Between Man and Machine: A Socio-Historical Analysis of Masculinity in North American Motorcycling Culture

by

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Abstract

There has been a longstanding fascination with motorcycling culture in popular mainstream North American media, but this culture has only recently become the focus of rigorous, contextualized academic research. While smaller research projects have studied specific aspects of motorcycling culture, few academic researchers have investigated the exclusionary discourses that underpin motorcycling culture and none have done so in a methodical manner. Using a series of columns published over a thirty-five year period in the popular Canadian motorcycle magazine, *Cycle Canada*, I have analyzed the discourses through which motorcycling culture comes to have meaning to its participants and I have elucidated the socio-historical understandings of masculinity that are present in North American motorcycling culture.

This thesis provides a historical sociological analysis of motorcycling discourse through a feminist lens. I view gender as a relation that must constantly be (re)negotiated amongst socially constituted subjects and I pay particular attention to how technological discourse is made socially durable and sustainable by the interface of material (motorcycles) and organic (human) beings.

Longitudinal analysis of *Cycle Canada* illustrates the presence of heteronormative discourses that constrain readers' choices of gender identification and sexual orientation to traditional notions of masculinity. In an effort to create solidarity with their readers, the magazine editors cater to the perceived interests of an idealized male audience by performing these masculine identities. Though motorcycling culture in Canada is increasingly diverse, *Cycle Canada* has only begun to reflect this diversity in the past two years of publication. Explicating the social, political, economic, technological and historical context which gave rise to particular masculine identities in motorcycling culture allows us to focus on the positive agency involved in the performance of masculine identities, while still recognizing that there remains room to include other figurations of identity beyond traditional concepts of heteronormativity and homosociality.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

There has been a longstanding fascination with motorcycling culture in popular mainstream North American media as radio broadcasts, newspaper articles, television shows and films have created a popularized image of motorcyclists. Yet motorcycle culture has only recently become the focus of rigorous, contextualized academic research. While smaller research projects and highly detailed ethnographies have studied specific political movements, lifestyles and subcultures in motorcycling culture (Joans, 2001; McDonald-Walker, 2000; Sato, 1991; Wolf, 1991), few researchers have investigated the exclusionary discourses that underpin motorcycling culture and none have done so in a methodical manner.

To expand upon this existent body of research, this thesis provides a historical sociological analysis of motorcycling culture through a feminist lens which is inspired by the works of Judith Butler, R.W. Connell, and other proponents of 'Queer Theory' (Butler, 1993; Connell, 1995; McNay, 2000), and which views gender as a relation that must constantly be (re)negotiated amongst socially constituted subjects. I am also influenced by feminist 'technoscience' literature, which constitutes technology as a social subject and examines how technological discourse is made socially durable and sustainable by the interface of material (motorcycles) and organic (human) beings (Braidotti, 1994; Grosz, 1994; Haraway, 1991; Latour, 1987). While the technoscience approach links the social exclusion of disadvantaged groups in the virtual realm to the denial of alternate forms of knowledge, I draw on the sociology of sport literature to illustrate how these gendered social relations translate into the physical world in the idolization of particular forms of human and machinic bodies (Burstyn, 1999; Giulianotti, 2005). Finally, I turn to the literature on media studies to help provide a methodological approach that is

best suited to conducting a discourse analysis of motorcycle magazine text (Babbie and Baxter, 2003; Bourdieu, 1984; Bülow-Møller, 1989; Van Dijk, 1984).

Riding a motorcycle is associated with self-realization in motorcycle culture and the importance of this rite of passage becomes apparent when examining people's accounts of their experiences as motorcyclists. Questioning my identity as a motorcyclist[1], I realized that my own efforts at negotiating an identity as a motorcyclist, as a sociologist and as a man were directly influenced by the stories, experiences and encounters I had shared with my two-wheeled brethren. While I was fortunate enough to have a father who was a motorcyclist and actively promoted my involvement in the culture, I wondered how other people became involved in the sport and what influenced their perceptions and experiences as motorcyclists. Though there is a litany of methodologies and media forms from which I could have drawn to study Canadian motorcycle culture, such as ethnographic research or the study of motorcycling cinema, my first and most memorable encounters with motorcycle culture resulted from browsing through my father's motorcycle magazines while growing up. Thus, I have chosen to illustrate this culture using empirical examples drawn from motorcycling magazines. As David Wolf notes in his seminal text on biker subculture in Canada, *The Rebels,* magazines act as a socializing agent for individual motorcyclists and a medium for the transference of information and cultural knowledge for the motorcycling community as a whole (1991:35). Writers are engaged in a form of reflexive identity construction when they put their experiences to paper (Bourdieu, 1977), and the knowledge I gained by reading motorcycling magazines has helped shape and continues to influence my identity as a motorcyclist today. It is from this realization that I have chosen to conduct a longitudinal discourse analysis of the Canadian motorcycle magazine *Cycle Canada*.

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[1] For this analysis, I conceptualize a motorcyclist as someone who rides their own machine and is interested in establishing a personal and cultural identity as a motorcycle enthusiast

Motorcycle print media has existed since the first gasoline powered motor-bicycles rolled out of Gottleib Daimler's workshop in 1885 (Osgerby, 2005:14). While newspapers have featured information on motorcycles since their inception, it was not until magazines such as *The Motor Cycle* (1928-1978) and *Motor Cycling* (1926-1967) (Classic Motorcycle Memorabilia, 2006), began circulation that a more comprehensive, regularly published and readily available medium for cultural dissemination became available to motorcyclists. These magazines catered to a multitude of interests in the world of motorcycling with articles on technological advancements, do-it-yourself repairs, race updates, general gossip, and tales of motorcycle adventures. While the form and format of motorcycle magazines have changed throughout the years and vary amongst publications, their purpose as vehicles for selling advertisements has remained unchanged and contemporary writers and editors of magazines face the same dilemma as their counterparts from years ago in that they must attempt to address a mass audience. It is impossible to know the identity and interests of each individual reader so an 'imaginary addressee' must be fabricated, who is an 'ideal type' of reader/motorcyclist as envisioned by the creators of the magazine. Thus, the writers of magazine articles attempt to minimize the social distance between themselves and their readers by constructing a literary identity for themselves which already *assumes* the likes and dislikes of the reader (McLoughlin, 2000:67). However, the remote relationship between the reader and the producer of the text leads to a distinct power imbalance.

Authors of magazine editorials are able to reach a much greater audience than a single motorcyclist recounting his or her experiences to a friend, and readers are afforded fewer opportunities to directly and expediently challenge the published content of a magazine than might be available in face-to-face interaction with another motorcycle enthusiast. The resulting asymmetry in social power privileges the published account and potentially excludes other viewpoints by foreclosing certain experiences. My point is analogous to Goffman's proclamation

in *Gender Advertisements,* that "[a]lthough the pictures shown here cannot be taken as representative of advertisements in general or particular publication sources, one can probably make a significant negative statement about them, namely, that *as pictures* they are not perceived as peculiar and unnatural" (Goffman, 1979:25). Though authors attempt to draw on the perceived common experiences, attitudes, and cultural beliefs of a group, their narratives are both 'normative' and 'normalizing' because although the narratives may not be representative of motorcyclists' experiences in general, neither are authors' tales perceived as 'peculiar and unnatural'. Because authoritative power (re)produces what it claims merely to represent, the author of the text stands in an authoritative position through which the motorcycling identities expressed through his or her narratives may then be taken up as a performative ideal by potential readers (Butler, 1990:2). The relationship between the reader and the magazine also promotes the dissemination of the authors' cultural expectations, as authors seek to engage with potential readers as friends and authority figures (Boni, 2002:473; Brandth and Haugen, 2005:151; Mort, 1996). By constructing narratives that reflect a shared commitment to motorcycling, authors offer their readers a degree of social solidarity and cultural affiliation via their identification with the readers' subject position. However, when these narratives are uncritically founded on or feature discourses of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity, these discourses and patterns of exclusivity become normalized and are (re)produced within the authors' texts.

Using a series of columns published in the popular Canadian motorcycle magazine, *Cycle Canada*, I intend to analyze the discourses through which motorcycling culture comes to have meaning to its participants and elucidate the socio-historical understandings of masculinity that are present in North American motorcycling culture. This magazine has been published for over 35 years and remains one of the most popular Canadian motorcycle publications. A longitudinal analysis of the motorcycling discourse within *Cycle Canada* magazines will reflect the broader

historical changes in gender representation that have taken place in North American society. These changes are chronicled more generally in the extensive body of literature on gender and sex, media studies, and studies of sport culture and technology, and harnessing these literary resources will permit me to critically examine the implicit and explicit cultural expectations embodied within the gendered discourse of *Cycle Canada.*

Thesis outline

Control and mastery of the motorcycle in the physical realm is conceptually linked to the virtual mastery of the qualities the motorcycle is thought to embody, such as the traditional masculine qualities of technomorphism (modernity, abstraction, and efficiency), and the feminine qualities of biomorphism, (archaism, emotionality, and corporeality) (Burstyn, 1999:21). As the hypermasculinized icon of the industrial age *par excellence*, tales of empowerment and disempowerment along gender lines are common themes in motorcycle narratives. I begin to explore these patterns of who is and is not permitted to participate in motorcycling culture in Chapters Two and Three, where I explicate the social, political, economic, technological and historical contexts in which motorcycles have been created, ridden and talked about. This approach also has the advantage of providing a solid theoretical and empirical foundation from which I will carry out the discourse analyses of *Cycle Canada* magazine, while simultaneously allowing me to draw upon my experiential knowledge as a motorcyclist. I make no claims to pure objectivity, and by treating this research as an exercise in historical sociology, I hope to elucidate the fact that the developments in motorcycling history I choose to discuss were not inevitable, and that things could have been, and still could be otherwise.

In Chapter Four I introduce my analytical methods and sources of data, as well as carry out an analysis of the motorcycling discourse in *Cycle Canada.* Motorcycle magazines are an excellent source of primary data as they are an easy to use, accessible and relatively cheap lifeline

into the motorcycling community. Because the narratives in *Cycle Canada* magazine are written in the form of personal stories about bikes breaking down, crashes or enjoyable rides, these narratives serve as a useful and entertaining introduction into motorcycling culture for novices. The initiate will learn of "leading the only life worth living" and "how to dress, socialize, and have 'good times'" (Wolf, 1999). In addition, these articles are written by paid authors who reveal aspects about their identity and personal experiences as motorcyclists for the entertainment of the reader. The (re)telling of 'real' events gives the reader a secondary perspective on what it means to be a motorcyclist and allows for comparisons with their own identities/experiences.

Finally, chapter five concludes the thesis with a discussion of the motorcycle as a historical symbol of masculine power and dominance, and how it can be used to exclude 'others' from participating in motorcycle culture, even as we recognize that technical knowledge and physical skill are not restricted to members of the male sex. There is nothing inherent within the male or female body that necessarily grants one individual an advantage over another in terms of being able to enjoy the experience of motorcycling, and motorcycling can be an act of subversion through which agents revolt against the dominant discourses of heteronormativity in North American culture. Drawing on people's narratives of self will help illustrate the influence of wider socio-historical changes regarding gender performances in North American society and whether these changes have or have not made an impact in motorcycling culture.

Chapter 2
The formation of motorcycling culture

Since the 1980s, the popularity of motorcycling as both a sport and leisure pursuit has increased dramatically in North America. Sales of new and used motorcycles have reached record highs, participation in motorcycle racing and spectator attendance at motorcycling events has skyrocketed, and some motorcyclists have even achieved celebrity status as the stars of popular television programs (Dulaney, 2005:13). However, academic interest has lagged behind mainstream enthusiasm and much of the socio-cultural research conducted in the field of motorcycle studies portrays motorcycling enthusiasts as members of an esoteric subculture of 'outlaws'. This image has reinforced negative stereotypes about motorcyclists and excluded motorcycling culture from rigorous analysis (Atkinson, 2003:96; McDonald-Walker, 2000). Nevertheless, the growing acceptance of motorcycling as a fashionable consumerist activity in North America has prompted a surge of scholarly research in the past five years, evidenced by the publication of *The International Journal of Motorcycle Studies* (IJMS). A relatively new (2005), peer-reviewed journal first published in 2005, the IMJS provides a global forum dedicated to the study and discussion of motorcycling culture in all its forms "from the experience of riding and racing to the history of the machine, the riders and design to the images of motorcycling and motorcyclists in film, advertising and literature" (IMJS, 2005).

No longer is the motorcyclist epitomized by the grizzled sneer of the bearded biker, as rising interest in motorcycling has led to an about-face in public perception of motorcyclists in North America. Many motorcycling purists claim that the roadgoing populace is now more likely to observe a goateed doctor or lawyer 'slumming it' as a weekend 'asphalt cowboy' than a 'true', weather-beaten motorcycle enthusiast (Ferrar, 1996; Joans, 2001; Lagergren, 2007:7;

MacDonald, 2007; Russell, 2005:9). This criticism has been echoed in mainstream media and has become the subject of a recent Hollywood film, the "Wild Hogs" (2007), which lampoons the 'Rich Urban Biker' stereotype of middle-aged, middle-class men "richly costumed in leather and riding highly customized Harleys down the backroads of midlife crises" (Schouten, 1995:49; Slawinski, 2005). While I do not condone the categorization and denigration of fellow riders according to elitist descriptions of 'true' motorcyclists, demographic data confirms that contemporary motorcycle ridership is more diverse than it has ever been since North American governments began maintaining motorcycle registration statistics. The current generation of riders includes people from all socio-economic strata, varying cultural backgrounds and an increasing number of female riders. Yet the literal and figurative 'face' of motorcycling remains distinctly masculine (Hostetler, 2002; Joans, 2001; McDonald-Walker, 2000; Osgerby, 2005; Russell, 2005). This chapter will explore the development of motorcycling culture in North America and how this culture has historically been dominated by particular forms of masculine gender representations.

Culture, what culture?

Too often theory mystifies and conceals the subject of analysis, provoking more questions than answers (McDonald-Walker, 2000:2). It is my belief that theory should not obscure or romanticize motorcycling culture, but make it transparent to those who are unfamiliar with the subject. But defining and describing the existence of North American motorcycling culture has been a difficult task. As a motorcycle rider for several years, I had yet to turn a critical eye towards my own identity as a motorcyclist, and throughout this project I have continually struggled with my own personal bias and the need for a level of academic objectivity. Being self-reflexive about my own identity has granted me a better understanding of motorcycling culture

and my place within it, and from this understanding I have generated a theory of culture that is flexible and inclusive, without being so general as to provide little analytic force.

In my work I define motorcycling culture as *cultivated dispositions that are practiced by people drawn together by their mutual interest in motorcycling*. This description draws on French anthropologist Michel Maffesoli's suggestion that culture is a community founded on "varied rituals, ordinary life, duplicity, the play of appearances, the collective sensibility, destiny" (1996:1). But this leads us to question the point at which the cultural diverges from the social. Who constitutes this collectivity I call motorcycling culture? Do we consider people who have not ridden a motorcycle in years 'default' members because of their past cultural affiliation? What about commuters who ride a motorcycle to and from work everyday, but have no interest in motorcycling beyond a means of transportation? Peoples' interest in motorcycles does not immediately confer group status, nor does commuters' disinterest in motorcycling for pleasure exclude them from motorcycling culture. Rather, the basis of this culture is grounded on the notion that membership is a deliberate choice and that being a motorcyclist is a semi-chosen identity, "one chooses to become a motorcyclist, one is not born a motorcyclist" (McDonald-Walker, 2000:42). Becoming a motorcyclist is an act of embodiment, a *labor of representation* that is continually performed to grant the appearance of a durable, natural sort of being (Bourdieu, 1998:234). As a repeated stylization of the body, motorcycling identity cannot be descriptively reconstructed. I can no more look back on my life and state "this is when I became a motorcyclist", anymore than a Catholic can state "this is when I began to believe in Christ".

Though there are many ways of analyzing motorcycling culture through relations such as race, ethnicity, and class, my experiences as a motorcyclist and with motorcycling in an academic context have been dominated by issues of gender and sexuality. I do not deny the existence of multiple motorcycling cultures in North America, but my approach is based on an ontological

understanding of my own identity as a young white male from a lower-middle class background. As such, my research is a socio-historical analysis which examines the discourse of magazine articles to draw observations that may both challenge and/or fortify my assumption that motorcycling has remained a predominantly *masculine* culture, though particular figurations and performances of gender have changed in the culture. This does not mean that I interpret masculinity as operating in the same way cross-culturally or of determining life in a unilateral way, what Pierre Bourdieu calls "pretending to a universal validity" (1998:134). I am more concerned with how masculine motorcycling culture has developed in particular historical and social conditions (Law, 2002:5), and am critical of academics in the field of motorcycle studies who categorize motorcycling identities according to stereotypical representations that exist in motorcycling discourse and popular media. Some scholars, such as Daniel Wolf and Barbara Joans, attempt to classify motorcyclists according to hierarchical qualifications that mythologize a masculine 'biker' lifestyle and perpetuate romantic fantasies about motorcycling culture. One such fantasy is their characterization of motorcyclists as a contemporary form of 'noble savage', where motorcyclists signify the 'purity' of the human spirit as he or she continues to live by their own code of ethics at the fringes of a corrupt and immoral Western society. Claiming that motorcyclists possess a singular essence mimics hegemonic binary discourse and confounds cultural identities with their material representation (Butler, 1990:13). My interpretation of motorcycling culture is not bound by rigid classifications of skill, riding experience or the type of motorcycle someone rides, as serious cultural inquiry should explore the totalizing claims expressed by some of the more dogmatic members of the motorcycling community.

This view stresses the importance of the 'relational component of social life' over and above the particulars of the individual. As Maffesoli writes, "[t]here are times when what matters is less a question of the individual than the community of which he or she is a member"

(1996:123), meaning that because identity is not a uniformly decodable practice, the difference between individuals who have not ridden in ten years and daily commuters is a difference of degree, not of kind. Maffesoli indicates that it is up to the members of the community to decide its membership through continual self-assessment, as each person embodies a specific motorcycling identity and contributes to motorcycling culture in their own manner. Though other motorcyclists may serve as the gatekeepers to motorcycling culture, it is not my place to do so.

Affectivity in motorcycling culture

The development of motorcycling as a cultural phenomenon coincides with the shift in postindustrial capitalist societies from the maintenance of bodily classifications and boundaries to modes of social control over their turbulent flows of matter and energy (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977; 1987; Foucault, 1974; Parisi and Terranova, 1999:7). Traditionally, the sensation of motorcycling has been described in emotive terms as feelings of freedom, speed, and thrills, culminating in the ultimate event where rider and machine become one. But this romanticized account is little more than an anthropomorphic metaphor: there is never any question of who is controlling whom. According to this binary discourse, motorcycling is a state of being accomplished by the rider, not the machine. After a ride the motorcyclist dismounts, breaking the illusion of the cybernetic melding of flesh and steel and reinstating the great dualist oppositions of human and machine, mind and body, emotions and rationality. However, if we critically examine how technology modulates and optimizes the spatial, material and temporal flows that comprise the social world, then the notion of a unitary body becomes only an idea, one which is formed through relations with other bodies that allow for their representation as a singularity (Braidotti, 1994:14).

Motorcycling is not simply an activity to be engaged in or an idea of action, but an *affective event* that exists as an "entity infinitely divisible into past and future...[in the] living present in bodies which act and are acted upon" (Deleuze, 1990:4). In the act of motorcycling the rider does not become machinic, nor does the motorcycle take on organic qualities; for "[m]imicry is a very bad concept, since it relies on binary logic to describe phenomena of an entirely different nature" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987:11). Rather, motorcycling is a process of *becoming*, of producing or assembling affective bonds to form an identity. The efficacy of my motorcycling identity is therefore dependent on a highly articulated material base since 'I' can only find fulfillment in relationships with other beings, be they mechanical or organic (Hayles, 1997:184-5; Maffesoli, 1996:10). Deleuze and Guattari offer this insight "[m]an and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other—not even in the sense of bipolar opposites within a relationship of causation, ideation, or expression; rather, they are one and the same essential reality, the producer-product" (1977:5). More importantly, the inorganic/organic bond formed between the rider and motorcycle elicits emotive and physiological responses that are irreducible to cultural dispositions or self-reflexive deconstruction. It is these bonds that serve as the foundation for solidarity amongst human agents (Law, 2002).

I can experience speeds of two hundred kilometers per hour in a car and smell fresh cut grass while riding a lawnmower, but when I am motorcycling, both the experience of speed and the smell of grass are combined in a way that is unique. Traveling fast and smelling the grass in a car or on a motorcycle may be described in similar ways linguistically, but the affective event lived in the physical world is dependent on the machine used to facilitate the experience, and it is precisely because language cannot effectively replicate physical sensation that the qualitative differences between motorcycling and other activities serve as a medium for social interaction (Cockburn and Ormrod, 1993). Motorcyclists and bicyclists may both state that they enjoy the

feeling of 'the wind in their hair', but the corporeal intensities of riding a motorcycle and a bicycle are qualitatively different because of the physical characteristics of the machines. The flows of energy and affections I experience whilst motorcycling are differentiated by their content (sensations) and expression (emotions), but are not reducible to them, and that which subsists between affect and language is the resonance or force of the event which inheres in the body (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987:9). Language translates or codes affections as capturable life potential, but affections are not merely uncategorized or unspoken emotions, they are interpersonal intensities (Massumi, 1996:234). These affective events offer a medium of solidarity for those who wish to recognize it via a common semiotic system in the form of bodily dispositions or verbal language, yet there can never be concrete meaning, only a state of continual becoming.

As I want to show in this research, motorcycling culture may be distinguished from other cultures not only because of the particular affections motorcycling may evoke, but because of the cultural qualities people believe these machines to embody. Renowned long-distance rider and author of *Against the Wind*, Ron Ayers, recounts one such experience, "for my last evening of the trip, I found a good spot to pull to the side of the road for some star-gazing. I recalled Hank Rowland's after-dinner comments to the group about wishing he was a poet so that he could describe how he felt. I knew exactly what he meant" (1997:192). I too can relate, having spent many evenings winding down country roads in the cool blackness, stopping only for fuel and to gaze at the stars above. Yet how can I communicate these feelings to those who have never had such experiences? On the other hand, what makes these affective events any more unique than if I had driven in a car or gone out for a walk? The difference is that the sensations produced from the activity of motorcycling are ascribed a distinct cultural importance as "the systems of provision and categories of things "materialized" in a stable form" (Slater cited in Urry 2004:26). Taking a

motorcycle ride on a summer night both extends and constrains my perception of the affective event. I am able to travel farther, faster and to experience an entirely different series of sensations than if I were driving a car or walking, even though I would be gazing at the same stars. This logic constructs my experiences of motorcycling as something that unites rather than 'frees' me from interrelationships with other beings, for "[i]t is within this framework that passion is expressed, common beliefs are developed and the search for '*those who feel and think as we do'* takes place" (Maffesoli, 1996:13), even on a lonely summer night.

While post-industrial life in North America often constrains people to the activities of daily living and limits their ability to form social relationships with others, amongst motorcyclists there as a sense that "one can 'fit in' and 'get on' more easily surrounded by people who have similar interests—a point which supports that...within the [motorcycling] community, one is assured of at least a superficial relationship with others" (McDonald-Walker, 2000:51). However, there is also a sense "that 'community' is not the same as 'commonality' and that a group does not need to be a monolithic mass to experience a feeling of solidarity and collective identity" (McDonald-Walker, 2000:53). The identities motorcyclists embody come to represent the masculine motorcycling community as a whole, for "the great history of events is less important than histories experienced every day: the imperceptible situations which constitute our community network" (Maffesoli, 1996:123). Even as motorcycling culture structures riders' identities, cultural practices are structured by the individual actions of motorcyclists and the implicit understanding that motorcyclists may always have something in common or a subject for discussion, but that "there may be no bond beyond this" (McDonald-Walker, 2000:48). The feeling of unity experienced by certain motorcyclists despite the diversity and multiplicities of identities is what Bourdieu calls the *habitus*, an inculcated, durable system of acquired schemes of perception, thoughts, and ways of acting (1990). As embodied cognitive and somatic

dispositions, the habitus establishes intelligible and objective relations between the activity of motorcycling and motorcyclists. These habitus are played out in the *field* of motorcycling, a social arena in which people maneuver and strategize in competition with other people over desirable resources (1990).

Bourdieu and Deleuze and Guattari are not the first to point out the limits of language when examining things of the 'soul'. Durkheim offers a similar insight when discussing religion in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* He too cautions that the meanings of actions are always too full of life to produce a static social entity that awaits the sociological gaze:

> The state of effervescence in which the assembled worshipers find themselves must be translated outwardly by exuberant movements which are not easily subjected to too carefully defined ends. In part, they escape aimlessly, they spread themselves for the mere pleasure of so doing, and they take delight in all sorts of games. When explaining rites, it is a mistake to believe that each gesture has a precise object and a definite reason for its existence. There are some which...merely answer the need felt by worshipers for action, motion, gesticulation. They are to be seen jumping, whirling, dancing, crying and singing, though it may not always be possible to give a meaning to all this agitation.
>
> ([1912] 1965:381)

Durkheim's and Bourdieu's statements are comparable in content, as each acknowledges that the boundaries of affects may leak and flow and dance into others, wax and wane, varying in intensity across a plane of consistency where the delimitations of affects are more like a "multidimensional fading to infinity" than sharp or disjointed breaks (Massumi, 1996:228). Conceptualized according to this theory of affect, Ayer's narrative about star gazing is less about the act itself than the feelings of social solidarity that performing the act can engender with fellow motorcyclists. Star gazing while motorcycling is not an abstract experience that can be uniformly perceived and appreciated by anyone , but nor does it "have to be felt in order to be understood with an understanding which may owe nothing to lived experience, still less to sympathy" (Bourdieu, 2002:101). The meaning of the experience varies according to the field of production

and by the cultural significance assigned to it by those people whose habitus is subjectively aligned to recognize these same categories of perception and appreciation in others. By untangling the relationship between the individual rider and their compatriots, we see how motorcyclists' collective identities form a habitus that celebrates an allegory of masculinity illustrated as physical displays of spectacular speed, potential violence and hierarchical exhibitions of technical skill. Indeed, the act of motorcycling may even serve as an allegory for the (re)creation of motorcycling culture.

I must first start the motorcycle. The throttle requires manipulation via my wrist. Steering input is provided as I apply pressure on the handlebars. There is no distinct point at which it is possible to break down this human experience to reproduce or replicate it fully, and all must occur in order to produce the desired outcome (Butler, 1990:133). Similarly, masculine motorcycling culture and the identities informed by it can only be determined in retrospect. The supposed 'mastery' of the machine is symbolically linked to masculine control over the body, such that the inorganic comes to represent the organic, but embodiment is not a process or mechanism that can be descriptively reconstructed. Each act of embodiment is dependent on the other and each is a productive force: "*productions of productions,* of actions and passions; *productions of recording processes*, of distributions and co-ordinates that serve as points of reference; *productions of consumptions,* of sensual pleasures, of anxieties, and of pain" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987:4). There is no distinct turning point in motorcycling history, no one event, person or thing that ultimately determines its course or the outcome of my identity performance.

Although human experience and history may be theorized in a nonlinear manner, it is very difficult to discuss, much less write about motorcycling culture in this way. On the other hand, it is also impossible to trace the development of a social phenomenon simply by listing a set of dates in chronological order. What Deleuze and Guattari call the 'productions of productions'

(1987:4), the technological and social developments that led to the creation of the motorcycle and motorcycling culture, are far too numerous and complex to be adequately explored in this space and remain possible subjects for future research. But as Bourdieu notes, “there is no more potent tool for rupture than the reconstruction of genesis: by bringing back into view the conflicts and confrontations of the early beginnings and therefore all the discarded possibles, it retrieves the possibility that things could have been (and still could be otherwise)” (1998:40). In an attempt to find middle ground, I, as the 'producer-product', acknowledge that the events, people and machines I have chosen to discuss are not necessarily more important than any others, but have served as mile markers on the path of my own thoughts and in the development of my identity as a motorcyclist. This constitutes a 'production of recording processes', as I set out a series of co-ordinates that serve as points of reference concerning the development of North American motorcycling culture as a masculine preserve. In turn, I am able to critique motorcycling culture as a 'production of consumptions', or how motorcycling culture has been produced and is consumed and embodied as particular identities. This project will use a feminist post-structural approach to focus on the events which I perceive as having the greatest influence in creating and enforcing hegemonic masculinity in motorcycling culture (Burstyn, 1999; Butler, 1990; Connell, 1995).

Masculine technology and the ‘fellowship of the wrenches’

In the article “Machines and Masculine Subjectivity”, Ulf Mellström explicates how agricultural machinery was used to reinforce patriarchal ideologies that marginalized how women did farm-work in Western countries (2004). During the turn of the nineteenth century, tools such as the harrow pulled by a horse became a symbol of masculine domination over women and nature. Using the harrow created a male domain both in the physical and discursive sense. Being

the sole operators of harrows, men acquired knowledge of plowing techniques, of how to repair the machinery and they also gained access to public space (Cockburn and Ormrod, 1993; Mellström, 2004). Farming women usually performed tasks that confined them to the interior of the household and limited their interaction with other people outdoors. The machinery they operated such as looms or butter churns, was not considered advanced or requiring a great deal of skill to use. In addition, the ability to operate these 'feminine' machines was not considered a technical skill, but was thought to be an inherent quality of being female (Mellström, 2004). However, so long as a man performed the work, the ability to repair feminine machinery was a form of technical knowledge. This gendering of technology and skill elucidates the point that "[g]ender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established" (Butler 1999:7). By using gender specific forms of technology, men and women are able to constitute and sustain a sexual identity.

The arrival of the industrial age saw unheralded advancements in productive capacity and technological innovation in Western society, but these marvels did not come without cost. Whereas the division of labor between men and women had been maintained through interpersonal relations prior to industrialization, the increased emphases on individuals' productive capacity required a more efficient logic to meet the demands of the emerging capitalist state. Men's control of technology and thus, women, had previously been achieved by employing their superior personal capital of physical force (domination of physical space and violence) or instruments of coercion, such as economic capital, cultural or informational capital (technological discourse), and symbolic capital (men's higher status in society). But the shift from subsistence living to paid labor enshrined masculine technical discourse and men's access to technology in the institutions of the Western state. Industry and technology were incarnated in "objectivity in the

form of specific organizational structures and mechanisms, and in subjectivity, in the form of mental structures and categories of perception and thought" (Bourdieu, 1997:40). This form of institutionalized, post-disciplinary power highlights 'sex-as-instrument-of-cultural-significance' as a discursive formation that naturalizes the foundation of the nature/culture divide and the strategies of domination that the distinction between the masculine and feminine technical spheres supports (Butler, 1990:37). While tools and their uses have changed over time, the attitudes that relegate their use to one gender have not, because "activities and characteristics which are considered to be masculine are highly valued as long as it is men who do these activities and have these characteristics" (Mellström, 2004:146). If it is always men who engineer, build and repair machines, this promotes an archetype of the 'mechanical male' that is maintained by certain men through reiteration of technical lingo and jargon. This discourse is then used to exclude others to create what Virgina Scharff, in her text *Taking the Wheel,* calls the 'fellowship of the wrenches' (1991:10).

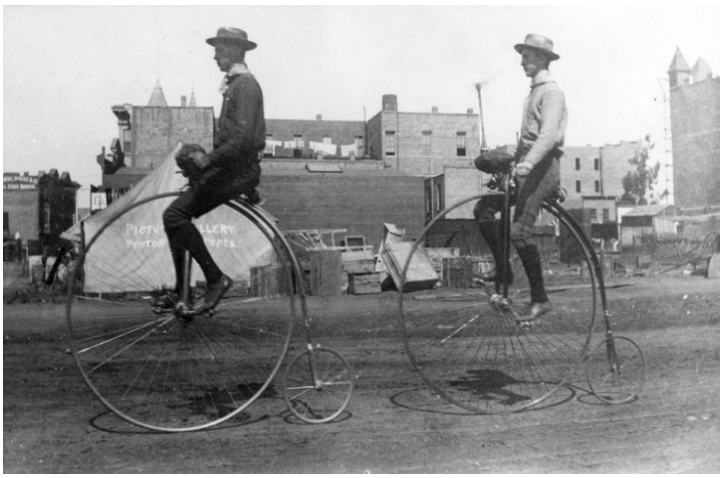
The 'othering' of women via technical discourse is not a recent phenomenon, as the link between *man* and machine had been established long before the first motorcycle had been invented. Yet it was not inevitable that this gendered discourse should be applied to motorcycling as well. As discursive constructs, nothing is inherently 'feminine' or 'masculine'. That the motorcycle would later be characterized as a masculine subject is a peculiarity of discourse; the machine is limited only by the laws of physics and human ability. Of course, "[t]his is not to say that any and all gendered possibilities are open, but that the boundaries of analysis suggest the limits of a discursively conditioned experience. These limits are always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality" (Butler 1999:111). As a material creation borne of a masculine discourse,

the symbolic qualifications that later marked the motorcycle as a masculine subject had yet to be established during the late nineteenth century.

As the second form of two-wheeled female rebellion, early motorcycling culture inherited a technological and cultural legacy from bicycling. What we simply refer to as a bicycle today was a significant advancement over previous two-wheeled designs. Appearing in the eighteen-nineties, the 'safety bicycle' featured two equally sized wheels and inflatable tires, greatly increasing stability over the previous high-wheel or ‘penny farthing’ design that was characterized by a large front wheel and small rear wheel, with the rider positioned almost directly over top of the front wheel (Garvey, 1995:67).

Safety Bicycle **Penny Farthing Bicycles**





The safety bicycle offered riders a greater range of mobility previously available only to those wealthy enough to keep a horse. Still, these bicycles were impossible to ride in skirts or even divided skirts, and in an era of Victorian sexual repression where affluent women were expected to uphold the ideals of the 'good, chaste housewife' and obey patriarchal moral authority (Burstyn, 1999:85), wearing anything less was expressly forbidden. Bicycle producers responded by creating different models for men and women. Men's bicycles became diamond shaped (similar to

present-day men's bicycles) and women's featured a drop frame that permitted the rider to wear a skirt, but were also less structurally sound and required an additional ten pounds of material in order to achieve the same rigidity as men's models (Garvey, 1995:69). The gendering of the bicycle was soon extended beyond accommodating women's dress, as designers produced 'female' bicycles that were virtually identical to the 'male' models, but were marketed using suitably masculine and feminine names, such as the regal 'Envoy' for men and the birdlike 'Fleetwing' for women (Ibid). Whereas the high-wheeled bicycle had symbolized men's mobility and domination of the outdoors, manufacturers' aggressive marketing of the safety bicycle to both men and women proved more effective in attracting sales. By the turn of the nineteenth century women comprised an estimated quarter to a third of the bicycle market (Ibid:95).

This had a profound impact on traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity. American suffragist Susan B. Anthony declared that bicycling "did more to emancipate woman than anything else in the world" and that a woman on two wheels was "the picture of free, untrammeled womanhood" (cited in Ann Ferrar, 1996:xii; Mullins, 2003:15). The bicycle afforded women access to the public spheres outside the family and home, and the influence of their attraction to bicycling soon extended into the cultural realm, where numerous magazines and newspapers framed bicycling as a 'natural' experience that freed urbanite women from the constraints of railroad and coach schedules. Bicycling was even recommended as beneficial for women by 'strengthening the uterus' (Garvey, 1995:70), thus allowing them to better fulfill their heteronormative destiny. However, these claims were challenged by conservative critics who attacked women's bicycling as a masculinizing activity and potential threat to women's sexual purity. Cartoons in magazines such as *Life* and *Punch* portrayed bicycling women as "mannishly dressed menaces", and medical authorities decried the manner in which bicycling might stimulate the female genitals:

> The saddle can be tilted in every bicycle as desired....In this way a girl...could, by carrying the front peak or pommel high, or by relaxing the stretched leather in order to let it form a deep, hammock-like concavity which would fit itself snugly over the entire vulva and reach up in front, bring about constant friction over the clitoris and labia. This pressure would be much increased by stooping forward, and the warmth generated from vigorous exercise might further increase the feeling.
>
> (cited in Garvey, 1995:75)

These concerns led marketers to stress 'proper' feminine bicycling technique. Written and pictorial advertisements illustrated women riders as positioned upright, so that they seemed to stand on their pedals when in motion. Manufacturers addressed the potential for female self-stimulation by developing split saddles that eliminated the point of contact with the genitals and by setting the handlebars on women's bicycles several inches higher than their male counterparts in order to prevent the rider from leaning forward in a 'scorching' or racing fashion in order to further restrict the possibility for self-stimulation (Ibid:76). While the bicycle offered freedom from direct surveillance, women were nevertheless subject to the masculine gaze in the form of an institutionalized technical discourse.

Transported away from the watchful eyes of patriarchal authority figures, bicycling women were still governed by a discourse that differentiated between 'proper' masculine and feminine bicycling technology and technique. Subjectively, the bicycle was institutionalized as a masculine technology by medical publications concerned with the potential health effects of bicycling for women and which offered recommendations for proper riding posture. Objectively, bicycling technology became a masculine institution as manufacturers produced different styles of bicycles and seats for men and women. But the seemingly contradictory representations of bicycling as emancipatory and threatening were cleverly mediated by early bicycle manufacturers and marketers. Using written narratives and pictorial advertisements, the image of female bicyclists was marketed by the industry through their assertions that bicycling was a feminine activity that simply aided women in their traditional social and domestic tasks (Scharff, 1991:41).

In her article “Reframing the Bicycle”, Ellen Garvey discusses at length how bicycle marketers employed fictive stories and personal narratives published in magazines and novellas to instruct readers in the complexities of the social and cultural meanings of bicycling. Advertisers made bicycling more palatable to those who might be challenged by women's increased mobility by portraying scenarios that reinforced and renewed traditional gender representations while investing the bicycle with romance and glamour (Garvey, 1995:95). At the same time, marketers were able to maintain the emancipatory character of bicycling by positioning the activity as a patriotic sport that freed the rider from responsibility and brought them closer to nature. Most importantly, bicycling was also promoted as providing opportunities to meet like-minded individuals. Garvey comments that bicycling culture was characterized as friendly and welcoming in popular media representations, and that in many accounts the bicycle became almost human by functioning as a mutual acquaintance who legitimately makes an introduction between strangers (Ibid:85). Later in the nineteenth-century, motorcycling culture would be characterized in popular discourse as sharing many of the same cultural themes of nationalism, individualistic freedom, and proximity to nature and of enabling a common bond between riders.

The advent of machinery such as the bicycle, motorcycle and automobile forever changed the concept of transport. Travel using these machines proved especially attractive to women anxious to escape the cloister of hearth and home, if only for an afternoon ride in the country. However, women were still subject to a masculine discourse that marginalized how they engaged in the activity of bicycling. While some feminists at the time perceived the bicycle itself as offering a transcendental solution to women's inequality in Western society (Garvey, 1995:72), the bicycle industry's demarcation between 'male' and 'female' models suggests a naturalization of the hierarchy between masculine and feminine technical discourse. Women's access to technology and technical knowledge jeopardized men's monopoly of physical space and

discursive power, but creating a technologically inferior model of bicycle for women allowed men to maintain their technical superiority. Similarly, we may read medical concerns over women's ability to masturbate while riding a bicycle as an issue of control over women's bodies. Deviations outside the realm of heteronormative sex jeopardized masculine hegemony over women's reproductive capacities and corporeal desires.

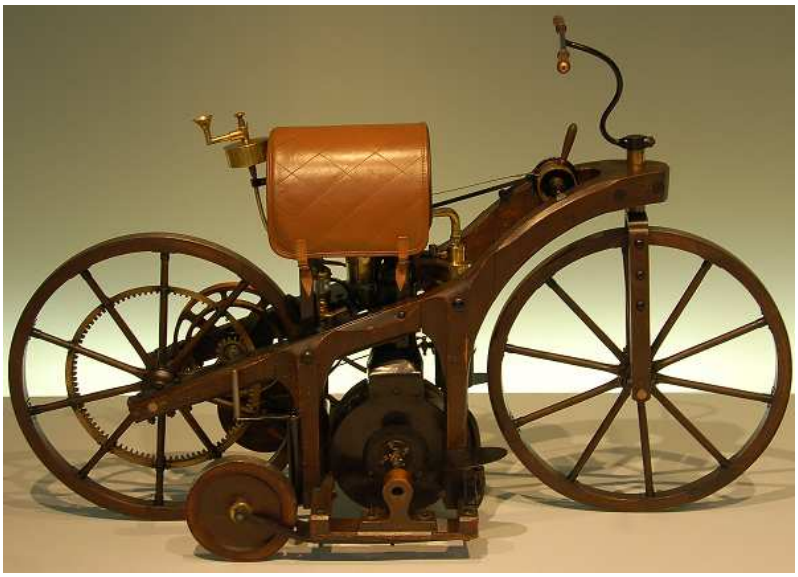
The development of the bicycle provides a social and historical context for the genesis of the motorcycle as a masculine subject. Not only was the motorcycle derived from bicycle technology, but the bicycle industry spurred interest in the maintenance of viable roadways and helped open a market for cheap and efficient transportation, and many bicycle manufacturers would later try their hand at motorcycle production (Koerner, 2007:4, Osgerby, 2005:12; Scharff, 1991:8). Yet the relationship between bicycling and motorcycling involves more than a shared technological history as the commonalities between the two activities and their respective cultural followings illustrates an emerging, masculine discourse concerning these new forms of transport (Holmes, 2007:3). As I will demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter, the initial promise of liberation that the motorcycle had held for women was not to be shared for long as economic, industrial and political interests usurped any claims of social equality as expressed by first wave feminists.

The masculinization of the motorcycle

Initial advancements in motorcycle design took place in Europe and can be traced to an 1818 cartoon of a ‘Vélocipédraisiavaporianne’. Depicting a bicycle with a boiler attached to the rear, the design was innovative but ultimately unworkable as most of the mechanical features were concealed in clouds of steam (Partridge, 1976:6). It was not until 1869 that French engineer Louis-Guillaume Perreaux created a working prototype by attaching a small steam engine to a

rigid wooden frame two-wheeler, called a “bone shaker” (Wilson, 1993:8). These 'motorcycles' proved cumbersome and awkward to steer however, due to the use of heavy boilers as engines. In 1876 in Germany, Dr. Nicholaus Otto patented the principal of a four-stroke internal-combustion engine. But an efficient, reliable gasoline powered engine was not developed until one of Otto’s assistants, Gottlieb Daimler, left his employment with Dr. Otto to fabricate his own design (Ibid). Mounting his gasoline engine in a wood-framed, two-wheeled machine with attached stabilizing wheels in 1883, Daimler invented what is widely recognized as the first gasoline powered motorcycle (Partridge, 1976:12).

Reitwagen



Essentially a motorized bicycle, Daimler's motorcycle featured equal-sized tandem wheels, a handlebar for steering, a seat for the rider, and most importantly, an internal combustion engine that drove the rear wheel and was mounted in the frame below the rider. While Daimler’s Reitwagen or 'riding car' served as the foundation that future motorcycle manufacturers drew on (Ibid), the machine was rather unreliable and required frequent adjustments and repairs.

The first practical motorcycle was not produced until 1901, when Eugene and Michael Werner developed a motorcycle with a diamond-style frame that positioned the engine lower in the frame than similar models at the time. With better handling and lower weight than other motorcycles, the Werner was very popular but still rather crude technologically. It lacked sufficient power to climb more than a slight incline and had no clutch, and was therefore unable to run while stationary (Osgerby, 2005:14; Wilson, 1993:12). By 1914, motorcycle technology had advanced far enough that manufacturers were installing features such as telescopic front suspension to improve ride and handling, and magnetos or batteries to power headlights. They also introduced clutches to allow for multiple gears to be fitted so that the motorcycle no longer stalled when it was not moving, and they moved the brake, clutch and throttle controls from their previous position on the frame of the motorcycle to the handlebars for greater accessibility (Ibid:12-13). However, these motorcycles were difficult to maintain and a rider had to be able to 'wrench' or repair their machine on the side of the road with minimal equipment (Ferrar, 1996, Zimmerman and Levingston, 2003; Mullins 2003). Riders also had to pay close attention to the road and the operation of their motorcycle. A small error such as forgetting to adjust the oil mixture every few miles, a necessity on most motorcycles prior to the 1920s, could leave a rider stranded in the middle of nowhere (Partridge, 1976). The risk of being stranded was an ever-present reality, as North America was mostly wilderness prior to World War I and dirt roads and cow tracks served as the dominant road systems. This made cross-country travel difficult and "[i]f one accepts the premise that the first *practical* motorcycles were available in America in about 1911, then—given the state of the Federal, state, and local road system at this time—one must also accept these early motorcycles as off-road machines" (Russell, 2005:2). Designed for mobility and utility, motorcycles were able to traverse terrain that was impassable to larger vehicles and they could do so more expediently than traveling by foot, horseback or bicycle.

Absent from most historical accounts is any mention of the influence women have had in the development of the motorcycle. There is no acknowledgment of the wives and partners of the men who created these machines or how their labor enabled the men's efforts. One can almost envision Herr Daimler, a solitary figure in his workshop amidst the machine parts, fiddling with what must be the prototype of his internal combustion engine. Yet where is Frau Daimler? Maybe she is in the house, preparing dinner, paying the bills, and attending to the children, thus enabling Herr Daimler to make history. Perhaps I criticize too harshly the division of labor between the imaginary Frau and Herr Daimler, but the fact remains that there has been *no* recognition in motorcycling culture of the 'external' or 'secondary' labor that must be undertaken to ensure that the masculine labor or 'primary' work is successful in producing 'technology'. As Cynthia Cockburn and Susan Ormrod note in their text *Gender and Technology in the Making,* technology is “the knowledge and practice of doing, making and producing” (1993:154). The marginalization of women in motorcycling culture is a process that extends beyond the pages of history books and magazines article, and as a production, technology is embodied with some of the qualities of its makers, if only in hindsight. If it is always mechanical males who design, manufacture and tell stories about motorcycles and motorcycling, then the actuality of motorcycling as a masculine culture is bound to these men by the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce and sustain the fictional separation between masculine and feminine technology (Bourdieu, 1990). While I am concerned specifically with representations of gender in motorcycle culture, this is not because I want to 'put women back into' motorcycle culture, because they have *always already* been there. Rather, I simply wish to give credit where credit is due by conceptualizing technology as a practical, laborious process that encompasses more than the mystical, finalized product.

The formation of a masculine motorcycling culture

During the period before World War II while inventors were busy tinkering, motorcycle enthusiasts were out on their “scoots” enjoying the countryside and meeting like-minded individuals. Initially, farmers did not appreciate motorists' intrusion into rural life as automobiles and motorcycles damaged land and disturbed livestock. In urban areas motor-vehicles disrupted pedestrian mobility by increasing traffic and pollution (Gartman, 2004:171), and it did not take long for motorcyclists to develop a negative reputation in the popular press. As early as 1904, a newspaper report lamented that “motorcycle speed artists chase up hills at reckless speed, kick up dirt, run over dogs, and make themselves obnoxious” (cited in Ferrar, 1996:24). Nevertheless, these new forms of vehicular transportation were still a novelty to most people, and crowds flocked to races, parades and films to watch these new vehicles compete in the new event of ‘motorsports’. Though details are questionable, Glenn Le Santo, a sportswriter for the British desk of Motorcycle.com, states that "The earliest claim I unearthed was at Sheen House, Richmond, Surrey, [England] on November 29, 1897. The race distance was over one mile and was won by Charles Jarrot in a time of 2 minutes and 8 seconds on a Fournier" (2000).

Motorcycle racing was also notoriously dangerous during the early days of the sport. In order to maintain records of events and enforce safety regulations, officiating bodies were soon established by concerned motorcyclists in collaboration with the motorcycle industry. The Federation of American motorcyclists (FAM) was formed in September of 1903, and during the 1904 Paris Car and Bike Show the Fédération Internationale des Clubs Motocyclistes (FICM) held its first meeting. Later renamed the American Motorcycle Association in 1924 (AMA, 2007) and the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme in 1949 (FIM), respectively, the FAM and FICM were the first organizations that attempted to bring motorcyclists together for a common interest, the promotion of motorcycle racing. Magazine publishers also took note of the increased

popularity of motorcycling and motorsports, especially in the United Kingdom. Created by former bicycling magazine editor Henry Sturmey, *The Autocar* was first published in November 1895 and continues publication to this day. Though there was virtually no motoring industry during this time in England, the magazine presented photographs and information about new motoring technology, whether they were two, four or even three wheeled machines (Holmes, 2007:2). Other publishers followed suit shortly thereafter, such as *Cycle and Motor World*, *Automotor and Horseless Vehicle Journal*, *The Amateur Wheelman* and *Motorcar Weekly,* but these publications were short lived. It was not until September of 1911 that *Motorcycle Illustrated* became the first motorcycle-only magazine published in North America (Library of Congress, 2003).

These events illustrate the emergence of motorcycling as a cultural phenomenon where participation in the activity signifies to other riders and non-motorcyclists alike that the individual supposedly possesses a distinct cultural habitus. Prior to World War II motorcycling had been promoted as a recreational activity and had largely been perceived as a 'gentleman's pursuit' by the North American public (Holmes, 2007:6; McDonald-Walker, 2000:27). Like the culture formed from the activity of bicycling, motorcycling provided individuals with the opportunity to meet other comparably wealthy people in a mutually agreeable social setting. As Suzanne McDonald-Walker's interviewees note of their of early childhood experiences with motorcycling culture, “it really was a gentleman's thing. It was what people like Lawrence of Arabia did” (2000:27). Another states that “King George VI, who was then the Prince of Wales, was a Douglas [a British motorcycle] rider when he was at Cambridge University [1919]...[and that]...a motorcyclist was bound to be a gentleman or a solicitor or somebody like that, they were welcome anywhere” (cited in McDonald-Walker, 2000:27). This description embodies notions of social class as well as gender, but it does not explain what it meant to be a 'gentleman' during this

time. The Victorian ethos was firmly grounded in colonial bigotry, and persons of character were almost exclusively white, Protestant, and from a British background. Following Stanley Coben's description of the Victorian 'cult of character', the male or female person of character was thought to be:

> [D]ependably self-controlled, punctual, orderly, hardworking, conscientious, sober, respectful of other Victorians' property rights, ready to postpone immediate gratification for long-term goals, pious toward a usually friendly God, a believer in the truth of the Bible, oriented strongly toward home and family, honorable in other relations with Victorians, anxious for self-improvement in a fashion which might appear compulsive to modern observers, and patriotic.
>
> (1991:4)

The gentleman was thought to be affluent and to possess a high degree of social, cultural or political capital, hence their supposed acceptance anywhere they may have roamed (Bourdieu, 1991:120-1; Garvey, 1995). Thus, motorcycles became defined in Western culture as bourgeois symbols of freedom and leisure, and engendered both hostility and envy amongst those unable to acquire them.

As mentioned by the interviewees in McDonald-Walker's text *Biker,* the romantic image of masculine nobility is epitomized by the famous British adventurer, army officer and keen motorcyclist T.E. Lawrence. “Lawrence of Arabia” captured the Western world's attention after a traveling show publicized his exploits leading Arab army irregulars fighting against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. In motorcycle mythology, he is famed for owning and riding seven Brough Superiors over the course of his life. Known as the “Roll's-Royce” of motorcycles (Brough Superior Club, 2007; Forbes, 2006; Scott, 1966), T.E. Lawrence named each of his motorcycle Boanerges (Sons of Thunder) George I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII in succession after their maker George Brough (Scott, 1966). Although Lawrence eventually perished in a motorcycle accident in 1935 (Wilson, 1989), his influence in motorcycling culture was made greater by the nature of his death and the popular film titled “Lawrence of Arabia”, which depicted his fatal

accident. Brough Superior motorcycles are currently some of the rarest and most sought after by collectors. With approximately only one thousand in existence, they fetch anywhere from twenty-four thousand to three and a half million dollars Canadian (Bonhams & Butterfields, 2007).

What has so captured the minds of collectors that they are willing to pay exorbitant sums for outdated machinery? Contemporary motorcycle manufacturers often evoke cultural nostalgia by emulating early motorcycle aesthetics even while using modern technology. But 'classic motorcycle' aficionados attempt to emulate the experience of riding these early motorcycles in their entirety. Perhaps owning such a machine today would be like capturing something of a time long past, the culture, the history and the feeling that this motorcycle might have evoked amongst riders who knew it as *the* newest and finest motorcycle of its day. More likely it is due to Lawrence's characterization of his 'Boa' as the finest example of machinery ever built and his experience of riding it as something akin to heaven:

> The extravagance in which my surplus emotion expressed itself lay on the road. So long as roads were tarred blue and straight; not hedged; and empty and dry, so long I was rich...[for]...A skittish motor-bike with a touch of blood in it is better than all the riding animals on earth, because of its logical extension of our faculties, and the hint, the provocation, to excess conferred by its honeyed untiring smoothness. Because Boa loves me, he gives me five more miles of speed than a stranger would get from him.
>
> (T.E. Lawrence, “The Road”. [1936] 1955)

What T.E. Lawrence has written, I can imagine; roaring down country lanes in the British countryside, full of daring and in search of adventure. Although it may seem peculiar that the experience reflected in the passage above is able to invoke such feelings in a person who is roughly sixty years younger than the motorcycle described, we must remember that motorcycling culture is more than a collection of cultural symbols or discursive constructs, and that its force resonates in the body in the form of inculcated bodily dispositions (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). T.E. Lawrence's characterization of the Brough Superior has been transferred through time as a fantasy, such that his identity and the character of the machine became entwined. His description

is an affective event that I am subjectively able to recognize and empathize with, even though my interpretation is the result of a cultural legacy gleaned through secondary information.

Could women at the time have dreamed such dreams? Some would have. But attempting to live them out would have been more difficult. Just as the masculine domination of technological knowledge was assured by the gendered division of labor and devaluation of alternative forms of knowledge, the *feelings* associated with motorcycling were reserved for certain men. The fact that I can even engage in such homo-social fantasies means that I occupy a privileged status in motorcycling culture in relation to other people. If one of the most appealing aspects of motorcycling for many riders is feeling a sense of community, it would stand to reason that those who did not feel welcome might turn to other pursuits.

While the advancement of bicycle technology had helped open the road to women and challenge traditional Victorian ideals of femininity and masculinity, women were still restricted in their use of technologies and their participation in the public sphere. Even with the gaining momentum of first wave feminism during the early twentieth century, women did not have the freedom to vote in North America until after the end of World War I. The advancement of motorcycle technology and women's access to it was therefore a contentious subject, as exemplified by the case of Clara Wagner. As motorcycles became more affordable and reliable, this only increased their attraction to potential buyers. But if the North American frontiersman had exchanged his 'buckskins for coveralls' as Virgina Scharff suggests, what then, were women gaining as a result of the increased institutionalization of technology in Western industrial society (1991:12)? Even though the motorcycle industry sought to attract female riders, there seemed to be a distinct separation between economic and political interests as represented by the motorcycle industry and the motorcyclists' associations, respectively. The industry may have been eager to attract buyers, as demonstrated by ads in which women rode alongside men (Osgerby, 2005:25),

but male motorcyclists in North America were having none of it. Nor were their counterparts in Britain, despite British motorcycle manufacturers' efforts to attract potential women riders by launching “Ladies Motor Bicycles” prior to World War I and commencing an aggressive marketing campaign after the war which included advertisements in non-motorcycling oriented magazines (Koerner, 2007:1).

There were a few intrepid females who made it into the pages of motorcycling 'herstory' however, and their motorcycling exploits stand in stark contrast to the prevailing attitudes of the day regarding proper 'ladylike' behavior. In October 1910, an eighteen year old named Clara Wagner achieved a perfect score riding in a 365 mile endurance race held in Philadelphia, defeating most of her male competitors. However, shortly after the race the FAM declared her win unofficial and refused to present her with a trophy (Ferrar, 1996:19). As the daughter of the manufacturer of Wagner motorcycles and a card carrying member of the Federation of American motorcyclists since she was fifteen years old, she occupied a position of relative privilege compared to her peers. Yet because she had been a woman, her abilities as a skilled and knowledgeable motorcyclist were denied. In response, some of her fellow competitors took up a collection amongst their membership and presented her with their own award (Mullins, 2003:16).

Other female motorcycling legends include the mother-daughter duo Effie and Avis Hotchkiss. Working amidst the hustle and bustle of Wall Street just after the outbreak of World War I, Effie quit her job and with her savings and money from an inheritance, purchased a new Harley-Davidson and attached sidecar (Ferrar, 1996:19-20). In 1915, Effie and Avis became the first women on record to make a round-trip transcontinental motorcycle journey, completing the round-trip from New York to San Francisco in a span of three months. The following year, the Van Buren sisters, Adeline and Augusta, set out on a cross-continental journey from New York to California to prove that women could serve alongside men as dispatch riders in the military

(AMA, 2006). Descendants of U.S. president Martin Van Buren, they are described in the literature as small-boned 'society girls' who attracted much police and media attention due in part to their masculine attire of leather caps, breeches and leggings (Ferrar, 1996:20). It may also have helped that they received sponsorship. Quick to realize the advertising potential of such an accomplishment, the Hendee Manufacturing Company provided the Van Burens with two Indian Power Plus motorcycles and the Firestone Tire Company supplied the sisters with unlimited tires (Mullins, 2003:19). After sixty days and eighty-nine hundred meandering kilometers, the Van Burens became the first women to cross the continent on two solo motorcycles. They were also the first women to surmount the infamous, four kilometer summit of Pike's Peak in Colorado (Ibid). In 1916, the Harley-Davidson Motor Company began publishing *The Enthusiast* (Harley-Davidson, 2007), a magazine devoted to Harley-Davidson loyalists and which often featured women riders such as the Hotchkisses and Van Burens.

However, motorcycles were still more expensive to purchase and operate than a bicycle, and it was primarily affluent women who had access to motorcycles during this time (Ferrar, 1996; Phillips, 2005). Indeed, all the women riders previously mentioned, Clara Wagner, the Hotchkisses, and the Van Burens, appear to have been from wealthy backgrounds or to have received sufficient support from other sources that allowed them to make their motorcycle journeys. They faced stiff resistance from some male motorcyclists who deemed motorcycling an 'unladylike' activity and did not want to compete directly against women (Koerner, 2007:5). Most of the research on motorcycling history omits these exceptional women or frames their accomplishments as secondary to those achieved by men. In her text *Hear Me Roar*, Ann Ferrar notes that these female iconoclasts are strangely absent even from feminist 'herstories' (1996:23). These women's accomplishments are worthy of attention and permit critical analyses of the issues of racism, gender, cultural habitus and social class in early motorcycling culture. Just as

Lawrence of Arabia's adventures are the stuff of fantasy, Clara Wagner, the Hotchkisses, and the Van Burens, were not your 'everywoman'. They had the mental and physical fortitude to achieve something most people would not or could not do, and were able to enter motorcycling culture, albeit at the margins. So long as no direct comparison between male and female riders could be made there seemed to be little problem, but there remained a threshold they could not cross, where the deciding factor of these women's legitimacy as motorcyclists had more to do with whether or not they challenged heteronormative ideals of masculine superiority.

Motorcycling culture during the 1920s and 1930s

Early feminism in North America was modeled on the methods of the antislavery movement, though the leaders of the feminist movement were largely white, middle-class women who derived many of their ideas from their experiences as Victorian women (Coben, 1991:91). In many ways it was their position of privilege that granted them the leeway to engage in political and social critique, just as Clara Wagner, the Hotchkisses, and the Van Burens were able to pursue motorcycling because of their relatively privileged status. Indeed, Susan B. Anthony, the feminist who had proclaimed that a woman on two wheels was the picture of 'free, untrammeled womanhood', had helped form the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) in 1869. Later in 1890, the NWSA merged with the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) (Coben, 1991:93-94). The women's rights movement gained momentum as the number of members grew steadily in the face of stiff opposition from virtually every Canadian and American official in government, the church and industry. As women fought for and won increased access to higher education, the number of women college graduates increased steadily up to the 1920s (Kyvig, 2002:19). In North America, the types of jobs women performed expanded as well. The prolonged fighting in Europe during

World War I meant that many women entered the manufacturing industry to replace men who had left to fight overseas. However, the overall proportion of females working in heavier industries had decreased during the period between 1850 and 1920 as women's labor shifted to lighter industries such as cigarette and food-packaging services (Ibid). As well, the number of women working in offices as secretaries, stenographers, clerks increased tenfold, while women almost took over the occupations of librarian, nurse, elementary school teacher and telephone operator (Coben, 1991:100-101). Though the Suffrage movement, and first wave feminism more generally, predated World War I, it was not until after the war that women were granted the vote. In 1918, the Parliament of Canada conferred the "Electoral Franchise upon Women" (Government of Canada, 2007), and in the United States women were granted voting rights in 1920 under the 19th Amendment to the Constitution (Kyvig, 2002:19).

In many ways, the few well-known motorcycling women served as exemplars of first wave feminist movement. Women like Clara Wagner, the Hotchkisses and the Van Burens challenged the division between masculine and feminine technical discourse simply by partaking of their favored leisure activity. These pioneering women may not have been politically engaged in support of women's rights, but their actions defied Victorian conceptions of mentally and physically weak females. Just as Susan B. Anthony had used her position of relative privilege to aid other women, so too did these motorcycling women, though perhaps inadvertently. The beginning of the 1920s marked a period of great hope and prosperity for people in North America, and women's involvement in the public sphere extended beyond motorcycling culture. Employment outside of the home gave many women an added motivation to travel and provided a salary with which they might indulge their interests. As political agents and more importantly, as consumers, they expected legitimacy as motorcyclists within the community. While women had participated in motorcycle racing and events and had been members of riders rights

organizations and motorcycle clubs since the invention of the motorcycle, it was not until 1940 that the Motor Maids received an official AMA charter as the first women-only motorcycle club in North America (Motor Maids, 2007). In keeping with the AMA doctrine of promoting motorcycling by 'persons of character', co-founders Dot Robinson and Linda Dugeau wrote to dealerships across the America in search of members who were "neat, clean and above reproach" (Robinson cited in Ferrar, 1996:28).[2]

One of the club's founders, Dot Robinson, was a prominent member of the motorcycling community. In 1937, she entered the arduous Jack Pine Enduro in Michigan, a two-day, eight hundred kilometer race through sand, swamp, woods and river crossings. Robinson finished second in her class that year, and raced in the Jack Pine again in 1940, taking first place (Ferrar, 1996:27). Echoing the injustice Clara Wagner had experienced more than fifteen years earlier when her trophy was withheld after a podium finish in Philadelphia, many of Robinson's male competitors expressed displeasure with her exceptional performances and AMA secretary E.C. Smith sought to have women barred from competing in the Jack Pine Enduro. However, Robinson and her supporters' took up a petition against Smith's rule and successfully fought for her right to race (AMA, 2006). As Major H.R. Watling notes in her forward to the Debenham's *Motorcycling for Women-A book for the Lady Driver, Sidecar Passenger and Pillion Rider,* published in 1928*:* "'[f]reedom' is the essence of modern womanhood, and the motorcycle is one of the gifts of the gods whereby such is attained" (cited in Mullins, 2003:27). These women were nonconformists in a patriarchal culture where the sight of a lone woman on a motorcycle pulling into a gas station still elicited comments such as "where's the men?" (Betty Fauls, cited in Mullins, 2003:29). Their actions subverted the dominant Victorian gender order and challenged

[2] The club currently has chapters across North America.

traditional divisions of labor and gendered technology. Thus, their personal accomplishments became political victories for the First Wave feminist movement.

The actions of these motorcycling women reinforce Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, as Joans explicates: only if "femininity is seen as an internal feeling rather than a particular behavior [would] a strong, competent woman pushing six hundred pounds of steel and chrome…be seen as a contradiction" (2001:148). The act of embodying a motorcycling identity and becoming a motorcyclist does not necessitate that the rider have male sex organs nor that he or she sufficiently master an esoteric technical discourse. Members of motorcycling culture are drawn to each other because of their passion and feelings for the motorcycle and motorcycling, regardless of gender.

Chapter 3
The influence of war in motorcycling culture

Motorcycling culture in North America has been dramatically influenced by the tides of war over the past hundred years. Before World War I there were links between the military industrial arm of motorcycle manufacturing and the industry's civilian branches. As one of the most technologically advanced nations in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Britain spawned such legendary motorcycle companies as Excelsior, Triumph, Norton, and the Birmingham Small Arms Company (BSA), founded in 1896, 1897, 1902, and 1910, respectively (Osgerby, 2005:20). Motorcycle manufacturers also proliferated in Europe: The Rene-Gillet Company was created in 1898 and was based in France (Ibid), the Fabrique National company was founded in Belgium in 1923 (Fabrique Nationale de Herstal, 2007), and the arms firm and motorcycle producer Husqvarna originated in Sweden in the year 1903 (Husqvarna Group, 2007). The Austrian firm Puch also began producing motorcycles in 1903 (Ibid), and in Italy, Benelli began manufacturing their own motorcycles in the year 1911 (Benelli Motorcycles, 2006). Perhaps the best known automobile and motorcycle manufacturer from Germany, Bavarian Motor Works (BMW), was an aircraft maker when the company was founded in 1917, but it began producing motorcycles in 1923. To this day the BMW logo remains the same, a propeller against a blue sky (Osgerby, 2005:20). Prior to this Wanderer, founded in 1902, and Hercules, founded a year later in 1903, had produced high-quality machines in Germany, but it was not until after World War I when the Treaty of Versailles restricted German military and aircraft production that motorcycles became an industry focus (Ibid). In North America, the Indian Motorcycle Company was formed circa 1901 (Ibid) and two years later in 1903, William Harley and Arthur Davidson established the Harley-Davidson Motor Company (Harley-Davidson, 2007). Today, Harley-

Davidson is a premier supplier of motorcycles to many law enforcement agencies in North America.

Military strategists were quick to see the potential of these agile machines and many countries began employing motorcycles in their armed forces. The United States Army fielded motorcycles during border skirmishes with Francisco 'Pancho' Villa's Mexican revolutionaries in 1916 (Osgerby, 2005:16). During World War I, motorcycles were used as messenger and reconnaissance vehicles, small arms platforms and ambulances. American motorcycle manufacturers Indian and Harley-Davidson benefited greatly from this arrangement, producing over 60,000 machines for the Allied forces. Harley-Davidson became a cause célèbré when dispatch rider Corporal Roy Holtz, one of the first Americans to enter Germany after the ceasefire, rode into Germany astride his American built V-Twin (Ibid). In World War II, Germany advanced the concept of mechanized warfare by employing battalions of motorcycle-mounted troops in their blitzkrieg attacks, while the Allies primarily used their bikes for dispatch and reconnaissance missions (IMZ-Ural, 2007). Witnessing the effectiveness of the Nazi's motorcycle troops on the battlefields of Poland, Russia established the IMZ-Ural motorcycle manufacturing facility in 1939 to counter the Germans' 'blitzkrieg bikes'. Today, the company produces motorcycles that are based on the design used for the BMW-R71, a model that had been in use for over sixty years. Exemplified by the company motto “Join the story...Ride Ural” (Ibid), there is now a small but avid subcultural following of Ural motorcycles in motorcycling culture.

Though civilian demand for motorcycles nosedived during periods of unrest and warfare, wartime often served as a boon to manufacturers (Osgerby, 2005:17). When governments were willing to finance and aid development, the battlefield served as the testing ground for new designs. Good business strategy even called for the diversification of production, as witnessed by the arms manufacturers that also produced motorcycles. Of the fourteen motorcycle

manufacturing companies listed above, four of them (BSA, BMW, FN and Husqvarna) also produced military weaponry prior to becoming motorcycle manufacturers. The BSA company currently produces a limited number of shotguns, air rifles and small arms accessories (BSA Guns, 2007), and FN remains one of the largest suppliers of military arms in the world (Fabrique Nationale de Herstal, 2007). BMW is better known for its automobiles and Husqvarna is a household name as a manufacturer of landscaping equipment (Husqvarna Group, 2007). The exception to this trend towards de-militarization is the Italian firm Benelli, which diversified into the arms trade in 1967 and is currently a premier supplier of hunting and military arms, though now under a separate corporate division (Benelli USA, 2007).

Men's use of machinery and technology for warfare served to heighten the perception that men, unlike women, inherited an innate technical ability. War strengthened the link in motorcycling culture between men's bodies, technology and men's willingness to take physical risk. After World War I, the connection between masculinity and machinery became more marked because of the increased mechanization of the battlefield (Gordon, 1994). Designs for machines such as airplanes and tanks were nascent technologies when they were introduced in World War I, at a time when armies still relied primarily on draft animals and human labor in order to transport troops and equipment. During World War II, significant advances in technology and manufacturing capability made the deployment of larger numbers of complex machines such as tanks and trucks possible, greatly increasing an army's maneuverability on and off the battlefield. While men fought, women worked in the factories to fuel the gears of war. Still, their labor was devalued and their technical knowledge undermined as women's work was transplanted from the rural farm to the urban factory (Cockburn and Ormrod, 1993). A male dominated 'culture of war' might be said to exist in which technologies developed for warfare symbolize masculinity, and the ability to use these technologies allowed operators to perform a masculine

identity regardless of their sex. Ironically, women may have built the war machines but it was men who used them, thus eroticizing their ability to wield instruments of death and alienating women from the products of their labor.

The increased mechanization of warfare meant that most World War II veterans had operated some form of machinery, whether it was a tank, a machine gun or a typewriter. Some veterans even had experience with motorcycles, mainly with American made Harley-Davidsons and Indians (Joans, 2000; Osgerby, 2005). Motorcyclists at war not only relied on their own technical skill and riding prowess, they also had to trust these machines with their lives. Just as men had 'bonded over bullets', they also developed affective relationships with their machines to the extent that "the steel of tanks, planes, and submarines becomes part of the bodies of the men who control them; the steel weapons become flesh" (Gibson, 1994:106). As a masculine domain, technology allows individuals to form a common bond that may transcend differences and may at the very least establish a foundation for solidarity. The soldier's very identity is grounded in this process of assembling disparate social relationships between organic and inorganic entities into a representation of self, such that the skillful use of technology testifies to the power of his masculinity. As an affective event, motorcycling forges an intimate bond from the dependency between human and machine, and while this bond is different than those between humans, it should be viewed as no less significant. It is unsurprising then, that many war veterans took to motorcycling after the war and formed loose fraternities.

Being stationed overseas had opened up geographic and cultural horizons, and had solidified empathetic friendships amongst members of the largely homosocial societies of the military (Burstyn, 2003:123). In stark contrast to the ideals of gender espoused by the Victorian cult of character, some war veterans returned to North America with a more corporeal concept of masculinity and vastly different ideas of what it meant to be a man. The *hyper*-masculine form

they expressed had developed as an exaggeration of the propensity for violent risk and physical action, however, this same identity that had benefited men on the battlefield became a liability in the post-War, North American economy where familial responsibility and conspicuous consumption signified maturity and masculinity.

With the end of the war, hundreds of thousands of men and women returned home to a civilian state that was demobilizing and which expected them to pursue the (North) American Dream of acquiring a stable job and raising a family (Phillips, 2005; Thompson, 1967:59). Most did, leading to an unprecedented rise in the birthrate that would later be known as the 'Baby Boom'. However, after experiencing the excitement of travel as well as the horrors of war, many veterans seemed to be unable or unwilling to integrate back into a civilian lifestyle, "where-faceless and product-less—they found it difficult to locate an identity" (Smith, 1992:23). In an effort to reintegrate war veterans into civilian society, the demobilization in North America after World War II involved a concerted drive by the state, large corporations, related popular media, elite civilian bureaucrats, and 'experts', to reestablish conventional Victorian definitions of the nuclear family, heteronormative sexuality and the patriarchal hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity and submissive femininity (Coben, 1991). These traditional norms had been loosened by the cultural permissiveness of the 'Roaring Twenties', largely overlooked during the thirties when North Americans were more concerned with feeding themselves, and then disregarded in light of the need for *man*power during World War II (Smith, 1992:9). After the war the military decreased in size through disarmament and troop reductions, and the Canadian and American states pushed women out of the jobs they had held in wartime and back into the domestic sphere by establishing trade unions which excluded women, encouraging corporate policies that placed restrictions on women's employment and by enacting legislative policies to the same effect (Phillips, 2006).

Motorcycling culture after World War II: The rise of a rebel

Rebelliousness or at least the pretense of rebelliousness has always been encouraged by some members of the motorcycling community. In the article *"*Motorcycle Myth: Rebels Without a Horse", Timothy Holmes notes that in the February 1902, issue of the British motorcycle magazine, *Motor Cycling*, motorcyclists were jokingly referred to as vulgar speed-demons who defied authority. The magazine contained several cartoons in which motorcyclists outran the police, offended 'old ladies' and generally made a nuisance of themselves to others. These cartoons helped "reinforce the idea of subculture, the special few who understand the jargon, the machines, who brave the wrath of the law to experience the thrill of subjugating the open road to your mechanical horsepower, [the] shrinking of time and space while savoring the perfume of new mown hay" (Holmes, 2007:9).

Given that motorcycling had a reputation for offering speed and thrills, it was unsurprising that returning war veterans should gravitate towards motorcycling as a way of establishing solidarity and satisfying the desire for excitement. Motorcycles had lost much of their pretentious image in the Depression and were readily available as cheap military surplus after 1945. Parts and fuel were affordable, and so long as one knew how to wrench, as many veterans did, a motorcyclist could travel to every corner of the continent. Motorcycles also served as efficient transportation and offered a high level of performance, with excitement readily available at the twist of the throttle. More importantly, motorcycles granted the rider the opportunity to meet like-minded individuals.

For some veterans, motorcycling served as proxy for the homosocial bonding they had first experienced in the heat of battle (Burstyn, 1999:179). These former soldiers, with a few rebellious teenagers thrown in for good measure (Osgerby, 2005:26), formed groups such as the Boozefighters, Galloping Gooses (so-named after their colloquial phrase for 'giving the middle-

finger salute') and the Pissed Off Bastards of Bloomington (or POBOBs). Due to their contempt for mainstream values and wild carousing, the AMA refused to charter them. On one occasion the founder of the Boozefighters, 'Wino Willie', literally gate-crashed a race being held by another club by riding his Indian Chief through the track fence and careening around the circuit (Osgerby, 2005:27-8).

The most infamous event in North American motorcycle mythology is the Hollister Rally. In 1947, the AMA sponsored a 4th of July Gypsy Tour that was to converge on the sleepy town of Hollister, a farming community in Northern California. No strangers to motorcyclists, the residents of the town had hosted gypsy tours in the past and even boasted their own motorcycle club, The Top Hatters MC (Osgerby, 2005:28). The 1947 event proved to be very different from past years however, with two to four thousand motorcyclists attending the weekend rally. Things quickly got out of hand with the Boozefighters and POBOBs taking the lead, turning San Benito Street (the main street of the town) into an impromptu drag strip while drunken riders attempted stunts on their motorcycles. By Saturday evening the local police force had called in the state patrol and a special court session was held overnight to deal with the number of arrests, which resulted in over two thousand dollars worth of fines being handed out for misdemeanors such as public drunkenness, disturbing the peace and reckless driving (Osgerby, 2005:29).

The only serious injuries were to a few motorcyclists who had been hurt during their own drunken antics, and aside from the repairs needed for broken windows and the like, the economic cost of the event was surpassed by the income generated by the partying bikers (Osgerby, 2005:29; Phillips, 2006:2). The spectacle at Hollister shocked the local area initially, but did not receive widespread media attention until the *San Francisco Chronicle* picked up the story a few days later, running it alongside a photo of a drunken man on a motorcycle. Entitled “Cyclist's Holiday: He and Friends Terrorize the Town”, the photograph was reprinted by *Life* magazine on

July 21, 1947 (a weekly at the time), opposite a mannequin in an ape mask in a barber's chair, titled “Barber's Holiday” (Dulaney, 2005; Osgerby, 2005:30; Phillips, 2006:2). Some sources suggest that the original photo of the drunken motorcyclists involved a great deal of 'theatrical license', and by juxtaposing the image of the ape and the motorcyclist the *Life* editors implied that motorcyclists were nothing more than animals (Osgerby, 2005:30). Coupled with a sensationalist account of the events at Hollister, the story portrayed a distinctly negative view of motorcyclists as unkempt, rebellious and as frequently engaging in 'lascivious behavior' such as drinking, reckless driving and fighting.

As Lily Moon explains, we “can throw the issues of class, race and gender into a new and valuable light by examining, at any given time, *who* is riding and *why* they ride and to what degree society approves of it” (Moon, 2005). In approaching these questions, Varda Burstyn’s typology is helpful. In the *Rites of Men,* she discusses men in North America as historically possessing one of three broad styles of heroic masculinities and associated sexualities: the owning/governing style, the managing/professional style or the laboring/soldiering style (1999:36). Drawing on these characterizations, I believe we may, following Bourdieu, classify what Burstyn calls a 'style' of masculinity as a 'habitus', a “generative and unifying principle which retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, goods, and practices” (Bourdieu, 1994:9). The first masculine habitus Burstyn discusses is derived from executive power, acquired primarily from holding political, economic and social capital. The erotic character of this masculinity is based on an agent's ability to command other individuals and, in Burstyn's words, 'power is the greatest aphrodisiac' (1999:36). The second masculine habitus that she discusses is associated with intelligence and skill. Epitomized by the middle-class hero, his erotics are linked with scientific, cultural and sexual capital and technique (Ibid:37). Finally, the masculinities of the working and

soldiering heroes are eroticized by physical acts of bravery and demonstrable muscularity. These men “wrest raw materials from nature [while their] sacrifices in war defend us from the predations of others” (Ibid:37). In North American society these masculinities constitute symbolic systems where differences in opinions, actions and economic capital become symbolic differences expressed as a form of social or cultural capital, whereby agents entering the field of masculine identities must compete with others in an effort to assert dominance over them (Bourdieu, 1994:9).

The mobilization of North American society to war increased the number of men and women who had inculcated the soldier/laborer habitus, yet the need for their corporeal capital diminished as the West demobilized. After returning home from combat, many of these veterans quickly became disillusioned with the very lifestyle they had fought to protect and were, in any case, ill-prepared and too undereducated to enjoy. They also faced castigation by a middle-class society engaged in a new global 'economic war' where unruly veterans on motorcycles came to represent the “unwanted reminder of the invisible class outside and the repressed masculine self within” (Ehrenreich, 1983:58). In her text *The Hearts of Men,* Barbara Ehreneich argues that as a conceptual remnant of the Victorian cult of character, managerial/professional masculinity in the 1950s meant taking on responsibilities and behaving 'maturely' by getting married, having a family and starting a career (1987:3). But increasingly, many affluent men were experiencing the male breadwinner role and the nuclear family as just one more set of internal controls they had to be coerced to undertake. For many men the 1950s was also an era of immense wealth and opportunity and having a wife and children became less an asset than a burden (Ibid). While “[w]hite-collar men fretted about conformity or fantasized about “cheating” with the smooth, pink lovelies in *Playboy”*, the motorcyclists that *Life* magazine portrayed had seemingly walked away from the responsibilities of marriage and family with no money or guilt, and with only the

ambition to see and do everything (Ehrenreich, 1987:55). The *Life* editors and motorcyclists had similar heteronormative desires, but the differences between the two groups lay in the performative identities they embodied (Butler, 1990). As editors of a widely read magazine, the writers at *Life* claimed a symbolic authority based on their ability to impose a certain vision of the social world via the communication of their values through the institution of print media (Ehrenreich, 1987:18). The irony is that men who identify with the solider/laborer habitus are thought to have acquired many of the same pleasures and leisure without having to exchange the necessary social, cultural or economic capital to achieve them as men who participated in society as 'mature' adults and who embodied the owner/governor or managerial/professional habitus (Phillips, 2005:6). In comparison to the ideal of the Victorian, gentlemanly masculinity, the biker lifestyle represented 'all the hedonism, none of the work'. The *Life* editors eroticized the very physicality, strength and masculine habitus of the motorcyclists they sought to dominate (Burstyn, 1999).

The *Life* magazine editors condemned *all* motorcyclists as deviants by printing exaggerated accounts of the rowdy behavior of *some* of the bikers attending the Hollister rally and failing to differentiate between this minority and the several thousand other motorcyclists (Dulaney, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Osgerby, 2005). By cleverly juxtaposing the 'Barber's Holiday' and the 'Cyclist's Holiday' photos, the editors of *Life* magazine also portrayed motorcyclists as drunken animals and in doing so, linked motorcycles and motorcycling with deviance and immaturity, hinting that only rootless, immature men engaged in the activity of motorcycling. The conflict over the representation of motorcyclists was a struggle not only over who had legitimate access to the discourse of motorcycling, it was also a discursive field in which the contest between different masculine habitus was played out.

Yet motorcyclists had an institutional voice with which to respond to the *Life* article, represented primarily by the AMA. In an attempt to defend the sport against public disapproval, Lin Kuchler, then secretary of the AMA in 1947, issued a formal response stating that the miscreants at Hollister did not represent motorcyclists as a whole, and that indeed, they constituted only "one percent of the total number of motorcyclists" (Dulaney, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Osgerby, 2005; Seate 2000). The symbolism of this disavowal had a profound impact in motorcycling culture. By scapegoating the one-percenters, Kuchler and the AMA attempted to reinforce the notion that most motorcyclists were "normal", participating members of society who just happened to enjoy motorcycling. Kuchler's statement legitimated the media's negative portrayal of motorcyclists and created a clear, division amongst motorcyclists. Coming from within motorcycling culture itself, this exclusionary statement cemented the myth of the 'one-percenter' biker in motorcycling culture in a way that the media's portrayal of the Hollister event alone could not. Dulaney's research into the origins of outlaw motorcycle clubs in the article "A Brief History of Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs" reveals that, as with many myths, the story of its creation may be intrinsic to the myth itself. The AMA denied ever issuing such a statement: "[w]e [the American Motorcyclist Association] acknowledge that the term 'one-percenter' has long been (and likely will continue to be) attributed to the American Motorcyclist Association, but we've been unable to attribute its original use to an AMA official or published statement—so it's apocryphal" (cited in Dulaney, 2005).

Overall, the *Life* editors' efforts to sensationalize the Hollister event had a much larger impact within motorcycling culture than in mainstream North American society. Exacerbating tensions between different groups of motorcyclists, Kuchler's scapegoating of the Hollister motorcyclists and subsequent labeling of the 'one-percenters' resonates within biker mythology even today. As Bourdieu notes in *Language & Symbolic Power* "the authorized spokesperson is

only able to use words to act on other agents, and through their action, on things themselves, because his speech concentrates within it the accumulated symbolic capital of the group which has delegated him and of which he is the *authorized representative*" (1991:110-1). As the spokesperson of the AMA, Kuchler wielded a *delegated power* that was nothing more than the substance of discourse, which in turn stood as a testament of the *guarantee of delegation* vested in him (Bourdieu, 1991:107). An alternative account offered by Dulaney is that other prominent members of the motorcycling community responded in a manner similar to that attributed to Kuchler, and that the impact of their statements had much the same effect. As with any historical account we must take these claims with a grain of salt, and either way, the attempt to shift blame from all motorcyclists to the one-percenters had the effect of granting some legitimacy to the claims made in *Life* magazine about motorcyclists.[3]

We can assume that many motorcyclists agreed with the AMA's official stance, offering complicit acceptance by not speaking out against it. Still, other motorcyclists accepted the one-percenter image and aligned themselves with groups that directly opposed the AMA's authority or were at least disdainful of the organization's efforts to legislate motorcycling culture. The AMA claimed to represent 'respectable, well-behaved citizens' (Dulaney, 2005), what we might playfully refer to as 'motorcyclists of character'. These might also be the same sort of folks who read *Life* magazine, though perhaps not after the 'Cyclist's Holiday' editorial. In hindsight, the AMA's response to the *Life* article enabled the editors to state that they were not attempting to portray *all* motorcyclists negatively and to respond by showing "law abiding, respectable motorcyclists" in a later issue (cited in Phillips, 2005:2). Perhaps the AMA could have responded in a less exclusionary manner, but there seemed to be little incentive to do so. And perhaps it did

[3] I perform my own bit of revisionist history by agreeing that the AMA did issue this statement, furthermore, that it is 'apocryphal' only because they did not disagree with the view that outlaws were 1% of the motorcycling population.

not matter. Given prior tensions within the motorcycling community, if the official one-percenter declaration had not been made at that point then it would have likely been stated at some other time, in response to another incident in some other community.

As I have discussed at length, tension existed between motorcyclists who pursued motorcycling as a pastime and those for whom it became a lifestyle. The AMA's statement had the ironic effect of legitimating the *Life* editors' perspective on motorcyclists rather than deflecting the media's attention from the sport as a whole. Although the AMA decried the stereotypical portrayal of all motorcyclists as hooligans, it did not deny that one-percenters were still *motorcyclists*. Motorcyclists who felt disenfranchised from North American society at large and disparaged by other motorcyclists could rally around the one-percenter label and form a new "brotherhood", even going so far as to sew the one-percenter insignia on their jackets.

One Percenter Patch



By recognizing the existence of the one-percenter the AMA granted them some legitimacy within motorcycling culture even as they sought to discredit them.

This struggle over motorcycling discourse played out among what may broadly be defined as the non-motorcycling public represented by the *Life* editors, motorcyclists of character as represented by the AMA, and lifestyle motorcyclists represented by the one-percenters. This struggle over who were and were not 'legitimate' members of motorcycling culture constituted a conflict of masculinities. The one-percenter biker rejected the 'slow death' that the men in the

grey flannel suits contended with but these motorcyclists were not the only group who rebelled against the North American consumer culture of the 1950s. In *The Hearts of Men* (1987) Barbara Ehrenreich discusses a group of men similar to the one-percenters, the Beats. The 'Beat Hero' bears a striking resemblance to the one-percenter; he spurned marriage and lasting relationships, was “mad to live”, and judged 'normal' social life as conformist and 'square' (1987:53; 67). In 1959, *Life* magazine attacked the Beats in several photo articles with editorial taglines such as “A hundred million squares must ask themselves: 'What have we done to deserve this?” (Ibid:53). Portraying the Beats as drugged out, oversexed degenerates, the editors of *Life* magazine spoke for America when they asserted that these men and the masculinity they represented were dangerous and immoral, just as they had 'warned' North America about the 'motorcycle menace' after the Hollister rally.

Was the masculinity as represented by the one-percenters and the Beats dangerous? To the great middle-class, conformist population of the 1950s, it certainly was. According to Ehrenreich, men like the one-percenter bikers and the Beats represented a masculine habitus that existed in the middle-class male's imagination as a repressed self. This eroticized 'other' was primitive, dissatisfied, potentially disruptive to the industrial-capitalist working order and most of all, immensely appealing in its eroticization of the soldier/laborer lifestyle (Burstyn, 1999; Ibid:59). As Ehrenreich states “despite all the developmental psychology and high school “life adjustment” texts, maturity just wasn't sexy, and adolescent defiance—symbolized by the tough, lower-class male—was” (1987:57). The *Life* editorial granted vicarious approval of the one-percenters, hinting at the repressed desires of the managerial/professional male for the “hardness” of soldier/laborer habitus that eluded them in the white-collar world.

In an effort to protect the media image of motorcycling and the marketability of the sport, the AMA regulated the behavior of their members and castigated those who did not conform.

However, the organization could do little to force conformity on those motorcyclists who did not hold themselves to the AMA ideals, as the AMA's *call to order* could only be responded to by those who were "predisposed to heeding them as they *awaken* deeply buried corporeal dispositions, outside the channels of consciousness and calculation" (Bourdieu, 1998:54-55) The one-percenters had little desire to participate in North American society, and so formed a subculture that accommodated those men whose hyper-masculine performance marked them as deviant in almost all social situations in North American society (Burstyn, 1999; Dulaney, 2005; Smith, 1992:21). It was not long before Hollywood picked up on these hidden desires and introduced a new breed of nihilistic, explicitly sexual male role models to the North American public. Based on the soldier/laborer habitus as the "last repository of defiant masculinity (Phillips, 2005:4)", the movie heroes portrayed in film overcame the emasculating effects of middle-class conformity and impotence even as the movie scripts read like tracts for the American Dream.

The Wild One and media influence on motorcycling culture during the 1950s

Today, the tourist bureau of Hollister promotes the town as the 'birthplace of the American Biker' (Horse Power Promotions, 2007). As Lily Phillips notes in her article on 1950s biker iconography "Blue Jeans, Black Leather Jackets, and a Sneer", it was not until seven years after the Hollister 'riot' with the release of the 1953 Hollywood film, *The Wild One,* that the North American media began to take full notice of motorcyclists as a potentially *dangerous* group (2005:2). Intertwined with Cold War fears of Communism and emergent national concern over juvenile delinquency, the film initiated a veritable 'moral panic' over the state of youth in the 1950s (Ibid).

The plot of *The Wild One* is based on a short story in Harper's magazine titled “The Cyclists' Raid”. Published in 1951, the story mimics the events at the 1947 Hollister rally with a great deal of exaggeration and hyperbole (Osgerby, 2005:32; Seate, 2000). In the film version, Marlon Brando plays Johnny Strabler, the young leader of 'The Black Rebels Motorcycle Club' (BRMC). The BRMC 'invade' a small town, get drunk and are in the process of staging their own rally when 'The Beetles', an opposing motorcycle club consisting of former members of the BRMC, shows up. Tensions between the two groups escalate into a fist fight between Johnny and Chino, the leader of The Beetles. Undaunted by the violence, the motorcyclists continue to carouse and cause havoc, much to the chagrin of the town's two-man police force. Of course, no dramatic film is complete without a love interest, and Johnny finds his in Katie Bleeker, the innocent and vulnerable daughter of the hapless local sheriff. Throughout the film Katie is portrayed as a damsel in distress at the mercy of Johnny, further accentuating his rebellious and impetuous nature. Johnny eventually 'rescues' Katie from some of his own club members, taking her into the countryside on his motorcycle. As a low-budget film with up-and-coming stars and a tried and true (if boring) plotline, the film is unremarkable in many respects. Phillips makes the point that, as with many sensationalist films, the reaction *The Wild One* elicited was due not to the quality of the film as much as its ability to play on mainstream cultural fears (2005:3). As a “celebration of delinquency” (Osgerby, 2005:33), the film received much criticism in newspapers and magazines. It was widely abhorred by many adults and in Britain the film was banned from public showing for fourteen years (Ibid; Seate, 2000). In an atmosphere of unease concerning juvenile delinquency and 'proper' masculine identity, *The Wild One* was a *call to order* of a different sort that not only legitimated the behavior of the actual Hollister motorcyclists, but supposedly exalted it.

There had been films about motorcyclists before *The Wild One* but none had generated the same level of moral outrage. Some, like the *Devil on Wheels* (1947), "played more like feature-length driver-training films than serious studies of the darker side of youth" (Seate, 2000:8). *The Wild One* appealed to audiences because it illustrated non-conformity and rebellion in an era where dissent was discouraged in the wake of the instability brought about by World War II, fears over juvenile delinquency, and general unease during the Cold War. Critical analysis of *The Wild One* reveals that the physical domination of the townsfolk in the film symbolizes the usurping of traditional masculine authority by young, rebellious, hyper-masculine men. Possessing little economic, political or cultural capital, part of Johnny Strabler's appeal to audiences was his powerful corporeal nature. In the film, Brando's character owns few possessions aside from his bike and has no commitments other than to his club. With nothing to lose, he has little to fear. Embodying the soldier/laborer habitus, Strabler is portrayed as dangerous to 'normal' society (the town) because his very identity challenges the social norms and judicial laws that benefit the managerial/professional habitus (the townspeople). This struggle then became mythologized in motorcycling culture and North American society more generally, such that riding a motorcycle or appropriating the icons of biker style symbolized physical power and rebelliousness.

As McDonald-Walker points out, "whilst part of one's identity may come from relations with other bikers, it stems from relations with non-bikers; for a community does not exist in a social vacuum but forms a part of wider society, and relations across that boundary between the in-group and out-group also carry consequences for the collectivity as a whole" (2003:14). According to the media's characterization, motorcyclists established an identity through ritualized physical actions of territorial appropriation (by nomadic exploration of the frontiers of the road) and physical strength (inherent in the capacity to ride a motorcycle). But we must approach this

myth with caution, as a critical analysis of motorcycling culture during this period reveals incongruities between the actuality of the hyper-masculine motorcyclist and the portrayal offered by Hollywood.

Comparing the portrayal of motorcyclists in *Life* magazine to Marlon Brando as Johnny Strabler in *The Wild One*, Phillips explains that the Hollister biker was shocking because of his repugnance, while Hollywood's glamorized biker was attractive precisely for the opposite reasons (2005:2). With the exception of the motorcycle and boots, the motorcyclist featured in the pages of *Life* magazine lacks most of the key elements of biker iconography that would become popular after the release of *The Wild One*.

Marlon Brando in *The Wild One*



Cyclists' Holiday Photo



When comparing the two photos it is clear that the Hollister motorcyclist is not the glamorous bad-boy portrayed in Hollywood film as "[h]e wears neither a black leather jacket, nor blue jeans,

nor a sneer" (Phillips, 2005:2-3). In *The Wild One,* Johnny wears a black leather jacket and blue jeans, two styles of clothing that would later become very popular with youth attempting to imitate Brando's cool. The Hollister motorcyclist is "[o]verweight, with his cap askew and clearly intoxicated (with attention drawn to the fact by the staged bottles under the motorcycle's wheels), [and] he appears unkempt rather than menacing" (Ibid). He is also "significantly older than Brando's Johnny, more like the army veteran that most bikers of the time were" (Ibid). Having critically reviewed the film myself, it seems evident that *The Wild One* was attempting to appeal to the youth of postwar North America by casting the protagonist as a handsome young rebel. At the time of the film's release, critics denounced *The Wild One* for its 'wanton violence', its portrayal of authority figures as hapless fools and its supposed glorification of juvenile delinquency (Osgerby, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Seate, 2000). Johnny Strabler refused to assume any ideological stance and rebelled against everything, much like 'the Beats'. Responding to a female bar patron's question "What are you rebelling against Johnny?", Strabler utters the famous line, "whaddya got?" (*The Wild One,* 1953). However, the decision not to decide is itself a choice, thus this anti-authoritarian attitude was inevitably a way to not rebel against anything in particular, or perhaps, not really at all (Phillips, 2005:7). A police officer in *The Wild One* articulates this clearly: "they're usually looking for somebody to push them around so they can get sore and show how tough they are... And they usually find it, someplace, sooner or later..." (*The Wild One,* 1953).

Alternatively, the story of Johnny Strabler and his motorcycle club overrunning a town and disrupting 'normal' life' may also serve as an allegory for the postwar struggle to reassert traditional understandings of gender. Not only did Johnny and his fellows reject the slow death that awaited men of their age, by sheer physical force they rendered the social, cultural and political laws of the state impotent, if only for a brief while. Though the motorcyclists are

eventually routed, *The Wild One* demonstrates an alternative lifestyle in which masculinity is defined as a measure of one's physical strength and toughness. Hollywood eroticized the 'biker' lifestyle and consumers were quick to emulate the Wild One's style, as black leather jackets and blue jeans became fashionable for youth (Phillips, 2005). Framing Brando's bad-boy cool as a marketable identity, the Western media constructed a 'motorcycle menace' that was based more on fiction than fact.

Hollywood media popularized the black leather jacket in mainstream Western culture as a consumer product, and it became a ubiquitous symbol in motorcycling culture. While high quality leather is superior to any other form of motorcycling garment, synthetic or otherwise, part of the allure of leather is its talisman-like qualities. Literally a second skin, the wearer becomes a different animal, tough and thick-skinned (Phillips 4:2005). Black leather has also been historically associated with the German Gestapo and SS units, importing a sinister and malevolent character. This contrasts with the brown leather jacket worn by aviators, which connotes adventure and heroism (Ibid). It is also interesting to note that there are now many men and women who identify themselves as 'leather fetishists' and find the qualities associated with leather and those who wear it particularly erotic. Given the history of the black leather jacket as a symbol of powerful corporeal masculinity, we can understand this fetish not as an abnormality, but as an erotic response to the hyper-masculine, sexualized identity the wearer is thought to embody (Butler, 1990). Indeed, in 1962, after the release of *The Wild One,* filmmaker-author Kenneth Anger produced *Scorpio Rising.* Featuring “well-oiled bodybuilders, static shots of full-dressed Harley touring bikes (which would later become an icon in the gay community) and disturbing shots of various religious artifacts” (Seate, 2000:18), this documentary received acclaim in art houses by challenging historical identities of sexual style. By featuring an alternative to Hollywood's heteronormative portrayal of the motorcyclist, Anger brought into question the

constructed status of the 'original' biker. As Phillips notes, when Brando rode his motorcycle into the sleepy town featured in *The Wild One*, he and his fellows had the appearance of an army dressed in black leather, metaphorically and sartorially (2005:4). With their "designer leathers (Brando sported a Perfecto "One Star" jacket made by Schott) and blue jeans rolled up above their bike boots, Johnny and the Black Rebels were more of a stylized Hollywood ideal of what a motorcycle gang *should* look like (Osgerby, 2005:34). The all-male motorcycle club reinforces this idea of an army and the homosocial character of the BRMC further promotes the ideal of masculine identity achieved through brotherhood.

The infamous appeal of the Hollywood biker was that he simply took what he wanted when he wanted it using brute force. Unlike the executive and middle class masculine habitus, the soldier/laborer did not have to exert social or political power, or have to demonstrate cultural, sexual or technical expertise. By picking up a few pairs of blue jeans and a black leather jacket, a young, disaffected boy could attempt to transform himself into this epitome of corporeal masculinity. It was much the same in Britain as in North America, as the following account from a British police officer illustrates:

> [F]or any teenager to prove that he was 'hip', he had to wear a leather jacket. A leather jacket was associated with motorcycles, so when there was aggravation, as there always will be with a percentage of young people, when they were wearing leather jackets, they were seen as motorcyclists, very often. And it always annoyed me, certainly as a law enforcement officer, that most of pillocks that you meet wearing a leather jacket had never been near a motorcycle, wouldn't know what to do with one.
>
> (cited in McDonald-Walker, 2003:30-1)

Part of the popularity of the Hollywood biker image is the ease with which the symbols could be appropriated and marketed. The image was also attractive in other countries around the globe. Combining local culture, Brando-esque rebellion and domestic motorcycles, youths modeled themselves after Hollywood biker subculture, though usually a few years after their North American counterparts. There were *les blouson noir* 'black jackets' in France, the *halb-starken*

'half-strong' in Germany, *skinn-nuttar* 'leather jackets' in Sweden, *nozen* in Amersterdam, *bosozuku* in Japan and the infamous *Rockers* in England (Philips, 2005:8).

Hollywood media had the added effect of representing the biker identity as easy to maintain and instantly gratifying, all it took was a willingness to use one's body as leverage. With the expansion of consumerism, it became easier for young men to simply purchase 'cool' by appropriating the symbols of a rugged masculine identity. But as the symbols of motorcycle masculinity became commonplace, they lost some of the corporeal power they were supposed to represent. Domesticated and divorced from the meaning of its earlier representation, Hollywood's 'biker' style lost its 'edge' in mainstream culture during the early 1960s, but continues to influence aesthetics in contemporary motorcycling culture. The style of black leather jacket worn by Brando in *The Wild One* remains very popular today and many contemporary motorcycles are designed to evoke the same visual characteristics of 1950s motorcycles (Phillips, 2005:7). The longevity of these masculine symbols derives from their ability to communicate a sense of fierceness, power, and invulnerability. A fierce biker may still be fierce without the black leather, but it is the black leather combined with his hyper-masculine performance that marks the individual as a motorcyclist. Objects like the black leather jacket and the motorcycle represented white male hyper-masculinity, such that they became physical representations of the boundaries of motorcycling culture that women and men of color could not cross.

The Civil Rights Movement, Second Wave Feminism and biker exploitation film, or: How Japanese ingenuity subverted biker subculture during the 1960s and 1970s

While members of North American 'straight society' gazed at the heavens and wrought their hands over the outcome of the space race with the Soviets, the motorcyclist found his

frontier of exploration in a more earthly domain. The terms 'asphalt cowboy' and chrome 'cowgirl' arose in the 1950s from the association of the expansion of the roadway system with the exploration of the western frontiers of North America in the 1800s. In 1949 the federal Trans-Canada Highway act was established to ensure cost-sharing of a national highway system, with similar initiatives being brought forth in the United States (Trans-Canada, 2007). The highways and backroads of North America provided a place for motorcyclists to explore and test themselves, but a highly developed transportation infrastructure also gave credence to the supposed claim that angry hordes of motorcyclists could descend upon an area without warning, that 'your town could be next', a message reiterated many times in copycat biker exploitation films that tried to mimic the success of *The Wild One* (Osgerby, 2005:42). In actuality, better roadways allowed a greater number of travelers to engage one another in public space and it became more likely that a family out for a Sunday drive might encounter a motorcyclist or two on their voyage.

With potential motorcycle riders deterred by the negative image of motorcycling and the availability of cheap cars, Canadian statistics show that motorcycle registrations for road bikes declined considerably after the war and throughout the 1950s, up until 1965 (Historical Statistics, 1983). Mainstream media interest in motorcycle culture also waned during the 1950s, but the media's gaze quickly refocused on the outlaw motorcycle community once again with the 1966 release of Hunter S. Thompson's book *The Hell's Angels* (Seate, 2000:22). Written in his characteristic 'gonzo' style, the novel detailed Hunter Thompson's adventures hanging out with the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club. *The Hell's Angels* shot up the sales charts and soon made the Hell's Angels the most notorious one-percenter motorcycle club in the world (Dulaney, 2005.) The same year Thompson's book hit the stands a film which dramatized the Hell's Angels' biker lifestyle, *The Wild Angels,* splashed across the big screen and it was an immediate hit with

teenage moviegoers (Osgerby; 2005; Seate, 2000). Three years later in 1969, *EasyRider* was released. It was a film in the same vein as *The Wild Angels* but it was even more popular and earned an award at the Cannes Film Festival and several Academy Award nominations (Biskind, 1999).

At times, it seemed as if the Hollywood rendition of the outlaw biker may not have been so far from reality. In 1969, the Hell's Angels MC were hired as security for a free admission Rolling Stones concert held at the Altamont speedway where they 'controlled' the crowd with sawed off pool cues. At least one Angel took part in the stabbing death of a young black man named Meredith Hunter, who reportedly drew a revolver during the concert, though the Angel alleged to have been the killer was never convicted (Burks, 1970). Despite the bad publicity brought about by the Hell's Angels' antics, the negative portrayal of bikers in Hollywood films and the decline of motorcycle sales in North America, once Japanese motorcycle manufacturers entered the North American market the image of the North American motorcyclist soon underwent a massive change.

The rebirth of Japanese industry after World War Two kick-started motorcycle sales in North America as the sanctions imposed on Japan and Germany forced the recalibration of their economies. Unlike in North America, postwar Europe and Asia often lacked adequate road systems to support car and truck traffic, and the motorcycle offered a cheap and readily available alternative. In 1948, Soichiro Honda capitalized on this need by taking small engines left over from the war and fixing them to bicycles. A year later, Honda founded the Honda Motor Corporation and the company began selling its first production motorcycle, the Honda Dream-D (Honda Motor Company, 2007). Other Japanese companies followed suit, with Suzuki establishing its motorcycle division in 1952 (Suzuki, 2007), Yamaha in 1955 (Yamaha Motor Corporation, 2007) and Kawasaki in 1956 (Kawasaki Motors Corporation, 2007). Later, these

corporations would become known in motorcycle discourse as the 'Big Four' for their domination of the international motorcycle market (Wilson, 1990).

The rapid turnaround in the Japanese economy which allowed these motorcycle companies to flourish was due largely to the postwar financial aid Japan received from the United States and to the economic benefits accrued during the Korean War by helping to supply the armies of the United Nations (Foot, 1991). By 1959 Honda had begun exporting motorcycles to the shores of North America. In the early 1960s the Japanese “invasion” had officially begun with the Big Four targeting the youth market. Honda's advertising campaign emphasized motorcycles as fun, friendly and above all, *masculine,* in an attempt to gentrify the image of motorcycling. Running advertisements in magazines and newspapers, and on billboards, their ads promoted clean-cut and respectable motorcycling under the slogan “You meet the nicest people on a Honda” (Joans, 2001:23). It worked. Sales of domestic motorcycles slumped as Harley-Davidson motorcycles developed a reputation for poor quality and for requiring constant maintenance. Sales of Japanese bikes remained brisk and in 1964 Honda began edging into the market for larger displacement motorcycles previously dominated by Harley-Davidson and the British manufacturers. Recognizing potential owners in men who simply wanted a fast, efficient and fun motorcycle without the outlaw image, Honda launched the CB750.

1969 Honda CB750



The most technologically advanced streetbike at the time, the CB750 set the bar for its competitors and it is widely credited with initiating the trend towards *superbikes,* motorcycles that bone-stock[4], could outperform many race bikes of yesteryear (Wilson, 2005, Osgerby, 2005).

To the untrained eye, Japanese motorcycles of the 1960s and 1970s bore a superficial resemblance to British machinery but were, for the most part, smaller, lighter, and more powerful for their engine size compared to their North American and European competitors. Thanks to the advanced manufacturing capabilities of the Japanese motorcycle industry and the highly skilled workforce they employed, Japanese motorcycles represented the latest in motorcycle technology and design (McDonald-Walker, 2003:17). In contrast, American motorcycles were physically large to the point of being ungainly. They were heavy and powerful, but required constant maintenance due to an outdated design that had changed little since being introduced. In many ways we can see the different emphases on the varied aspects of motorcycling as representative of different national identities. Japanese motorcycles were efficient and technologically superior, while the American machinery was rugged and a little unpolished. Yet each motorcycle manufacturer sought to achieve the same aims of speed, efficiency and power; only their methods differed. If we conceptualize the motorcycle as representing a choice between hyper-masculine identities, Japanese technology symbolized masculine, managerial/professional erotics whereas American machines represented the corporeal 'hardness' of the soldier/laborer habitus. In the end, motorcyclists perceived the difference as one between style and substance; the Japanese bikes had the technology, but the American bikes had the look.

The dominance of Japanese motorcycles in the North American market was a symbolic defeat for North American motorcycling culture and industry. Responding to social changes during the 1960s, men and women who embodied the masculine habitus of the working and

[4] Unmodified in any form.

soldiering class felt threatened by the American defeat in Vietnam and the anti-war movement at home. Many theorists point to the emasculation of the North American male following the Vietnam War and the great cultural shame felt by many Americans (Burstyn, 1999; Connell, 1995). However, North American military and economic dominance had been challenged long before the 1960s. Western military powers suffered their first symbolic defeat after World War II after losing China to the Communists when Mao Zedong gained power. They also lost face during the Korean War in the early 1950s when the combined Western militaries of the United Nations were unable to push the Communists out of North Korea once the Chinese and Soviets intervened (Foot, 1991). As well, American efforts to overthrow and prevent Communism in Cuba and other South American states by the Americans were largely unsuccessful and contributed to the escalation of the Cold War (Garfinkle, 2000). To some motorcyclists, riding a Japanese motorcycle threatened the male hierarchy of white, hyper-masculine motorcycle culture because it signified that the West was not infallible (Burstyn 1999:206).

The reference to Japanese motorcycles as 'Jap crap' or 'rice burners' and to their import as an 'invasion' in motorcycling discourse implies a defensive response by some members of the self-identified ‘Harley Crowd’ (Ferrar, 1996; Joans, 2001; Osgerby, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Seate, 2000). Proud, patriotic and vocal about their preference to buy American, their propensity to denigrate Japanese machinery reveals the prevalence of racist and bigoted attitudes in some formulations of motorcycling culture. The Hell's Angels' killing of Meredith Hunter may not have been race related, but the ties between motorcycling culture, and the outlaw subculture in particular, would indicate otherwise (Joans, 2001). Many self-proclaimed one-percenters wear Nazi insignia and military paraphernalia as a way of distinguishing themselves from 'straight society'. The president of Hell's Angels MC Sonny Barger explains “This stuff—iron crosses, the Nazi insignia, the German helmets—that's to shock people. To let them know we're

individualists. To let 'em know we're Angels...Hell, we buy this junk in dime stores" (Osgerby, 2005:91).

These men are not ignorant of the political implications of these symbols and it is no coincidence that much of this biker iconography became prominent during the 1960s with the advent of the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement was a *call to order* that jeopardized white, working class men's access to resources in the form of employment, sexuality and politics. The racist overtones of some biker insignia reveals deep-seated prejudice and the display of racist symbols merits more concern than say, the appropriation of black leather jackets by non-motorcyclist youths, because of the context in which they are used. David Wolf's apologia for motorcycling culture is instructive: "[w]hile outlaw bikers indeed are politically right-wing and conservative", he writes, "they are neither Nazis nor neo-fascists". Yet, in the same paragraph he can add: "[w]hile I have never heard of it being formally incorporated into any club's constitution or by-laws, all outlaw clubs operate within a policy that stipulates 'no negroes allowed'" (1991:120).[5] However, several other motorcycling texts indicate that many of the one-percenter clubs established constitutional regulations that prohibited women and men of color from becoming members, in order to maintain homosocial solidarity (Ferrar, 1996; Joans, 2000; Osgerby, 2005). In either case, it would be a gross misstep to state that these discriminatory acts and symbols mean absolutely nothing as Barger and Wolf contend. Although those who wear these symbols may not in fact uphold Nazi doctrine, the symbols are unlikely to be reappropriated as non-racist symbols in Western cultural anytime in the near future.

Understood in the context of homosocial solidarity, motorcycling culture offered refuge to men seeking to maintain their hyper-masculine identity in a world where men and women of

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[5] Wolf's statement highlights his racially-biased perspective of outlaw motorcycling culture as black motorcycle clubs such as the East Bay Dragons, grew alongside the Hell's Angels during the 1960s and 70s in California, and are still prominent in that area today (Zimmerman and Levingston, 2003).

all ethnic backgrounds marched in protest of the Vietnam War, as part of the Civil Rights Movement, and in support of women's rights. Drawing support from the Civil Rights Movement, proponents of Second Wave Feminism sought to surpass the original aims of First Wave Feminism by offering critiques that touched on issues of class, race and gender (Ehrenreich, 1983). The Second Wave Feminist movement helped bring about increased employment and educational opportunities for women, and challenged traditional female identities based on subordination and domesticity. While motorcycling culture and Beat culture challenged the managerial/professional masculine hegemony of North American society, Second Wave Feminism confronted all figurations of masculinity by encouraging both men and women to critically examine their personal lives and to view their bodies and their material conditions of existence in a politicized manner. Yet there was a contingent of people in motorcycling culture who actively rejected the changes that were occurring in North American society and who sought to maintain conventional figurations of heteronormative and hegemonic masculinity by forming their own cultural sub-groups.

Symbolizing this homosocial desire, the first issue of *EasyRiders* was published in 1971 (Osgerby, 2005:92). A magazine devoted to "the swinging biker" and the promotion of the outlaw identity, *EasyRiders* featured motorcyclists and their 'sickles, and was rife with half-naked women draped over customized Harley-Davidsons called 'choppers'. Though most motorcycle magazines at the time did not take the biker myth to such extremes, lifestyle magazines such as *EasyRiders* are important precisely because they catered to a particular audience and appeared in motorcycle culture as a direct response to the social change occurring at that time in North America. In an era where the hyper-masculine soldier/laborer identity was in jeopardy, these magazines provided a clear set of guidelines and alternative representations (of men and women)

concerning appropriate masculine behavior and appearance to a small but growing contingent of dissatisfied men.

But the vulgar image of the lifestyle biker was met by an equally masculine but more subdued counterpart. While the presentation of motorcyclists in the media during the 1960s continued to emphasize their raw, corporeal masculinity, much like earlier representations, the marketing campaigns of the Big Four was having the desired effect on the motorcycle market by steadily revamping the image of motorcyclists and motorcycling culture after more than thirty years of continued media attacks (Historical Statistics, 1983). Honda's 'nicest people' campaign proved effective as the fierce image of the lifestyle biker was countered by the representation of the workaday motorcyclist who rode *his* bike as an alternative to the family car. Motorcycle sales soared and Japanese manufacturers began to take over the motorcycle market in North America as more and more men and women experienced the fun of motorcycle riding, without the stereotypical trappings of hyper-masculine biker performance. Nevertheless, as Schouten notes in her discussion regarding the diverse array of cultural backgrounds that motorcyclists may come from: “[s]ome informants give the impression that they are engaged in something akin to performance art for the mere fun of it...[o]thers, however, take the machismo more seriously, as if they have something to prove by it. In either case, indulgence in an overtly masculine subculture may function (for men at least) to compensate for some self-doubt in the area of supposed male competency” (1995:55).

Throughout the 1960s and 70s as the number of motorcyclists increased and motorcycle technology advanced rapidly, motorcycle culture began to transform much like automotive culture had with the introduction of the Ford Model T. Motorcycles remained an object of leisure for the most part, but the import of cheap, dependable Japanese motorcycles attracted many more people (mostly men) to the sport of motorcycling who had little interest in performing the

constant maintenance required by most British and North American motorcycles. And with the greater interest in motorcycling, motorcycling culture expanded to meet the desires of this growing population.

Chapter 4
'In my beginning is my end' – analysis of *Cycle Canada* magazine

In this chapter I return to the idea of motorcycling as an affective event, a theory first discussed at the beginning of the second chapter of this thesis. By conceptualizing the formation of motorcycling culture and motorcycling identities as particular socio-historical events, I am able to understand the relationship between personal activity and experience on the one hand, and social organization on the other, as something that is continuously (re)constructed in time (Abrams, 1982:17). In the process of becoming/being a motorcyclist I am the producer-product of motorcycling culture, both drawing from and contributing to this gendered discourse. This is reflected within my writing, such that this thesis is as much an exercise in historical sociology as it is a personal account of the events that have served as mile-markers on the path towards my own gender identity performance. Bearing in mind that an event is "not just a happening there to be narrated but a happening to which cultural significance has been successfully assigned" (Abrams, 1982:191), this chapter directly confronts a primary source – *Cycle Canada* and the gendered narratives of the authors of its columns – in order to illustrate, elaborate and perhaps challenge my interpretations of motorcycling history as gleaned from secondary sources.

My decision to focus on a single magazine is due to the fact that *Cycle Canada* is a Canadian publication that deals primarily with the Canadian market and motorcycle culture. I know that the intended audience is Canadian and that the writers participate in Canadian motorcycling culture, and because I share a common history I am able to draw on my own experiences to interpret their representations of motorcycle culture. Although many of the secondary sources used for this research either focus directly on American motorcycle culture,

culture is an amorphous discourse that heeds no national boundaries. Witness the influence of *The Wild One* on 1950s youth fashion and the lasting effect it has had in motorcycle culture. Just as Marlon Brando's bad-boy cool was emulated in California, New York, France and Sweden, so too did Canadian motorcyclists incorporate this hyper-masculine image into their collective identity. Though the particular figurations of masculinity may vary from country to country, they share much of the same historical origin and foundation of masculine discourse. By explaining the significance of certain events in motorcycling history, I have sought to understand how these events may have been experienced by those involved, as well as what influence these event continue to have in contemporary motorcycle culture. My general assumption is that the imagery and representations in *Cycle Canada* would not differ significantly from those found in U.S. magazines of the same sort.

Cycle Canada magazine is the most representative title for my longitudinal research concerning the performance of gender identity in motorcycle culture because it has been published for more than thirty-five years and remains one of the most popular and successful motorcycle magazines in Canada with a current readership of 23, 781 people (Canadian Circulations Audit Board, 2007:1). Featuring motorcycle and related product reviews, trip suggestions and stories, regular and guest columns, and race events and news, in its current format *Cycle Canada* resembles many of its American and European counterparts like *Motor Cyclist, Rider* and *MotoNews.* Furthermore, the editors at *Cycle Canada* attempt to reach a broad reader base by reviewing a variety of machines such as cruisers, sportbikes, adventure bikes, sport-tourers, supermotards and dirtbikes, though the magazine is oriented more towards street riding as it features fewer off-road motorcycle reviews and race news. Nevertheless, it perpetuates many of the heteronormative, hyper-masculine ideals of motorcycle identity performance even as the editors attempt to attract a diverse readership that increasingly includes

women and other groups traditionally excluded from participating in motorcycle culture (Boni, 2005:469).

Theory

I will analyze the content of columns in *Cycle Canada* using a combination of Judith Butler's theory of identity performance and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus and field. Though it may initially seem incongruous to combine the two theorists and Butler herself has criticized Bourdieu's inattention to issues of gender (Butler, 1997), Lois McNay offers a detailed explanation of the complementary characteristics of these two theorists. Succinctly put, McNay attempts to formulate agency as a reflexive, positive force that agents express when they make decisions in the field of human interaction and which depend upon the habitus they have inculcated. This contrasts with the form of subjectivity often postulated by feminist perspectives like Butler's, which are based on what McNay describes as 'ahistorical' Lacanian psychoanalytic methods and 'voluntaristic' Foucauldian theories. She argues that the 'negative' agency that arises from the combination of these perspectives cannot account for the "capacity for autonomous action in the face of often overwhelming cultural sanctions and structural inequalities" (McNay, 2000:11). To overcome these limitations McNay focuses on three fundamental areas: the material and symbolic conditions of subjectification, performative identity, and the relationship between the social world and the individual psyche (Ibid:6). Like Butler, McNay conceptualizes social action as structured by situational context, but she also emphasizes the human capacity "to institute new or unanticipated modes of behavior" (Ibid: 21) by recognizing that there always remains the potential for spontaneous action or agency.

However, McNay echoes Butler's criticism that Bourdieu's account of human relations is deficient because he paid little attention to sexuality as a form of capital. By combining

Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* and *field* with Butler's theory of gendered identity performance, McNay is able to provide a more encompassing analysis by conceptualizing gender as a *field* where agents representing hegemonic and subordinate masculinities are engaged in conflict with one another along a 'hierarchy of masculinities' (Boni, 2005:467; Brandth and Haugen, 2002:150; Connell, 2000). Agents establish a masculine identity in motorcycle culture by competing with other agents for the physical, cultural and political power associated with the soldier/laborer, managerial/professional, and owner/governor habitus. By conceptualizing performative identities as "the systematic products of habitus, which, perceived in their mutual relations through the schemes of the habitus, become sign systems that are socially qualified (as 'distinguished', 'vulgar' etc)" (Bourdieu, 1987: 172), we may understand how some elements of a particular habitus stand in opposition to, or may complement, other habitus within the field of masculinity, and how agents arrange themselves hierarchically in motorcycle culture through conflict.

While I use Burstyn's tripartite theory of masculinity as a heuristic device to analyze representations of gender, I do not wish to categorize motorcyclists according to the type of motorcycle or riding style they enjoy, by how much money and leisure time they have or otherwise dilute their specific historical meaning into over-generalized abstractions (Abrams, 1982: 224-5). The soldier/laborer, managerial/professional, and owner/governor habitus are mutually inclusive, and all motorcyclists embody aspects of these habitus to some extent. It is not my place to act as a cultural gatekeeper, nor am I trying to analyze who the *Cycle Canada* editors 'really are', for I can never really know, but rather how they perform their motorcycling identities in the context of their own writing. Reading motorcycle print media is an expression of desire "within which individual and social practices and forms of identification are made manifest through the use or not (in our particular case) of a certain kind [of] men's magazines" (Boni, 2005:466). Motorcyclists are attracted to magazines which reaffirm their gender identity because

it allows them to experience solidarity with other agents. By analyzing this appeal I am able to explore how the editors at *Cycle Canada* encourage their readers to put habitus into practice by assuming self-responsibility for the manner in which they embody a masculine motorcycling identity (Holmes, 2005: 673); and how 'typical' agents in 'typical' relationships in motorcycle culture feel, behave and look like a motorcyclist, regardless of their cultural peculiarities (Boni, 2002: 468).

Method

I have chosen to use critical discourse methodology because it allows theory and empirical evidence to interrogate one another while simultaneously encouraging the researcher to integrate their own understandings of inequalities of power, hegemony and domination (Abrams, 1982: 215; Burstyn, 1999; Goffman, 1979). I am guided by Norman Fairclough's conception of critical discourse analysis as a tripartite endeavor, an analysis of: i) written text, ii) the discursive practice which motivates the production, distribution and consumption of the text, and iii) the socio-cultural context in which the discourses in the texts are put into practice (1995; 2005; Van de Mieroop, 2005:107). Following Fairclough's suggestions permits me to analyze the text of *Cycle Canada* magazine through the lens of feminist post-structural theory while drawing on my experiences as a motorcyclist and self-identified male to provide a self-reflexive analysis of motorcycling culture and masculine identity as portrayed in the magazine.

My analysis of *Cycle Canada* magazine encompasses 180 articles written by 6 writers, over a period of 35 years from the first year of the magazine's publication in April of 1971 to December 2005. The articles have been selected at five year intervals, beginning with 13 articles from the first year of publication (April 1971-April 1972), and 17, 22, 29, 15, 30, 30 and 24 articles at subsequent five year intervals (1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2005,

respectively.)[6] While it may initially seem that examining each and every article from every year of publication would be ideal because the magazine's owners and columnists have changed over the years, such an extensive sample is unnecessary as most of the *Cycle Canada* editors have been regular contributors for at least a decade and have produced enough text that data saturation was achieved relatively early in this study. The magazine has also undergone many format changes over its 35 years of publication, moving from a newsprint or 'tabloid' format to a non-glossy magazine format in 1981 (November 1980), and finally to a glossy magazine in 2000 (January 2000). To ensure reliability and reproducibility I have focused my analyses on the recurring columns in *Cycle Canada* that are written by regular contributors because although the focus of each article may vary, the content of the articles generally falls along the authors' areas of interest. The manner in which authors narrate their experiences and mediate what they perceive as their readers' interests illustrates the performative character of the editors' gender identity as it appears in their texts and the changes that have occurred in motorcycling discourses over the 35 year period (Van de Mieroop, 2005: 109).

This longitudinal approach also mitigates some of the problems associated with the data collection. For instance, during the publication period between 1971 and 1975 there are usually just two columns per issue that are written by regular authors, limiting the number of articles available for analysis to just 30 of the total 180. Another limitation is that these 30 columns are generally longer at approximately 420 words, while the full page columns published beginning in 1980 are shorter at approximately 360 words, because by this time there were three monthly columns and the new magazine format reduced the space available. This does not affect the

[6] A detailed compendium of the articles, authors, and publication dates may be found in the Appendix

reliability of the data however, because the data are drawn from a sufficiently large sample of articles in a longitudinal series and subjected to rigorous textual analyses.

Conducting this research as a longitudinal study allows me to use the empirical data, the local or micro level latent and manifest narratives in the magazine columns, in order to interrogate the global or macro themes that I have explored through my historical research, and vice versa. I primarily focus my examination of the discourse on the structure and strategy of the authors' writings as it relates to the social, cultural, political and economic capital that motorcyclists embody to perform a masculine identity (Fairclough, 2005). Passages from the text are used to illustrate the presence of heteronormative discourse that constrains potential readers' choices of gender identification and sexual orientation to traditional models of masculine identities that may only be achieved through hyper-masculine gender performance (Finders, 1996:71). The purpose of these measurements is not to enforce rigid categories upon the discourse, but to call attention to the particular discourse that the author is using *in any instance* to establish a motorcycling identity and the ubiquity of the discourse in motorcycle culture. However, as Butler writes, "strategies always have meanings that exceed the purposes for which they are intended" (1990:4), and so these specific categorizations of language can capture only some of the intent of the text which the editors of *Cycle Canada* magazine use to express the boundaries of their own identity.

Analysis

The soldier/laborer habitus as represented in *Cycle Canada* magazine

As my socio-historical analysis reveals, the soldier/laborer habitus in motorcycle culture arose from the early connection between men's use of motorcycles in warfare and as a low-cost,

utilitarian vehicle. Motorcycles have been used in combat all over the world, in the border skirmishes between the United States and Mexico during the 1910s, in WWI and WWII, and are presently fielded by the United States military in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Hayes Diversified Technology, 2007). However, the link between motorcycles and soldier/laborer masculinity was made most prominent at the end of WWII when male war veterans formed motorcycle clubs and rode military surplus Harley-Davidsons throughout the southern United States. This social phenomenon was reflected by the negative portrayal of motorcyclists in films such as *The Wild One* and the resulting media backlash against motorcyclists. The masculine discourse that arose from these events frames the motorcyclist as a man who is an individualist, patriotic, physically tough and aggressive, and is mechanically inclined. The soldier/laborer motorcyclist relies on his male anatomy and willingness to take physical risks to signify his masculinity, and the erotic character of this habitus is demonstrated through acts of physical bravery and muscularity. But as the AMA's reaction to the Hollister 'riot' demonstrates, the 'motorcycling moral panic' during the 1950s was aimed at controlling this particular form of dangerous male masculinity, and therefore, the people who performed this identity.

It is significant that the media's gaze was focused on *motorcyclists* and not tennis players or lawn bowlers, because motorcycling as a 'dangerous' pastime gave credence to the perception that all motorcyclists were *potentially* dangerous themselves. Historically, the menacing appearance of a bearded man on a Harley with straight pipes[7] has been enough to cause onlookers to divert their gaze. But just as the black leather jacket lost its 'edge' after suburban teens adopted it as a quick way to present a 'tough-guy' persona without having the necessary physical or social capital to validate their performance, the biker image popularized by *EasyRider* and the infamy of

[7] Straight pipes are straight exhaust pipes that have no internal baffling, thus making the motorcycle louder. These exhaust systems are illegal in many urban areas because of the deafening sound they produce.

the Hell's Angels MC has been emulated by the contemporary middle-aged 'boomer' generation (McDonald-Walker, 2000).

This eroticization of the biker image in mainstream North America is as much a product of the concerted effort by the Big Four Japanese motorcycle manufacturers and domestic motorcycle organizations to cultivate sales and interest in the sport, as it is a consequence of the socio-demographic change in society during the late 1960s and early 1970s. As the boomer generation reached the legal driving age of sixteen during the late 1960s and early 70s, young motorcyclists purchased Japanese machinery that was cheaper, more reliable and just as fast if not faster, than bikes produced by Harley-Davidson or the British marques (Mike Duff, March 1972, August 1975). John Cooper typifies these motorcycles as being sold to an appreciative, if undiscerning market:

> From what I've seen, they [the motorcycles] don't generally belong to your typical enthusiast rider. They belong to people who aren't sophisticated enough to know that they should look down on a bike which vibrates some, doesn't corner as if on rails and has only two cylinders arranged in an inelegant parallel formation. All they know about motorcycles is that this is the way one is supposed to look, sound and feel. Plus it's not too big, not too expensive and it's as reliable as an anvil.
>
> September 1980

However, by 1975 the market for what is colloquially know in motorcycle culture as the ubiquitous 'Universal Japanese Motorcycle' or UJM,[8] was becoming saturated (John Cooper, January 1975, February 1975). The Big Four Japanese motorcycle manufacturers were quick to adapt to this market by taking note of North American motorcyclists' desire for cruiser-style motorcycles that had air-cooled, V-twin engines like the Indians and Harley-Davidsons ridden by the Hell's Angels and outlaw bikers featured in *EasyRider* (John Cooper, September 1980).

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[8] One such example is the Honda CB750 discussed in the previous chapter. The other Big Four Japanese manufacturers attempted to copy the styling and performance of the CB750 by producing a series of motorcycles that bore a striking resemblance to each other, regardless of their brand.

While Japanese manufacturers had produced fast and exciting machinery for the North American market for well over a decade, they had yet to enter the cruiser category. But in 1981, Yamaha released the Virago, the first Japanese motorcycle designed to directly compete with Harley-Davidson's Sportster (Yamaha, 2007). The other Japanese manufacturers were quick to follow suit by releasing their own 'Harley-clones' and by 1983, Japanese motorcycle sales in the cruiser category threatened domestic sales enough that Harley-Davidson successfully lobbied the International Trade Commission to enforce a tariff on imported motorcycles over 700cc[9] in engine size. The tariff would only be removed in 1987 after the company's sales rebounded (Harley Davidson, 2007). Rather than simply marketing a utilitarian vehicle motorcycle manufacturers began to sell a lifestyle, one founded on the understanding that "it's obvious to any observer, motorcyclist or otherwise, that the aura of societal disapproval, ignorance, and fear also forms part of the attraction. I'm doing something "they" may not approve of, and enjoying it, so bite me" (Max Burns, May 2005). Though the Japanese helped reinvigorate the North American appetite for cruisers, no-company has proved more efficient at marketing the tough-guy image than Harley-Davidson. As of 2004, Harley-Davidson has a 43% market share in the United States and 38% in Canada,[10] and if we take into account Japanese and European manufacturers' sales in the cruiser category as well, this indicates that over 50% of the North American motorcycling populace owns a cruiser motorcycle (Heylar, 2007).

Physically large, heavy and powerful, the cruiser motorcycle as epitomized by Harley-Davidson symbolized the form of heteronormative, masculine power that these baby-boomers sought to embody. As Chris Knowles notes, this soldier/laborer masculine ideal sells motorcycles:

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[9] CC = cubic centimetres, a volumetric measurement of engine size.
[10] Harley-Davidson's sportbike subsidiary, Buell, is not included here as their market share accounts for less than 1% of the North American market (Heylar, 2007).

> Much of the blame (or credit, depending on your perspective) for the popularity of cruisers and customs can be laid on those self-absorbed baby boomers. With the costs of bikes and insurance beyond the reach of anyone who doesn't wear a tie or have a ponytail, it's riders in their late 30s or older who make up the bulk of the bike buyers. They have smooth, quiet, comfortable four-wheeled boxes for everyday travel, so their bikes can be less for transport and more for flights of fancy. What does it matter if the suspension is harsh? If the bike allows its rider to fulfill the fantasy of being young, virile and free, buyers feel it's worth every jolt.
>
> November/December 1990

The supposed gentrification of the rebel image is by no means a new phenomenon. In 1985, Max Burns sarcastically lamented in one of his monthly columns titled *The trials of the born-again Wild One and his gang*, that "I like the nasty image. I find it reassuring to hear the solenoid clicks of electric door locks when I ease up beside some spiffed-up family sedan at a traffic light. Call it *childish* and *egotistical*, but that's the basis of most things fun. So I do my best to appear bad" [my italics] (November, 1985). Coupling his sarcastic wit with a keen analytical eye, Max Burns sums up the perverse pleasure of playing the bad-boy biker almost perfectly, noting that this image is one that many motorcyclists encourage.

In the same column he labels his own behavior as childish and egotistical, Max Burns is quick to add that "that's what image is all about—faking it. It's a front, a crock of chicken fur, a low, disreputable fraud" (Ibid). Though the majority of motorcyclists are not Marlon Brando or Peter Fonda incarnate, the ability to project an air of menace and physical power by embodying the corporeal erotics of the soldier/laborer habitus has proved appealing for many men who might otherwise choose to suppress this aspect of their identity in normative society (Ehrenreich, 1983). However, contemporary movies like *The Wild Hogs* exemplify the point that owning a motorcycle and wearing a sneer does not mean this masculine performance will be accepted as a legitimate identity by other motorcyclists. Bruce Reeve elaborates on this observation when he asks:

> How much is role playing and how much is real? It's a fine line sometimes, which naturally creates problems for hardcore biker groups. Tight-knit families, serious

> craftsmen and successful businesses working in the milieu demand to be accepted and tolerated by the general public, even as they accentuate their differences from mainstream society.
>
> Cycle Canada, May 1990

Indeed, where is the separation between myth and reality, role-playing and lifestyle choice? Many of the editors at *Cycle Canada* magazine scoff at motorcyclists who adorn themselves in designer leathers and troll through town from one coffee shop to the next pretending to be bad, as they are clearly not the contemporary representatives of the hard-riding, hard-living motorcycle enthusiasts of previous eras (Bruce Reeve, March 1995).

However, a new riding style called 'stunting' emerged during the late 1990s that epitomized the sort of daring and 'brave' behaviors most closely associated with the soldier/laborer masculine style. Motorcycle 'stunters' emphasize their physical vulnerability and the risk associated with riding a motorcycle by flaunting established safety precautions by not wearing helmets or protective riding gear, and by performing dare-devil feats, often at high speeds and on public roads.

Stunting on Public Roads



There are several articles in *Cycle Canada* published in 2000 that decry the risk-taking behavior of motorcycle stunters, with the most fervent protestations made by Bruce Reeve:

> Most recently I became seriously afraid while observing crowds at the Toronto motorcycle show stand mesmerized in front of various television screens. They were watching the video *Las Vegas Extremes*, an amateurish production that documents mostly amateurish stunts by goons on sport bikes [my italics]. Its one redeeming feature as entertainment is that the stunts are performed on public roads, in heavy traffic, through intersections and busy streets, making it all so hideously dangerous that you can't help but watch in appalled fascination… in the usual disclaimer at the beginning of the tape, even the word safety is misspelled. These guys are so obviously clueless, I'm afraid the reaction of some viewers will be to think, "How hard can that be?"
>
> March 2000

These sorts of behaviors are not new, as newspaper reports in the early 1910s berated motorcyclists who liked to ride at 'reckless speed, kick up dirt, run over dogs, and make themselves obnoxious' (Ferrar, 1996), and contemporary newspapers and magazines depict motorcycle stunters as a risk to public safety (Max Burns, July 2005).

Yet Max Burns rises to the defense of unruly motorcyclists everywhere by drawing socio-historical parallels between the youth of most generations:

> [S]ome stunters are unquestionably talented riders. So is it their fault they're currently occupying the stupidity spot in the space-time continuum? Obviously not. But do they have to go so public? Obviously yes. Stupidity intuitively seeks out an audience, has since the beginning of time and always will. I mean, what's the point of showing off if no one's there to see it? …Yet why do I still feel that we—the once-were-young—should attempt to temper the practice? Perhaps because I know how much pain sucks when things don't work out as intended. And perhaps because I too have felt the thrill of pushing the limits on a motorcycle.
>
> Max Burns, July 2005

While it would appear that Max Burns asserts that risk-taking behavior or 'stupidity' as he calls it, is a function of age, he also acknowledges that "stupidity is not exclusive to the young" (Ibid). By doing so, Max Burns draws attention to the latent conflict in motorcycle discourse over the legitimacy of one's identity as a masculine motorcyclist. Like the leather jacketed youth of the 1950s, the Beats of the 1960s and the one-percenter bikers of the 1970s, motorcycle stunters seem

to directly oppose normative society simply by being who they are and are singled out because they are an easily identifiable minority group. The decision to self-identify with soldier/laborer masculinity is above all a reflexive decision and as Bruce Reeve asks of these types of individuals, "[w]ill the general public ever welcome the biker lifestyle? Of course not. Nor, I suspect, would most hardcore bikers really ever want them to" (Bruce Reeve, May 1990). It is from the decision to visibly differentiate themselves from 'straight' society and to live the sort of lifestyles that places their bodies at greater risk of physical injury that these agents define themselves.

The managerial/professional habitus as represented in *Cycle Canada* magazine

The sport a man practices and the way he practices it, his political opinions and the way he expresses them, and his social responsibilities and the manner in which he upholds them are systematically different according to the habitus he embodies and the masculinity he performs (Bourdieu, 1994:9). Whereas the solider/laborer identity is performed in motorcycle culture by emphasizing the perceived vulnerability of the human body, the managerial/professional identity is performed by *managing* this perceived vulnerability. Motorcyclists who embody this habitus legitimate their masculine identity by relying on their intelligence and skill to demonstrate their command of scientific, cultural and sexual capital and technique.

The managerial/professional habitus operates based on the self-reflexive acknowledgement that masculine motorcycling identities are formed not only in relations with other motorcyclists but with non-motorcyclists as well. Motorcycling is an activity that is most often engaged in while on public roads or areas and the consequences of anti-social behavior impacts the motorcycling community as a whole and not solely the perpetrators, as we have witnessed with the widespread disdain for motorcyclists after the antics of the Hell's Angels in

the 1960s. Many members of the motorcycling community accept that there will always be riders who ride in a reckless manner or beyond their skill level, but these same members are also very concerned about the image of motorcycling as portrayed in mainstream North American media. As Bruce Reeve points out, "[m]otorcycle accidents are perceived differently from other traffic incidents; car wrecks are considered regrettable, but a cultural norm, the same result on a motorcycle is viewed as senseless. Or worse, inevitable" (July 2000). Motorcyclists occupy a secondary status with respect to other forms of transport and are at a greater risk of injury from accidents in comparison to other road users (Bellaby and Lawrenson, 2003). According to statistics from North America and the United Kingdom, motorcyclists are between nine and sixteen times more likely to be involved in an accident than automobile drivers and four times as likely to be injured (Baldi, Baer and Cook, 2004:19; Coben, Steiner and Owens, 2004:355; Hurt, Ouellet and Thom, 1981). Those motorcyclists who comprise these accident statistics are more likely to be men between twenty and thirty-four years of age (Road Safety in Canada, 2001), and are involved in more accidents largely due to the fact that they engage in behavior that elevates their risk of injury, such as speeding and driving while under the influence of intoxicating substances (Ibid; Horswill and Helman, 2003:589; Hurt, Ouellet and Thom, 1981).

Returning to Bourdieu's theory that authors wield cultural knowledge as a form of delegated power, the editors at *Cycle Canada* are able to use their discussions of risk in motorcycling culture to influence the behavior of other agents (1990:110). Their writings concentrate within them the accumulated scientific, cultural and sexual capital of the group, which is used to legitimate the managerial/professional identity in the field of masculinities by disseminating their understandings of acceptable risk. Just as the AMA had sought to distance its membership from the rowdy biker image after the Hollister Rally of 1947, editors like John Cooper, Bruce Reeve and Claude Léonard are acutely aware of and regularly attempt to minimize

the potential backlash from the non-motorcycling public regarding incidents that reflect poorly upon the sport of motorcycling and its enthusiasts. As an editorial contributor at *Cycle Canada* for over twenty years, Bruce Reeve as been perhaps the most vociferous proponent for managing the physical risks of motorcycling and the social perception of the sport as a safe and responsible activity. He is particularly derisive of contemporary motorcycle hooligans and his comments sometimes appear as less a social critique of a particular phenomenon than a personal attack on the character and lifestyle of other motorcyclists:

> Motorcycling's inherent freedom and excitement have an especially strong appeal for people with a high tolerance for risk, or perhaps a poor understanding of it. These people are often untrained or unlicensed, impulsive, abusers of drugs and alcohol, or perhaps not very bright. This core group is very hard to reach; it's a lot easier to place restrictions on the rest of the motorcycling population. As a result, we can expect a lot of turbulent noise, and not much understanding.
>
> Bruce Reeve, July 2000

Bruce Reeve's animosity towards stunters and irresponsible riders parallels the fear and distrust which was directed at motorcyclists by the editors of *Life* magazine in the "Cyclists Holiday" article, but while motorcycle stunting has become a recent concern for the editors at *Cycle Canada*, the safety practices and public behaviors of other motorcyclists have been a central topic of discussion for decades.

Similar to the 'motorcycling moral panic' that occurred in North American society after the release of *The Wild One* in the 1950s, there have been many more localized motorcycling moral panics within motorcycling culture itself, where some *Cycle Canada* editors have decried the impending damnation of the sport by a group of motorcyclists behaving in a manner of which they did not approve. Over the course of the 35 years of *Cycle Canada* that I analyzed for this research, the majority of specific complaints changed every five year interval as a result of advancements in technology, changes in government legislation and cultural trends, but there

were several recurrent issues which exemplified the continued conflict between various groups in motorcycling culture and the masculine habitus they symbolized.

For example, the editors at *Cycle Canada* actively promote the use of motorcycle helmets and leather riding gear, and their recurring discussion regarding the need to enforce mandatory helmet regulations reflects the editors' interest in maintaining the responsible and law-abiding image of the sport. In an article published during *Cycle Canada*'s first year of circulation, editor Georgs Kolesnikovs discusses the Canadian motorcycling community's outcry over the federal government's intent to change existing helmet regulations and implement "arbitrary plans for helmet standards" (October, 1971). Kolesnikovs indicated that the new regulations were confusing for many motorcyclists and could possibly bolster support for anti-helmet groups like ABATE (A Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments), which claims that mandatory helmet laws were simply another way of effecting government control over the motorcycling community. John Cooper adopts a more antagonistic tone in his support of mandatory helmet use in an article published in April of 1980, stating that "…I know why those people are so down on helmet laws. They can't find a helmet small enough to fit their heads". He reiterates his point in another article published that same year, where he details his experience at a motorcycle safety conference that he attended in June of 1980:

> It seemed the best attended sessions were those related to the thorny issue of helmets: their design, testing, effectiveness and whether riders should be compelled to wear them. Arguments against helmet use on anything but a philosophical or freedom-of-choice basis were dispelled by the papers of Hurt[11] and Jim Newman, helmet design consultant from Ottawa.
>
> John Cooper, August 1980

By declaring his support for motorcycle safety 'experts' who supposedly have greater empirical knowledge of the risks of motorcycling and insulting motorcyclists who rely on a 'philosophical'

[11] Harry Hurt became the most prominent motorcycling safety expert in North America after conducting the

interpretation of risk, John Cooper accesses scientific discourse to legitimate his own understanding of risk in motorcycling culture. He is not the only editor to do so, however.

Bruce Reeve is adamant in his support of legislation that mandates helmet use and he chastises those opposed to helmet laws as irresponsible motorcyclists whose immature behavior negatively impacts the rest of the motorcycling community. Like John Cooper, Bruce Reeve relies on the stereotype of the brutish, uneducated outlaw biker to convey the message to his readership that 'we' are not like 'them': "For the most part the Harley faithful have simple pleasures—socializing, custom shows, helmet protests, beer drinking, drag racing on the beach at 5:00 a.m. and waking thousands of people…" (June 1985). The *Cycle Canada* editors are fully cognizant of the impact bad publicity may have upon their favorite pastime, and they are very keen to preserve their responsible image in the eyes of the mainstream North American public, lest non-motorcyclists begin to exert a stronger influence on motorcycling culture. In the interest of maintaining some form of informal self-governance in motorcycling culture, Bruce Reeve and Max Burns echo the criticisms of editor Georg Kolesnikovs regarding the confusion over helmet standards fifteen years earlier (Bruce Reeve, April 1995, March 2000, July 2005; Max Burns, August 1985, June 2000). Although the editors at *Cycle Canada* employ motorcycle accident statistics to fortify their arguments for helmet use, their columns on helmet legislation often serve as a platform from which the editors may contest others forms of masculine performances in motorcycling culture. The following passage is an excerpt from a column written by Bruce Reeve concerning the Canadian Department of Transportation (DOT) helmet standard. The column offers a lengthy critique of outlaw biker lifestyle and the performance of soldier/laborer masculinity in motorcycling culture:

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most extensive study of motorcycle accidents to date. His study is cited in the bibliography of this thesis.

> Now I fear that we're going to be inundated by a new crop of beanies, skid lids, plastic yarmulkes or possibly just salad bowls on riders' noggins. For some, perhaps, putting this kind of crap on your head is an act of civil disobedience. That's one way to look at it. I'd say it just labels you as an ignoramus.
>
> February 2000

From these passages we observe that a managerial/professional identity is performed in motorcycling culture by adopting 'expert' or scientific understandings of risk in motorcycling culture and then interpreting this risk though a motorcyclist's corporeal experience of motorcycling. By policing the boundaries of motorcycling discourse, these editors are able to appease the wider non-motorcycling community as represented by the state, while simultaneously exercising their delegated power within motorcycling culture to influence other motorcyclists.

Another recurrent subject which demonstrates the managerial/professional desire to manage risk is the issue of motorcycling under the influence of intoxicating substances. John Cooper first confronts the subject in August 1980 and the topic is discussed by various editors in at least one article at every subsequent five year interval (Mike Duff, 1985, Bruce Reeve, April 1990; July 2000; January 2005; Chris Knowles, November/December 1995, John Cooper, January 1985, March 1985, July 1985, August 1980). In one such article, Bruce Reeve must defend to his readership his decision to publish information regarding the increased number of motorcycle accidents following popular motorcycle rallies like the Ride for Sight:[12]

> There's no question that reputations are damaged when reports of these incidents are made public. And Cycle Canada isn't going to make any friends by reporting them. But what sort of damage is done when the truth is concealed?
>
> April 1990

Bruce Reeve's statement embodies the managerial/professional standpoint that it is preferable for motorcyclists to regulate their own risk-taking behaviors, rather than allowing the non-motorcycling public to effect legislative decisions that may be unsatisfactory to the motorcycling

[12] Ride for Sight rallies are fundraisers held across Canada by local motorcycle clubs or organizations and

community. The editors at *Cycle Canada* do not deny that they share the same desires for speed and thrills as other motorcyclists, but they are much more concerned with how these energies should expressed.

For most of the editors at *Cycle Canada*, there is no more appropriate manner of directing these affective energies than on the racetrack. Not only are these pent-up desires for thrills expended in a 'productive' manner, they are expressed in competition with other riders on sanctioned racecourses that contain fewer distractions than public roads and which are, more importantly, out of the public's disapproving gaze. Instead of relying on ostentatious physical displays of strength and bravery which are potentially disruptive to normative society, the managerial/professional habitus channels corporeal energy towards demonstrations of skill and intelligence which often require greater cultural, social and monetary resources, even as it presupposes that most riders possess the necessary abilities to race motorcycles:

> It is my contention that any person, physically able, can reach any height of any sport he wishes just by wanting to, if he wants to enough. A man's ability is directly proportional to the interest he has in the subject. To reach the level of being a star is no more difficult than wanting to be there.
>
> Mike Duff, September 1971

Interestingly, though the editors at *Cycle Canada* have continually contested the mainstream perception that motorcyclists might be dangerous people because motorcycling was an inherently 'dangerous' activity, Mike Duff affirms that most motorcyclists possess what he perceives as the positive qualities of skill and intelligence. His statement highlights the point that the affective energies generated from the act of motorcycling offer a medium of solidarity for those who perform an identity that is objectively oriented to recognize these corporeal dispositions, and that it is the cultural significance that we import to these displays which differentiates agents in the field of masculinities. As Mike Duff explains, the social rewards for expressing the desire for

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funds raised during these rallies are donated to the Foundation Fighting Blindness (Ride for Sight, 2008).

speed and thrills in a legitimate arena such as the racetrack can only accrue to those motorcyclists who believe that the "color and prestige of riding on the famous racing courses of the world in search of fame, fortune and personal reward, is often attraction enough. The quest for a sense of purpose to one's life is often a stronger pull to the world championship series of races on the Continent" (April 1985). By encouraging other riders to direct their corporeal energy towards what they perceive as skillful riding and legitimate competition, *Cycle Canada* editors such as Bruce Reeve, Mike Duff, Chris Knowles and Claude Léonard reinforce the managerial/professional identity in motorcycle culture by promoting the management of risk.

Yet the managerial/professional desire to legitimate one's masculine identity via demonstrations of skill and intelligence in a socially approved setting requires a higher level of social, cultural and economic investment than may be available to many individuals, even for those motorcyclists who ride on the street. Not all motorcyclists who attempt to achieve this ideal are successful, as Claude Léonard remarks, "I have seen a good number of guys forfeit a normal childhood and education and put all their energy and hope into forging a motocross or hockey career, only to have the dream fade into oblivion" (Claude Léonard, March 2005). Many other *Cycle Canada* magazine editors have lamented the increasing costs of their favorite sport as motorcycles, motorcycling supplies and equipment, and motorcycle insurance rates have continued to rise over the 35 year period (Claude Léonard, September/October 1995, January 2000, March 2005, Chris Knowles, May 1990, Mike Duff, March 1975, February 1980, March 1985). The fundamental observations regarding these articles are that the authors recognize that for many motorcyclists, the time, energy and money they devote to motorcycling does not always produce the expected return in enjoyment:

> I was in the hunt at mid-season when an incident made me realize that getting serious about a title chase was a great way to take a lot of the fun out of dirt riding. And possibly lose a good friend. As my girlfriend had subtly pointed out on that fateful day, "What do you ride dirt bikes for, anyway? To complicate your

> life by obsessing over a stupid points race and to argue with your best friend, or to have fun? You're acting like an idiot."
>
> Claude Léonard, January 2005

These articles indicate that not all motorcyclists are capable of or even have the desire to participate in racing. However, the collective admiration and recognition in motorcycling culture for those riders who do race, allows for the hierarchization of motorcyclists according to their perceived level of skill and perpetuates the managerial/professional masculine ideal in motorcycling discourse.

Perhaps the most poignant discussion of the power of the managerial/professional ideal in motorcycling culture arises from Mike Duff's account of the death of a fellow racer during his participation in the 1962 Isle of Man Tourist Trophy race. In his column, Mike Duff acknowledges that all of his accumulated skill and knowledge ultimately amounts to little should he make a mistake on the racetrack or street:

> The departed rider never sees the reactions and emotional breakdowns of those left behind. If riders stopped to consider the possibility of death more often and the consequences for their families, perhaps more would have second thoughts about racing, or about having a family…Professional racing is not without its personal rewards—rewards that can fully justify the risks. But it can be very costly when a maximum performance is demanded.
>
> February 1985

His solemn words elucidate the powerful draw of competitive motorcycling and the repercussions of misjudging the limits of one's abilities, while also calling attention to the instability of a masculine identity founded on the mediation of corporeal risk. Racing may then serve as a useful allegory for the performance of managerial/professional masculinity. Like the corners and cambers of a racetrack, the performative limits of gender identity must "be memorized to the point of infallibility. This is a matter of life and death, your death" (Mike Duff, July 1971). It is accidents like the one Mike Duff describes that call attention to vulnerability of the human body

and which reveal the performative character of the managerial/professional identity in motorcycling culture.

The owner/governor habitus as represented in *Cycle Canada* magazine

While soldier/laborer masculinity is performed through acts of physical bravery and muscularity, and managerial/professional masculinity is legitimated via demonstrations of skill and intelligence, these measurements of bravery and skill are little more than discursive constructs produced within the discourse of risk. Rather than adhering to these self-imposed concepts of risk, motorcyclists who perform the owner/governor identity use these discursive constructs to harness the corporeal energies of other agents to increase their own political, economic and social capital. The erotic character of the owner/governor habitus derives from an agent's ability to command other individuals and is summarized in the phrase 'power is the greatest aphrodisiac' (Burstyn, 1999). The owner/governor identity subverts the desires of other agents by legitimating certain aspects of the soldier/laborer and managerial/professional habitus while simultaneously directing the energies of other agents towards legitimating its own performance. In motorcycling culture, these corporeal energies are expressed via the discourse of risk.

The owner/governor identity attempts to mediate between the identity performances of other agents by maintaining a false neutrality in the field of masculinity. A statement by Max Burns written in response to proposed off-road motorcycling insurance fees exemplifies this point:

> There once was a concept of assumed risk, a concept that allowed a person some jurisdiction over his own fate if he chose to challenge his abilities and the world. It allowed man to sail out into a flat sea to prove the world round. It allowed man to fly, to shoot into space, and to land on the moon. It allowed man to push his goals forward to better himself and his world, to take chances. Some of his stunts seemed

> absolutely foolish, but it was the challenge he craved, the thrill of going one step beyond and succeeding. Man needs that challenge as he needs food.
>
> September 1985

This seemingly laissez faire approach to personal accountability for the risks of riding a motorcycle allows owner/governor masculinity to literally capitalize on the desires of other agents. Max Burns presses for lower insurance rates by arguing that motorcyclists should be held personally accountable for their behavior and that outlawing or taxing certain behaviors will not eliminate them, but rather make them more dangerous.

Treating risk as an inevitable byproduct of motorcycling and focusing on the context in which it is experienced allows Max Burns to state that the actions of motorcycle stunters are no worse than that of motorcycle racers, and that instead of disparaging the behavior the motorcycle community should attempt to engage these individuals in discussion: "[y]ou, know, talking. Not in some condescending parental tone, but in an attempt to communicate and learn. Not the stunts (sorry) but the reasons. Maybe then a persuasive argument could be made to, at a minimum, take the show away from disapproving eyes." Rather than falling into the dichotomous, good/bad argument regarding motorcycle stunting, Max Burns proposes an alternative approach that might be amenable to all parties involved. Recognizing that judicial and social sanctions will not eliminate stunting or alleviate the stunters' desire for legitimacy in motorcycling culture, taking the offending behavior out of the public's view protects the image of motorcycling as a responsible activity while legitimating stunters' physical exploits as a form of *skill*. Though Max Burns's statement is not necessarily a self-reflexive, conscious attempt to encourage other motorcyclists to a course of action, it could be. Regardless of his intentions, his statement is a product of the owner/governor habitus that motivates agents to consolidate social, political and cultural power by granting other agents a degree of legitimacy and acceptance in motorcycling culture, provided these agents' behaviors benefit the owner/governor.

Where the tendency of the soldier/laborer identity is to maximize performative potential via acts of physical bravery and muscularity, the managerial/professional identity minimizes these displays by demonstrating skill and intelligence at managing the same desire for legitimacy in motorcycling culture. The owner/governor identity seeks to channel these desires in way that augments its own social, political and cultural power by legitimating other masculine habitus through material and symbolic rewards that agents who perform the owner/governor identity are in the unique position to offer. For example, the thrill-seeking, 'defiant' behaviors exhibited by contemporary motorcycle stunters on public roads are the same that motorcycle road-racers of yore exhibited prior to the legitimization and corporatization of motorcycling racing under the auspices of organizations like the AMA and FIM. On public roads, motorcycle stunts and bravado are rewarded with traffic citations and media disapproval, but on the racetrack the most daring and skillful displays are rewarded with social and cultural prestige, and lucrative racing contracts offered by corporations headed by individuals seeking to profit on the desires and corporeal abilities of other motorcyclists. While Max Burns does not condone motorcycling stunting on public roads, nor is he prepared to scapegoat stunters, "I'm not endorsing unsanctioned public displays of stunting, just pointing out that it seems to be part of being a rebellious youth, present time period, motorcycling subset" (July 2005). By adopting the standpoint that a level of risk is 'assumed' by the individual the moment they make the decision to ride, race, or stunt a motorcycle, those agents who self-identify with owner/governor masculinity attempt to limit their responsibility for the potential backlash from the activity should something go wrong, while still reaping the economic, political and social benefits associated with the practice.

Just as other forms of motorcycling like MotoCross and Enduro racing were accepted and actively endorsed by the non-motorcycling public and the motorcycling community once they were brought under the auspices of regional officiating bodies like the AMA and FIM, which

improved rider safety through standardization of practices and regulations, so too has motorcycle stunting become increasingly accepted and viewed as a legitimate, skillful activity in motorcycling culture. Bruce Reeve's fears regarding the negative public attention from stunting have proved unfounded as the sport has become increasingly accepted in the motorcycling community and the popularity of stunt riding has been channeled towards the promotion of industry sanctioned events and venues (March 2000). The rise of stunting in the past decade has led to the creation of semi-professional stunt groups such as Canadian Chaos in 1997, based out of Calgary, Alberta (Canadian Chaos, 2007), as well as Bruce Reeve's dreaded Las Vegas Xtremes, which have begun to stream their own reality-based television show online out of their headquaters in Las Vegas, Nevada (LVX Entertainment, 2008). Even the traditionally staid corporation of BMW Motorrad has been sponsoring world-renowned stunt rider Christan Pfieffer at motorcycle rallies like the Isle of Mann Centenary to help showcase their newest motorcycles and revamp their conservative public image (BMW Motorrad, 2007). The widespread acceptance and increasing popularity of motorcycle stunting is a symbolic triumph for those motorcyclists who have struggled to achieve legitimacy in motorcycle discourse, and because the stunts are performed on closed tracks in front of an approving audience this also satisfies the tendency to manage risk as expressed by the managerial/professional habitus. Yet perhaps it is individuals like Max Burns who benefit the most from this arrangement. Unlike Bruce Reeve who simply dismissed motorcycle stunters as a 'clueless goons', by not taking a stand on the issue of motorcycle stunting Max Burns has appealed to the erotic desires of the soldier/laborer and managerial/professional habitus without offering a definitive opinion that might have excluded either one or the other group.

The example of motorcycle stunting becoming a legitimate activity as noted in the *Cycle Canada*, complete with corporate sponsorship and backing from motorcycle manufactures, seems

antithetical to the supposed rebelliousness that grants the soldier/laborer identity its corporeal power and differentiates it from other masculine performances. A rising market in North America for 'streetfighter' motorcycles, high-performance sportbikes stripped of their streamlined plastics, and various performance parts and fashion accessories designed to appeal to motorcycle hooligans, seemingly indicates that being or at least appearing to be a motorcycle stunter is a marketable identity (Max Burns, September/October 2005). This development parallels the increase in popularity of the leather jacket after the release of *The Wild One* and the ubiquity of the cruiser style motorcycle that emerged from the outlaw biker image of the 1960s and 70s, as these identities were eroticized within the managerial/professional habitus. As these examples illustrate, those agents who perform the owner/governor identity in motorcycle culture wield their delegated social, cultural and political capital to literally capitalize on the desires of other agents by subverting the other individuals' self-interest to fortify their own identity performance in what Burstyn calls "coercive entitlement" (1999).

Another example of the owner/governor habitus's ability to capitalize on the desires of other agents is the recurring issue of loud motorcycle pipes. Loud and raucous motorcycles seem to have been a public nuisance since motorcycles first took to the streets (Ferrar, 1996:24) and in motorcycling culture it is still widely debated whether 'loud pipes save lives'. Proponents claim that other road users are more likely to take notice of motorcyclists if they are able to hear them approaching, but there is little empirical evidence that would suggest that this is the case (Hurt, Ouellet and Thom, 1981). The issue of noise regulations is similar to the debate over mandatory helmet laws and over the years the debate has devolved into a polarized conflict between one group of motorcyclists who promote their desire for personal satisfaction and another camp which promotes the need for social responsibility. However, unlike the helmet debate, the *Cycle Canada* editors have not relied on empirical evidence to support their arguments for quieter motorcycles.

The editors at *Cycle Canada* magazine side with the need for social responsibility and Mike Duff is the first to advocate the voluntary use of motorcycle mufflers. He is quick to assure his readership that "the greatest myth in motorcycling is that noise equals power," and that "*some* mufflers increase horsepower and the usable power range of a motorcycle engine" [my italics] (May 1971). Like Harley-Davidsons and black leather jackets, loud motorcycle exhausts have traditionally been associated with physical strength and power in motorcycling culture, and because the horsepower of one's motorcycle symbolizes the riders' own masculine strength and skill, motorcyclists are loath to do anything to their machines that might hinder their efforts to project a masculine identity. Besides, loud motorcycle exhausts also serves to draw attention to the riders' corporeal performance. Writing from the standpoint of an owner/governor, Mike Duff attempts to coerce his readership into voluntarily lowering their noise pollution by assuaging potential concerns over power loss and focusing on the potential benefits that some motorcycles may experience from using mufflers. The operative word in his claim is that *some* motorcyclists may benefit; he is not being directly untruthful, but nor is he providing a substantive argument for using a muffler other than his own 'philosophical interpretation'.

The issue of voluntary noise restrictions seems to fade from discussion in *Cycle Canada* magazine only to resurface fourteen years later when Bruce Reeve associates loud motorcycles with loud, obnoxious people (June 1985), a view he reiterates in a later article which discusses his attendance at the famous Daytona Bike Week, a weeklong party and motorcycle rally attended by tens of thousands of motorcyclists and non-motorcyclists alike:

> The whole town [Daytona] bends over frontwards to welcome bikers each March, who show their gratitude by installing straight pipes on their Harleys specifically for the duration of Bike Week. Back home they'd get ticketed for making an obnoxious racket: Daytona Beach smiles and says, "Say, handsome, is that a big wallet in your pocket or are you happy to see me?
>
> May 1995

Although the main focus of the article is the Daytona rally rather than loud motorcycle pipes, Bruce Reeve appeals to his readers' supposedly elevated sense of social decorum while also poking fun at the stereotype of the Rich Urban Biker who is able to emulate outlaw biker subculture only because it is profitable to the motorcycling industry. Also, his allusion to the populace of Daytona being bent over a barrel indicates that he views the residents as making the best of a bad situation by profiting from the thousands of rowdy bikers even though they have little control over the situation if things get out of hand.

After another ten years, noisy motorcycles become Bruce Reeve's central area of focus and he seems to be taking the matter more seriously this time:

> Sooner or later, our inability to govern our own sound limits will come back and bite us on the ass. Too bad, because the backlash against loud interlopers has already made stock exhaust systems quieter than they need to be. Authorities strike back where they can, tightening regulations where they're not needed.
>
> Bruce Reeve, September/October 2005

By urging their readership to voluntarily reduce the noise generated by their motorcycles, Mike Duff and Bruce Reeve reveal their desire to maintain their social, political and economic power, derived from their status as authors and cultural gatekeepers. The editors attempt to coerce their readership into compliance by reinforcing the ideal of self-responsibility and framing their suggestions as ultimately beneficial to the reader, thereby channeling the affective energies of other agents to their own aims while appearing to do the opposite. While it is probable that all motorcyclists would benefit from decreased police harassment and the technological benefits offered by cleaner, quieter motorcycles, the editors of *Cycle Canada* will be the ultimate benefactors. It is likely that taming the loud and obnoxious image of motorcycling will result in more people being attracted to the sport of motorcycling, and every potential motorcyclist is also a potential motorcycling magazine buyer. The *Cycle Canada* magazine editors walk a fine line between their deference to the broader needs of the non-motorcycling public and the desires of

their readership. By expanding their readership the editors would expand not only their economic potential, but more importantly, their social and political influence in motorcycling culture.

The editors most often occupy the unique position of the owner/governor identity in their texts and have the potential to be very influential in Canadian motorcycling culture because they are employed as knowledgeable and entertaining commentators whose columns are read by thousands of other motorcyclists almost every month. While most editors at *Cycle Canada* do not draw explicit attention to their superior cultural, social or political position with respect to their readers, they do attempt to justify or legitimate their status by serving as the gatekeepers of motorcycling culture. For example, Max Burns attests time and time again that that he does not hold himself to the expectations of others, exemplifying the concept of coercive entitlement by demonstrating superior cultural and social power, and setting his own standard which others should hope to achieve (November/December 1995, March 2000, June 2000 September/October 2000, February 2005, August 2005). He also differentiates himself by indicating that unlike other motorcyclists, he is not bound by the same chronological concerns as the 9 to 5, workaday motorcyclist:

> Make no mistake, the opportunity [to ride] was taken, not given. Nor did luck have anything to do with it. Each trip accompanied a conscious decision to abandon day-to-day nags and the supposed responsibilities of life, swapped at a financial loss for a few cherished experiences gathered in passing. Contrary to popular misconception I was not paid to go on these adventures…Still, I consider myself a wealthy person. It's a wealth of no cash value, riches accumulated not from earning a living but from the experience of living.
>
> November/December 2005

Taken at face value it would seem that Max Burns's statement summons the image of the carefree and irresponsible motorcyclist most often attributed to those performing the soldier/laborer identity. However, if we acknowledge that he is discussing the publication of his newest motorcycling book titled *These are a few of my favorite roads*, we recognize that Max Burns is instead calling attention to the breadth of his cultural, social and political influence in

motorcycling culture, thus demonstrating his identity as an owner/governor of motorcycling culture. Bruce Reeve also calls attention to his position as the head editor of *Cycle Canada* magazine and the greater responsibility he shoulders because he is beholden to both social disposition and the expectations of the imagined readers of *Cycle Canada*:

> If I do my job as editor well enough, readers should still end up with a magazine worth reading, no matter how difficult a month we have during the production cycle. But the issue you hold in your hands is a product of its environment…Perhaps the reason I can admit this is that recently I've been acting as a judge of large-circulation magazines for the Canadian Society of Magazine Editors awards program.
>
> June 2000

By drawing explicit attention to himself in the article Bruce Reeve indicates that his combined social, cultural and political command over motorcycling culture is greater than that of the average reader, and thus he is uniquely qualified to serve as the head of *Cycle Canada* and as someone capable of judging the form and content of other Canadian magazines.

In their capacity as authors, the editors of *Cycle Canada* magazine serve as cultural gatekeepers who police the imaginary boundaries of motorcycling identities in Canada through their categorization and critique of motorcycling discourse (Bourdieu, 1987). But magazine editors are not the only motorcyclists who have the opportunity to present themselves as the owners/governors of motorcycling culture. Just as most motorcyclists are capable of demonstrating their physical bravery or motorcycling skill through corporeal displays, most motorcyclists are capable of inculcating the necessary dispositions that would allow them greater access to social, cultural and political power. A motorcyclist need not be a widely read magazine editor to have a voice in motorcycling culture, as there are many knowledgeable and influential motorcyclists who organize sporting events, own motorcycle race teams or lead organizations such as the AMA or FIM. Individuals in these social positions may or may not perform the owner/governor identity, but are nevertheless in the unique position to command and reward

other motorcyclists for their behaviors, while simultaneously benefiting from the corporeal energies of others.

Change and continuity

Throughout the thirty-five year period of *Cycle Canada* magazine which I analyzed there emerged more continuities than radical changes within the heterosexist discourse and hyper-masculine gender representations in motorcycling culture. The overall representation of motorcycling culture in *Cycle Canada* magazine reveals systemic gender biases even as the language used to discuss motorcycling has increasingly become gender neutral. Editors like Mike Duff and John Cooper initially use mostly masculine pronouns in their publications but made the shift to gender-neutral terms such as 'motorcyclist' or 'rider' by 1980. However, their articles still feature narratives about women, written by men, for an assumed male audience. Though the language of motorcycling has changed, the discourse has not.

This systemic gender bias is most prominent when examining the idealized gender performances that the *Cycle Canada* editors describe in their columns, with the most articulate editor being Mike Duff. Through his vivid accounts of the motorcycle road races that he has participated in and the experiential joys that accrue to the man who stands on the podium in first place he is able to portray motorcycling as a pursuit reserved for men, "I have shared the ultimate experience. To stand alone, thronged by cheering thousands proclaiming an accomplishment that was singularly mine: from this stardom it is not possible to emerge unchanged" (Mike Duff, September 1980). Mike Duff embodies the owner/governor habitus when he promotes the physical and social rewards of motorcycle racing to his readership. Described as an elite motorcycle racer by editor Georgs Kolesnikovs, the following 'credentials' follow at the end of every column Mike Duff published in *Cycle Canada* magazine from 1971 to 1975; "Mike Duff,

one of the 23 riders in the world to lap the Isle of Man circuit at more than 100-mph [as of July 1972], is now retired after a European racing career that saw him ranked as high as second in the world championship standing" (Mike Duff, July 1972). Though motorcycle racing was a predominately male sport at the time that Mike Duff was writing and remains so today, he seems to go out of his way to emphasize this point in his writings to create solidarity with his perceived male audience. The fantasy he commonly describes is distinctly masculine, as is the discourse he uses to describe it. The protagonists and antagonists in his narratives are all male, and the penultimate reward that the protagonist is showered with after triumphing over his competitors on the racetrack is the admiration of other men. Often Mike Duff's tales go into great description regarding the affective bond between *man* and machine and imply that the motorcycle serves as an extension of the rider's masculinity, "[b]ecause the island races are the most demanding for both *man* and *machine*, riders who have no desire to compete in Europe professionally are attracted to the TT races as men are attracted to climb Mt. [Everest] [my italics]" (Mike Duff July 1971). Mike Duff emphasizes that single-minded devotion to improving one's riding skill and machinery is integral to achieving success both on the racetrack and in the field of masculinities.

Mike Duff's perception of motorcycle racing as a singularly masculine pursuit is exemplified in his many columns in which he discusses the Isle of Man TT, a 37 ¾ mile per lap motorcycle circuit that is run on public roads on the Isle of Man in the British Isles:

> The TT stands head and shoulders above all other race meetings. The personal satisfaction from just competing and succeeding to finish is beyond any journalistic capability I possess. The TT must be experienced to be believed and appreciated. The Isle of Man TT is a race apart. Its absence will be missed by those thousands who live for nothing other than to ride the island and know that something worthwhile has been done, if for nobody other than one's self.
>
> July 1975

The Isle of Man circuit is the oldest motorcycle racing course still in use today and consists almost entirely of public roads that are closed for the duration of the race events, and it is also the

same circuit which claimed the life of Mike Duff's racing colleague in 1962 (February 1985). Though the course is still used for Tourist Trophy races (time-trial races), as Mike Duff explains the FIM had good reason to withdraw the Isle of Man's status as a world championship classic, "[n]o other race course is so dangerous and it is the personal risk which has called the TT's death knell. The Island races have come under a tremendous amount of criticism in the last few years as speeds [sic] have increased while safety has not" (July 1975). As of February 2008, more than 225 racers have perished from injuries sustained while racing on the circuit (Lamp, 2007). For Mike Duff, the Isle of Man's attraction lies not in the monetary rewards for winning a race, but in the danger of the circuit; to navigate it at racing speeds requires that a rider possess both a high level of skill and daring, qualities that are appreciable to motorcyclists who perform the managerial/professional or soldier/laborer masculinity, "[r]acing at the Isle of Man could be considered the last form of gladiatorial challenge a road racing motorcyclist can attempt" (Ibid). Thus, the masculinity of the rider is also linked to the masculine character of the machine, "[p]erception of equipment or machine preparation often plays a critical role in a rider's approach to the race. There may be absolutely nothing wrong with this machine, but if the rider thinks something is not quite right it can easily affect the way he performs" (Mike Duff, 1980). Similarly, performing a masculine gender identity that will be accepted by one's peers in motorcycling culture requires extensive preparation that is afforded only by having embodied a masculine habitus.

In an unforeseen twist, Mike Duff ceased contributing to *Cycle Canada* in April of 1985 to "take on the role, physical appearance and name of a woman. The Mike Duff of old is the new Michelle Duff to be, a person whom many of his acquaintances may be unprepared to accept" (John Cooper, May 1985). This was most likely not a decision that Mike Duff made on a whim, and I find it intriguing that he is able to project a hyper-masculine gender identity in his writing

without betraying what might have been going on in his personal life. It was not divulged whether he left the magazine on his own accord or was asked to leave, but Mike Duff's departure from the magazine and his decision to perform a feminine gender identity exemplifies the point that the *Cycle Canada* editors are projecting an idealized version of own experience and identity in a fashion that they think will appeal to their readers, while ignoring some of the detractions of practicing such an identity.

After Mike Duff's departure from *Cycle Canada* editor Chris Knowles steps in to write about road-racing in May of 1985 and by January of 1995, Claude Léonard had taken over the position of racer guru. Both Chris Knowles and Claude Léonard focus on motorcycle racing in their columns, road racing for the former and off-roading for the latter, but they do not write with the same flair as Mike Duff, nor do they attempt to portray success as a motorcycle racer as the epitome of masculinity. Many of their articles discuss the physical injuries that racers incur and the emotional energy required to become a motorcycle racer (Chris Knowles, June 1990, November/December 1990, February 1995, September/October 1995; Claude Léonard, March 1995, July 1995, February 2000, August 2000, January 2005, March 2005). Instead of glorifying their own racing ability, these two editors take a less serious approach to their own accomplishments (or lack thereof) and still grant other motorcyclists the credit they deserve:

> I finished the series with three wins, two seconds and a fourth. But so did Guy Daigle, and since he beat me at the last round…I admit I was a little disappointed when I crossed the finish line. But I was quickly able to put things in perspective. Upon returning to my pit, I learned that my buddy Joël had crashed hard and been carted away. So I squeezed his bikes, gear and son into my van and trailer and headed for the hospital. Watching Joël hobble out of emergency with a broken bone in his right foot and a stretched ligament in his left knee, it was pretty hard to complain about my fate.
>
> Claude Léonard, January 2005

They are also willing to poke fun at their own riding abilities and masculine performance, as Chris Knowles writes about his team's dismal performance at a six-hour endurance race:

> No trophy, but we got to pass a lot of bigger bikes (most of whose riders didn't know the track), got lots of track time, enjoyed the camaraderie of fellow retirement-home residents, and generally had a wail of a good time.
>
> June 1990

Chris Knowles and Claude Léonard's self-deprecatory style and willingness to question Mike Duff's supposed 'ultimate experience' of standing on the podium to the exclusion of all else indicate a shift in the editorial direction of *Cycle Canada* magazine and the perceived readership of the magazine. The expansion of the motorcycle market in the 1980s meant that there were a greater number of novices eager to assume the identity of a motorcyclist, but who were not well versed in the history of motorcycling or interested in competitive motorcycle racing.

However, there are many topics of discussion that do not require any cultural knowledge to engage the reader and which appeal to a broad range of masculine habitus. A longstanding theme in *Cycle Canada* magazine which illustrates masculine hegemony in motorcycling culture is the continued references and allusions to motorcycles being used as a heterosexual dating ploy, where narratives about motorcycling are used as literary backdrops against which the editors reveal their sexual exploits. Claude Léonard gives one of the most vivid accounts as he writes about one of his youthful forays aboard his first motorcycle:

> Many years ago, an indecently cute young lady offered me a copy of Van Morrison's Moondance album—a definite desert-island must-have, as in "what ten albums would you bring if...." I was heavily into music at the time and definitely sold on Van the Man, but she was mostly hooked on a verse from the title track, where Mr. Morrison would cut in over a haunting bass line and sing, "It's a marvellous night for a moondance/ With the stars up above in your eyes/ A fantabulous night to make romance/ 'Neath the cover of October skies." The words, the music, the mood, the timing, everything seemed to fit. I'd just bought my first bike at the time, a dual-purpose DT125 with a small rack about the size of a rolled-up sleeping bag behind the seat, and we would just ride off to the back woods and, well...ah…Gee, where was I?"
>
> April 2000

In the remainder of his column Claude Léonard details the hazards he encountered whilst traveling across the country to various race events to race dirtbikes. This story returns us to the

notion of the affective event which creates solidarity between the writer and the reader, in this instance by offering a decidedly heteronormative motorcycling narrative that supposedly reaffirms Claude Léonard's heterosexual identity.

In a column subtitled "Buttman of the North" and rife with sexual allusions, Max Burns offers a humorous perspective on the matter of homosocial solidarity in motorcycle culture, "I know of one guy who deliberately buys his motorcycles based on passenger discomfort because he doesn't want the wife to come along" (May 2000). Although he uses gender neutral language throughout the column when referring to motorcycle passengers, we implicitly understand that because women are the majority of passengers, this story is meant to create solidarity with his male readers. Similarly, Bruce Reeve offers a humorous anecdote about receiving the following advice given to him by a friend:

> Currently Scott is riding BMW R69S. "As a friend of mine says, 'In a classless society style is equity,' and you really can't beat the look of it. Older motorcycles are definitely more attractive than newer motorcycles, but you've got to have a comfortable seat or they're completely ineffective as a dating ploy."
>
> March 1990

Fifteen years later in *Cycle Canada*, Bruce Reeve again discusses his friend 'Scott' by poking fun at his prior use of motorcycles as a dating ploy. This time around the theme of his column is the explicitly heterosexist connection between 'males and females and motorcycling':

> Specifically, it's the relationships—or maybe the dirt—between guys and girls or men and women and how they've been affected by motorcycling. We want to hear about your pick-ups, dust-ups, break-ups and make-ups, and if we publish your story, we'll send you $50.
>
> February 2005

Bruce Reeve then gives his own account of an extended motorcycling trip that he and his wife went on, and how half-way through he realized that his wife did not share his same enthusiasm for motorcycling. The story is told in a humorous manner and though he makes light of the fact that he had "rather overestimated her [his wife's] enthusiasm for endless

bleak expanses of spruce in northern Quebec", this statement nevertheless marks her as not having the same desires as a motorcyclist (Ibid). Bruce then continues to differentiate his wife from his other motorcycling buddies as she then proceeded to give him "the full silent treatment" for his supposed transgression (Ibid), thereby reaffirming her otherness by playing on the stereotype of the passive-aggressive female.

While all the editors made jokes, told stories and alluded to sexual transgressions at some point over their career at *Cycle Canada* magazine*,* these narratives and comments stand out as the most prominent examples of heteronormative writings not because they are especially crude or overtly sexist, but precisely because they are constructed to be humorously entertaining to the imagined 'average reader'. Yet the editors become sensitive when they stand accused of heterosexist behavior. In a column dated April 1985, John Cooper criticizes a Quebec based study by Denis Bachand and Jacques Couture which portrays motorcycles as 'the objects of a phallic cult' where "[r]iders are shown as targets for advertising messages that rely on mankind's most basic instincts. Motorcycles, the study would seem to say, are only marketed as part of a mystique that can be packaged by formula as easily as breakfast cereal" (John Cooper, April 1985). To be fair, the study does state that "[o]ne must conquer, dominate and enjoy the motorcycle and the road the way one would with a woman" (Ibid), but are Bachand and Couture's observations about motorcycle advertisements really so different from some of my own regarding representations of masculinity in motorcycling texts? Their observation that 'one must dominate and enjoy the motorcycle and the road' parallels my own recognition that control and mastery of the motorcycle in the physical realm is conceptually linked to the virtual mastery of the qualities the motorcycle is thought to embody. Bachand and Couture's allusion to dominating the feminine is akin to embodying both the traditional masculine qualities of technomorphism and the feminine qualities of biomorphism to perform a masculine identity in motorcycling culture. Perhaps John Cooper's

protest stems more from the researchers' notion that motorcyclists are easily swayed by clever marketing campaigns, "It's hot stuff, but also a rather unflattering picture both of motorcyclists and the manufacturers who hope to sell their products" (John Cooper, April 1985). If he thought Bachand and Couture's study was unflattering, I wonder what would he think of my analysis of his writings?

However, the intent of my research has not been to portray motorcyclists in a negative light but to engage in a critical analysis of motorcycling culture in Canada. Over the course of my analysis I have revealed some aspects of the Canadian motorcycling culture that are discriminatory, particularly towards women and people of color. Some editors attempt to appeal or participate in this discriminatory behavior in order to foster solidarity with what they perceive as a like-minded readership and these attitudes may have negative effect on motorcycling culture by turning off potential motorcyclists from motorcycling because they do not want to be associated with this hyper-masculine culture. Some of my findings may appear to be criticisms of particular editors at *Cycle Canada*, but it is important to remember that this research was undertaken in the spirit of critical analysis and I chose to analyze the magazine because I also have a great respect for and admiration of the editors and their writings. I am conscious of the fact that my comments may be perceived as detracting from the image of motorcycling in North America, but as Bruce Reeve notes about his decision to publish damaging information about the sport:

> Part of the problem, I'm sure, is the immaturity of motorcycling in this country. The sport's reputation is considered so fragile that it can't tolerate an honest discussion of any aspect that isn't relentlessly cheerful or positive…We can close our eyes to unpleasantness, but sooner or later we'll need to open them to see where we're going. If things have gotten worse in the interim, I'd hate to think it was because I contributed to a problem by pretending it didn't exist.
>
> April 1990

I would like to think that by framing my criticisms using a tri-partite theory of hyper-masculinity in motorcycling culture, we may focus on the positive agency involved in the performance of masculine identities while still recognizing that there remains room to include other figurations of identity that subvert the concepts of heteronormativity and homosociality.

As I stated at the beginning of this thesis, my research is as much a critical self-analysis of my own identity as a motorcyclist as it is an examination of motorcycling culture in Canada. Though I have tried to maintain a level of objectivity, many of my critiques have also affected me on a personal level and have forced me to reevaluate my own identity performance. Participating in motorcycling culture inevitably means that one will engage in a heterosexist and hyper-masculine discourse, whether you are reading motorcycle magazines, browsing a motorcycle showroom or interacting with your peers. At times this self-reflection has been difficult to accomplish and my revelations have not always been easy to accept because they apply not only to me, but my father, my friends and motorcycling culture as a whole. However, acknowledging the inequalities in motorcycling culture is the first step towards affecting change. By explicating the social, political, economic, technological and historical context which have given rise to the particular formations of hyper-masculinity in motorcycling culture, the soldier/laborer, managerial/professional and owner/governor habitus, I hope to have encouraged others motorcyclists to employ their masculine identities as a positive force. By empowering other agents with knowledge of how their efforts to build group solidarity at the expense of others negatively affects motorcycling culture as a whole we may break the legacy of motorcycling as a homosocial culture dominated by hyper-masculine interests. As Chris Knowles remarks about his daughter's interest in motorcycling, motorcycling is an affective event that offers the potential for solidarity regardless of cultural or social factors:

> I saw it in my daughter's eyes, a certain sparkle that conveyed the joy of accomplishment, the satisfaction of facing apprehension head on, the wonder of

> future possibility. I recognized the look immediately, for they were my eyes of almost 30 years ago I was peering into… [since that time] the little Z50 has given other youngsters their first taste of motorcycling. Some were immediately enthralled; some hopped off and never asked for another ride. I was never able to figure out just what it was in their nature that caused them to take one fork in this path over the other. Will my daughter follow me and develop the same seamless obsession for the sport that I did? I'd say she's off to a good start.
>
> July 1995

These tales of empowerment and disempowerment along gender lines are common themes in motorcycle narratives and though some of my observations that motorcycling culture can be heterosexist and exclusionary, there is nothing that inherently makes it so.

By combining a socio-historical understanding of motorcycling culture with a critical analysis of *Cycle Canada* magazine I have revealed that motorcycling culture in Canada is becoming increasingly diversified and is no longer solely a male preserve. With the continued increase in the number of registered motorcycle riders in Canada, more of whom are women than ever, motorcycling culture has become diversified as well. This diversification is a benefit not only to those of us who enjoy reading about other riders' experiences, but to the motorcycling community as a whole. Riders from a variety of social backgrounds contribute their cultural and social knowledge to the culture and may add their influence to the voice of motorcycling community in dealing with political issues in mainstream North American society. Most importantly, a more diverse motorcycling culture would help demonstrate that the past developments in motorcycling were not inevitable, and that things could have been, and still could be otherwise.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

In this thesis I have sought to expand upon my socio-historical analysis by analyzing regularly published columns in *Cycle Canada* magazine in order to provide empirical evidence of the gendered discourse of motorcycling culture. Using a feminist approach, I have shown how the soldier/laborer, managerial/professional and owner/governor habitus compete for legitimacy in the field of masculinities via representations of hyper-masculinity in motorcycling culture.

Questioning how masculinity is *represented* in motorcycling culture through the text of *Cycle Canada* magazine illustrates the point that performative identities in motorcycling culture are diverse and not easily categorized. The editors at *Cycle Canada* recognize this as well and so they cater to the perceived interests of an ideal reader in an effort to create solidarity with their readership. Yet I am left wondering what place women have forged for themselves in contemporary motorcycling culture if the discourse continues to be dominated by the three hyper-masculine forms that I have described at length. For thirty-five years the text of *Cycle Canada* magazine has featured narratives detailing the adventures of the soldier/laborer, managerial/professional and owner/governor motorcyclist, but as of August 2007 this hegemony has been challenged by the addition of a female columnist. While adding a female to the mix does not inherently change the character of the magazine, it does give me something to ponder regarding the change in the editorial direction *Cycle Canada* magazine in the past two-years.

In 2004, *Cycle Canada* magazine was sold to LC Media by Turbopress, and shortly thereafter Bruce Reeve retired as head editor at *Cycle Canada,* handing over the reins to Costa Mouzouris in November of 2005. Claude Leonard left the magazine in July of 2005 while Max Burns continued to write for the magazine up until November 2006. Neil Graham joined the

magazine in November/December 2005, and Andrea Goodman, a road-racer herself, came aboard in August of 2007 as a guest columnist, writing about the favorite topic of every motorcycle editor—helmet legislation and rider safety. Her more recent publication in March of 2008 suggests that she will likely continue to write for *Cycle Canada* but there has been no further indication that she will become a permanent contributor.

Female contributors have featured in *Cycle Canada* in the past only as guest columnists (May 1980, October 1985), but the recent addition of Andrea Goodman and the changes in the other columnist positions suggests that the magazine owners may be trying to attract the growing market of female riders/readers. She has the necessary cultural capital inculcated from being a motorcycle road-racer and from serving as an instructor of women's only riding courses, and more importantly, she admits to having been a longstanding reader of *Cycle Canada*:

> I stopped and stared at page 16 of the Sept/Oct 1998 issue of *Cycle Canada*—it was my first look at Kawasaki's ZRX1100. One moment I was unaware of its existence, the next moment I felt I'd always wanted it. I sat on the ZRX for the first time a few months later at the '99 Supershow and was surprised to discover that it nearly fit me. I had loved the look of the bike in the magazine, but until that moment hadn't imagined riding it. Throwing a leg over it added a tactile dimension to my fantasies and so I fell in love.
>
> Andrea Goodman, June 2007

What is interesting in her writing is that she seems to understand that the majority of her readers will be men and she has no intention of playing the subordinate female in order to appeal to the traditional perception of the woman as passenger. Her narratives detail her experiences as a female motorcyclist and she directly confronts the issue of gender-bias in motorcycling culture:

> While teaching women's rider training weekends—instructors and students alike are female— I am reminded that we are not all cut from the same cloth. While I often feel out of place amongst motorcyclists, women motorcyclists make me feel less conspicuous: *I don't expect a deep sense of connection but neither do I feel out of place*. Speaking a few years ago on a panel with four women who ride, I was taken aback to discover that we had nothing in common beyond a motorcycle license. They thought I was a freak racer instead of a fellow rider, and I felt just as out of place as when I'm called "sir' at a gas station. Just because you know one thing about a person doesn't mean you know anything else about them (my italics).

She attempts to establish a social bond with her readers by refusing to presuppose that all female riders are kindred spirits, thereby demonstrating that regardless of sex, motorcycling offers only the *possibility* for solidarity. Andrea Goodman also acknowledges that motorcycling culture's legacy as a masculine domain means that women are often treated as second-class members of the culture, but that the increasing number and diversity of women-only motorcycling clubs signifies that women are finally becoming recognized as cultural force in their own right (July 2007).

The editors at *Cycle Canada* magazine have also begun to take notice of women's increased participation in motorcycling culture over the last two years as well. Since Costa Mouzouris took the helm of *Cycle Canada,* the magazine has begun to feature more articles about women and offer them more recognition within the sport. An article published in August 2007, details Neil Graham's competitive efforts at a single event in the Women's Cup Challenge racing series in Canada during the 2007 season. The premise of the article seems to be an exercise in contradiction and perhaps more of a publicity stunt than a serious attempt at journalism, but Neil Graham's attentiveness and creative ability convey a serious intent. What better way to highlight the gender divisions that exist in the sport of motorcycling? The article is titled "Just One of the Girls", with the word 'girls' set in a flowery, purple font to emphasize Neil Graham's 'feminine' assignment, and he has written the article in a tongue-in-cheek style by cracking self-deprecatory jokes to massage his own bruised ego:

> When first year Women's Cup director Ken Pieschke approaches me in the pit, his face has an apologetic expression. He is in the middle of a shoving match between the novice Grujic and the expert Gareau. Grujic wants me to be qualified as an expert, even though I'm not riding for points and am essentially invisible on the grid. But Gareau is having none of it, and wants me shunted to the back of the pack, as far away from her as possible, on the grounds that I am not a woman and am without rights in the Women's Cup. I briefly consider claiming that I am a

> woman to get my grid position back, but in the end I take the high road. "Wherever you put me is fine," I tell Pieschke, with an unconvincing smile.
>
> Neil Graham, August 2007

Making light of the traditional gender divisions between men and women, "…Colin Fraser has, as a way to make me feel welcome, I presume, entered me as Nell Graham. With my feminizaton complete, I retire to the hotel and a night of fitful sleep" (August, 2007), Neil Graham is nevertheless respectful of his female competitors' abilities on the track by commenting that several of them "have the potential to be top finishers against the men" (Ibid). Interestingly, he measures the women against their male counterparts, thereby indicating that this masculine ideal is the ultimate motorcycling performance. While it may not have been his intent, Neil Graham's article illustrates the arbitrary separation between the men's and women's racing leagues, and the higher level of social, political, economic and cultural support that are available to men in the sport.

Neil Graham's article highlights the continued separation of the masculine and the feminine in motorcycling culture as well. The pages of *Cycle Canada* are rife with advertisements for 'his' and 'hers' motorcycling gear that are tell-tale primarily by the menacing black products marketed to men, and the soft pastel colors marketed towards women. Pink bikes, baby-blue racing suits and genuine Harley-Davidson helmets that "feature a lower, profile, an anti-static liner to reduce helmet hair and notched ponytail cut out" (April 2008), reinforce the traditional concept of femininity as performed by women clothed in pastel colors and wearing their long hair in a ponytail. However, perhaps there would have been confusion amongst male riders if the article had not specifically stated that the helmets were made for women, lest some male biker find that these new Harley-Davidson helmets fit oh-so-well over his long, greasy ponytail.[13] Not

[13] Long, greasy hair and matted beards has been a trademark of the biker lifestyle since the post-war era (Ferrar, 1996:83)

all riding gear designed for women emphasizes their 'femininity' and in fact, there is probably more gear available for women that mimics the sinister, bad-boy style of *The Wild One* than that which is designed to clearly denote femininity. Yet the decision to wear a pink helmet or track suit is a choice that some motorcyclists continue to make. Dot Robinson, the founder of the Motor Maids, "painted her Harleys pink, wore pink outfits, and attached a lipstick holder to her bike", all the while beating her male competitors in some of the toughest off-road races throughout the 1920s and 30s (Ferrar, 1996:26). Since that time motorcycling culture has undergone significant change, but as evidenced by contemporary divisions between male and female race series and the feminization of motorcycling gear, motorcycling culture has retained its hyper-masculine character.

Perhaps these boundaries have been maintained in part because of the marketing efforts of the motorcycling industry. The motorcycle market reached a saturation point as of 2006, with motorcycle sales falling off after a steady increase as the baby boomers bought into the motorcycle craze during the 1990s and early 2000s (MMCI 2007:3). With faltering sales, motorcycle manufacturers are looking at diversifying from the cruiser dominated market to smaller displacement motorcycles and scooters designed to attract new riders, both male and female. In 2006, Honda released the CB125R to the Canadian market with much fanfare. The *Cycle Canada* editors praised the motorcycles' excellent handling, good looks and low-power output as being a potential draw for novice motorcyclists, particularly women (May 2007). Other manufacturers like Yamaha, Kawasaki and Suzuki are following suit with their own new or updated beginner-bike models, and they have also stepped up their promotion of small, economical scooters for our fuel conscious world (Yamaha, 2007, Kawasaki, 2007, Suzuki, 2007). However, these manufacturers tread a fine line between tapping into the feminine market and alienating their masculine customers because it is precisely the hyper-masculine legacy of the

motorcycle that sells motorcycles in North America. As one *Cycle Canada* reader submits to the Readers Write section:

> My brother-in-law still has his Bonnie 650 and I still have my 1967 Honda 305 Superhawk. We no longer need litre bikes to prove our masculinity and we are seriously considering buying the small CBR. Sport bikes cause my 50-year-old body to contort too much and cruisers just aren't my thing.
>
> Mike Bailey, July 2007

It is no coincidence that large, expensive cruisers became the epitome of masculinity for the baby boomer generation who were fueled by childhood memories of old American and British motorcycles and the biker image of the Hell's Angels. But this trend has begun to change as the baby boomers have already bought their new motorcycles or are getting out of the sport. A new market for more economical and rider-friendly motorcycles has opened up amongst potential motorcyclists who wish to demonstrate their skill and motorcycling prowess, rather than attempting to convey an image of physical grandeur and power via ownership of chromed-out cruisers.

In order to tap into the growing female market, will motorcycle manufacturers issue standard production models in bubblegum pink and baby blue, with requisite lipstick holders on the handlebars? While a pink motorcycle may be more subversive to the hyper-masculine character of motorcycling culture, given that much of the culture, its members, and the motorcycling industry are involved in (re)producing the dominant hierarchy of masculine gender performance, it is likely that these concepts would be highly offensive to the vast majority of contemporary motorcycle enthusiasts. However, the change in the writing staff at *Cycle Canada* signifies the direction that the magazine, the industry and motorcycling culture at large appears to be taking with regards to the greater opportunities afforded to women in the sport. As Andrea Goodman states in her July 2007 column, women riders have a variety of interests and riding styles like any motorcycle enthusiast, but what draws them to sport are the affections generated

by the act of motorcycling. This is reflected by the increasing amount of editorial content in *Cycle Canada* about women that is directed towards a wider audience than the typical old-boys' camp fire tale about motorcycling and fornicating in the woods. These editorial changes may draw a more diverse group of new readers to the magazine, but it could also turn other readers away or dissatisfy readers accustomed to the 'old' version of *Cycle Canada.* My father has already expressed his disinterest in the new format of the magazine and stated that he will not be renewing his subscription primarily because he does not enjoy the reviews or columns written by the chief editor, Costa Mouzouris. Perhaps my father is no longer the target audience of the magazine, as Costa Mouzouris admits that he intends to take *Cycle Canada* magazine in a new direction now that he has assumed the position of head editor:

> When Bruce took over editorial responsibility in 1990, he was placed at the helm of a sinking ship…With a lot of hard work, *CC* not only survived imminent collapse, but also became the largest-selling motorcycling publication in Canada…*CC* will certainly be different in the future, but changes will be driven by better attempting to serve our longstanding readers.
>
> November/December 2005

Could these changes signify the magazine owner's awareness that women represent a largely untapped potential market any more so than the previous format changes that occurred in November 1980, and January 2000, signified changes in the motorcycling culture at those times? It is an interesting question that can only be addressed with further investigation.

Tracking these editorial changes presents an interesting opportunity for future research that would expand upon the knowledge base developed over this research project. Since the inception of *Cycle Canada* magazine there has been a 'Readers Write' section where readers may offer their opinion on the material presented in previous monthly editions in the form of letters to the editor (March 2005). Though these presentations are biased because the letters are hand-picked by the editors for their entertainment value, they may serve as a gauge of how an editor's writing is received by the motorcycling community. The letters are sometimes complementary of

a particular piece, "I enjoy your magazine because of its variety and I find the diversity of the writers and the subject matter entertaining" (Graham Hodder, November?December 2005), yet others are scathing, "[a]s a lady motorcyclist, I hated the story on the Montreal Harley Show [CC May '05]. Why cover a low event that would be more aptly featured by *Sleazy Rider*. I'm seriously considering canceling my subscription" (Isabel Galle, July 2005). In one letter, a reader comments on the decidedly heterosexist discourse used by the *Cycle Canada* editors:

> Your request for tales of Weird Romance [CC April '05] asks for readers' stories "that involved members of the opposite sex." Why perpetuate the myth that romance is just for members of the opposite sex? Since a fair size of our diverse population actually aim their romantic notions toward members of the same sex, could you not just invite tales of weird romance period? I'm not saying you should invite gay stories, but that you refer to romantic relations in a generic way, so that the limited vision of what the majority sees as normal and acceptable is not presented to people as the only way. I only bring this up because *CC* has always been open and honest about every story, bringing us tales of all kinds of people in all kinds of situations.
>
> Stephen Krahn, June 2005

Bruce Reeve's response below the letter invites all submissions, "regardless of sexual orientation", but I question whether a 'camp fire tale about two men motorcycling and fornicating in the woods' would be featured in the pages of *Cycle Canada* magazine (June 2005). Obviously I am not the only reader to notice the heterosexist discourse used by the editors to project their hyper-masculine motorcycling identities. Analyzing readers' letters alongside the articles of the editors would indicate how motorcycling identities have developed in motorcycling culture over the past thirty-five years, while providing comparative viewpoints as to whether the editors' performative identities are accepted as legitimate by their audience.

To maintain their cultural and social capital, magazine editors must protect their cultural knowledge and promote their understanding of motorcycling above others', much to the ire of some readers. Neil Graham is particularly antagonistic in his denunciation of the cruiser motorcycle as a poseur's bike:

> My interest in motorcycles is not based on socializing with other riders nor is it fuelled by vanity (my vanity is separate from my motorcycling). I'm also iffy on riding in the rain and my ass hurts after an hour on the highway. I'm fond of motorcycles mainly because I like the sensation of leaning into a corner. So if a motorcycle, life a cruiser, is compromised at cornering, then for me it's like an airplane that's not good at flying or a hammer with an aversion to nails.
>
> June 2007

As a cultural gatekeeper, Neil Graham attempts to create solidarity with readers by relating that he takes the utmost pleasure from the act of motorcycling when he is cornering and that all other affections generated by the act of motorcycling are secondary to that visceral sensation. Though he does not criticize any individual or group of motorcyclists directly in the previous quote like he does in some of his other articles (May 2007, July 2007), Neil Graham's critique of the cruiser riding style and type of motorcycle are interpreted by some members of the motorcycling community as an attack on their motorcycling identity.

In response to his comments directed at cruiser riders, one reader mockingly asks whether "…you [Neil Graham] think your reality is more significant than mine?", while another takes a more combative approach "[t]he ranting from the pulpit continued about the tooliness-purity, and the origins of the pure motorcycle, which sounded more like a xenophobe's mantra" (July 2007). Yet some readers agree wholeheartedly with Neil Graham's assessment that owning a cruiser motorcycle is akin to buying a lifestyle rather than embodying a motorcycling identity, "[i]n Neil Graham's column titled The Kids are Alright (May 2007) he managed to put into words a sentiment that I also share. Those "parodies of rebellion" that are riding around on inefficient and noisy bikes in the throws of midlife crises are throwbacks of a bygone era" (August 2007). Despite the vehement reader responses, a cursory review of my research reveals that Neil Graham is but one of a long line of magazine editors like John Cooper, Max Burns, Chris Knowles and Bruce Reeve, who view some cruiser riders as parodying rebellious soldier/laborer masculinity. These editors conceptualize these 'parodic' identity performances as a form of gender subversion,

much like Judith Butler's description of men performing drag, "[d]rag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the excessive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity…In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency" (1990:137). As cultural gatekeepers, many of the *Cycle Canada* editors reinforce the concept that owning a motorcycle does not automatically grant an agent access to motorcycling culture and that legitimacy comes only by inculcating the dispositions they deem appropriate. However, readers' responses in the Readers Write pages demonstrate that they also recognize that the editors' masculine identities communicated through their texts are highly stylized performative representations, and that the fundamental difference between the two groups is a matter of cultural and social influence; the editors have access to a much greater audience than the average motorcyclist enthusiast.

Neil Graham offers a poignant self-reflection regarding their role as columnists writing for *Cycle Canada* magazine, "where I can see through most advertising, editorial content of product-review enthusiast magazines (like this one) also glorify objects, by, in our case, illustrating motorcycles in the most flattering of scenarios…we want you to want what we're selling, which is not a particular motorcycle, but the fantasy of new motorcycle ownership" (July 2006). Given that the motorcycling narratives in *Cycle Canada* have been primarily written for men, by men, for the past thirty-five years, these motorcycling fantasies use a heterosexist discourse to idealize an unattainable form of hyper-masculine identity while simultaneously promoting a material product as the means by which to achieve this ideal. Analyzing readers' responses in the Readers Write pages would reveal how the demographics of motorcycle ridership are changing in North America and how these changes are reflected in the idealized

narratives of the magazine editors who are tasked with marketing the sport to a new generation of riders.

As the baby-boomers retire from the sport, I expect women to exert much greater influence in North America motorcycling culture as the motorcycling industry adjusts their marketing tactics to women's increased participation in motorcycling, but I also suspect that women will continue to be segregated from their male counterparts and treated as second-rate motorcyclists in motorcycling culture. The North American motorcycling industry will continue to divide racers into male or female leagues and market motorcycling products designed to emphasize women's supposed 'femininity', if only because their marketing continues to rely on the gender dichotomy and a staunchly heterosexist discourse. Could things be different in the future? By conducting this research, it is my hope that my contribution to motorcycling culture, no matter how miniscule, will help bring about greater social changes that will enable more of my female and male friends alike to enjoy the pleasures of riding a motorcycle and the sense of community that it offers.

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Appendix A

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June 1990	Helmet flaws	Bruce Reeve
June 1990	Retiring plans	Chris Knowles
July 1990	Passion on the side	Bruce Reeve
July 1990	Wrench in the works	Chris Knowles
August 1990	Field of dreams	Bruce Reeve
August 1990	Tomicic's method	Chris Knowles
November/December 1990	I saw the light	Bruce Reeve
November/December 1990	Crevier in chaos	Chris Knowles
January 1995	Leather fetish	Bruce Reeve
January 1995	What's Miguel been smokin'?	Chris Knowles
January 1995	Two-strokes into the future	Claude Léonard
February 1995	Win, lose and draw	Bruce Reeve
February 1995	The illustrated man	Chris Knowles
February 1995	Great little classic	Claude Léonard
March 1995	Personality for sale	Bruce Reeve
March 1995	A few loose screw	Chris Knowles
March 1995	International secrecy	Claude Léonard
April 1995	The skin days	Bruce Reeve
April 1995	RACE for survival	Chris Knowles
April 1995	Who is the champion	Claude Léonard
May 1995	Burnt at the beach	Bruce Reeve
May 1995	The rides of march	Chris Knowles
May 1995	Gotta have balls	Claude Léonard

June 1995	Common scents	Bruce Reeve
June 1995	Put a socket in it	Chris Knowles
June 1995	A man called moose	Claude Léonard
July 1995	Why bikes are too cheap	Bruce Reeve
July 1995	Small wheels and circles	Chris Knowles
July 1995	Crashing can hurt you	Claude Léonard
August 1995	Emotional baggage	Bruce Reeve
August 1995	I am not a crasher...	Chris Knowles
August 1995	Gregarious instinct	Claude Léonard
September/October 1995	When in doubt throw it out	Bruce Reeve
September/October 1995	A tunnel of pain	Chris Knowles
September/October 1995	Friday-night mystery	Claude Léonard
November/December 1995	Land of blinding sun	Bruce Reeve
November/December 1995	Backward thinking	Chris Knowles
November/December 1995	Surveyor's stick	Claude Léonard
January 2000	Ain't by the numbers	Bruce Reeve
January 2000	Leave it to cleavage	Max Burns
January 2000	The Hull-Dakar adventure	Claude Léonard
February 2000	Blowing the lid off	Bruce Reeve
February 2000	Down on my needs	Max Burns
February 2000	Taking on the world	Claude Léonard
March 2000	Believing Las Vegas	Bruce Reeve
March 2000	Safe at any speed	Max Burns
March 2000	The Paris-Dakar-Kayo	Claude Léonard
April 2000	Countdown aborted	Bruce Reeve
April 2000	Van the Man in my van	Claude Léonard
April 2000	Middle-finger discount	Max Burns
May 2000	Freebie heebie-jeebies	Bruce Reeve
May 2000	About my passenger's butt	Max Burns
May 2000	Changing of the guard	Claude Léonard
June 2000	Springtime for Hitler	Bruce Reeve
June 2000	Unsafe at home	Max Burns
June 2000	Ride with the animals	Claude Léonard

July 2000	Signal-to-noise ratio	Bruce Reeve
July 2000	Oh what a tangled web	Max Burns
July 2000	The guy on the DR-Z	Claude Léonard
August 2000	Covenant with the devil	Bruce Reeve
August 2000	Sounds like music	Max Burns
August 2000	Mother Nature's rebore service	Claude Léonard
September/October 2000	Trail-riding superstar	Claude Léonard
September/October 2000	Feet firmly planted	Bruce Reeve
September/October 2000	Pretty new, but not too pretty	Max Burns
November /December 2000	Sins of emission	Bruce Reeve
November /December 2000	Not in the forecast	Max Burns
November /December 2000	Jam-packed and jumping	Claude Léonard
January 2005	Your attention, please	Bruce Reeve
January 2005	Chasing glory	Claude Léonard
January 2005	Surprise not ending	Max Burns
February 2005	Strangely enough	Bruce Reeve
February 2005	Spare me the babble	Max Burns
February 2005	Fun keeps a rollin'	Claude Léonard
March 2005	You can stop progress	Bruce Reeve
March 2005	No telling about motelling	Max Burns
March 2005	Arena-crossing	Claude Léonard
April 2005	Turbo transitions	Bruce Reeve
April 2005	Can't get there from here	Max Burns
April 2005	Off to a screeching halt	Claude Léonard
May 2005	Alarmed over nothing	Bruce Reeve
May 2005	We're only human	Max Burns
May 2005	Pushing a Chevy to Ford	Claude Léonard
June 2005	Land of blinding sun	Bruce Reeve
June 2005	Clearing the bench	Max Burns
July 2005	Same old hard-hat blues	Bruce Reeve
July 2005	Now for my next stunt...	Max Burns

July 2005	A season to savour	Claude Léonard
August 2005	Any loopy excuse will do	Max Burns
August 2005	It's somewhat academic	Mark Gardiner
September/October 2005	Sounds like hell	Bruce Reeve
September/October 2005	Coming out in the wash	Max Burns
September/October 2005	Moped mopery	Costa Mouzouris
November /December 2005	Throw a wrench	Costa Mouzouris
November /December 2005	Photographic memories	Max Burns
November /December 2005	Subterranean aspirations	Neil Graham

Article summary by year

Year	Number of Articles
1971-1972	13
1975	17
1980	22
1985	29
1990	15
1995	30
2000	30
2005	24

Article summary by author

Author	Number of Articles Written	Number of Articles Analyzed
Chris Knowles	20	20
Bruce Reeve	40	40
Claude Léonard	27	26
Mike Duff	42	41
John Cooper	27	27
Max Burns	27	26
Total articles:	183 articles	180 articles