportsmen thus took every available opportunity to pin any brutal allegations onto non-sporting hunters and anglers. This created a further incentive for sportsmen to educate each other about avoiding bad habits, and helped them as well to build stronger ties within the fraternity.

Before the end of the 19th century, North American sportsmen were not adverse to using a wide variety of methods in hunting and fishing for game. The first

sportsmen on the continent were intrigued by how local settlers and natives baited animals, fished with nets and spears, or used a variety of ingenious traps and snares in acquiring their food. One was not restricted, for example, from shooting deer or moose when they were trapped in deep snow, or when they were swimming across rivers and lakes. But by the 1880's, one could find in the pages of sporting magazines numerous editorials and letters which censured such practices. In 1882, a sportsman from Quebec described how some local fishermen saw a swimming moose and shot it from their boat. When it was dragged to shore they discovered that it had two calves and they promptly shot them as well. The Quebec sportsman did not hide his revulsion, writing that, "There is nothing in the English language that will properly characterize this transaction, and such things simply make one sick." (10) In Rod and Gun magazine, another hunter wrote about the "cruel" customs of his native guides while on a duck hunting expedition. He described how they forced a loon underwater with repeated shots until it was too tired to resist any longer. Although he "hated the very sight of it," he admitted that he "found it hard to deny [his] fellows the fun." (11)

When sportsmen admonished non-sporting hunters and anglers, they were trying to show that they too had the capacity for humane sentiment. Perhaps one of the rare examples of how sportsmen gave in to public pressure can be

seen in the phasing out of the use of live pigeons for target practice. A Rod and Gun article which promoted the use of clay pigeons stated that, "again the element of cruelty in pigeon shooting, although more apparent than real, is, of course, entirely absent at the targets." (12) It is likely, however, that the conversion to clay pigeons was also because they were much cheaper to use than real birds.

One can also see the humane side of Victorian sportsmen in their efforts to end the market hunting of rare birds for the fashion industry. This was an example of how sporting enthusiasts took an interest even in the welfare of non-game species. An editorial in Rod and Gun from 1899 saddled women with the blame for birdlife destruction:

What a commentary on civilization. These little birds by the hundreds of thousands are slaughtered, not for food purposes or even because a mistaken idea of sport might palliate such wholesale destruction, but simply that the fairer sex may decorate their hats! (13)

The editorial slipped further into hysteric chauvinism when it asked what sportsmen could do to prevent the destruction of birdlife. "Shall we plead with them," it asked sportsmen, or "[should] we rise in our might while the machinery of law-making power still remains in masculine hands, and pass drastic measures that shall stop the evil?" (14)

Conscientious sportsmen were quick to police their own membership as well whenever poor hunting form or ungentlemanly behaviour threatened to tarnish their image. Addressing the problem of "game hogs," or those individuals who thought of nothing but how many animals they could kill, a Canadian correspondent in Rod and Gun wrote: "The burning desire of the shot gun enthusiast, as has been said of the Englishman, is to go out and kill something." (15) The correspondent felt that sportsmen should instead take an interest in "clean kills," and the proper and professional use of their equipment.

This move towards "professional" sporting conduct also meant that drinking and rowdy behaviour in the field would have to be eradicated. The liberal use of alcohol had long been an integral part of hunting and fishing expeditions. In what was perhaps a futile effort to remove drink from sporting activities, the editors of Forest and Stream began a policy, in 1882, of not publishing stories that romanticised and made fun of drunken sportsmen. One reader wrote to congratulate the magazine, for "excluding from the columns of [Forest and Stream], all references to the use of beverages of an exhilarating nature in narratives of hunting and fishing adventures." (16)

A further effort at reforming the image of wilderness sport came with the attempt to make women more welcome in fox-hunting circles. Women had been participants in the

sport as early as the 18th century. With the rise in the 19th century of the "cult of true womanhood," which emphasized the inherent moral virtuosity of women, foxhunters found that female participation in the sport reaffirmed its moral legitimacy. The Victorian fox-hunting enthusiast Anthony Trollope pursued this idea in order to challenge the myth that huntsmen were loud, boisterous and cruel drunkards. He explained that the presence of women on the hunt ensured that the men were always on their best behaviour.(17)

Although the reformation of sporting habits may have deflected some of the criticism aimed at hunting and angling, it did not appease the humanists who argued that killing animals for sport was inherently immoral. Victorian sportsmen needed to justify their recreations. Not only did they wish to answer criticisms, but they wished to re-affirm in their own minds that their activities were moral. In the literature which is intended to describe the value of recreational hunting and angling there are some obvious differences between how the two were perceived. In the sense that hunting and angling represent attempts to get closer to nature, and given the fact that they both involve finding and killing game, they are essentially the same activity. Moreover, angling is simply hunting by another means, especially if one is speaking of landing an illusive, large and vicious game fish such as pike or muskellunge.

Yet hunting is generally associated with communal activity; the most celebrated hunts are those which conjure up a group of men, stalking big game in the manner of their pre-historic ancestors. Angling, on the other hand, has its ideal form in the individual's probing of the watery depths, and the solitary attention to rod, line and lure. Both sports are, however, closely tied to the tradition and folklore of survival on the land.

Historian and sociologist Stuart Marks has speculated on the appeal of hunting and angling at a time when it was not considered "sport" in the modern sense of the term. Moreover, the timeless quality of the appeal suggests that it formed the basis for Victorian sentiments. Marks argues that,

Hunting and fishing were a release from the constraints integral to an agricultural way of life. In hunting, a person's character and accomplishments provided the stuff that forms enduring bonds. Men were criticized or praised, respected or reproached, as a consequence of their success or failure in well-established roles.(18)

The hunting and angling traditions, whether carried out as a means of survival or for sport, are closely linked with an individual's self-esteem. In the Victorian period, there was also an implication that if one was a capable sportsman, one had proved one's ability to survive in a hostile setting. If a person could master the techniques of living

off the land, then he might also be better equipped to cope with the problems of everyday urban life. Moreover, if an individual did not perceive himself as the master of his own destiny at work or home, he could at least achieve a measure of independence through his sporting skills. This was undoubtedly one of the prime factors behind the appeal of the buckskin sporting tradition.

An even more compelling reason why people loved to hunt was offered by the Victorian sportsman Christopher Sykes. "Hunting," he claimed, "ministers to obscure parts of our being, such as lie underneath reason and awareness." (19) A similar sentiment was expressed by a hunter named Brian, who was a neighbour of the Upper Canadian settler and author, Susanna Moodie. Brian was, "a sour, morose, [and] queer chap," according to Moodie, and "as mad as a March hare!" (20) He was afflicted with chronic depression and probably alcoholism as well. When Moodie asked him why he hunted, he spoke of it as if it were a means of escaping from harsh realities. He replied, " 'Tis the excitement, . . . it drowns thought, and I love to be alone." (21)

These kinds of feelings were difficult for hunters to describe given that, by their very nature, they are antithetical to reasonable argument. Yet Victorian sportsmen did express primal feelings in indirect ways -- talking about the tyranny of reason and the technological age, or the distortion of time and space while they were

consumed with the hunt. The Victorian hunter Wilson Stephans, saw hunting as "a challenge and a release from the artificiality of living in the technological age. [Sportsmen] share the ageless drama of the natural order as it unfolds against the background fields and woodlands." (22)

A holiday from reason sometimes released a flood of emotion which served to crystallize an event, making it memorable for years to come. Many big game hunters recalled how they were paralysed with "buck fever" upon sighting a majestic animal. The eminent Canadian Banker and Statesman, Sir John Rose, was reputed to have died from shock upon seeing a great stag in the Scottish highlands. "It is probably true," claimed one Victorian, "that Sir John's death was caused by derangement of the heart, due to the excitement of the moment, or what is known as 'buck fever.'" (23) In hunting lore, big game animals have almost a Medusa-like brilliance, which dazzles the sportsman and renders him nearly incapable of killing them. They have a mystical power which challenges the hunter to assess his own importance in the universal scheme of things. In an almost animistic fashion, the Victorian hunter was likely to believe, if only in his sub-conscious mind, that he could claim the powers of his quarry if he killed it. Thus the 19th-century hunter felt as if he were blessed when his skills and good fortune brought game into his sights.

The pressure to validate sport hunting at the end of

the 19th century also led to some elaborate and horrific arguments which spoke to the ideals of militarism and social Darwinism. A sample of a Forest and Stream article from 1888 clearly spells out one point of view on the racial and national obligations of white sportsmen:

The primitive hunting stage was the school in which man acquired supremacy over the beasts of the field, and had his faculties gradually cultivated for that interminable struggle for supremacy between the several sectors of the race, which has subsisted for ages, and which must for ages continue to subsist.(24)

The author then describes in typically Malthusian fashion how warfare served to check populations and how the white race was in danger of being squeezed out of existence by "Slav, Tartar and Latin races." The sporting arts are offered as a partial solution to the problem:

For these inevitable wars the hunting field is the best training field. It improves a man's physique, gives him readiness of hand and eye, familiarity with weapons of war, inures him to hardship, and gives him that self-reliance born of assured skill in the handling of his weapon which is so much conducive to victory.(25)

It is unlikely that Victorian sportsmen hunted out of a sense of racial obligation. People generally engage in recreation for selfish reasons. But when Victorians were forced to justify their pastimes in response to the ideals of "useful" or "rational" recreation, they tended to overemphasise the social utility of their sport.

In contrast to hunters, Victorian anglers never really

articulated the usefulness of their pastime. This was due in part to the fact that they were not the targets of humanist reformers, nor were they thought to be very social in nature. The public perception of anglers has traditionally been that they are eccentric cranks, and, in the Victorian period, they were seen especially as incorrigible daydreamers who frittered away their time in idle recreation. But if angling ever had any benefits besides the fact that it was an entertaining way of providing food, they came from the notion that the quiet contemplation it evoked opened one's mind to creative thought and divine inspiration. This idea formed the basis of how Victorian anglers justified their sport.

In some sense, angling is analogous to discovery and learning. The angler exists above the water, in a known and familiar surrounding which signifies a realm of understanding. He casts out lure or proposition into an unknown dimension and probes its form for the places where a fish might be. The tension in the line, vibrations of the water and subsurface obstacles are all sensible to the angler, who uses his rod as an ant uses its antenna. With a great deal of luck and a small amount of skill, a fish is hooked and the struggle ensues. As the angler comes to terms with the object of pursuit, it is apprehended and brought into the known realm. Finally, eating the fish represents the assimilation of knowledge and the

satisfaction of intellectual hunger.

The idea that angling bestows upon the fisherman some special and illusive knowledge made it almost profane for sceptical Victorians. It was a sport which was better left to the outcast, the eccentric, the intellectual or prophet. In 1615, Gervase Markham wrote that fishing has "beene the sport or recreation of Gods, Saints, of most holy fathers, and of many worthy and reverend Devines, both dead and at this time breathing." (26) Markham was obviously alluding to the importance of Biblical and Christian influences on angling. Whenever someone wished to defend the sport, they would point out that fishermen were Christ's chosen followers. (27)

Three hundred years after Markham, Herbert Hoover remarked on the spiritual dimension of angling and its ability to purify the soul. Even as president of the United States, his sentiments were those of a young boy who had imbibed the Victorian conception of angling:

Fishing, is not so much getting fish as it is a state of mind and a lure of the human soul into refreshment. The joyous rush of the brook, the contemplation of the eternal flow of the stream, the stretch of forest and mountain all reduce our egotism, sooth our troubles, and shame our wickedness. (28)

Victorian anglers, more so than their hunting compatriots, emphasized the importance of the entire sporting experience rather than the actual kill. Angling was frequently thought of as an excuse to spend some time

and in the contemplation of nature. In The Anatomy of Melancholy (1907), Robert Burton wrote that,

Fishing is still and quiet; and if so be the angler catch no fish, yet he hath a wholesome walk to the Brookside, pleasant shade by the sweet silver streams; he hath good air, and sweet smells of fine fresh meadow flowers; he hears the melodious harmony of birds.(29)

But if angling was thought to be a more peaceful pastime than hunting, it was not the result of Victorian efforts. In 1653, Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler paved the way for a genre of angling literature that would elevate fishing to an almost holy art. But in later Victorian years, the 17th- and 18th-century conceptions of angling as a gentle, contemplative pastime had to compete with a new heroic approach to the sport, one that might be described as typically North American. Some anglers, especially those who went after big game fish, saw themselves as hunters taking part in an epic struggle with the forces of nature. Like the buckskin hunter, they threw themselves upon the water with the customary zeal of intensely active Muscular Christians. A Victorian angler describes in Rod and Gun a trip he took with his friends to hunt salmon in Quebec. His flair for adventure erases any Waltonian imagery of a cast fly, floating lazily in a calm pool under a willow tree:

With confidence in the guide, but doubt in our hearts, we cast a fly into the heaviest water. It seems impossible that any fish could live there, but after a cast or two, there is a flash in the curl of the rapid.(30)

In the ensuing battle between fish and man, the salmon

peels line from angler's reel as it races downstream through the rapids. Landing the fish after a long fight, the author boasts, "our first encounter with the tiger of the Saguenay is over." (31)

A satirical look at this kind of angler is one of the finer aspects of John D. Robins' The Incomplete Anglers.

The author describes his own fishing experiences with a group of friends, playing up their incompetence and lack of preparedness in a humorous way. But it is the pompous angler, who fancies himself as a macho wilderness hero, that is the true focus of criticism in the book. Robins describes him as:

the strong wordless hero, who carries with him but one shirt, one pair of socks, one trouser, and thus defies The Forest. But even he, except in melodrama, has a guide; ergo, an income. (32)

The negative image of hunters and anglers as cruel and boisterous savages had its origins in the puritanical values of 17th-century Europe. Puritanism would bond with enlightened humanist thinking to create an urbane environment and sensibility which treated bloodsports as retrograde and immoral. The advent of the industrial revolution severed instinct from reason and allowed generations to develop which had no real conception of wilderness nor wildlife. This modern sensibility sent scores of Victorians back into the wild to experience what

they thought was a more primal way of relating to nature. Near the end of the century, sportsmen had to face the criticisms of the humane reformers, and the growing numbers of urbanites who were uneasy with the thought of sport hunting. By evoking the medieval notion of the refined gentleman sportsman, hunters and anglers tried to cling to the moral high ground. Thus, the European sporting tradition was given a new lease on life at the same time that the buckskin, or heroic tradition was gaining momentum. An unintended consequence of the debate surrounding the morality of sport was that Victorian hunters and anglers tried to explain to outsiders and each other the allure of recreational hunting and angling.

The basic arguments that hunters and anglers made in defense of their sport provide only a surface understanding of their sub-culture as a whole. Articulate and public minded sportsmen may have given their fraternity some food for thought in describing the sport as they saw it. But if we choose to view recreation as a form of expression and self-development, the actions and behaviours of the less publicly-minded sporting enthusiast are far more valuable in our understanding of the fraternity. Treating wilderness sport as a ritual, with mythic and symbolic ingredients, will illuminate the basic structures that provide continuity to the institution, and a sense of belonging and purpose among its members.

CHAPTER 4

RITUAL, SYMBOL AND THE SPORTING MYTH

Whenever Victorian sporting enthusiasts took to the field, they were engaging in a slowly evolving ritualistic process that allowed for both individual and collective expression. As we have seen, sportsmen have always talked about the qualities in hunting and angling that provide for a well-rounded and fully developed masculine character. Yet wilderness sport was not only regarded as a means for testing one's mettle against the natural world, or as an opportunity to contemplate the meaning of wilderness. Hunting and angling were also thought of as pursuits which bound men together and instilled an appreciation for "natural" forms of social interaction. Sportsmen relied on such things as social drama, symbolism, oral narratives and tradition, as tools which enabled them to maintain and develop their individual and collective identities as men. These highly visible and well acknowledged aspects of wilderness recreation, describe the illusive and shadowy character of Victorian sporting ritual.

A ritual is any repetitive action that is perceived to have special significance.(1) It is by its very nature conservative, in that it attests to the ability of a specific behaviour to remain relevant regardless of the

tenor of the times. With each repetition, a ritual gains legitimacy and becomes absorbed into the repertoire of less important habit until it too is taken for granted. At the point where ritual becomes second nature, it releases the mind from the constraints of reason, allowing instinctual or imaginative thought free reign. The liberating aspect of ritual was especially appealing for buckskin hunters and those who sought "deeper" wilderness experiences. Patrician sportsmen, on the other hand, would have appreciated the fact that ritual served to establish a historical link with the European tradition.

The examination of sporting ritual also raises the question of how a person "creates" something new out of established ingredients and within the confines of a set pattern. This argument is more familiar to the arts than to sport, but there is reason to believe that the two pursuits are not all that dissimilar. Sociologist and cultural theorist Victor Turner has developed the idea of "social drama" in his study of ritual, theatre and recreation.(2) His study of various African tribes revealed that people in their collective rituals were taking on roles as if they were theatrical performers. This element of performance in everyday life finds significance in even the most apparently mundane things. Turner claims that

Each culture, each person within it, uses the entire sensory repertoire to convey messages: manual gesticulations, facial expressions, bodily postures, rapid, heavy, or light breathing, tears,

at the individual level; stylized gestures, dance patterns, prescribed silences, synchronized movements such as marching, the moves and "plays" of games, sports, and rituals, at the cultural level.(3)

Turner's thesis intentionally blurs the lines between formal theatre and ritual performance, treating both essentially as forms of communication. And as we shall see in our examination of sporting lore, there may also be unseen connections between literature and sporting behaviour.

The medieval roots of Victorian sporting culture give further evidence of the theatrical possibilities in wilderness sport. After the demise of feudalism, when knights took on a more symbolic role, their tournaments and competitions were not so much sporting events as they were spectacles and performances. They provided a forum for the display of physical prowess, grace and courtly manners.(4) As the embodiment of the essential qualities of gentle virtue, they formed the basis of the sporting codes which were rediscovered in the 19th century. The role of Victorian sportsmen was to display these virtues in order to garner the esteem of their peers. But whereas medieval knights had an audience for their feats, Victorian sportsmen performed within the context of a social drama. As Turner states, "Ritual, unlike theatre, does not distinguish between audience and performers."(5)

Acknowledging the importance of ritual in sporting culture opens up lines of inquiry that might otherwise remain un-pursued. As in the case of the sportsmen who saw hunting in terms of social darwinism, or the man who feared the influence of women on legislators, there are many examples of Victorian hunters and anglers who openly expressed their views of the world. But in sporting ritual, one can find the most commonly held, and sometimes undeclared, values that have stood the test of time.

Sociologist Stuart Marks has suggested that

Insofar as hunting is a social and learned activity, consisting of repetitive rituals, we can examine it like a collection of "texts" in which participants perform and make declarations about themselves and how they perceive their world.(6)

If we were to follow through with a theatrical analogy in the description of sporting ritual, we might ask questions about the significance of direction and script, backdrop, costume and props. The first two elements shape the outcome and quality of a performance; they are the external forces which most broadly constrain the actors. In sporting ritual, the script is slowly written over time, as each enthusiast gives a rendition of his own memorable encounters, and the form of an ideal hunting or fishing trip becomes the canon. Direction is given through the power of repetition and an understanding of how one is expected to behave in a given situation. The backdrop, of course, is

nature itself, which provides the primary context for the drama. Costume and props are those things which are closest to the actors; they act, in effect, as extensions of the actors. This close relationship between the subject and his objects is the catalyst of improvisation. It allows, more than any other theatrical detail, the expression of individual identity.

The sportsman loves his rod, or gun and dog, and is scrupulously neat and careful with his outfit, reading from it the stories of bygone days as from the pages of a well worn book, longing for others to come.(7)

The special meaning that Victorian sportsmen invested in their gear tells us something about their relationships with the natural world and with other sportsmen. As the above quotation reveals, the sportsman's impedimenta serve as mediums through which he can access the experiences of those who hunted and fished in "bygone days." For Victorian sportsmen, a fly rod or a pair of leather walking boots could provide a link to previous generations, and conjure up the image of a golden age of English sporting life. With repeated use, a particular piece of equipment could act as a repository for memories of enjoyable excursions. Victorian sportsmen were often so endeared with their favourite items that they personified them with names. One Victorian named his old faithful rifle "Habeas Corpus," and credited it, more than himself, with sniffing out game.(8) Another joked

about the time when he mistakenly oiled his gun with nerve tonic, only to discover that it took "the nervous disposition out of his gun." (9) And even an object as inconsequential as a fly or lure could be given life through the magic of angling. Recounting a fishing trip on the Nepigon in 1917, E.E. Millard wrote:

Hobo (the fly) had been well fed, clothed and doctored, his constitution thoroughly repaired; and one afternoon when he was strutting around camp, feeling fine as silk and quite cocky, we concluded he was seeking trouble, so we ferried him across the river, where he found it in abundance. (10)

While such examples might seem trivial by themselves, the study of symbols reveals that the most inconsequential objects can have great importance in describing the character of an individual or culture. Sociologists Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton have argued that the objects a person acquires represent both an individual's attempt to control his or her environment and the abilities of the objects themselves to impose a structure on the person's life. (11) If we consider, for example, the familiar statement, "guns don't kill people, people do," we see a denial of the power of the object to influence the individual. A more appropriate sentiment might be: "guns help people to kill each other." In helping a person to kill another without risk of injury to himself, a gun can plant the idea of murder in the mind of an individual. The object does not completely control the

individual, but if it has greater potential to effect significant change than the individual, the relationship will be unbalanced and a kind of coercion will take place.

As we have seen with the nature of rituals, culture -- and in this case, a cultural artifact -- is at once pliable and coercive. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton have further claimed that, "[e]ven purely functional things serve to socialize a person to a certain habit or way of life and are representative signs of that way of life." (12) The idea that people are in some way shaped by the objects they make is the basic premise behind historical studies of such technologies as the plough, the wheel or the stirrup. But not only does technology change personal and social behaviour in a direct sense; it can also embody a set of values. In his study of Nuer in the Sudan, E.E. Evans-Pritchard found that the spear was thought to confer special status on its owner:

The spear is a metaphor to portray the idealized self among the Nuer of the Sudan. The spear exaggerates those personal traits -- strength, speed, potency, permanence, the ability to command respect and to control surroundings -- to which its owner and other men aspire. (13)

Sport hunters have a similar relationship with their firearms, but in a more subdued way. We can see this in the fact that weapons and sporting equipment can and have been used as decorations in the home. Regardless of its expressed function, sporting gear as ornament retains, and

perhaps even accentuates, the symbolic meaning it had when in use. And in a sense, the symbolic meaning of sporting equipment is more concentrated than other objects found elsewhere; because of course, everyday life is full of useless and relatively meaningless objects. A hunter or angler can only carry a few items with him, so those that are chosen are essential, and therefore meaningful.

Furthermore, preparing one-self for a sporting trip invites contemplation of an object's meaning. Writing on the symbolism in canoe tripping, professor William James has argued that, "[t]he very necessity of reducing one's baggage to a minimum demands an awareness of essentials not common in our cluttered world." (14) In The Incomplete Anglers, the author forgoes a description of this process, telling the reader that he "will be spared the full account of our buying, chiefly because the anticipatory joys and the fragrant glamour of camp shopping would be communicated only to those familiar with it." (15)

For hunters and anglers, the devotion to equipment represents an interest in mastering the technology which, in turn, allows one to master his natural surroundings. The capabilities of a gun, rod or lure become the capabilities of the sportsman -- technology as an extension of one-self. Yet in the personification of equipment, we can see an acknowledgment that objects have a life of their own. The rod and gun share the credit for acquiring game with the

angler and hunter, and as such, challenge the autonomy of their users. In the following chapter, we shall see how the sportsman's most prized possession, the trophy, serves to buttress the autonomy and self-esteem of its possessor.

An important part of the Victorian sporting ritual existed in the remembrance of past events through oral tradition. Methods of hunting and angling have always been passed from generation to generation by the spoken word typically from father to son. Preparing gear, planning the hunt, and talking about it afterwards were essential parts of the experience. In recounting his boy-hood experiences as an angler, Frank Parker Day fondly recalls: "In March, all the boys in school began to talk fishing; furtively, under the desks, we traded hooks, lines, sinkers, and baitcans; in little groups we laid secret plans of action." (16) As children might exchange hockey or baseball cards today, these boys were learning to interact socially through the medium of a shared interest. Their enthusiasm for angling could simply not be confined to the fishing season, and by exchanging equipment and making plans, they were conjuring up an idyllic image of trips to come.

The process of hunting and fishing for food has never simply been about finding game and killing it. In talking about the hunt, the participants shared techniques, ironed out any problems and, perhaps most importantly, revered the

achievements of the most skilful hunters and anglers. With time, the most basic lessons and observations worked their way into the lore, re-emerging with a different quality at each recitation. And perhaps to give these ideas more persuasive power, or to fill a need for entertainment, hunting stories developed a mythical, romantic and adventurous quality. The overriding theme of the typical sporting narrative was that success in society, like success in hunting, was based upon achievement and skill rather than upon chance or luck.

The late 19th century poem, "The Fowler of The Coast," by C. McKay, describes a lone fowler, floating on cold, dark ocean swells under a tempestuous sky. As dawn breaks, he braves the elements in the hope that ducks might pass overhead.

The fowler rouses with the light,
And grasps his ancient fowling piece;
Anxious, alert, his keen eyes gaze,
Up through the shimmering pearl-like haze
That folds him like a mystic fleece,
Watching the wild fowl's swift winged flight
Twelve fowls drop seaward, one by one;
The fowler gathers up the dead
And wounded -- loads -- and waits for more.(17)

Such was the sportsman's ideal hunting orgy; a never ending flight of birds served up by fate to a keen, rugged and determined hunter. One can imagine that the fowler with his ancient weapon has always floated there and always will, as long as the birds keep coming.

Whether one hunts and fishes alone or with others,

sporting narratives and poetry always serve to bind sportsmen together through common experience. They achieve their longevity by recounting heroism, good fortune, mythic and strange events, or humourous situations. In angling lore, for example, there have always been tales of ridiculously large or old fish. The anonymous author of The Arte of Angling (1577) spoke of a pike that was caught in 1497 with a copper ring in its gills. The engraved band stated that the fish had been placed in the lake by Frederick the Second in 1230.(18) In the 1890's, an angler from Buffalo was told by the locals at Sturgeon Falls that the 1000- pound sturgeons there were as thick as blackberries, and that the boys of the village trained them to jump over sticks.(19)

The active imagination of anglers is well known, and often makes them the brunt of humour. E.E. Millard defended the angler's habit of lying when he wrote "Truth seems so narrow a path, to a few of our genial fraternity, scarcely a poorly defined trail, little wonder we occasionally stub our toes."(20) The tall tales of the sportsman are evidence of the desire to stand out from one's peers and achieve a place in lore, even if it is only of a local variety. They are, furthermore, opportunities to trick fellow sportsmen and prove that baiting friends can be as easy as baiting game. An American sportsman described at the turn of the century how his companion was charmed by a local boy who lied about

how many quail he had killed in a single shot.

"My boy," said A___ solemnly, "you may or may not become an expert quail shot, but you are today the biggest liar in Christendom -- bar none. And I'd like to shake your hand, and compliment you. If you'll stay with us and tell us more guilt-edged lies, we'll give you lunch and a glass or two of sherry." (21)

Even though this episode is probably a fabrication, the point still remains that story-telling earns the sporting enthusiast as much respect as does being a good shot. For Victorians, fellowship was one of the most valued aspects of sport, and story-telling was second only to shared experience in its ability to bring people together. The tall tale also represents a means of separating the sporting fraternity from outsiders. Here we can see inside jokes and tall tales as exclusive forms of communication in which only a select group of people have the ability to discern reality from fiction.

Sporting enthusiasts also maintained their group identity by making fun of non-sportsmen who tried to fish and hunt. In the following dialogue, a group of Ontario ice fishermen mock an American tourist for his ignorance about angling. When he fails to catch fish with salt pork as bait, the American asks,

"Wal, how under Heaven, did you get all them 'ere fish?"

"Caught them."

"Wal, I s'pose you did; but what kinder bait do you use?"

"Worms."

"Varms! Why, under Heaven, where do you get Varms at this time of year?"

"I got them out of my cellar."(22)

The ice fishermen then laugh at his folly, as the American goes home and proceeds to dig up his cellar. Making sport of aspiring hunters and anglers is part of the initiation ritual, where the group assesses the skills and sociability of new members. But the real test of admittance comes in the field, where the initiates must prove their abilities. Group hunting provides an opportunity for people to integrate with others, even when the community in question is not composed exclusively of recreationalists. As Marks writes,

Like marriage, hunting is a way of integrating a newcomer into a rural community. It allows residents the opportunity to assess the stranger's behaviour and to assign him to a known category of persons.(23)

For sportsmen in the 19th century, the greatest opportunity for testing the skills of the individual and the cohesion of the group was the extended hunting and fishing trip. It invited the display of heroic abilities and offered the participants a chance to leave behind their everyday affairs. Under the stress of an arduous journey the mind became focused on the immediate problems of basic survival. The hunter and the angler knew that they were taking part in a event that was older than the voyageurs -- an event that formed the basis of classical romantic adventure stories. It is even probable that the archetypal wilderness quest set a pattern for expectations in the minds

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of Victorian sportsmen and canoe-trippers. William James, in his article, "The Canoe Trip as Religious Quest," notes the similarities between canoe-tripping and the genre of quest literature.(24) In this genre, the heroic protagonist begins his voyage as he prepares for departure and separation from his known, civilized environment. James writes:

The careful selection of food and clothing of a kind not associated with the profane routines of ordinary life suggests a break with the usual and the familiar, like the irruption into everyday life occasioned by the sacred festivals of less secular cultures than our own.(25)

Upon leaving the civilized world, the hero is forced to reorient himself to unfamiliar surroundings which exist according to natural, rather than man-made, laws. The limits of his physical and emotional endurance are tested by the natural obstacles he encounters, and a stronger character emerges. He is challenged with natural wonders and beautiful vistas and, in the process, undergoes a form of religious transformation. In the context of a wilderness trip, the boon that the traveller takes with him back to the civilized world is a deep understanding of wilderness. Thus the wilderness trip is a quest for enlightenment and self-development that mirrors in its structure the voyages of Jason, Mohammed and Buddha. One can perhaps best understand the mental and spiritual aspects of such a journey by looking at tribal rituals, where a religious leader or

medicine man enters a trance in order to visit the spirit world and bring back a healing boon. In recreational wilderness voyages, the internal, or personal dimensions of the journey are more important than the actual trip, which serves no purpose by itself.

The parallels between quest literature and the Victorian wilderness trip raise the question of whether recreationalists actively sought out mythic experiences. What kind of distinction, if any, do they make between the two? Victorians had a special interest in the past, given the uncertainty of the times, and one might speculate on their desire to slip into the known and comforting bonds of an ageless ritual like the quest. Certainly, there were many promoters of tourism in late 19th-century Canada who played on the appeal of ancient ritual, historical figures and pre-historic locations. An 1889 pamphlet by the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association stated, for example, that

Ever since the days of Champlain the Ottawa has been the main highway for those hardy adventurers who were the founders of Canada in their exploration westward; but once the main centres of population are passed the great expanse of territory still preserves its primal beauty and grandeur. (26)

Although he was writing forty years after the Victorian period, John Robins vividly expresses the lure of history and tradition for sportsmen in the Canadian wild:

When I roll myself into it [a Hudson Bay Blanket], I am a bearded factor, pulling that blanket out of a bale at York Factory, and selling it dourly to my feathered, silent, stately Cree self for too many beaver skins, trapped along the bitter reaches

of the North Saskatchewan. (27)

Lacking an ancient tradition of wilderness life here in Canada, recreationalists of European heritage also borrowed from the native population much of the local lore that would give them a stronger sense of place. At the turn of the century, the Ojibwa of Desbarats, Ontario re-enacted the "Drama of Hiawatha" for large groups of tourists who camped out around the venue. (28) This is clearly an example of cultural appropriation in the name of establishing a history for a newly "developed" area. In her travels throughout Upper Canada in the 1830's, Anna Jameson articulated the longing that drove settlers to take an interest in native history. She wrote: "Canada is a colony, not a country; it is not yet identified with the dearest of affection and associations, remembrances, and hopes of its inhabitants: it is to them an adopted not real mother." (29)

The role that history and tradition played in Victorian sporting ritual suggests that through recreation, sportsmen sought the kind of close relationship with their predecessors that everyday urban life did not provide. Sport and play have the instinctual and imaginative qualities that are more typically thought to exist in the arts. As such they have more in common with literature, drama and story-telling than they do with the spheres of economics or politics, for example. In tribal societies, the idea that someone would travel for hundreds of miles to

hunt and fish as a form of recreation would seem ludicrous. And certainly from that perspective, the notion that sportsmen were enacting a historical drama when they went afield would at least lend some legitimacy to the endeavour. The relationship between art and life is most evident in the study of sport and recreation. But the flight from reason which is a prerequisite in art and recreation, requires first of all a flexible notion of time. This lets us step freely from past to present, appropriating the things we need to construct an imagined time and place. Says one theorist on this matter,

. . . we are gifted with the mental process that allows us to step outside the "now," the endless succession of stimuli, and to build elaborate models of time: of the fluctuation of nature, the past, present, and future, near time and far time, even the fictitious time of novels and plays. (30)

To fully appreciate the importance of fictitious time we must accept the fact that without it we have no method of understanding the past. The same mechanism which allows us to create literature and drama also provides for the very basic emotional need of integrating one-self with previous generations. If we conceive of ritual as a means of satisfying that need, its connection to imaginative and instinctual thought should be understandable.

Victorian sporting enthusiasts employed ritual as a means of developing both collective and individual

identities. Through ritual, hunters and anglers were instructed about proper sporting behaviour and learned how to manipulate their status within their group. Their devotion to symbols and the importance they placed on storytelling reveal the channels through which ideas were passed from one member to another and from one generation to another within the various sporting traditions. And it was also in the context of ritual that Victorian sporting enthusiasts explored their gender identities. Victorian sportsmen believed that modernity was as much a threat to their manliness as it was to the well-being of society in general. They tested their notions of rugged manliness by seeking primitive experiences in the wild and by competing with themselves and others for the symbols of manhood. In this next chapter, we will further examine these processes and consider, as well, the extent to which wilderness sport was predominantly a male pursuit in the 19th century.

CHAPTER 5

PRIMITIVISM AND THE QUEST FOR MANLINESS

Victorian sportsmen saw their masculinity as both an end and a means. By relying on his "male qualities," an individual could access raw nature and come to a greater understanding of its purpose in the human scheme of things. But masculinity was also something that one hoped to find and exercise in the wilderness. It was believed that the deeper the penetration of nature, the closer one came to a masculine ideal. It might even be said that gender was such an integral part of the male conception of wilderness that the two could not be separated. In the wilderness, relying on the basic tools of survival, a man could rediscover the perceived essence of manhood: strength, courage, ingenuity and dominance.(1)

It has been suggested by historians that to understand masculinity in the mid-to late-19th century, one must first consider the relationship between boys and their parents.(2) With the onset of the industrial revolution, it became common for a father to work outside of the home, or to engage in new kinds of labour that were often difficult for children to understand. Fathers were thus further removed from the domestic world inhabited by their children.

Victorian children of the middle and upper classes typically perceived their fathers as strong, stern and disciplined patriarchs who maintained their distance in the domestic environment.(3) These men did not love their children any less than previous generations had, but believed that the harsh, impersonal, and competitive nature of the modern, "real world," required them to show their boys by example how to be tough, disciplined and responsible. Although Victorian fathers placed a premium on masculine virtues, they nevertheless allowed their boys to be raised in an environment that emphasized feminine qualities. As the historian John Tosh argues:

. . . while boys all too easily identified with the stern and undemonstrative father, they learned to associate tenderness and affection exclusively with women -- if not with the mother then the nurse or nanny. As a result boys came to distrust these feelings in themselves as unmanly, to an extent they would surely not have done if their fathers had been more openly affectionate.(4)

As small children, mid-Victorian boys were held with tight reins by their mothers and nannies. Their "wild and savage" nature was restrained by rules, regulations and even the restrictive smocks they wore.(5) At about the age of six, however, they often broke free of the domestic milieu and began participating in what one historian has described as "boy culture."(6) This was a distinctive sub-culture that arose from the peculiarities of modernity, and remained essentially intact until it was regulated by adults at the

end of the 19th century. Boys rebelled against both their mothers and fathers, forming close friendships, establishing their own hierarchy and rules for ascending it, and indulging their essential, "wild nature." They tormented each other (and animals) with brutal and sadistic games, taunted male authority through vandalism and petty theft, and demonstrated their mastery over their natural surroundings by making forts, collecting natural specimens, or tempting fate with hazardous play. Above all, they sought to establish their independence from the home, and eradicate the feminine qualities from within themselves that they had imbibed there. A boy only left this culture behind when he developed an interest in girls, and later on began to assume his domestic and societal obligations through marriage or work. For some later Victorians though, their negative associations with fatherhood and its values of selfless and enduring obligation made a return to domesticity unappealing.(7)

In many ways, the character of Victorian sporting culture is similar to that of boy culture. The values of fraternity, the pursuit of "savage" pleasures, a desire to master one's surroundings and engage in dangerous activity all represent a continuum between adolescent and adult worlds. Moreover, the search for manhood through sport reveals an inclination to leaving the domestic sphere with its feminine associations behind, and expunging the female

within. To be sure, "masculine" qualities like obligation and industry were also repressed by the holidaying sportsman, but this stems more from the more general aspects of leisure than it does specifically from hunting and angling. We must also remember that sportsmen were quite inventive at perceiving their pastimes as useful or industrious, given the historical associations of hunting and angling with providing food.

The process of eradicating the feminine qualities of the Victorian male began in childhood. Sportsmen never gave up this goal, and for many it was as elusive as the ideal game trophy. This was probably because, as Tosh and Roper have argued, "Despite the myths of omnipotent manhood which surround us, masculinity is never fully possessed, but must perpetually be achieved, asserted, and regenerated." (8) Victorian wilderness sport can be viewed as a clear manifestation of this process. Not only does it represent an escape from feminine influences, but ironically, it suggests that sportsmen projected femininity onto wildlife and the natural environment. (9) From this perspective, the concrete representation of the feminine, as experienced in the home, is left behind in a search for a symbolic, maternal entity in the form of nature. For those who sought to conquer nature through sport, hunting and angling allowed a confrontation to take place between the ego-impoverished male and his symbolic mother. Because the struggle was

contrived and imagined, however, it could never compensate for an early childhood spent in the "smothering" bosom of mother or nanny.

The desire to conquer nature, and exercise one's "manly" virtues in the process, can most easily be found in the American sporting tradition. One of the great bastions of this ideal in the 19th century was the Boon and Crocket Club, founded by Theodore Roosevelt and other well-known sportsmen in 1888. In hunting big game, the club's members coupled sport and muscular christianity with primitivism, the result being the American "buckskin" sporting tradition.(10) They believed that the hunter "must be sound of body and firm of mind, and must possess energy, resolution, manliness, self-reliance, and a capacity for self-help."(11) The drama of the big game hunter was played out against a rugged and sublime wilderness rather than a picturesque pastoral one. There in the midst of the Rocky Mountains and its virgin forests, the "Boone and Crocket" hunter felt the oppressive weight of civilization fall from his shoulders. William Kent, a California congressman and well-regarded club member believed that during a hunt, "you are a barbarian, and you're glad of it. It's good to be a barbarian . . . and you know that if you are a barbarian, you are at any rate a man."(12)

The renowned Victorian social commentator Thorstein Veblen could not have put it better, when he described manly

sport as an "atavistic survival of the old barbarian virtue of prowess." (13) Even though the gentleman's code of sport acted as a counterweight to such impulses, the tension between civilized behaviour and barbaric virtue was largely unresolved. The primitive ritual of bloodying the face of a hunter after his first kill, for example, had fallen into disrepute under the "civilized" reign of Queen Victoria. Nevertheless, this practice was still being followed within certain well-respected fox-hunting circles late into the 19th century. (14)

One of the greatest appeals of a primitive existence was the belief that the savage represented the essence of freedom. Rousseau's romantic ideal of the "noble savage," who lived in a blissful state of happiness and well-being, was the likely foundation of the cult of primitivism among sportsmen. The Upper Canadian settler William Dunlop described, as early as 1832, how wilderness life rejuvenated his sense of independence:

I made my debut in the forest, and first assumed the blanket-coat and the rifle, the moccasin and the snow-shoe; and the ecstatic feeling of Arab-like independence, and the utter contempt for the advantage, and the restriction of civilization. (15)

Victorian sportsmen were intrigued by the habits of aboriginal people. They envied, in a sense, the native man's inherent manliness and his apparent oneness with nature. And even though they occasionally adopted native ways while out in the bush, they also teased themselves with

the fear of "going native." In 1897, John Talbot Clifton travelled from his estate in Lancashire to the central arctic in search of musk-ox he could bag for a trophy. After almost a year of extreme hardship and bad luck he resorted to an Inuit ritual in the hopes of finding game. Holding pieces of bone, tobacco and fur to the wind, he chanted an Inuit phrase. Afterwards he wrote in his diary with great distress, "Whether I have turned heathen or not, don't know; no refusing." (16) Certainly a man like William Dunlop, even though he was himself attracted to the primitive, would not have thought highly of John Clifton. The white man was free, and perhaps even obliged to indulge a primitive instinct now and then. But in the end, it was civilization that separated the white race from the savage, giving the Englishman his right to dominate others. Dunlop expressed the fears of a great number of sportsmen when he argued that,

. . . it is an undoubted fact, that no man who associates with and follows the pursuits of the Indian, for any length of time, ever voluntarily returns to "civilized society." (17)

Given the great expense and hardship involved in spending extended periods of time in the bush, it is unlikely that adventurous sportsmen, or those individuals who freely immersed themselves in native culture, were ever a majority within the fraternity. By definition, a hunter who had "gone native," had forsaken his white brethren for

another way of life. More importantly, for a group of enthusiasts who were working hard to reform their public image in light of humanistic reform, savage or barbarous behaviour was an embarrassment. A Forest and Stream editorial from 1888 perfectly describes the tension between civilized and savage sporting ideals, and is worth quoting at length:

In these days of game scarcity the sportsman must overcome the natural savage desire for mere slaughter and the mean ambition to kill more than another More spiritual than sensual, this enjoyment of the field is the better part of what goes to the making up of what we call the love of sport, and the sportsman who cultivates this to the overgrowth of the baser senses enjoys the finer pleasures, suffers fewer pangs of regret and self condemnation If we examine our feelings in the moment of triumph over the conquest of one of our lesser brethren, we detect a sort of savagery that as civilized men we are ashamed of. (18)

In statements of this kind we find a puzzling mixture of spiritual elation and self-loathing. The gentleman sportsman, while tapping into his sensual, baser instincts, must nevertheless struggle to master them at all times. One might even argue that self-mastery was more important than the domination of nature for these individuals. Sport became a means of affirming one's civility, of demonstrating that wilderness, whether inside or outside of the sportsman was subordinate to the civilized man. In many regards, it was a compensation for the bunker mentality of the pioneer in bygone days. But whereas the pioneer reclaimed the land with an axe, the sport hunter did so by turning it into a

playing field.

In the late 19th century, the distinction between sportsmen who revered the primitive and those who eschewed it was perhaps most evident in the western United States. It was there, in the midst of a vanishing frontier, that the "buckskin" hunter was mythologised as the true model of manhood. At their annual dinner in 1902, members of the Boone and Crockett club spoke at length about the great buckskin hunters in frontier history and passed pictures of them around the room.(19) The eastern American and the English sportsmen, on the other hand, were thought to be effete, and were the subject of mockery in western sporting circles.(20) Sportsmen of the Roosevelt ilk did not think much of those who merely went out for a day's shooting without any risk or hardship whatsoever. Boone and Crockett hunters never saw themselves as part of the European aristocratic sporting tradition. Their tradition began with frontiersmen who cleared the path for civilization.

The Canadian sporting fraternity in this period had no real parallel with the American buckskin enthusiast. Canadian sportsmen would occasionally make mention of the hearty voyageur as a model for manliness, but by and large, their heroes came from the European tradition. An article from 1883 in Forest and Stream described the character of an internationally infamous sportsman who had settled in Quebec:

In point of his compact mold and massive physique he faintly reminds us of the old Norman type personified in a Warwick or rather the powerfully built Goths so graphically portrayed in Kingsley's "Hypatia." (21)

Canadian sportsmen also revealed their interest in a "heroic" sporting tradition whenever they found the habits of "civilized" hunters and anglers to be inappropriate in the North American wilderness. A backwoods settler and avid sportsman, Thomas McGrath adopted native techniques such as jack-lighting and netting fish. (22) On the occasions when gentleman sportsmen were curious enough to join him on a fishing trip, he made sport of them as well:

By the hardy sportsman, night fishing is always preferred, but is a source of misery to the dandy, who is afraid of wetting his feet. For this description of animal, I have so little respect or pity, that I have often undergone a wetting by upsetting the canoe, to enjoy the terror of the would-be sportsman. (23)

Establishing models of true manhood was especially important for sportsmen who wished to initiate their sons into the fraternity. (24) The relationship between father and son had traditionally been the channel through which sporting skills and masculine identity were transferred between generations. A boy's first kill on the sporting field and the respect he garnered from his older companions served as a kind of manhood ritual. The meaning of this initiation took on a greater significance with the onset of modernity. Fearing the effeminizing tendency of urban life, as well as its ability to lure youth into immoral behaviour,

sportsmen looked upon hunting and fishing as time-honoured methods of making men out of boys. As one correspondent to Forest and Stream stated:

When my two boys were at home, they had no desire for other company than mine. Evening after evening I entertained them with stories of adventure, ranging from my own deer shooting to the exploits of Daniel Boone and other frontiersmen. No poolroom or street entertainment could entice them from their evenings at home. (25)

The man went on to argue that the greatest joy a father could have was to hunt and fish with his boys. In the sporting field a father could earn the respect of his children by teaching them how to hunt and fish.

Furthermore, lessons about masculinity were implicit in the sport. In an urban setting, a father would have to assess individually the many forces which informed a young man's identity. Under the rapidly changing conditions of 19th-century city life, with its new jobs, recreations and social opportunities, this would have been a daunting task. (26)

The relationship of father and son is one of the more insightful aspects of Frank Parker Day's Autobiography of a Fisherman (1927). Day begins the book with his earliest memories of fishing in Nova Scotia with his father. As Day matures, he studies overseas, travels around Europe and fights in the First World War. Whenever he returns home, he finds the time to fish with his father; on these occasions, they talk about their lives and exchange little pearls of wisdom. Suffering from a slight case of existential angst

while out in their boat, Frank tells his father, "I think I'd like to be a monk." (27) The complications of life have left the younger Day with a desire to withdraw from it. "No, [life] is not complicated," says his father, "it's simple; get money and property so that you'll be no man's slave as I have been, have a few friends, be kind to people, bear with fools and fanatics, love horses and dogs and go fishing." (28) One is left with the impression here that this simple philosophy could only have come from an angler.

Many years later, after his father has passed away, Frank writes:

If there be a hereafter and I achieve eternal life, I shall seek him out first of all -- no, that will not be needful -- he will be waiting for me at the gate, and he will take me by the arm and lead me to some shining meadow where he has found a trout stream and kept it secret from all the angels. (29)

Day concludes his book with a description of the first time he took his own son fishing at the age of seven. "If I pass on to him the love of fishing as my father gave it to me," he writes, "I shall have done well." (30) Day was aware of the cyclical way in which sporting traditions and values are typically perpetuated within the fraternity. The relationship of father to son was a cherished aspect of Victorian wilderness sport, involving a respect for the values of historical tradition and intimacy.

One of the ways in which Victorian sporting enthusiasts upheld their masculine identity was to, in effect, borrow it from other men, and from animals as well. The pursuit of trophies in hunting and angling can be seen as a means of achieving status within a group of people. When one acquires a trophy, others are obliged to pay homage to the skills and good fortune of the sportsman. Conversely, when a person pays homage to the trophy of another, he diminishes his own ability to influence the group. In their study of devotion to objects, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton have argued that:

In almost every culture, objects are chosen to represent the power of the bearer. More than any other trait, the potential energy of the person, his or her power to affect others, is the one that is symbolically expressed. For men this power tends to be synonymous with virile virtues such as strength, bravery, prowess [and] endurance.(31)

Obviously then, a game species that has bravery, strength and endurance will confer these same qualities, through the symbolism of the trophy, upon the bearer. Millard may have been thinking along these lines when he described a trout that he had wrestled to the shore:

He was a stalwart, solid-meated, game; no liver-fed sluggard; no hothouse product, tame and insipid, that waited like a prized pig for his food to be brought to him; but an active sportsman, a warrior bold, that had conditioned himself by buffeting the riffs and currents and battling among the eddies for his many meals, and now it seems almost a sin that so beautiful a creature should be sacrificed upon the altar of man's love of sport, though every element of that sport was honest and gentle and manly.(32)

For men such as Millard, nature was indeed a mirror that reflected man's innermost desires.

In sporting circles, the trophy stands second only to the oral narrative (although the first often will trigger the second) in its ability to confer status. The nature of status has been described by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton as consisting of the respect, consideration, and envy of others.(33) They suggest that,

A person with status sets the standards and norms by which others will act, and in this way embodies the goals of a culture. Similarly, a thing with status also acts as a template embodying these goals because it will cause people who believe in its status to act accordingly toward it and its owner who possesses status.(34)

The manipulation of status symbols is by no means an exclusively male activity. But status and hierarchy are the traditional forces which have shaped how men interact with one another. Among the Victorian sporting fraternity, one can see constant posturing and jostling for status -- an effort to display one's manly virtues by acquiring exceptionally powerful trophies. John Clifton's effort to acquire a muskox head is a perfect example of the sportsman's obsession with the pursuit of trophies. After an arduous year in the arctic, Clifton finally shot a muskox, and prepared for the 350-mile journey to the nearest Hudson Bay outpost at Churchill. But Clifton was so obsessed with taking the head back to England that he refused to let his party of Inuit hunt for meat, even

though they told him they would all surely starve to death on the long trek home. Towards the end of their journey, as they neared Churchill, the party were indeed starving. Clifton wrote in his diary, "No tea, tobacco, biscuits or food of any sort left. It is worse than hell." (35) Yet the prospect of starvation did not prevent him from asking himself, "Will I get my muskox head to England in safety?" (36)

The power of a sporting trophy to garner status stems essentially from its rarity. A large rack of antlers, for example, may be impressive for their sheer size, but if they are large for that specific species then they are also rare. Similarly, the rarity of an endangered species trophy was especially alluring for those Victorian sportsmen who were not particularly conservation-minded. At the turn of the century Horace Vachell embarked upon a hunting expedition in search of the almost extinct bison. Answering the need for melodrama in the sporting and adventure literature of the time, Vachell wrote,

As I crawled [towards the bison] I was sensible for the first time in my life of the horrors of thirst for my tongue began to swell; but I can swear that I was happy, for my ambition, so I thought, was about to be not satisfied, but glutted. We had been assured by cattlemen and hunters that bison were almost extinct. (37)

Vachell carefully approaches the bison, but when he fires his rifle, he misses. His response, while overly dramatic, is probably shared by his readers:

After that I seriously considered the propriety of shooting myself. Life seemed worthless after such a misfortune. I told myself that I should never have such a chance again. A truly wretched man rode into camp that afternoon. (38)

Men such as Clifton and Vacheil often travelled the world in search of exotic big game trophies. They collected them as other Victorians collected stamps. Every head carried the message that its owner was a virile, persistent, manly and well-travelled gentleman. And of course, a good story accompanied each trophy to enhance the prestige of the hunter.

One of the reasons Victorian sportsmen looked upon hunting and angling as manly pursuits is that conventional wisdom told them that the sporting field was an uncontested male domain. If domestic spaces in the 19th century were largely controlled by women, then wilderness spaces, by virtue of their distance from the home, were considered to be masculine. Furthermore, the Victorian conception of women as weak and emotional creatures would have worked against their full participation in wilderness sport with its perceived hardships and dangers. In the rare instances when men considered the propriety of women partaking in hunting they were quick to find excuses that would bar their actual participation. A sportsman, for example, related an anecdote in 1888, about a woman who had suffered an "indignity" in the Aderondacks from a guide with whom she

was hunting alone.(39) The problem of sexual misconduct was also the reason women were usually barred from English fox-hunting prior to the 1850's. It was not until mid-century that the class exclusiveness of the sport had been established. Thus it was the fear of lower class men consorting with upper class women that piqued the fertile imagination of the hunting elite and impeded female participation in the sport.(40) But even as women began to take part in the English foxhunt, there were those purists who thought that gender integration in sport could be deleterious to both women and men. Anthony Trollope described in 1865, how a demanding woman could spoil everyone's enjoyment of the hunt. He writes: "It is marvellous to watch the manner in which a hunting lady will become exacting, troublesome, and at last imperious, -- deceived and spoiled by the attention which she receives."(41) But Trollope's comment was simply a caution to women that if they wished to participate in a foxhunt, they would have to forsake their customary reliance on men; in other words, they must not delay the pursuit by seeking assistance. Trollope says of the independent woman hunter, ". . . how welcome she is! What a grace she lends to the day's sports!"(42)

With the exception of fox-hunting, the Victorian male generally took a dim view of women hunters. The conventional wisdom of the time put women in the role of

nurturers and protectors of virtue rather than rough and aggressive killers. "We think," said one Victorian sportsman, "a woman is never more lovable and womanly than when she shows tender pity for the beast or bird deprived of its innocent life in the hunting field." (43) The thought of a Victorian lady gutting a moose in the fly-infested bogs of northern Ontario, for example, would not have sat well with men who conceived of femininity in the conventional way. But whereas the Victorian sportsman's conception of hunting was that it was essentially a manly pursuit, his ideas about angling were different. As a contemplative, sedentary and unathletic sport, angling would not have taxed the "delicate constitution of the weaker sex." Furthermore, given that it is more often than hunting a solitary activity, it did not introduce the problem of integrating women into male hunting cliques, those great bastions of male bonding and masculine mystique.

The kind of angling which seemed best suited to female participation in the 19th century was fly fishing. Unlike bait fishing, it did not involve anything so vulgar as hooking worms, minnows or salt pork. Fly fishing also required delicate action and a light touch if the fly was to land gently on the water. These were skills which women were thought to possess more easily than men. In promoting an upcoming fly casting tournament in New York, the editor of Field and Stream in 1888 wrote, "Should the day be fair many

ladies are sure to be present, and as there are few ladies who cast the fly with skill, there are no doubt others who would like to do so."(44)

The desire to attract more women to field sports came as much from economic motives as it did from a wish to see women appreciate the intrinsic benefits of wilderness recreation. By the mid-1880's, sporting magazines like Field and Stream began running advertisements which appealed specifically to women. An issue from 1885, ran an advertisement from the "Great American Tea Company" which began with the bold headline, "Good news to ladies."(45) The presence of an advertisement for women in a sporting magazine tells us that if women were not yet participating in wilderness sport, they were at least paying attention to it.

By the turn of the century, the editors of Rod and Gun magazine had begun to reveal an interest in their female readers when they published a fishing narrative by Mary Harvey Drummond. The author described the informal way of life at a Laurentides fishing camp, writing that, "short skirts were the rule in camp, and I felt as I donned mine that the new woman was after all no curiosity of mushroom growth, but a clear glimpse of the true woman yet to come."(46) Drummond was impressed by the freshness of her wilderness experience, the landing of a nine-pound trout with a fly rod being only one of the thrilling moments she

enjoyed. And her male companions at the camp were greatly amused when, at the trip's end, Drummond had caught more fish than anyone else. It was surely the perfect affirmation that women belonged in the field as much as did men. But the greatest thing which Drummond was to perceive was the "perfect" or "authentic" moment of oneness with nature. Her moments with nature highlighted the artifice of civilized living in a way other sporting enthusiasts had described. In concluding her article, she revealed a belief that women had a special interest in understanding nature because it was only there that they could escape the cultural shackles that bound women to men in a subservient role. Drummond wrote:

We women of today talk much of our rights, and while our tongues wag, we are letting slip by us the very things we clamour for. In the woods of Canada, equality with our brothers and husbands awaits us, and a share in the sports that give health to body and mind. But how many of us avail ourselves of such privileges? Too few indeed. The seaside resort with its second-rate bands, Euchre parties, and boundless opportunities for the display of diamonds and dress, still reigns supreme favourite of the gentler sex, proving more strongly than anything else, that the day of emancipation has not yet dawned for women.(47)

The irony of ostentatious behaviour in a nature setting, where people professed a desire to "get away from it all," was obviously not lost on Mary Drummond. And if the second rate bands and euchre parties of which she wrote were part of a cultural environment that constrained women, they also spoke volumes about the significance of class

habits and relations in the recreational settings of the late 19th century. In our consideration of gender and wilderness sport we have seen how Victorian sportsmen walked a fine line between the expectations of a "civilized" culture and the desire to experience a primitive or barbaric ideal. Driven by the fear that a feminine side of their character lay just beneath the surface, some sportsmen played out the dramatic struggle of man against mother nature, and man against himself. But the societal imperative of the "gentleman" to master his basic and primal instincts seemed barely strong enough to contain his impulses at times. In the next chapter, we shall witness a similar struggle between class convention, on the one hand, and the realities imposed on people who recreated in the wilderness on the other.

CHAPTER 6
CLASS, COMPETITION AND THE
POWER OF CULTURE

In the spring of 1885, an anglophone sportsman living in Quebec was horrified to witness the slaughter of moose in deep snow by the francophones of his community. Writing to the editors of Forest and Stream, he let loose with a racist diatribe that showed absolutely no sympathy for the survival needs of his neighbours. He claimed that

The average French Canadian is lazy when any work is to be done, but let him know of a chance to kill a head of game, in or out of season, his laziness disappears, the love of the chase, which he inherits from his ancestors, comes to the fore, and he is in his element.(1)

If Victorian sportsmen in North America had access to large game preserves as did their ancestors in Europe, there would have been few opportunities for racial and class conflict. But because North American sportsmen hunted and fished largely in the public domain, they frequently came into contact with guides and outfitters, farmers, miners, trappers, lumbermen, and people who hunted and fished for food, cash, or barter. With so many points of contact, and removed from the influence of urban habits, it was up to the individual sportsman to decide whether he would preserve class distinctions and bully his way through potential

conflicts or seek understanding and conciliation. But while the gentleman sportsman might have had the advantage of money, education and social convention in his relations with members of the lower classes, he more often than not found himself to be a visitor in someone else's domain. It was no doubt such a situation that emboldened a Quebec farmer in 1862, when he "greatly offended" Lord Monck's fox-hunting party.(2) In pursuit of a fox, the Governor General's party tore down the habitant's fence and proceeded to trample over his crops. When the habitant could not talk them out of riding over his land, he shot the fox in the head. In any other instance, a simple habitant would not have been left unpunished after disturbing the recreation of the Queen's representative.

Until a sporting area matured into an area of tourism, where outsiders with fat wallets were respected (at least to their faces), it was not uncommon for sportsmen visiting a wilderness area to be publicly mocked and ridiculed for their fine dress and equipment. It is conceivable that as early as the late 19th century, such areas were affected by the classic symbiotic relationship of metropolis to hinterland.(3) In describing this phenomenon with regards to Ontario tourism over the last few decades, Hodgins, Wall and Kidd stated that,

the residents of the permanent hinterland, dependent for their livelihood and their future on the fickle recreational habits of the urbanites, suspiciously approach their clientele, . . .

with a classic love hate regard.(4)

Victorian sportsmen were likely aware of this tension and saw it as a source of the mockery they sometimes endured. One enthusiast made a public statement, in 1882, that responded to such treatment:

No, friend in the rural districts, do not allow yourself to be too severely prejudiced against the gentleman who comes with fine rod, reel and line, and perhaps knee-breeches, to whip your stream; he may be able to teach you much that you have never known; at least, if he cannot, you will not often find him a bore.(5)

Unfortunately, the rural prejudice against sportsmen probably went far beyond appearances or a dislike of economic dependence. Visiting sportsmen were also competing with locals for the same animals they used to feed and clothe themselves. Moreover, the presence of significant numbers of them sometimes had even more dire consequences. As late as the 1880's, sportsmen were accidentally wounding and killing numerous settlers around Detroit. Apparently the settlers, with their fur coats and hats, were being mistaken for animals by sportsmen who could not tell the difference.(6) It is the kind of problem that one might expect to have occurred, in the period before hunting regulations, wherever sport and settler-hunters made use of the same habitat.

Given the fact that settlers relied on game species for food, and sometimes to supplement their incomes in a cash-poor environment, their attitudes towards closed seasons

were often contrary to those in the sporting community. Sportsmen generally did not make much distinction between poachers and pot hunters, probably because they were usually the same thing. When the "king" of Nova Scotia poachers, Alex Piper, was caught and fined 25 dollars for snaring over 80 moose, the local sportsmen were elated.(7) It was a simple case of competition for what was becoming a scarce resource, and local populations had less influence on law-makers than the sporting lobby. One sportsman even suggested that the provinces had an obligation to wean settlers off of their reliance on game species by finding them new occupations. He said, "We of the province of Quebec must wake up to a sense of our duty and find some other occupation for the hundreds of families who now eke out a precarious living from our streams and marshes."(8)

Although the sentiment was perhaps well meant, the enactment of such a policy would have required the massive relocation of the settlers who lived on the land. Obviously the chief benefactors would be members of the sporting community, who could then claim exclusive hunting and fishing rights.

Of course the slaughter of game species was not the exclusive habit of the "unwashed" settler or local. As the tourist economy in the Kawartha lakes region began to grow in the 1880's, there was a marked decline in the fish populations there. It was not uncommon for visitors to

catch hundreds of fish in a day and leave them to rot on the shores. Whenever such incidents occurred, the local sporting community would dismiss the slaughter of game species as the acts of uneducated enthusiasts who were not true sportsmen at all. "We want no men here who are 'cads' and butchers of game and fish," exclaimed one sportsman and resort owner. "The true sportsman," he added, "will always be welcome whether rich or poor." (9) Unfortunately, the proprietors of the Mount Julien Hotel on Stoney Lake turned a blind eye to the over-fishing by their guests; as a result, a group of locals burned the resort to the ground in 1882. (10)

A subtler form of bias which the Victorian sportsman had against the locals he encountered came from a conflict over "proper" hunting and angling techniques. In many regards this was a clash between the refined European sporting model and a pragmatic North American one, which was based on subsistence hunting and angling. An essayist in Forest and Stream addressed the conflict when he compared notes on the "Artistic Angler" versus the "Barefoot Boy," or the angler who uses any means available. His argument illustrated perfectly the feeling of superiority that some sportsmen had over the people they encountered in the field. The author lamented the provincial attitude that rural Americans had towards fly fishing, citing the commonplace notion that delicate tackle could not catch big fish.

Speculating on why fly fishing was so ridiculed by the masses, he queried, "Is it not because the masses are not educated to that point where they may comprehend these refinements of the art?"(11) As an opera fan might lament the fact that the North American masses do not appreciate it as the European masses do, the author pointed out that, in Britain, the common people had a great appreciation for fly fishing. In America however, by using worms and other live bait, the common angler was "pandering to the baser appetites of fish."(12) And though the bait fisherman was often successful, it was, according to the patrician fly fisherman, simply because he had the advantage of knowing his "turf." In all other ways, he argued, "The ragged country boy with a bean pole cannot begin to compete with the man who has light tackle, if the latter be an angler and know how to use his tools."(13) He further added that the rural bias against urban visitors had led to the creation of many erroneous accounts about the competence of fly fishermen. He claimed that "Stories without end of the urchin's string of fish bought by the "dandy" are rife in the rural press, but are not true in one case in ten."(14)

The fact that rural hunters and anglers had a marked advantage over their city cousins was a sore point for some urban sportsmen. Not only did they enjoy the advantage of knowing a piece of land more intimately than an outsider, but because they relied on hunting and angling for survival,

their skills remained honed throughout the year. Furthermore, by spending more time in the field, they could achieve a level of competence that the sportsman envied. Sportsmen also succumbed somewhat to the myth that the rural hunter and angler lived a wilder and freer existence. As we saw in the treatment of gender identity, these qualities were held in high regard by sportsmen who valued their manliness.

The class/gender tension between gentleman sportsmen and locals was in some respects symptomatic of a wider phenomenon that informed these relations in the Victorian period. Victorian intellectuals such as Thomas Carlyle were keenly aware that lower-class men signified a masculine ideal that conflicted with the gender values of the governing classes. According to historian Norma Clarke, Carlyle's affection for his working-class father was based on his belief that he symbolized all that was virtuous in true manhood. Clarke argues that,

Carlyle further clothed his father in vestments drawn from the mythicized figure of the natural man: gifted but undeveloped, rugged, abrupt, unpolished, with an uncorrupted, instinctive commitment towards the morally true. Such a man did not depend on the slippery potential of speech for his effectiveness, for speech at once implies persuasion and persuasion suggests values that might shift. (15)

What Carlyle saw in his father was undoubtedly what numerous sportsmen saw when faced with guides, settlers and other men who inhabited the wilderness. Their choice in how

they would react under such circumstances was based on individual temperament, as well as whether they perceived themselves as inheritors of the buckskin tradition or the patrician one. We can thus see how the rural image of the effeminate dandy with his delicate rod, reel and flies would not have sat well with anglers who coveted the ruggedness of frontiersmen. It is significant then, that in the essay comparing the rural with the "cultured" angler, the former is described as a boy rather than a man. When a man competes with a boy, the question of manliness is dismissed. Class identity thus becomes a substitute for manliness in establishing the dominance of one individual over an other. If a Victorian sportsman felt that his manhood was threatened by a local, he could at least take comfort in the established superiority of his class.

The virtues of the rural or wilderness hunter and angler were not always seen as a challenge to the status of sportsmen. In fact, it was sometimes thought that with closer association, the finer qualities of both parties would emerge and there might be a sharing of values. The belief that sport could act as a means of class conciliation was not uncommon in the later 19th century, when poor labour relations and the struggle for more responsive government evoked the spectre of class warfare.(16) There were valid concerns about how the classes would interact in the process of industrialization and there was a keen desire to look for

novel solutions. Through sport, the lower classes could be shown by example the benefits of education, refinement and high culture. Conversely, the lower classes with their coarse ways would prevent the upper classes from lapsing into feebleness and effeminacy.(17) The field of wilderness sport was a perfect place to test this experiment in the sharing of values between classes. Thus we see, in sporting publications, semi-fictional narratives about the great classless fraternity of sport, and essays on the noble virtues of the rural hunter and angler.

In a story that appeared in the first issue of Rod and Gun in 1899, a university professor with practically no wilderness experience goes on a fishing trip with a rugged and unrefined rural angler. The professor is mystified by his partner's success in using partridge gizzards instead of flies for catching fish. "It seems to me," says the professor, "such an easy method of catching fish, so primitive and so delightful."(18) A few days later, the sportsman also instructs the testotalling professor about the benefits of alcohol on a wilderness trip. Unable to hold his liquor, the professor stumbles into the thick forest and falls into the undergrowth. After a few more drinks the two men laugh uproariously. As luck would have it, by the end of the trip, the greenhorn manages to catch a bigger fish than his companion.

The moral of the story is that time spent in the

wilderness has the effect of eroding the class barriers that are all too evident in city life. Even the most refined and inhibited individual cannot resist the power of male bonding when he finds himself in natural surroundings, freed from civilization and all the artificial rules that apply there. Contrary to the sentiment that rural anglers have nothing to teach the sporting gentleman, this story finds value in the knowledge possessed by the lower classes. In an essay of a similar bent, a correspondent in Forest and Stream argued that the farmer/hunter had a better chance for success than any other sportsman. He thought of the farmer as the animals' landlord, stating that "his life will be the pleasanter for the interest he takes in them, and the skill he acquires in bringing them to bag and creel." (19)

In examples of this kind, one can also see why proponents of the "Frontier School" of North American history believed in the "levelling power" of wilderness life. (20) Arthur Lower's claim, for example, that "North American democracy was forest born," (21) was based on the idea that one could simply not afford to maintain class distinctions under the harsh conditions of pioneer life. Like the professor and his sporting companion, those who lived on the frontier had been offered a chance to break free of class conventions in establishing their new society. Among sportsmen however, this opportunity was more often than not used to re-assert class distinctions.

Even if Victorian sportsmen were in some instances comfortable with the idea that lower-class hunters and anglers could be treated as equals, they were not so open-minded when it came to their relationships with guides. Because they received money for a service, guides were treated more like domestic servants than proper sporting companions. On those rare occasions when a big game hunter would spend months or years with the same individual, as was the case with Francis Parkman and his companion, a less formal relationship might emerge. Parkman described his guide in respectful terms, stating that "[H]e was proof of what unaided nature will sometimes do. I have never in the city or in the wilderness, met a better man than my true-hearted friend, Henry Chantillon." (22) For the most part though, it was more common for sportsmen to take a paternalistic and domineering attitude towards their guides. While on a fishing trip in the Adirondacks in 1883, one angler had to explain, "in a fatherly way," (23) to his two guides that he did not appreciate them calling his fishing "rod" a fishing "pole." When they laughed at his objection and made fun of his equipment, he thrashed them with his "rod." In the mock tone of a schoolmaster, he further added: "[i]t is sad to chronicle the fact that this treatment had to be several times repeated before the lesson was finally learned." (24) Whether the author was relating a true incident or was satirically illustrating the

subservient role that guides play in sporting culture is immaterial. Even as a joke the story describes the archetypal relationship between guide and sportsman, with the latter bearing the insults of the uncultured servant and assuming the burden of imposing discipline.

Although guides were often treated as servants, they possessed something that their domestic peers did not. If a sportsman was unfamiliar with the area in which he was hunting or fishing, or if he was particularly unskilled, he was at the mercy of his guide. An angry or discontented guide could take his employer trolling for bass in a trout pond or sheep hunting in a bog if the sportsman did not know any better. Perhaps the worst scenario for the serious sport hunter was for a guide to be a "game hog," and shame his employer by catching the most or biggest animals. A guide could legitimately claim that his job was to get his employer a trophy by any means necessary, although this would be cold comfort for the accomplished sportsman. The big game hunter and author, Horace Vachell, provided his readers with some advice about dealing with this kind of problem. He believed in paying guides well; ". . . and let it be plainly understood between you," he added, "that he is not to shoot without orders." (25)

At times, the distinction between guides and servants was entirely artificial, as in the case of John Clifton in his quest for a muskox head in the Canadian arctic. Clifton

had brought with him on his year long trek a man named Betts who was to act as porter, game dresser, valet and companion. On the occasions when Clifton was waiting for fowl in a blind, Betts would trudge several miles to bring him hot meals twice a day. But when the rigours of arctic life became too great to bear, Betts became "lazy," and ceased to "conduct himself as a servant." (26) The unsympathetic Clifton, unprepared at this early stage in his journey to abandon the formalities of a genteel life, promptly fired Betts and left him to find his own way back to England from Norway House.

In their quest for a vital experience in the wilderness, Victorian sportsmen often encountered men with whom they found themselves in conflict. The pot hunter, the poacher, and the local inhabitant could prove themselves to be vital sources of information, supply and instruction, or they could be seen by sportsmen as competitors and challengers of the sporting ideal. The "coarse" and simple ways of the locals and their successes in catching fish and animals were an irksome reminder that one need not be a gentleman in order to be a skillful hunter and angler. Moreover, for those sportsmen who wished to exercise their manliness and display the virtues of their class, the local hunter/angler, with his close relationship to the land and his rugged manner, might be a source of envy. Unable to

compete with the success of the local, the sportsman reassured himself by claiming that there could be no competition or comparison between two different entities: the sportsman and the pot hunter.

Differentiation between the sportsman and the pot hunter was made easier by virtue of class distinctions and the fact that one was visiting the wilderness whereas the other called it home. But even though each party criticised, mocked, and in some ways harassed the other, there was, at least on the part of some of the sportsmen, a desire to see better class relations and the sharing of positive values.

CONCLUSION

In the later years of the 19th century, Victorians were able to look back within living memory and see a way of life profoundly different from their own. Countrysides free of railways, cities without severe pollution and vibrant rural communities were part of the vanishing world that many Victorians had grown up in. And even though the problems of modernity were not felt at the same time in England, Europe and North America, by the turn of the century there was hardly a city in the western world where questions were not asked about the fate of humankind.

If it could be said that periods of extreme change and uncertainty breed traditionalism -- a penchant for order, discipline and stability -- then it is hardly surprising that such basic recreations as hunting and angling were so meaningful for many Victorians. This study has approached hunting and angling as two of the many recreational pursuits which revealed, at their centre, a desire to use nature as a stabilizing influence on private and collective entities. The force which established the foundation of traditional economies, dictated the nature of social and political systems, and imposed aesthetic structures in the arts was thought by wilderness enthusiasts to be an ideal environment for recreation as well. For the hunter and angler, nature

in its ideal recreative form was healthful and instructive; it was orderly and sensible, and mercifully free of the controls that bound him to others in exploitive relationships. But above all, the sportsman in the late 19th century saw wilderness as a means of supporting and developing his sense of manhood. Romantic notions of the chivalrous sportsman and the noble savage were the two pillars upon which Victorian hunters and anglers built their fraternity. In Canada, where reverence for British culture was a main ingredient in a growing nationalist sentiment, the genteel European sporting tradition overshadowed any minor attempts at developing an indigenous tradition. American sportsmen, on the other hand, tempered their anglophilic sporting culture with a larger dose of frontier ruggedness.

In its real form, wilderness was in a sense anarchic. It was a nebulous and misunderstood thing that invited speculation and imagination while resisting certainty and conventional responses. These points however were often overlooked by people who could not cope with an apparently chaotic wilderness -- a nature one could not commune with because traditional European ideas about the dangers of wilderness continued to persist into the 19th century. Northrop Frye speculated that this rift between nature and society was impassable. "The human mind," he argued,

has nothing but human and moral values to
cling to if it is to preserve its integrity

or even its sanity, yet the vast unconsciousness of nature in front of it seems an unanswerable denial of those values.(1)

When faced with the unconsciousness of nature and the oppressive rationalism of modern life, Victorians looked back at the art, literature, recreations and lifeways of their ancestors in order to construct a benevolent and mythic nature. Sportsmen could take comfort in the fact that their pastime already contained a history of benevolent romanticism. Yet it would be unwise to claim that the image of nature was the same for all Victorian sportsmen, or that different images were mutually exclusive. If a particular individual was of a progressive mind set, he might see a benevolent nature as a force which could be harnessed, dominated, and otherwise made to serve the will of man. But he might just as easily view humankind as subordinate to nature -- at the mercy of both its munificence and its punishments.

Henry David Thoreau once stated: "From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind."(2) As we have seen however, the notion that nature could serve to ease the pains of progress did not originate in his time. The birth of the sporting ideal in the 17th century came not only from a desire to preserve feudal customs, but as a means of fending off the negative, effeminizing influences of urban life. In the colonial days of North America though, the few sporting cliques that

existed pursued sport for slightly different reasons. Without urban centres to spawn anxiety, and with easy access to unfamiliar habitats and wildlife, sport could be approached mainly as a source of pleasure and discovery. This would not mean, of course, that the ability of hunting and angling to confer "gentlemanly" status was ignored by early North Americans. If the colonial angler wished to differentiate himself from the coarse and uncultured settler and savage, he needed only to import a copy of Izaak Walton's The Complete Angler, and a rod, reel and book of flies from England.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, recreational sport in North America was part of a fitness regimen for soldiers stationed at garrisons. It also provided administrators in the fur trade and other resource sectors with a break from their sedentary routine. With improved transportation and communications, and with the development of tourist economies towards the end of the 19th century, hunting and angling became an established sport of the cultural elite. And as various regions in North America became further removed from their pioneer roots, wilderness sport took on the added meaning of atavistic discovery. It suggested a link with the past, and implied some anxieties about the future. In both Canada and the United States, the sense of discovery was closely tied to nationalist sentiments, and represented a desire to understand the

history of the respective nations.

The Victorian sporting fraternity was defined in part by the sportsman's code it inherited and the values that its members held in common. It was also defined by the humane sentiments of animal welfare advocates at the end of the century. In the eyes of reformers and those individuals who thought themselves urbane, hunting, and to a lesser extent, angling, were antiquated acts of barbarism and brutality. As vestiges of a pre-industrial way of life that was unrefined, they were thought to be inappropriate for the modern age. This did not mean, however, that humane reformers eschewed the Victorian cult of wilderness; their participation typically involved the study of nature through literature, art, and the natural sciences. These pursuits led them away from a conception of animals which allowed for their use and destruction to one where they were seen as close cousins (and, through the work of Darwin, ancestors).

Not all sportsmen were interested in these criticisms, but those who were actively promoting the sportsman's code sought to expunge from the fraternity any habits which cast the hunter and angler in the role of barbarian. Their articulation of sporting pleasures was brought out and refined partly because of the criticisms they endured. Thus it was a sort of siege mentality that forced reflection. It remains unknown, however, whether this public debate ever left the circles of elite society and changed the mass

conception of how human beings should relate to animals. In the 19th century, people relied on animals for all sorts of purposes, many of which were probably cruel even by Victorian standards. But regardless of whether the masses took an interest in the issues -- and in the case of the banning of bloodsports they certainly did -- the personification of animals in popular culture helped to undermine the traditional conception of animals as beasts of burden and sources of food.

The most speculative dimension of this thesis involves the treatment of ritual, symbol and myth. These shadowy, but nonetheless important, aspects of wilderness sport were the mechanisms through which sporting traditions were re-discovered and developed in the 19th century. They were articulate expressions of what it meant to be a hunter and angler. By treating sporting equipment as symbols, for example, we can see how a particular piece of gear tells a story for its owner, or makes him feel as if the magic and mystery of sport can animate his most cherished possessions. In the case of the Victorian hunting and fishing trip, sportsmen were often able to see parallels between their own experiences and those represented in fictionalized quest or adventure literature. Unfortunately for the Victorian literary arts, innumerable sportsmen felt that their travels and feats contained such strong narrative possibilities that they put them in print, regardless of their artistic

abilities. But when an enjoyable sporting event has the attributes of a lively narrative, each can be a qualitative measure of the other. This symbiotic relationship, which blurs fact from fantasy, answers well the question of free will in ritual. Just as a popular author may fancy himself a great innovator, even when he writes within the confines of a genre, a sporting enthusiast can imagine his private adventure as something more unique than it is. The things which inform his drama are the expectations and the technology he takes with him, as well as the land itself.

Conventional thinking has always perceived hunting, and to some extent angling, as quintessentially male pursuits. Today the language of the hunt pervades courtship, business, recreation and political life to such an extent that the origins of the terms are unquestioned. As a metaphor for survival, sustenance and aggressiveness, hunting reveals the deep desire of an individual to be important -- to be a relevant member of the community and an active participant in the natural order of things. In hunting and gathering societies, a man is judged by his ability to provide food for his family and tribe. However, the value and meaning of masculinity in industrialized societies is less established and very unstable.

In the 19th century, the affluent urban male was probably less secure about the meaning of his gender than his ancestors had been. For Victorian men who grew up after

mid-century, hunting and angling allowed a re-visitation of the boy culture they had belonged to. It provided a familiar means of subduing the much feared female within them, and set the stage for a struggle against "mother" nature.

The rise of the first-wave feminists and their challenge to the established order of things was seen by most men as another sign that the future would be unfathomable. Hunting and angling were thus thought to be invaluable passports for visiting a time when the meaning of manhood was clear. Whatever notions Victorian males had of "true manhood" were of course highly subjective. "Buckskin" hunters indulged themselves in barbarism, while the more genteel sort took game in the spirit of European nobility. However they wore the clothes of civilization, Victorian sportsmen believed in the rejuvenating powers of wilderness. A man could be many things in the 19th century, but he could not forsake fitness in mind and body, nor the active, independent sense of purpose that made things happen. In this sense, the pursuit of trophies by Victorian hunters and anglers appears to be a statement about determination and egoism. The flip side to this coin was that the pursuit of a trophy was a sign that the great "independent" hunter was in fact dependent on the respect of others, or at least that he craved a concrete affirmation of his own worth.

Conventional wisdom in the 19th century had also

dictated that wilderness was not a gender-neutral sphere. The feminine sphere was presumed to be the domestic environment: the trappings of home-life and the family relations therein were a sort of nest, feathered by the innate goodness and nurturing qualities of women. Perhaps owing to the myth that men were better suited for adversity, wilderness was thought to be their domain. In reality however, a pioneer woman, or for that matter a refined country lady, was likely to be in closer contact with nature than a sportsman who spent most of the year in a city. When faced with survival in the wilderness, gender was less a prerequisite for success than was the basic will to persevere. As we have seen, Victorian wilderness sport was not the exclusive domain of men. The possibility that hunting and angling provided some Victorian women with the opportunity to escape the gender constraints of culture is a point that merits further study. By virtue of the fact that these women challenged the gender assumptions of their time, it would be interesting to discover whether they then found it easier to abandon other cultural constraints as well. One could imagine such a process leading them to a completely different relationship with nature than that of Victorian men.

In addition to gender, class sensibilities were another aspect of culture that influenced how Victorian sportsmen approached wilderness. The patrician sportsman often found

himself in conflict with the people who lived in his playground. Empowered in a way they might not have been had they lived in the city, local inhabitants were free to mock the urban sportsman for his fancy equipment and refined techniques. Whether or not they were aware of it, they lived closer to the rugged, manly ideal which seemed to possess the sportsman. Fortunately, patrician sportsmen were sometimes able to transcend their class biases, and look for common ground where the finer qualities of both groups could be shared.

An intriguing aspect of Victorian wilderness sport in Canada was the extent to which the European tradition remained dominant. The reason for this may go beyond the fact that all aspects of British culture had an appeal among the upper classes at that time. When confronted with distinctive geography and the cultures of indigenous people, Canadian sportsmen chose to fall back on the familiar, rather than investigate the new. The North American path to manhood through sport, with its laudable but misguided emphasis on primitivism, may simply have been too close to home for Canadians. As scholars like Frye and Careless have suggested, the Canadian wilderness was harder to emboss with the stamp of civilization than the relatively forgiving American landscape.

It is ironic that it was south of the border, where

vast tracts of pastoral land invited sport of an English kind, that the cult of the buckskin hunter was born. Obviously, that manifestation of the manly hunter grew more from the peculiarities of American culture than from its geography. If one were to consider geography alone, Canada, with its immense and intimidating landscape, would have been a more likely place from which an heroic buckskin sporting tradition should emerge. The fact that it did not tells us either that Canadian sportsmen never really escaped the garrison mentality, or that their heroic desires were sporadic and unorganized, leaving few tracings in the sporting literature. While it may be unwise to claim that an indigenous heroic tradition did not exist in Canada simply on the basis that a record of it cannot be found, there is some justification for doing so. If such a tradition had existed, Canadians would have had ample opportunities to articulate it in the numerous sporting magazines and monographs, to which they had unimpeded access at the time. One might argue however, that sporting literature was itself a product of the European tradition, and those who advocated primitivism were too engrossed in indulging the savage within to take notes on their personal odysseys. It is possible that this was the case in Canada. In the United States, however, people like Theodore Roosevelt and his sporting companions were almost evangelical with their ideas on nature, manhood and sport.

We are left to conclude that if Canada had a great number of sportsmen who eschewed the gentlemanly tradition, their presence went unnoticed by both the general public and the sporting fraternity.

Regardless of which tradition Victorian sportsmen pursued, their prime intent was to find a way to access nature. Sporting traditions provided a sort of safety net on this journey, protecting the hunter and angler from becoming simply an other predatory animal in the natural order of things. This may have been an alluring objective for those sportsmen who believed that the essence of manhood was animalistic rather than intellectual. But even they did not simply wander naked into the bush with a spear and the intent of never returning to civilization. The buckskin hunter was undoubtedly closer to nature than the patrician quail shooter, but he nonetheless needed to sell his hides in the urban marketplace to pay for this "freedom."

The Victorian sportsman did not question the idea that wilderness and gender were intimately related. It might suffice in a paper of this kind to share this assumption simply because the subjects of the study, members of the Canadian sporting fraternity, believed it to be true. All his efforts, values, and aspirations orbited around this premise, and to thoroughly question it would undermine the emphasis given to the fundamental principles of the sporting sub-culture. But it must be said that on the level of the

individual sporting enthusiast, gender might not have been a key consideration in some instances. Masculinity is the theme which stands out above all others in the historical literature, but we must remember that hunting and angling can be potent, all-consuming recreations which make it difficult for one to assess his or her own feelings and motivations. Both the genteel and buckskin hunter knew that sport could release a flood of un-restrained and imponderable emotions. Extracting ideas about class, nationality, ethics or gender from such an act was difficult, and only happened after some distancing from the event allowed for reflection. The true sporting enthusiast can, in fact, never be objective about hunting and angling, because they are too closely bound to a conception of the self. This is undoubtedly why Victorian sportsmen responded so vehemently to the humanists' critiques. They tried to make objective arguments against what they felt were personal affronts, but were unable to articulate their love of sport without being subjective.

Historians are continually faced with the discrepancy between an event or phenomenon, and the recording of it. The imperfect nature of historical sources is well illustrated in the field of recreational hunting and angling, where the essence of the activities defies objective and rational reflection. Victorian wilderness sport thus left an impression on its enthusiasts rather than

a coherent and comprehensive view of the world. Historical associations with the savage and the chivalrous medieval huntsman led them to believe that wilderness sport was a panacea for the problems of modernity. They followed in the footsteps of their predecessors with the hope that true well-being and contentment could be found in the primal relationship of man and wilderness.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 Rod and Gun in Canada June 1900: 352.

2 Given that Victorian sporting enthusiasts were mostly male, and that masculinity was thought to be an essential component of wilderness sport, the terms "sportsmen" and "fraternity" are used in this study rather than their equivalents in gender neutral language.

3 For a general discussion on the crisis of modernity see, W.E. Houghton's, The Victorian Frame of Mind, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), and, P. Carters The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971).

4 After the First World War, patrician wilderness sport in Canada was rivalled by several factors: the commercialization of sports and tourism; the accessibility of sport for a growing middle class; and the movement of the sporting fraternity towards a popular, classless ethos not unlike the one that was already under development in the United States.

5 Alan Metcalf Canada Learns to Play and M. Howell's The History of Sport in Canada are two examples of books on Canadian sport history which make minimal (one or two pages) mention of hunting and angling. There are also, of course, scattered references to sport hunting and angling in most histories of exploration, settlement and tourism. In local histories of areas like the Kawarthas or the Muskokas, for example, one can sometimes find humorous anecdotes about tourists and guides or references to the importance of game in local diets.

6 Morris Mott's Sports in Canada: Historical Readings includes several chapters on recreational hunting and angling. There are also several papers on hunting and angling that are listed in the bibliography, which were part of a Canadian symposium on the history of sport and physical education. Paul Louis Martin's La Chasse au Quebec and Mike Parker's Guides of the North Woods are the only two Canadian books which specifically address the history of hunting and angling in Canada, although Janet Foster's Working For Wildlife discusses the depletion of wildlife at the hands of hunters, and conservation legislation at great length. American studies of wilderness sport are common in both

periodical and monograph literature. Most of these are listed in the bibliography.

7 Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History (1930).

Donald Creighton, The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence (1937).

J.M.S. Careless, Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, and Identities in Canada Before 1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).

8 W.L. Morton, The Canadian Identity (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 5.

9 The American Newspaper Directory states that in 1886, Forest and Stream magazine had a circulation in the United States and Canada of 210,000. Rod and Gun in Canada had a circulation (mostly in Canada) of 18,000.

10 Another notable difference between the two periodicals is that Forest and Stream published articles on subjects like yachting, non-sport travelling and target shooting. Rod and Gun in Canada dealt almost exclusively with sport, although it occasionally featured stories on forestry, nature photography and fox-breeding.

11 Anthony E. Rotundo, "Boy Culture: Middle-Class Boyhood in Nineteenth-Century America," in Carnes and Griffen, eds., Meanings For Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 9-37.

CHAPTER 1 NATURE AND LEISURE IN THE MODERN ERA

1 A.L. Tennyson, as quoted in U.C. Knoepfelmacher and G.B. Tennyson, eds., Nature and The Victorian Imagination (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 30.

2 For a good introduction to the crisis of modernity, see W.E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) and P. Carter, The Spiritual Crisis of the Guilded Age (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971).

3 Coleridge, as quoted in Knoepfelmacher and Tennyson., xix.

4 J.W. Dafoe, "A Day in The Laurentians," Rod and Gun in Canada, August 1899, 51.

5 Forest and Stream 5 August 1880: 5.

6 Carl Berger, Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

7 Knoepfmacher, 367.

8 Hans Huth, Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes (Berkeley: University of California Press 1957).

Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

9 Nash, 8.

10 See Altmeyer, Kline, Wadland and McGregor.

11 Anna Jameson, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada (1838. Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons; Ltd., 1943). 29.

12 See summary of Edmund Burke's Philosophical Enquiry into Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1756) in I.S. Maclaren "The Aesthetic Mapping of Nature in the Second Franklin Expedition," Journal of Canadian Studies 20.1 (spring 1985): 41.

13 Nash, 92.

14 Ibid., 91.

15 See, R.G. Moyles and D. O'ram, Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada 1880-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988). Moyles and O'ram describe how Canada was viewed from abroad as a sporting paradise in the late 19th century after other colonial sporting grounds had been depleted of animals.

16 Dafoe, "Day in the Laurentides," Rod and Gun in Canada August 1899, 51.

17 For an in-depth treatment of muscular christianity, see H. Green, Fit For America: Health, Fitness, Sport and American Society (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

18 Jamie Ben Jackson, "Recreational Canoeing in Ontario Before the First world War," Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education IX.2 (Dec. 1978): 43.

19 Henry D. Thoreau, Walden, or Life in the Woods (1854), in David Profumo and Graham Swift eds., The Magic Wheel: An Anthology of Fishing in Literature (London: Heinemann, 1986.) 241.

20 Jamie Benidickson, "Temagami and the Northern Ontario Tourist Frontier," Laurentian University Review, 1, (Feb. 1979): 46.

21 George H. Meyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914," Journal of Canadian Studies XI.3 (Aug. 1976): 21-37.

22 Ibid., 22.

23 Wadland, 199.

24 Nash, vii.

25 Frederick Turner argued that the frontier experience had given the American people a rugged independence. He viewed the westward movement of the frontier as the fundamental process that gave Americans their democratic tradition and unique character, as can be seen in The Frontier in American History (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1920). For a treatment of Turner's impact in Canada, see Michael Cross, ed., The Frontier Thesis and The Canadas: The Debate on The Impact of The Canadian Environment (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1970).

26 J.M.S. Careless, Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, and Identities in Canada Before 1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 43.

27 Ibid., 41.

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29 Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 48.

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CHAPTER 2 FROM SURVIVAL TO PLAY: THE BIRTH OF THE SPORTING IDEAL

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29 An advertisement in Forest and Stream on August 24, 1882 claimed that the distance from New York to Rice Lake in the Peterborough area was only 36 hours by train. The short travel times from Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago were also quoted as a means of luring American tourists who might only have a limited amount of time to spend on holiday. And a Rod and Gun advertisement from 1899 promoted a trip on the C.P.R. into Lake St. John via the Place Viger Hotel in Montreal which was, "absolutely fireproof as human ingenuity can devise".

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44 In the late 19th century, the definition of Canadian nationalism was surrounded by an intense debate between continentalists, imperialists, and those individuals who wished to define the nation without too much regard for either the United States or England. Carl Berger has studied this debate in two works, The Sense of Power: Studies in The Ideas of Canadian Imperialism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970) and Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884 - 1914: A Conflict in Canadian Thought (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1967).

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CHAPTER 4
RITUAL, SYMBOL AND THE
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16 Frank Day, The Autobiography of a Fisherman (Gardner City: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1927), 14.

17 C. McKay, "The Fowler of The Coast," Rod and Gun July 1899: 30.

- 18 Anon. The Arte of Angling in, Profumo and Swift. 60.
- 19 Straw Hat. "In Search of an Island," Rod and Gun
June 1899: 7.
- 20 Millard, 9.
- 21 Vachell, 211.
- 22 Strickland, 78.
- 23 Marks, 6.
- 24 James, 19.
- 25 Ibid., 11.
- 26 Ottawa Valley Tourist Association, Sport and
Pleasure in The Valley of The Ottawa (Ottawa: 1898), 6.
- 27 Robins, 11.
- 28 Straw Hat. "Camping With Indian Teepees," Rod and
Gun, 2.2 (July 1900): 273.
- 29 Jameson, 31.
- 30 William Friedman, About Time: Inventing The 4th
Dimension (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1990), 7.

CHAPTER 5 PRIMITIVISM AND THE QUEST FOR MANLINESS

1 Roper and Tosh argue in the introduction to their edited volume Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800 (London: Routledge, 1991), that in the latter half of the 19th century, the popular conception of manliness shifted from an emphasis on moral strength to one based on a respect for muscle and might. (p.5)

2 Tosh, Roper, Carnes and Griffen all emphasize, in the introductions to their books, the importance of childhood on informing masculine identity.

3 See John Tosh, "Domesticity and Manliness in the Victorian Middle Class," in his Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800 (London: Routledge, 1991). See, also, D. Roberts' chapter, "The Paterfamilias of

the Victorian Governing Classes," in his The Victorian Family: Structure and Stresses (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

4 Tosh, "Domesticity and Manliness in the Victorian Middle class," 65.

5 Rotundo, 16.

6 Ibid., 15.

7 This phenomenon has been described by historians as the "Victorian flight from domesticity." John Tosh has argued in his essay on domesticity and manliness that young Englishmen were lured away from domestic life by the promise of imperial adventure. He furthermore points out that many of the Victorian and Edwardian male role models were either single, or they married late in life (Gordon, Kitchener, Rhodes, Baden-Powell, Lugard, and Milner for example). A similar phenomenon is described by David Pugh in his Sons of Liberty: The Masculine Mind in Nineteenth Century America (London: Greenwood Press, 1983) Pugh interprets the American Revolution as a rejection of male authority, and the battle waged by Andrew Jackson (the first and most significant symbol of American rugged individualism) against the banks and aristocracy as a rejection of the "smothering maternal figure." (p.7-8)

8 Tosh and Roper, 18.

9 The links between femininity and nature as they are generally known are perhaps too obvious to discuss in depth here. The notion of a benevolent and nurturing "mother nature" is as common today as it was for the Victorians. In regards, however, to the relationship of man to a feminine nature, Geoffrey Gorer in his book The American People (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964) states that, "America in its benevolent, rich, idealistic aspects is envisioned (by Americans), as feminine; it is masculine only in its groping and demanding aspects. The American land itself . . . is feminine; its possession has been on occasion wooing, on occasion seduction, and on occasion rape." (p.23)

10 It should be mentioned that the Victorian cult of primitivism went far beyond the confines of the sporting sub-culture. Mark Carnes' essay, entitled, "Middle-Class Men and The Solace of Fraternal Ritual," in his edited volume, Meanings For Manhood, describes the widespread appeal of primitive-like rituals within Victorian fraternal organizations. Carnes demonstrates, in his case study of the Red Men, how they acted out an interpretation of native puberty rites where imaginary animals were shot with arrows, and palefaces (new members) were threatened with scalping.

- 11 Nash, 152.
- 12 Ibid., 153.
- 13 Thorstein Veblen, quoted in Cunningham, 117.
- 14 David C. Itzkowitz, Peculiar Privilege: a Social History of English Fox-hunting, 1753-1885 (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1977), 4.
- 15 Dunlop, 51.
- 16 John Kennedy, "The Squire Takes a Muskox," Beaver 316.1 (1985): 27.
- 17 Dunlop, 51.
- 18 Forest and Stream 13 November 1888.
- 19 George B. Ward, "Bloodbrothers in The Wilderness: The Sport Hunter and The Buckskin Hunter in The Preservation of The American Wilderness Experience," Ph.D. diss. University of Texas at Austin, 1980. 170.
- 20 Ibid., 176.
- 21 Forest and Stream 5 October 1883: 183.
- 22 Jack-lighting was the native practice of spearing fish in a boat, on a platform over the water, or by the shore at night. The fisher would use a torch that burned pitch, weeds or material in order to see the fish and dazzle them.
- 23 Thomas McGrath, quoted in Radcliff, 177.
- 24 On the nature of Victorian parenting, see D. Roberts' chapter, "The Paterfamilias of the Victorian Governing Classes," in his, The Victorian Family: Structure and Stresses (London: Croom Helm, 1978).
- 25 Forest and Stream 7 April 1900: 267.
- 26 An interesting look at urban forces that were thought to corrupt youth at the turn of the century can be found in Joseph Kett, Rights of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to The Present (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1977). See also, Lewis Erenberg, Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and The Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930 (Westport: 1981).

- 27 Day, 63.
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- 29 Day, 132.
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- 31 Csikszentmihalyi, 26.
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- 33 Ibid., 29.
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- 35 Kennedy, 28.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Vachell, 199.
- 38 Ibid., 200.
- 39 Forest and Stream 13 September 1888: 20.
- 40 Cunningham, 129.
- 41 Trollope, 71.
- 42 Ibid., 72.
- 43 Forest and Stream 22 November 1888: 6.
- 44 Forest and Stream 5 October 1882: 23.
- 45 Forest and Stream 4 June 1885: 15.
- 46 Mary Harvey Drummond, "A Woman's Trip to The
Laurentides," Rod and Gun December 1900: 388.
- 47 Ibid., 389.

CHAPTER 6
CLASS, COMPETITION AND
THE POWER OF CULTURE

1 Forest and Stream 5 March 1885: 106.

2 Howell and Howell, 43.

3 See J.M.S. Careless, Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, and Identities in Canada Before 1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989). In its most basic form, the metropolitan/hinterland thesis maintains that large urban centres exert a control over their surrounding areas by drawing off materials and talented personnel. The hinterland receives manufactured goods, capital, and cultural and political direction from its metropolis. Both areas remain dependent on each other until the satellite communities grow and diversify to the point where they may become metropoli themselves. The system usually expands, with a developing hierarchy of metropoli and satellite communities. Although this thesis is generally used to explain regional economic and political phenomena, it provides an interesting framework for understanding cultural transference between classes and urban/rural areas.

4 Hodgins et al. 229.

5 Forest and Stream 3 August 1882: 42.

6 Forest and Stream 7 December 1882: 3.

7 Forest and Stream 16 November 1882: 307.

8 Forest and Stream 5 March 1885: 106.

9 Forest and Stream 14 September 1882: 129.

10 Ibid.

11 Forest and Stream, 2 August, 1882: 85.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Norma Clarke, "Strenuous Idleness," in Roper and Tosh, Manful Assertions 38.

- 16 Cunningham, 51.
- 17 Ibid., 121.
- 18 C.C. Farr, "The Professor's Outing," Rod and Gun June 1899: 14.
- 19 Forest and Stream 28 September 1882: 163.
- 20 See, for example, Michael Cross, ed., The Frontier Thesis and The Canadas: The Debate on The Impact of The Canadian Environment (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1970).
- 21 Arthur Lower, Colony To Nation (Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1946), 49.
- 22 Francis Parkman, quoted in Ward 178.
- 23 Forest and Stream 3 August 1883: 101.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Vachell, 194.
- 26 Kennedy, 8.

CONCLUSION

- 1 Northrop Frye, quoted in M.B. Kline, Beyond the Land Itself: Views of Nature in Canada and the United States (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 47.
- 2 Henry David Thoreau, quoted in Nash, 81.

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