

Cataloguing wilderness:

Whiteness, masculinity and responsible citizenship in Canadian outdoor recreation texts

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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Doctor of Philosophy (2010)  
Marie Annette Vander Kloet  
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education  
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**Abstract**

This research examines representations of wilderness, Canadian nationalism and the production of responsible and respectable subjects in commonplace outdoor recreation texts from Mountain Equipment Co-op, the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Bruce Peninsula National Park. Drawing theoretical insights from Foucault's genealogy and technologies of the self, post-structural feminism and anti-racist scholarship on whiteness, I pose three broad questions: How is nature understood? How is Canada imagined? How are certain subjects produced through outdoor recreation?

In this research, I outline five ways in which wilderness is represented. First, I consider how wilderness is produced as a place that is above all else empty (of human inhabitants and human presence). I then examine four ways in which the empty wilderness is represented: first, as dangerous and inhospitable, second, as threatened, third, as sublime and fourth, as the Canadian nation. I link the meanings invested into wilderness with a set of practices or desired forms of conduct in order to articulate how a specific subject is produced. These subjects draw on the meanings attributed to wilderness. The dangerous wilderness can only be navigated by a *Calculating Adventurer*. The threatened wilderness desperately needs the assistance of the *Conscientious Consumer*. The sublime wilderness provides respite for the *Transformed Traveler*. The Canadian or national wilderness is best suited to and belongs to the *Wilderness Citizen*. The

four subjects I examine in this thesis each draw from particular wilderness representations and specific practices in order to be produced as desirable in the context of outdoor recreation.

By examining the relationship between wilderness discourse, subjects and practices in everyday texts, I illustrate how masculine and white respectability operate in outdoor recreation. Pointing to subtle shifts in the meanings and values attributed to masculinity, Canadianness and whiteness, I articulate how outdoor recreation texts produce subject positions which are richly embedded in race and gender privilege and assertions about national belonging. In addition to examining whiteness, nationalism and masculinity, this research examines how individualized practices, such as consumer activism, become understood as the conduct of responsible neoliberal citizens concerned with national and environmental interests.



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## Introduction

### Into the wild

I first started researching for this thesis, entirely by accident, while working for an outdoor recreation retailer. Forbidden to read anything but product manuals while at work, I escaped mundane tasks and avoided dull conversations by immersing myself in the catalogues and manuals of Patagonia, Mountain Safety Research/MSR, The North Face, Sierra Designs, Arc'teryx and countless others. The more I read, the more troubled I became about the sort of person an outdoor recreationist was supposed to be. In the endless descriptions of technical features and shots of adventure seekers hanging precariously from cliff edges or wading through chest high water, I observed how everything to be encountered – a mountain, a salt flat, an exoticized village – was simply a challenge to overcome or an experience to photograph. I began to see outdoor recreationists as a ravenous pack consuming everything in sight and I was selling them the tools to make it happen.

I ended up in this retail position because I reflect the population that shopped in the store: I was young, white, educated, able-bodied and physically fit. I should have felt right at home but it was my co-workers who reminded me that I was not. I worked at this store in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, a small city of 18,000, in “the north”; I had, up until this point, lived my entire life in the densely populated Golden Horseshoe in southern Ontario. It turned out that, regardless of what I thought of myself and my outdoor recreation prowess, my co-workers thought I was “too city” and to some extent not as Canadian as they were. I was informed that I was not tough, too soft because of my urban life.

Despite the assertions of my co-workers that I was ill suited to life in the Yukon, I found my way into the forests, mountains, lakes and rivers of the scarcely populated territory. Looking

out over truly remarkable vistas, I was inspired. Watching a grizzly run from my campsite, I was terrified. I conceded that it certainly felt wilder than the Kwartha or Georgian Bay. Yet, despite my experiences in the wilderness, I still knew I was doing it wrong. Most of my excursions into the wild were haphazardly planned and I ignored many of the safety precautions I provided to the serious recreationists shopping in the store. I found myself feeling unlike a responsible or conscientious recreationist.

While back in my retail job, I was able to present myself as authoritative and informed about “gear” and was thus lent a certain amount of credibility. Technical competency earned me the ability to appear knowledgeable and to convince shoppers of their every expanding need for more gadgets. It was this set of knowledge that opened up the cultural and social milieu of outdoor recreation in Whitehorse to me. It was not long afterwards that I realized I wasn’t sure I wanted to stay and fit in and that, even if I could, the retail job I had was not likely to afford me the opportunities for outdoor recreation that I desired. I opted to return to southern Ontario with graduate school on the horizon.

At the time that I was living in Whitehorse, I attributed my outsider status to my short stay (eight months) and to the insular nature of small northern communities. Today, I see these as tensions about belonging and authenticity. This was apparent to me after I returned to southern Ontario and moved to Toronto. In the city, my soft shell and hiking boots marked me as “serious” about outdoor recreation in ways I would not have experienced in the Yukon. When I recounted my disorganized wilderness explorations in the Yukon, because they included iconic sites such as Dawson City, the Chilkoot Trail and Kluane National Park, I garnered enthusiastic nods from jealous southern Ontarians eager for northern experiences. In Toronto, I was read as a real and authentic outdoor recreationist, a rugged Canadian. This switch in how I was perceived

struck me as oddly humorous and also helpful for understanding the meaning attached to recreation practices, wilderness and nationhood.

My story about trying to effectively be a responsible recreationist or authentic Canadian is not really all that insightful. I could have or would have eventually been read as belonging in Whitehorse as a result of the privileges I experience. Recalling my time spent reading catalogues and product guides, I am cognizant that I was learning how exactly I ought to behave. My willingness to take up the prescriptive practices was the only real gate keeping into the realm of proper Canadian outdoor recreation I encountered. I look back on what I was reading and appreciate that I learned far more than technical gear information.

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My reading of catalogues and product guides has changed considerably; they are no longer a source of escape from the doldrums of working in retail. Catalogues and magazines are now data and my reading of these materials lends me authority of an entirely different nature. Further, my central task is no longer to ponder my own discrete experiences of nature, recreation and northern Canadianness. In this thesis, I grapple with how Canadian outdoor recreation institutions shape the discursive production of wilderness, produce subjects and advocate for particular practices. Plainly put, I consider what wilderness is supposed to mean, who outdoor recreationists ought to be and how to properly perform Canadian recreation in the wilderness. I embark on a genealogical analysis in order to examine the constitutive relationship between discourse, subject and practice in the context of outdoor recreation.

Drawing from everyday texts, including catalogues, magazines, brochures, a film, signs, websites and a visitor centre, I examine representations of present day outdoor recreation. Focusing on the time period from 1987 through 2007, I interrogate how three Canadian outdoor

recreation institutions shape nature, nation and recreation. My research sites are Mountain Equipment Co-op, the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Bruce Peninsula National Park; these sites were selected as examples of consumer, community and national sites respectively. Reading across these three sites, I employ Foucauldian constructs in order to explore how wilderness is to be understood and what sorts of subjects are imagined in the context of Canadian outdoor recreation.

One of the core tasks in this thesis is to examine how the wilderness and its subjects are represented in the texts of three Canadian outdoor recreation organizations: Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) and the Bruce Peninsula National Park (BPNP). MEC catalogues are addressed to nearly 3 million members. Similarly, the BTC texts are directed towards their membership of approximately 10,000. The BPNP materials target park visitors (approximately 250,000 annually). I address the discursive production of wilderness – pointing to how MEC, the BTC and the BPNP draw on and invoke certain knowledges in representing wilderness to their readers. While intriguing, I do not work with audience responses to these texts or interrogate some of the specific technologies employed in the production of these materials.

I am compelled to unpack the discursive production of wilderness because of the central role wilderness plays in outdoor recreation. It is the backdrop or setting in which adventures and journeys will unfold. Francis (1997b) and Shields (1991) both argue that the journey out into wilderness and return to the city (or civilization) is one of the rhythms of Canadian life. This begs the question: what are we going to the wilderness for? Further, this assertion has left me curious about how wilderness is defined – how will we know when we have arrived in the wilderness? What experiences do we anticipate having there? All of these questions lead me



back to the necessity of analyzing how wilderness is represented in outdoor recreation. What became apparent is that there is not one “wilderness” offered to Canadian outdoor recreationists, rather, I uncover that wilderness is represented in multiple and contradictory ways. There are, in effect, numerous wildernesses each infused with complex meaning. I address five ways that wilderness is constructed in outdoor recreation texts. The first and most pervasive assertion about wilderness is that it is empty of human inhabitants and presence. The wilderness is represented as unpeopled and untouched. The four other representations of wilderness I examine rest on the assumption that nature is a blank slate that can be understood variously as dangerous, as threatened, as sublime and as nation. The discursive production of wilderness is at times contradictory – for example, wilderness can be simultaneously read as dangerous and frightful and peaceful and awe-inspiring. These divergent representations of wilderness manage to play out in the texts as congruent by invoking particular desirable subjects. Each wilderness imagines an idealized subject that speaks to outdoor recreationists in different ways; these subjects tug at different values presumed to be held by outdoor recreationists allowing for myriad wildernesses to appear desirable and probable rather than paradoxical.

Another task of this thesis is to examine how particular subjects are produced in relation to representations of wilderness. Considering again the presumed longing Canadians have to get into the wilderness, it is necessary to examine what is supposed to happen to us while we are there. Further, what does our desire to be in particular wildernesses reveal about the sort of people we imagine ourselves to be. In the four wildernesses examined, each one has a mode of address that anticipates a particular subject position. These subjects draw on the meanings attributed to wilderness. The dangerous wilderness can only be navigated by a *calculating adventurer*. The threatened wilderness desperately needs the assistance of the *conscientious*

*consumer*. The sublime wilderness provides respite for the *transformed traveler*. The Canadian or national wilderness is best suited to and belongs to the *wilderness citizen*. These four subjects possess the qualities or attributes that their respective wildernesses require. As I explore the values and characteristics attributed to particular subjects in their relationship to particular wildernesses, I point to how discourses of race, nation, class and gender come to be embedded in the production of these subjects. While my examination of each subject is tied to how wilderness is discursively produced, I also allude to the practices which constitute subjects as possessing the desirable qualities and principles that will forge appropriate relationships with wilderness.

It is these practices which secure the relationship between wilderness discourse and outdoor recreation subjects. The practices are evidence of the virtues and values attributed to particular subjects; they are the means by which outdoor recreation can, according to the texts, assert themselves as particular sorts of subjects. Finally, the practices serve as a demonstration or performance of the presumed characteristics of outdoor recreation subjects. The wilderness discourses and subjects positions I explore in this thesis are secured in place through a wide variety of everyday outdoor recreation practices. The practices themselves, such as shopping for a new jacket, removing one's garbage from a campsite or laughing with friends, are not unusual or atypical of what many recreationists might regularly do. They are important not because they are unprecedented or radical but because of their ordinariness and because of the meanings which are attributed to them. A once insignificant exercise, such as photographing a flower, according to outdoor recreation texts, if put to use by outdoor recreationists becomes deeply consequential for affecting themselves as particular subjects. In the outdoor recreation texts I examine, these daily practices become richly embedded with meaning and the decision to take up or participate is presented as a key marker of one's ability to embody specific subject positions.

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This project is specifically focused on the construction of wilderness, the production of subjects and the promotion of specific practices in outdoor recreation texts from MEC, the BTC and the BPNP. This research is focused around three broad questions:

- How is nature understood?
- How is Canada imagined?
- How are certain subjects produced through outdoor recreation?

I bring these questions to a carefully selected set of outdoor recreation texts. Drawing on the work of Foucault and poststructural feminist and anti-racist theories, I employ a genealogical analysis. Additionally, I consider the work of cultural studies theorists, notably Stuart Hall and John Berger, to develop a methodological approach suited to the outdoor recreation texts I examine.

My research project is an examination of the interdependent relationship between discourse, subject and practice in Canadian outdoor recreation texts. I focus specifically on ordinary, everyday texts which are readily accessible to outdoor recreationists. Texts, such as catalogues, magazines, brochures and park signs, are materials that outdoor recreationists frequently encounter during their leisure. These are commonplace texts intended for broad audiences; the texts are not specialized, inaccessible materials. It is highly probable that these texts could be found stuffed into glove boxes or left spread open and pen marked on coffee tables. I look at these texts, instead of more specialized documents, such as national park implementation files or paintings in art galleries, because I desire to explore how theoretical constructs, such as discourse, operate in the texts of daily life. I have been drawn to scholars such as Davies (2000) and Dyer (1997) who anchor their examinations of theory with references to

experiences and texts from everyday life. In this thesis, I contribute to scholarship which works to make theory a useful tool for understanding the texts routinely encountered through daily life. My research project is an opportunity to explore how the relationship between discourse, practice and subject is organized and represented in outdoor recreation. Rather than re-stating that these constructs work interdependently or constitute one another, I intend to illustrate how complex and slippery theoretical constructs can be observed in commonplace outdoor recreation texts. My hope is that this will foster more nuanced understanding of the representational work of outdoor recreation texts and of the theoretical tools and constructs used to understand them. Further, I hope that this thesis exhibits theory *in* practice, somewhat eliding the false dichotomy of theory-practice. My decision to structure my analysis around the tri-fold relationship of discourse, practice and subject is intended to help further understandings and utilities for theory in relation to Canadian outdoor recreation.

This study draws critical studies of masculinity, whiteness and Canadian nationalism into the field of outdoor recreation. In drawing these fields together, I contribute to critical recreation scholarship that sees recreation as political and consequential to the operations of power. While sport is readily acknowledged as a site where assertions about national belonging and identity are frequently played out, recreation, in particular outdoor recreation, has received considerably less attention. I articulate how particular texts have been employed in the service of nation building in Canada. Further, I illustrate how discourses of race, class and gender work alongside nationalist discourses in outdoor recreation texts to produce particular subjects. I incorporate anti-racist and feminist scholarship, including critical whiteness studies into the research on outdoor recreation. Scholars such as Razack (2002), Bannerji (2000), and Mackey (2002) lend considerable insight into how particular Canadian national mythologies, or stories about national belonging and

origins, rely on the fantasy of Canada as a benevolent, just and white nation. Canadian, anti-racist feminist scholarship is under utilized in studies of Canadian sport and physical culture. I look to these scholars because of the insight their work on the Canadian nation and racialization contribute to my examination of outdoor recreation.

Through this research, I grapple with and interrogate how emerging discourses of new masculinity and whiteness are produced and represented through these texts as resistant to dominant forms of masculinity and whiteness.<sup>1</sup> Drawing on critical whiteness studies and feminist and anti-racist analyses of masculinity, I interrogate how masculinity and whiteness are, through particular forms of conduct, used to secure claims of respectability. While masculinity, whiteness and respectability in outdoor recreation have been previously linked by scholars such as Phillips (1997) or Howell (2001), what emerges in this research is a substantially different approach to staking claims to these privileges. I suggest that these outdoor recreation texts produce white, masculine respectability as achievable through what Rabinow and Rose (2006) describe as “modes of subjectification, through which individuals are brought to work on themselves” (p. 197) under the claims of pursuing a collective good. The subjects of these recreation texts become respectable and lay claims to the privileges of whiteness and masculinity through unexpected appeals to discourses of caring and conscientiousness undertaken for the good of nation and nature.

In this thesis, I examine texts; thus, my research responds to these questions by considering representations of outdoor recreation rather than experiences of outdoor

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<sup>1</sup> In using the term ‘new’ in reference to masculinity and whiteness, I reference burgeoning popular discourse around studies of masculinity which suggest that both men and women are oppressed by hegemonic masculinity and that men, in particular white, middle class, heterosexual men, require means to salvage masculinity. This does not refer to critical responses to essential notions of identity, such as Stuart Hall’s (1995) ‘new ethnicities’ which calls for critical examinations of historical, cultural and political specificity and consideration of the interconnections between race, class, gender and sexuality.

recreationists. I incorporate insights from cultural studies theorists, such as John Berger (1972) and Stuart Hall (1997), in order to interrogate how these texts work to invoke particular meanings about wilderness and produce or address an imagined outdoor recreation subject. This research considers how nature, nation and recreation discourses are shaped in the texts. I cannot deduce how actual outdoor recreationists read these texts or discuss whether or not my analyses mirror their experiences. As previously mentioned, this research offers partial, temporal responses to the broad questions posed. In unraveling how wilderness is understood in outdoor recreation texts examined, I offer analyses specific to the texts rather than to how outdoor recreationists might read and understand wilderness as a result of these texts. Similarly, as I examine the production of subjects, I present certain subjects as they are constituted in the texts. The *Conscientious Consumer* or the *Wilderness Citizen* emerges in the texts; it is, however, highly improbable that outdoor recreationists imagine themselves as identical to these subjects. The subjects of these texts must be understood as somewhat fantastical. As with the idealized woman of fashion or homemaking magazines, the subjects of outdoor recreation texts are unlikely to resonate completely with how outdoor recreationists understand themselves. Although there might be qualities or practices attributed to the subjects of outdoor recreation texts which appeal to recreationists, the desire for, or even possibility of, embodying these positions is highly improbable. However, in working with representations of outdoor recreation which are intended to appeal to outdoor recreationists, my analysis offers some insight into what is intended to invoke envy amongst this group.

This project, which draws from a variety of disciplines, offers insight into the work done by MEC, the BTC and the BPNP to shape the meanings of wilderness. By examining commonplace texts, it is possible to see how wilderness is represented in materials which are

intended to be read by many outdoor recreationists. Further, this research links the construction of wilderness and the undertaking of particular practices with the production of certain recreation subjects. In short, I examine the relationship between discourse, subjects and practices in ordinary outdoor recreation texts and argue that representations of wilderness shape the sorts of the subjects and practices imagined as desirable in outdoor recreation.

### *Chapter outlines*

The first chapter is a review of the literature. My research draws from and is situated within diverse bodies of scholarship. I begin by examining literature that engages with the notion of nature as socially constructed. I review scholarship which articulates how nature or wilderness has been discursively produced, at times in radically different ways. I focus specifically on discussions of how Canadian wilderness comes to be understood. I observe considerable variations in how nature is constructed and that shifts in nature's construction correspond with political imperatives of those who seek to define wilderness. One of the central political struggles which relies on the discursive production of wilderness is the making of national communities. Wilderness, presented as emblem or symbol of the nation, is put, both in Canada specifically and more broadly, to the service of nationalism. In the second section of this chapter, I shift from thinking about the construction of wilderness more broadly to analyses of the relationship between nature and nation in Canada. Here, I examine scholarship on assertions about how the wilderness is used to make claims about the sort of people Canadians are. Throughout this review, I focus on scholarship which addresses the relationship between the construction of wilderness and the production of subjects. I then turn to scholarship on outdoor recreation. In this section, I discuss literature which analyzes the transformative potential of recreation. I draw from scholars who illustrate how recreation has been and continues to be used

as a tool for personal transformations and to secure certain privileges. I conclude the literature review by drawing together these bodies of literature and pointing to scholars who have most influenced my work. Further, I observe gaps and outstanding questions in order to outline which areas I hope to contribute to through my research. At the close of this chapter, I revisit my three core research questions.

In the second chapter, I explain the theoretical tools I draw on, as well as the methodological approaches I employ. I first discuss Foucault's genealogy and consider the utility of this methodology for my work. I then outline key concepts which figure centrally in this thesis: power, discourse and the subject. I detail how I apply these concepts before moving into a discussion of methodology. I introduce my research sites and explain why each site was selected. I describe the data collected from each outdoor recreation institution. I explain how I was able to locate the data and describe methodological or logistical hurdles I dealt with. In this section, I also point to the interconnected nature of my research sites. I then articulate what methodological tools I employ and discuss scholars who inform my research. I close this chapter by addressing a number of organizational techniques I employed in undertaking this project and outline methodological and ethical dilemmas encountered.

The third chapter, *The Calculated Adventurer*, serves as an introduction to the remaining chapters of the thesis. In this chapter, I trace how wilderness is produced as uninhabited. The remaining four chapters all rely on the presumption of wilderness as empty. The remainder of the third chapter examines the representation of the wilderness as a dangerous and inhospitable place. Wilderness is constructed as a place that is overwhelmingly risky and unpleasant to encounter. MEC, the BTC and the BPNP craft the wilderness as a place that requires a technologically savvy and calculating subject who is able to navigate and negotiate the



treacherous terrain. This subject employs the use of various gadgets and calls on particular knowledges in order to assert himself<sup>2</sup> as knowledgeable about and capable of traversing through this wilderness.

The fourth chapter, *The Conscientious Consumer*, grapples with constructions of wilderness as threatened. After outlining what are the perceived sources of threat to the wilderness, I draw attention to what MEC, the BTC and the BPNP believe is at stake in environmental degradation. After consideration of how wilderness as threatened comes to be understood, I discuss the solutions presented to outdoor recreationists. Overwhelmingly, for these outdoor recreation institutions, tackling environmental devastation is best addressed through careful and responsible forms of consumption. The methods of saving wilderness proposed repeatedly emphasize the qualities and values that outdoor recreation subjects presumably possess. This chapter closes with a discussion of how the consumer activism advocated for is tied to other more discrete and individualized responses to environmental degradation.

The fifth chapter, *The Transformed Traveler*, explores how wilderness comes to be read as a sublime and restorative place. I trace how MEC, the BTC and the BPNP are able to call up particular emotive responses by drawing on familiar wilderness tropes and images, such as the mountain vista or the quiet meadow, to represent wilderness as a place where it is possible to experience wonderment and personal transformation. I then consider the practices which are espoused as best fitting to the sublime wilderness. These outdoor recreation institutions pinpoint how some practices disrupt the soothing potential of the wilderness and thus must be avoided.

These practices are explicitly tied to the *transformed traveler*; a subject who is capable of

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<sup>2</sup> My choice of male pronouns is deliberate. This research closely examines masculinity. I elect to use masculine pronouns throughout this text to emphasize the extent to which the subjects produced in and through this research are not gender neutral.

appropriately feeling and responding to the inspirational wilderness. This subject gains much from his wilderness sojourns. He is able to effect himself, through demonstrations of improved well being and personal relationships, as a good and moral subject. This chapter closes with consideration of how hegemonic masculinity might be simultaneously challenged and re-established through this particular subject.

The sixth chapter, *The Wilderness Citizen*, examines the discursive production of wilderness as nation. In this final chapter, I articulate how particular representations of wilderness are employed in specific national mythologies in order to define who belongs to the Canadian nation. I first explore the qualities and descriptors applied to the Canadian wilderness; I focus specifically on how wilderness is conceptualized as priceless and as heritage. Certain practices and demonstrations of an appropriate relationship with the national wilderness are called for; these forms of conduct serve to articulate whether a subject values and connects effectively with wilderness. In this chapter, it is evident that the meaning of wilderness impacts how Canada, as an imagined community (Anderson, 1991/1983), will be understood. A central struggle in the discursive production of the Canadian wilderness is how to reconcile the presence of Indigenous people with assertions of Canada as a benevolent, white nation. The wilderness citizen produced in outdoor recreation texts then, is a fantastical subject, one which points to ideals or fantasies about the nation. The wilderness citizen, as model Canadian, becomes a subject through which to better understand who is presumed to belong to the wilderness and by extension to the nation.

The final chapter is followed by a brief conclusion. I draw my thesis to a close by first, briefly outlining research themes which I left unexamined in this thesis. From this, I point to possible areas of inquiry which I hope to address in future research. Concluding my research on

outdoor recreation, I articulate four contributions this examination of outdoor recreation makes to particular bodies of scholarship including sociology of sport and physical culture, studies of nation and citizenship and feminist and anti-racist studies of masculinity and whiteness.

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

In this chapter, I review scholarship from the fields of nature/environmental sociology, Canadian studies and nationalism, critical studies of recreation and equity studies. In this review, I narrow my focus to particular pockets of scholarship that have shaped my research. The body of literature I discuss here is interdisciplinary. To organize the diverse fields of inquiry, I have divided this chapter into four sections. In the first three sections - entitled “Social Nature” “Canadian Mythologies” and “Rational Recreation” - I address scholarship which has been particularly useful and influential in guiding my own thinking and research in the areas of nature, nation and recreation. In the final section, my goal is to articulate where my research figures within these interconnected fields. I outline questions which guide my research and lines of inquiry which emerge from reading the literature, some of which I take up in later chapters and others which are cursorily addressed. In this section, I bring some synthesis to my discussion of the literature and I detail scholarship that has shaped my research. I outline what questions I intend to pursue and point to fields of study that I aim to contribute to through this project.

### Social Nature

Nature is anything but natural. There is a growing field of scholarship focused on unraveling the construction of nature. While some, such as Evernden (1992), have carefully worked through the theoretical techniques by which nature has been produced (Castree, 2001; Castree & Braun, 2001, Demeritt, 2001; Harvey, 1996; Moore, Pandian & Kosek, 2003), Wilson (1991), Nash (2001) and Atwood (1995), whose work has appeal outside of academic circles, have explored how we have come to encounter “nature” in North America and the meanings that have been attached to it. Across these literatures, a serious challenge is posed regarding what we think we know about nature. In this section, I discuss scholarship that challenges the naturalness

of nature and presents detailed texts, images and theoretical tools in order to make plain the techniques by which nature has been constructed.

What does it mean to talk about nature as socially or discursively constructed? Before launching into responses to this question, it seems necessary to pause and consider what exactly it means to assert that nature is constructed. There is an abundance of research that posits that nature is constructed (socially, politically, economically, historically, discursively or culturally) and authors devote considerable energy articulating how the construction of nature is achieved (Adams & Mulligan, 2003a, 2003b; Anderson, 2001; Blyth, 1998; Castree, 2001; Castree & Braun, 2001; Demeritt, 2001; Gregory, 2001; Harvey, 1996; Moore, Pandian & Kosek, 2003). In approaching nature as constructed, these scholars attempt to navigate the meanings that have been invested in nature and how in turn these meanings have been used to legitimate various claims. Evernden (1992) explains how, in order to know ourselves, we have created nature but that in this very process we have erased our presence within it. Evernden argues that the construction of nature is always tied into how we understand ourselves and our relationship to nature often imagined as outside of ourselves.

Yet, what exactly does it mean to view nature as constructed? Is nature not real? Does it not exist? Haraway (1992) argues: “nature cannot pre-exist its construction” (p. 296). Her statement highlights the insight that we cannot understand nature outside of our own creation of it. What we claim as nature is, in fact, our own creation. It has only been knowable as nature because we invested it with particular meaning. This claim unsettles our deepest investment in nature: that it is real. At the same time, scholars who unpack the constructedness of nature do not aim to dispute the existence of lakes, trees, birds, reptiles, mountains and those things thought of as “really” natural. Rather, they seek to unsettle the significance attached to these places, beings

or things and show that these attachments are not inherent in these aspects of nature. Further still, scholars who critically unpack the construction of nature are not arguing that it is unnecessary, without value or artificial in all aspects. Rather, they make visible the political projects that have stemmed from the construction of nature and argue this production of meaning is deeply embedded in power.

*How is nature constructed? Who constructs it?*

*Nature as dangerous and savage*

When nature is imagined as wilderness,<sup>3</sup> it is perceived to be clearly distinct from the civilized spaces of the town or the field (Anderson, 2001). The wilderness is seen as dangerous, frightening and inhospitable, in sharp contrast to the safety, order and morality attributed to civilization. This way of conceptualizing nature has its roots in a Judeo-Christian tradition (Bordo, 1997; Cronon, 1996a, 1996b; MacLaren, 1999; Manore, 1998; Nash, 2001). Cronon (1996b) explains how, in the Biblical tradition, wilderness was imaged as outside the comforts of the Garden of Eden, and therefore outside of the Judeo-Christian g/God's favour. The Biblical wilderness, understood to be desolate and uninhabitable, is sharply contrasted with Eden, a cultivated and providing garden. The uninhabitable, even dangerous wilderness is often described as a place that cannot be productive or put to use. It is wasted space which fails to serve the needs of humans (Loo, 2006; Nash, 2001). Perhaps more so than its unproductive qualities, wilderness in the Biblical tradition is perceived as frightening and that it ought to be viewed with suspicion and fear. The wilderness is, for example, the site where Jesus was tempted

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<sup>3</sup> I primarily use the term wilderness, rather than nature in my later chapters. The vast majority of the material I analyze is far more concerned with nature forms that have come to be understood as wilderness (large, uninterrupted, uninhabited landscapes). There may be points in which I elect to use nature instead of wilderness and in this chapter I aim to use the terms that authors employ in their own work (ie, nature, wilderness, parks). I resist the temptation to try to provide demarcated definitions of complex terms like wilderness or nature as this process is unlikely to further understanding of how either of these terms is invested with meaning. Instead, I suggest that it may be more productive to consider how these terms are used and what layered meanings they house.

by Satan (Cronon, 1996b). It is also the place where the Biblical Israelites were forced to wander as punishment before entering the second Eden, the land of Canaan (Nash, 2001). The wilderness is explicitly tied to evil and immorality. It is perceived as a place where it is easy to be physically and morally lost (Nash, 2001). It is these perceptions and interpretations of wilderness that white, Christian, European settlers bring to North America at the start of colonization.

North American wilderness is encountered through this particular lens; thus, the “new” wilderness is similarly infused with fright and immorality. North American wilderness becomes read as place which housed dangerous beasts and savages (Cronon, 1996b; MacLaren, 1999). Traveling in the wilderness, whether actual colonial ventures or through fictionalized tales, is perceived as intensely risky (MacLaren, 1999; Phillips, 1997). The riskiness of wilderness travel stems from the perceived ability of the wilderness to transform travelers into savages. The ability of colonialists to lay claims to respectability<sup>4</sup> could be usurped, compromising the construction of white men as moral, rugged and tough (MacLaren, 1999; Phillips, 1997). The danger and savagery of the wilderness in many ways shaped how colonialists encountered the Canadian landscape (MacLaren, 1999) and how they defined themselves as respectable subjects vis-à-vis the savage and degenerate inhabitants of the wilderness (Phillips, 1997).

In her lecture series, *Strange Things*, Atwood (1995) takes apart the important Canadian literary tradition of writing a dangerous wilderness into existence. By exploring the Franklin Expedition<sup>5</sup> and the myth of the Wendigo,<sup>6</sup> Atwood considers how Canada’s wilderness is a

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<sup>4</sup> Fellows and Razack (1998) define respectability as “a descriptive term for how dominant groups secure its position of dominance through the margins. How groups on the margins are positioned in relation to one another on the disrespected, or more aptly, the degenerate side of the divide, is of central importance to understanding how the dominant group produces and sustains feelings of innocence for itself and groups on the margin” (p. 336).

<sup>5</sup> The Franklin Expedition refers to an attempted Northwest Passage by a group of British men headed by Captain John Franklin. The ship went missing and the scraps of evidence that are retrieved suggest that the crew might have resorted to cannibalism. Atwood’s discussion of the Franklin expedition is primarily focused on the persistent re-telling of this story in Canada and its role in shaping how the north is understood.

dangerous place for white men (and women) because of its potential to undo their civility. Nature, marked out as savage and dangerous, is deeply suspect in these particular national mythologies<sup>7</sup> precisely because of what it can do to those moral and respectable subjects who venture into it. I find Atwood's writing on the northern Canadian wilderness useful precisely because of the relationship she examines between contact with wilderness and subsequent effects on particular subjects. Nature, imagined here as inhospitable and able to undo one's civility, has a direct impact on those who enter it. Wilderness is produced in and through subjects who are imagined within it. Evernden (1992) draws attention to how the construction of wilderness results in an erasure of our presence within it. Atwood describes how wilderness is perceived to be a place that has the potential to undo how we know ourselves. Her work demonstrates how even when civilized subjects are perceived to be distinct from the wilderness they are embedded within, wilderness continues to hold tremendous influence over their ability to secure respectability.

Atwood's discussion of the Canadian wilderness and its un-civilizing potential demonstrates what nature can do to those who encounter it. Phillips (1997) and Braun (2003) also explore the conceptualization of wilderness as transformative space. Phillips (1997), in an analysis of R. M. Ballantyne's<sup>8</sup> adventure stories, explains how the wilderness was imagined as a place to toughen up young white boys and men. In these adventure stories, middle and upper

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<sup>6</sup> The Wendigo is a part of aboriginal culture (likely Algonquin); the Wendigo might be best described as a spirit that inhabits a person either as a result of cannibalism or resulting in cannibalism. Atwood's discussion of the Wendigo focuses on examples from Canadian culture which highlight how white individuals have been taken over by the Wendigo often as a result of isolation in the Canadian wilderness.

<sup>7</sup> Razack explains "[n]ational mythologies or national stories are about a nation's origins and history. They enable citizens to think of themselves as part of a community, defining who belongs and who does not belong to the nation" (2002, p. 2). National mythologies articulate how Canada and Canadians are to be understood, for example, by indicating what values, qualities or interests are perceived as nationally desirable.

<sup>8</sup> R. M. Ballantyne was a 19<sup>th</sup> century Scottish fiction writer. A former Hudson's Bay Company worker, Ballantyne published a prolific number of adventure stories for youth from the mid to late 1800s. Many of his adventure stories draw on his short tenure in the Canadian north.



class white boys venture into the wilderness, a place imagined as savage and dangerous. They emerge from the experience as toughened and respectable subjects. This process of heading into wilderness and returning unscathed marks these boys as good and moral subjects. They return remade as strong, disciplined and morally astute young men as a result of their journey; they are now prepared for their roles as ethical, political and economic leaders. Interestingly, Ballantyne's stories also reinforce the idea of nature as something distinct from culture and civilization (presumed to be anchored in settlements and garrisons). In Ballantyne's writing, wilderness is a place on or in which stories are written, but not a place with already existing stories (see Thorpe, 2008 on a similar trend in writing the Temagami wilderness into existence).

I find both Atwood and Phillips useful in understanding the relationship between the discursive production of the wilderness and the production of subjects through contact with wilderness. I am interested in the construction of wilderness, not as a process that is abstract, but as intricately tied to shaping who it is possible to be as a result of encountering wilderness. In this thesis, I am drawn to examinations of how wilderness is infused with meaning in order to make claims about the subjects who enter and travel in it. Braun (2003) examines risk, whiteness and masculinity and details how venturing into wilderness is presumed to be inherently dangerous. He explains how today middle and ruling class white men's entry into wilderness (a presumably risky endeavor) is used to legitimate their privilege. Thus, white men are not privileged because of racism/white privilege or sexism/male privilege, but as a result of the types of challenging leisure activities they engage in. By undertaking dangerous wilderness adventures, they are rightfully rewarded with privileged social status as a result of their demonstrated strength, bravery and intellectual acumen. In Braun's work, similar to Atwood and Phillips, the meaning attached to wilderness is used to make claims about those who encounter it.

Braun, Phillips and Atwood each discuss how contact with wilderness impacts those subjects who are positioned outside of the wilderness. Civilized, white men (and at times, white women) are seen as distinct from wilderness, yet, they are strengthened by their capacity to endure within it. Although shaped by its transformative forces, these respectable subjects are not defined exclusively by their contact with wilderness, in contrast to the savage who is anchored permanently within and marked by the wilderness (see also Mohanram, 1999). The respectable subject moves through the wilderness unscathed or is even further strengthened by surviving the dangerous and risky experience.

### *Nature as Sublime*

The wilderness is not solely a place filled with fear and dread; the meanings of wilderness are diverse and dynamic. While Canadian and American wildernesses continue to be shaped by biblical understanding of civilization and wilderness, there are other competing discourses of wilderness. Informed by nineteenth century romanticism, American writers such as Thoreau, Muir and Leopold shifted the construction of wilderness as a site of danger to a source of inspiration and refuge. Nash (2001) indicates that this “appreciation of wilderness began in cities” (2001, p. 44) and was driven primarily by wealthy urbanites who had little daily contact with the American frontier. Wilderness was imagined as a place to escape the city and to redress the mundane and highly mechanized urban life (Lacombe, 1998; Manore, 1998; Nash, 2001). Wilderness travels were framed as a solution for the ailments of middle class urbanites, in particular the feminization of men.<sup>9</sup> Since the task of conquering nature was considered

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<sup>9</sup> Nash explains that the solution of being in the wilderness assuaged multiple concerns about the feminization of urban men. For example, hunting is presented as a chance for men to compete with nature. Excursions into the wilderness are presented as demonstrations of capable and powerful masculinity (as a result of coping with the challenges it poses). Other rationales for wilderness excursions, such as those provided by Olmstead, emphasize dissatisfaction with the artificiality and mechanization of life in cities (Nash, 2002, p. 155). Life in cities is perceived as confining, restrictive and perhaps overly refined – thus urban Americans risked being understood as

complete, middle class, urban and educated men recreated wilderness to correspond with a different set of masculine imperatives (Lacombe, 1998; Nash, 2001). For these nineteenth century urban elites, wilderness was envisioned as a place of escape, restoration, and regeneration. This new vision of wilderness, although once again intended to transform white men, focused on the majestic and sublime qualities of particular nature formations. Impressive mountains, waterfalls, expansive vistas as well as peaceful streams and quiet forests promised a chance for rest and an appreciation of the beauty of the wild. The wilderness is reconstructed from dangerous and frightening place to a natural cathedral: a place to worship its beauty and enjoy the redemption it offers.<sup>10</sup>

Conceptualizing wilderness as sublime and redemptive hallmarks two key discursive shifts in how wilderness was understood. First, the idea of wilderness as valuable and impressive for urban travelers necessitated the removal of Indigenous people. Although Muir and Thoreau admitted that Indigenous people inhabited the wilderness they had come to admire, they argued Indigenous people were unable to use it appropriately (Nash, 2001). The misuse of wilderness risked undermining the values ascribed to this revamped place now represented as pristine, sublime, untouched and uninhabited. Spence (1999) outlines how, in the development of national parks intended to protect significant wilderness places, wilderness needed to be forcibly and discursively emptied of Indigenous peoples. Valued natural sites, including Yosemite (Nash, 2001; Olwig, 1996; Spence, 1999), the Grand Canyon (Nash, 2001; Wilson, 1991), Niagara Falls (Jasen, 1995), the Canadian Rockies at Jasper and Banff (MacLaren, 1999) and Temagami (Thorpe, 2008) required the erasure of Indigenous peoples in order to function as pristine sites

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soft, rather than rugged. Wilderness excursions were presented as a means to “assuage fears that Americans were not what they used to be” – tough, resourceful and independent (Nash, 2001, p. 154).

<sup>10</sup> See Lacombe, 1998 (on Bon Echo wilderness cults), Fox, 1952 (on John Muir). John Muir is perhaps one of the foremost proponents of seeing wilderness as a spiritual place (see Cronon, 1996b; Nash, 2001; Olwig, 1996); names such as Cathedral Grove (old growth forest preserve on Vancouver Island) gesture to this wilderness discourse.

for wealthy urbanites to seek respite. There is ongoing debate about why Indigenous peoples were removed from the wilderness of national parks. For example, Binnema and Niemi (2006) assert that the removal of Indigenous people stemmed from the economic imperatives of the burgeoning tourism industry in national parks such as Banff. While tensions exist about whether the economic or ideological rationale was the central force in driving the erasure of Indigenous people, scholars converge in their assertions that wilderness, in order to function as sublime and restorative, must appear to be empty of particular human inhabitants.

Corresponding with the ideological and material erasure of Indigenous peoples from the wilderness is the new national significance of wilderness sites. Wilderness, no longer just a place outside of civilization, is conceptualized as central to the making of national identities. The appreciation of nature corresponds with the desire for new and distinct forms of American nationalism (Nash, 2001; Olwig, 1996). In overthrowing British colonial rule, American wildernesses were tools for marking out the meaning of the nation. In the next section on “National Mythologies,” I discuss in more depth how this has manifested in Canada.

Wilderness, when put to the service of American and Canadian nationalism, is evidently tied to explicitly political processes and purposes.<sup>11</sup> For American nationalists, the discursive reconstruction of wilderness ran concurrently with a refiguration of the discourses of race and nation. For example, DeLuca and Demo (2001) point to how the American wilderness is manufactured as sublime in contrast to European castles and cathedrals; thus rendering the need for a connection to imperial Europe obsolete. Nash (2001) similarly details how turn of the century writers, such as Thoreau and Leopold craft American nationalism as distinct on the basis of its natural splendour. What DeLuca and Demo signal in their analysis is how the sublime

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<sup>11</sup> I make this claim without the provision of an explicit time period deliberately. There are numerous examples throughout Canadian and American history which employ wilderness in politicized projects; this research itself takes up present day uses of wilderness in shaping who belongs to the Canadian nation.

wilderness is also richly invested in the production of white wilderness – one which they argue “permits only visitors, but not all visitors” (p. 553) and which cannot be used for work (forestry, shepherds, etc). Thus, in reconfiguring American wilderness as sublime, race and class privileges are woven into nationalist discourse. This literature highlights how national wildernesses are constructed and the consequences for those included in the imagined nation. Further, in reading this literature, I observe how the discursive construction of wilderness changes to serve the different political projects of nationalism, urbanization and racialization.

### *Nature as threatened*

The pristine and sublime empty wilderness must be carefully produced and maintained. Today, anxieties that this untouched wilderness is at risk from human interference and mismanagement are heightened (Baldwin, 2003, 2004; Braun, 2002). In this section, I focus on scholarship which specifically addresses how discourses of nation, race and gender are tied to distress about threats to the wilderness. The dominant strand in environmental scholarship addresses environmental destruction and its consequences for ecological and geological structures and life-forms. Here, I turn instead to scholarship which provides analyses of how national identity and racial privilege are embedded in the discursive production of wilderness as threatened. I focus on this literature because of what it reveals about the stakes or investments made in producing the wilderness.<sup>12</sup>

The possibility of wilderness destruction as a source of threat to continued global survival is a recent issue; however, concern about damage to particular wildernesses which have had national significance began in the late 1800s (Olwig, 1996). At this time, national parks began to be developed in the USA, Canada and Australia and longstanding environmental preservation

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<sup>12</sup> Admittedly, the possibility of engaging in this discussion rests on the assumption that ecological devastation is not absolute just yet. This signals the privileges I enjoy and which are shared by many, although certainly not all, who live in the global north where the effects of environmental destruction is felt more slowly than by those in the south.

organizations, such as Muir's Sierra Club, were formed (Nash, 2001; Olwig, 1996). As a result of the burgeoning parks movement, the protection of wilderness was viewed as the symbolic protection of the nation (Grant, 1998; Harvey, 1996; Olwig, 1996). In Canada, wilderness that holds national significance, such as national parks and the Canadian north, is viewed as nearly sacred and requiring protection (Grant, 1998; MacLaren, 1999; Spence, 1999). The protection of wilderness in North America is embedded in the history of colonialism. Adams and Mulligan (2003a) explain how European colonialism relied on and practiced the strategic management of wilderness and Indigenous peoples. In the development of game reserves in parts of Africa and North America, as well as national and regional parks, wilderness was scripted as requiring or needing "saving" and preservation (Adams and Mulligan, 2003a, 2003b; Erickson, 2003; Loo, 2006; Spence, 1999). The project of protecting nature prompts the questions: Who is wilderness being saved from and for? And who will save it?

Scholars who examine conservation histories point to how white, ruling class men produced themselves as the logical managers of wilderness (Adams and Mulligan, 2003b; Alston and Brown, 1993; Loo, 2006; Magome and Murombedzi, 2003; Murombedzi, 2003). Colonial wildernesses were set aside for recreational use by white people and Indigenous people were named as a specific threat to its preservation (Adams and Mulligan, 2003a, 2003b; Bullard, 1993a). Beginning in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, capitalist imperatives were viewed as the primary threat to wilderness (Bullard, 1993a; Hermer, 2002). To a lesser extent, Indigenous peoples continue to be perceived as a threat to the proper management of wilderness (Dunk, 2002). Both Dunk (2002) and Braun (2002) discuss how wilderness continues to be reproduced as under threat from particular forces, such as careless or greedy hunters/anglers, tourism operators or forestry executives, and how this representation leads directly to notions of who is

imagined as suitable caretakers of the wilderness. For example, Dunk (2002) explains how the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, in addressing the halt of the spring bear hunt in Ontario, positions itself as the appropriate guardian of this threatened species. Similarly, Braun (2002), in *The Intemperate Rainforest*, details how environmentalists, forestry advocates, recreationists and Aboriginal people from Vancouver Island were all invested in defining the forest (in and around Clayoquot Sound) and in justifying its preservation in ways that reflect their investments in the space and the role they imagine themselves rightfully to have within it. Both Dunk and Braun illustrate how tensions in defining wilderness are very much about the power relationships between its inhabitants, its owners, and those who seek to label and study it. This scholarship on threatened wildernesses is useful because it points to deep investments which influence how we understand wilderness. It shows that there are serious political, economic and social consequences of this process. In shaping wilderness, we do much more than define a particular natural space: we aim to define ourselves in such a way that we are its logical and desired caretakers.

The “Social Nature” scholarship is incredibly varied both in terms of approach and topic. In drawing this particular group of scholars together, I work to illustrate key discourses of nature or wilderness and trace how wilderness is used to make particular claims about those who encounter it. Reading this literature left me wondering what wilderness continues to mean and what claims are made today about those who venture into it. I am compelled to ask: what sorts of discourses structure our current relationship to nature? By contrasting diverse and competing discourses on wilderness, I want to examine the process by which certain discourses gain legitimacy. The scholars I review in this section challenge the naturalness of nature and our

relationship to it. It is this body of scholarship that I find compelling and to which I intend to contribute.

While much of the scholarship I examine here addresses the wilderness of colonial North America and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars such as Baldwin (2003, 2004, 2009), Braun (2002) and Thorpe (2008) have examined more recent environmental struggles over iconographic Canadian places (the boreal forest, Clayoquot Sound and Temagami respectively), paying particular attention to how these wildernesses are imagined. Both Baldwin and Thorpe focus closely on the claims made about the nation through these wilderness spaces. While these three scholars do examine recreation practices, they do not focus on recreation. Rather, their interest is primarily on environmental activism, resource extraction industries and Indigenous peoples' land claims. I intend to position recreation at the centre of my analysis and consider how wilderness is produced in the context of contemporary outdoor recreation. I want to detail the meanings invested in the wilderness in the context of recreation and consider what claims are made about recreationists who encounter the wilderness today.

The "Social Nature" scholarship is at best artificially divided from the discussions of "Canadian Mythologies" and "Rationale Recreation." There are cracks in these divisions. As I continue to discuss nation and recreation, it will be possible to start asking more focused questions about the uses of wilderness discourses and their claims about nature, the nation and outdoor recreation.

### Canadian Mythologies

In this section, I discuss scholarship that addresses nationalism, cherished Canadian mythologies related to wilderness and recreation, as well as broader questions about the consequences of how Canada and its citizens have been imagined in relation to nature.



It is near impossible to begin theorizing the nation without discussing Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1991/1983). There are three areas of Anderson's work that have furthered my own thinking on the Canadian nation and recreation. First, Anderson's link between print text, capitalism and nation-building has led me to consider what kinds of wilderness or nature texts are central to the construction of Canada. I question how particular texts work to continuously re-imagine the Canadian nation. Most specifically, I am interested in commonplace texts, such as the Mountain Equipment Co-op catalogues, and speculate how they invoke particular notions of community and nationhood. Second, Anderson details how the museum operates as a political enterprise invested in producing certain visions, histories and traditions of the nation (see also Jackson & Penrose, 1993). Anderson posits that museums, as cultural institutions for western nations, are meant to create meaning and a history for a nation. I consider how other institutions may participate in this process and whether national parks can be viewed as museums in Anderson's sense. Finally, Anderson pinpoints the centrality of deliberate memory-making (by telling and identifying with particular practices and stories) and strategic forgetting (by collapsing differences between members of the nation) in the production of imagined communities. I am troubled by what Canadians are asked to recall and to erase from our collective memories. Anderson's work, although examining quite different institutions, texts and practices, invites consideration of the myriad ways a nation is imagined through cultural institutionalization of wilderness. Further, Anderson's analysis has challenged me to consider how outdoor recreation is instrumental to the production of Canadian nationalism.

Anderson's examination of how western nations become knowable focuses primarily on developments in areas of language, culture, class and, to a limited extent, colonialism. He does very little to consider how nature or wilderness figures in the national imagination. I look to the

work of scholars on American wilderness history and nationalism, such as Olwig (1996) and Nash (2001) to interrogate the constitutive relationship between nature and nation. Additionally, I turn to broader analyses of nationhood. One of the most useful discussions of the links between bodies, nation and nature occurs in Mohanram's (1999) work on what she terms "the cartography of bodies" (p. 3). In her analysis of the relationship between bodies, race and knowledge, Mohanram examines how nation and landscape are intricately connected. She analyzes how undeveloped natural features such as "hills, mountains, rivers, oceans and deserts" (p. 5) are used to ground assertions about national belonging. She argues:

[t]he landscape functions as a scribe recording the passage of history of the nation and its people. The emotion attached to the landscape relates to its ability to release memory... the reference to landscape makes the reader/viewer think of the nation; the nation, in turn, links it to its people. (p. 5-6)

Mohanram details the discursive role which nature or landscape play in the making of a national community. Further, she links landscape and nation to racialized bodies, arguing that imagining the nation is also about the strategic inclusion and exclusion of specific bodies (see also Razack, 2002). For Mohanram, an imagined nation cannot be abstracted from the materiality of the landscape or its investments in the racialization of its citizens and non-citizens. In the next section, I consider how wilderness figures in the construction of an imagined Canada through outdoor recreation. I also examine how Canada's wilderness contributes to deeply cherished national myths about what sort of people Canadians would like to believe we are.

### *Imagining Canada's Wilderness*

The depiction of Canada as a vast northern nation is not simply about Canada's geographic location. The idea of being a northern nation is embedded in myths about the

qualities of Canadians and their relationship to a northern wilderness. For Canadians, most of whom live along the southern Canada-US border, wilderness always seems to be located in the north (Manore, 1998). Shields (1991) suggests the north is an “imaginary zone, a frontier, a wilderness, an empty ‘space’ which, seen from southern Canada, is white, blank” (p. 165). Imagining wilderness as north holds real salience in Canadian national consciousness despite its remarkable lack of geographic specificity. The concept of the “north,” like that of the wilderness, is assumed to play an important role in the experiences and identities of Canadians (Atwood, 1995; Friedrich, 1997; Grace, 2001). In *Canada and the Idea of North*, Grace (2001) shows how Canada has been constructed through a fantasy of “north” and of “northern wilderness.” The Canadian north has been characterized as everything from malevolent to moving but what is perhaps most significant about discourses of north, wilderness and nation is how they work to construct Canada and Canadians. Grace and Shields argue that the fantasy of a northern Canadian wilderness is cherished because it can spatially anchor our desirable national qualities. I am intrigued by the discursive construction of “north,” how the north has been produced and its contribution to defining who belongs to the nation.

Carl Berger (1966, 1970) analyzed the connections between north, nature, whiteness and the Canadian nation. He assessed the discourse of the “true north strong and free,” exploring how the northern climate - epitomized in images of snow capped mountains and icy lakes - has been used to construct Canadians as strong, healthy and pure (see also Francis, 1997b). Berger drew attention to how the representation of Canadian climate reinforces the belief that only desirable (white) races can prosper in and inhabit the North, ensuring racial purity and the maintenance of “northern” values. As a result, Canada is understood as the home to a superior race capable of physically enduring and prospering in harsh conditions. Berger explained how the ruggedness of

Canadians is contrasted with the perceived laziness and weakness of Americans (presumed to result from the large number of southern European immigrants and former slaves). The physical prowess of northerners is viewed as testament to both their superior physical and moral qualities. They are imagined to be capable of making do with less indulgence and luxury, to work more industriously and to rely on personal grit and strength to succeed. In his analysis of whiteness, Dyer (1997) also points to how certain landscapes, specifically mountains, have come to be connected with whiteness. In addition, Shields (1991) analyzes how the north and wilderness are instrumental to the making of Canada and Canadians through the gendering of the wilderness. Shields suggests that wilderness and civilization are gendered spaces and that the entry into and return from the wilderness to civilization is vital to the production of white Canadian masculinity (see also Francis, 1997b).

The connectedness of nation, north, wilderness and whiteness points to how the space of wilderness works to construct subjects or citizen-subjects.<sup>13</sup> The national investment in this discursive construction of a Canadian citizen-subject as embodying whiteness ensures that its borders will be closely policed. In normalizing whiteness in the production of particular Canadian citizen subjects, bodies of colour are marked as other, outside of the nation (Bannerji, 2000). Bodies of colour are marked as degenerate, weak and morally suspect, unaccustomed to democracy and as threat to the nation. The production of the Canadian citizen-subject as white, able-bodied and respectable also rests on the construct of nature/wilderness as empty land. This is necessary as the citizen's claims to strength, endurance and moral fortitude rest on the assumption that only white, able-bodied Canadians have thrived in the rugged northern

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<sup>13</sup> Citizen-subjects can be understood as subjects scripted by and produced through national discourses on citizenship and belonging, including national mythologies. All citizens of Canada may not necessarily have access to the position that is produced. Arguably, this is the intent of the production of citizen-subjects (see Razack, 2002).

wilderness; to acknowledge the presence of Indigenous people as well as non-white settlers, undermines the claims that only northern, or more accurately northern, white European, “races” can survive in the harsh Canadian climate.

Nature is used as a nation building device which operates by invoking images of particular landscapes in nationalist discourses; these discourses simultaneously construct both the nation and the subjects within it. Lawrence (2002) argues that the production of an innocent white Canadian citizen-subject and Canada as a democratic and moral nation relies on the discursive production of wilderness as empty space to remain intact. She writes:

Canadian identity is deeply rooted in the notion of Canada as a vast northern wilderness, the possession of which makes Canadians unique and “pure” of character. Because of this, and in order for Canada to have a viable national identity, the histories of Indigenous nations, in all their diversity and longevity, must be erased (p. 23).

Lawrence links the fantasy of an empty wilderness with a particular myth about Canada and its citizens. She challenges the Laurentian vision, more accurately termed, the “Laurentian-colonialist legacy” (Bordo, Kulchyski, Milloy & Wadland, 1998, p. 5), which relies on a resource based economic strategy, the myth of two founding nations and the simultaneous project of erasing and assimilating Aboriginal peoples. By writing Indigenous peoples back into this emptied wilderness, Lawrence challenges one of the central stories told about Canada. But challenging these national myths is met with strong resistance. Grant (1998) states that “for many non-Native Canadians, their wilderness and northern identity myths verge on sanctity” (p. 29) and this affects the ways in which land marked as wilderness can be used. Grant focuses on the centrality of the Arctic in Canadian national mythologies and how non-Native Canadians wish to restrict economic use of the land by Inuit peoples because it interrupts these myths. His

discussion illustrates how particular spaces have become sacred through racialized discourses of Canadian nationalism. Lacombe (1998) and Manore (1998) are also concerned with how wilderness as sacred (national) space to non-Native Canadians will further undermine Indigenous people's claims to and use of land.

*A Fundamentally Decent People*

I have found it productive to read and review the work of scholars who look specifically at the relationship between wilderness and Canadian national mythologies alongside scholarship that interrogates what "being Canadian" means and what the imagined community of Canada tactically includes and excludes from its collective memory. Specifically, I am interested in scholars whose work critically interrogates who is imagined to belong to the nation, who ought to be excluded and what national stories are needed to uphold this discursive arrangement. Bannerji (2000), Mackey (2002) and Kalant (2004) each theorize the making of Canadian identity, the failure of multiculturalism and the desire for a white Canada. Bannerji critiques the myth of a multicultural Canada suggesting that it is incompatible with the fantasy of a white nation. Bannerji illustrates how Canada, as a liberal democracy and colonial state cannot make space for a politicized multiculturalism that deals with race and class inequalities. Kalant (2004), in her analysis of the Oka crisis, suggests that this conflict forced white Canadians to consider what was stirring within their own borders rather than to continue bemoaning their lack of traditions and fears of Americanization. She argues that, for non-Native Canadians, Aboriginal peoples are imagined to be in the remote north and that native self determination is also only contingently tolerated there. With the Oka conflict occurring in the south, close to a major city, media and government vocalized overt racism and stereotypes about "good" and "bad" Indians. Kalant makes clear how Canada's work of imagining itself as benevolent and more tolerant than

the USA was suddenly put to the test. Beneath a veneer of tolerance a widespread racism was firmly anchored in Canadian history, government practice and popular opinion.<sup>14</sup>

Mackey's (2002) critical investigation of whiteness in "Canadian-Canadian" identity is detailed, theoretically rich and immensely purposeful for developing my own research. Mackey describes how Canada positioned itself as a victim of American imperialism in order to elide critique of the violence imposed on "internal others" (p. 10, 12). Her study explores exactly how Canadian-Canadians tolerate, manage, depoliticize and ultimately erase difference in various events surrounding Canada's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Mackey, Kalant and Bannerji provide theoretical considerations which will inform my research. I am particularly interested in how whiteness and Canadianness are forged simultaneously. Both Kalant and Mackey focus on specific and remarkable events in Canadian history. In my research, I will utilize their analyses to examine commonplace outdoor recreation texts and the routine, daily practices endorsed in them. While they deal with moments when racism is visible and the myth of tolerance is undone by illustrating how racism is not aberrant or exceptional but instead operates continuously beneath a thinly veiled surface, I am interested in illuminating the underlying national myths working in the everyday contexts of outdoor recreation.

These scholars probe central national myths and insist on rethinking the ways in which Canada, as a nation, is imagined. This is a discussion I am eager to join. I have my own questions about how Canada is understood and about the institutions, texts and subjects that figure into this process: how do outdoor recreation texts participate in the imagining of Canada?

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<sup>14</sup> Recent events, such as the Ontario Provincial Police shooting of Dudley George at Stoney Point land/Ipperwash Provincial Park, illustrate how tensions over the use of significant nature places, such as national and provincial parks continue to result in state violence and racist outpouring by media and politicians. Then Premier Mike Harris is famously noted for screaming "I want the fucking Indians out of the park." The conflict in Caledonia between developers and Six Nations members, although not in park space, again demonstrates Kalant's assertions that land claims in southern and urban areas bring thinly concealed racisms to the surface of public discourse making the fantasy of a tolerant and benevolent Canada implausible at best.

What national discourses figure centrally in outdoor recreation texts? What investments are apparent in the nation building of espoused leisure practices? What relationships are constructed between wilderness and Canadian nationalism through ordinary outdoor recreation texts? How do representations of wilderness continue to shape how Canada is understood? In developing my research project, these questions have functioned as an important guide as I reflect on how Canadian nationalism operates in our everyday lives. I find recreation texts to be useful sites to begin this inquiry because they represent “play” rather than something that is at first glance defined as inherently political terrain. In later chapters, I show how representations of recreation in Canada tap into the national myths I have discussed. This makes the analysis of leisure materials more urgent. It forces me to consider exactly what sort of national games are being played out in Canadian outdoor recreation texts.

### Rational Recreation

Recreation is imagined as the opposite of work and is subsequently conceptualized as superficial and purely for fun. Yet, recreation is often the place where our values, desires and fantasies are most clearly played out. There is a sense that we must work but that what we do for recreation is truly our own. In many ways, this aspect of how we conceptualize recreation is what has drawn me to it as a site for analysis. Examining recreation, precisely because of what it supposedly reveals about who we really are, enables a unique entry point into the discursive production of nation and nature.

In contrast to assertions that recreation is a place of freedom, scholars point to how organized recreation and leisure activities function as a form of social control (Eitzen, 2006; Howell, 2001; Rojek, 1993, 2000; Wamsley, 1999). In Canada, recreation, in particular physical forms of recreation such as organized sport, has been and continues to be used by the ruling class



to legitimate inequitable power arrangements (Howell, 2001). Critical leisure scholarship approaches recreation pastimes not as inconsequential fun activities but as deeply revealing and capable of perpetuating broader operations of power. From scholars such as Howell and Rojek, I accept that recreation must be seen as serving a social purpose. It is intended to shape how its participants will be understood. Further, recreation is imagined as an activity that can transform those who engage with it. For example, in his analysis of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century sport in Canada, Howell (2001) explains how white middle and ruling class British and Canadian men used sports such as equestrian, tennis or cricket to assert themselves as respectable subjects. Similarly, the middle class, employing the discourse of Muscular Christianity, claimed that morality, for young men, could be demonstrated through organized exhibitions of physical strength and endurance (such as basketball and baseball) (Howell, 2001; Wamsley, 1999).<sup>15</sup> As discussed earlier, Manore (1998) and Nash (2001) argue that privileged urban men, in order to avoid succumbing to the degeneracy of the city, should embark of wilderness sojourns to escape the mundane and comfortable aspects of urban life, experience physical and mental challenges in order to reassert themselves as respectable subjects. These examples signal that recreation can transform, restore and improve potentially endangered or flawed subjects. This discourse of improvement or transformation through one's recreation practices is central to Canadian outdoor

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<sup>15</sup> It is worth noting that Muscular Christianity and the claims to respectability made through relied on the simultaneous dismissal and demonization of working class masculinity. Wamsley (1999) explains that

[w]hile these physical expressions of maleness [middle and ruling class sport and exercise] were cast in a positive light, other types of male physicality were not looked upon so favourably. The rougher physicality of working-class men was often regarded as an affront to social order by 'respectable' citizens who value the suppression of public violence, drunkenness, gambling, and Sabbath-breaking (p. 28).

Here, it is possible to see how sport and physical culture for the middle and upper classes is used to make claims to respectability and how privileged men eschew working class culture and physicality in order to assert themselves as respectable subjects. This echoes Fellows and Razack's (1998) insistence that claims to respectability rest on differentiations with those 'on the margins.' Further, both Wamsley and Howell signal that claims to respectability were very much tied to bodily practices (sport, drinking, dancing, violence) and that it is through physicality that class values emerge (see also Bourdieu, 1984)

recreation. In the next section, I consider what outdoor recreationists are assured of or promised as a result of their leisure practices.

*Adventure as recreation*

Adventure as recreation holds real salience in the Canadian imaginary. In his analysis of Victorian children's adventure stories, Phillips (1997) describes how British boys and men are toughened through their contact with Canadian wilderness. He makes clear how adventure operates as a tool to enact and repair hegemonic white masculinity. (Ad)venturing out into the wilderness is imagined as a cure for at risk of feminization urbanites (see Manore, 1998; Nash, 2001). Similarly, hunting and fishing are argued as appropriate and necessary leisure activities for men to re-establish themselves as adequately masculine (Bye, 2002; Dunk, 2002; Fine, 2000; Franklin, 1998). Today, hunting and fishing advocacy groups, such as the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), argue that the activities they promote offer solutions to distorted masculinities resulting from boys and men lacking sufficient opportunities to release their naturally violent and competitive energies (Dunk, 2002; see also Fine, 2000; Franklin, 1998). Dunk (2002) critiques these assertions about hunting and masculinity, suggesting instead that OFAH's claims echo burgeoning conservative men's rights movements. He writes

the claim that men are victims too and that they have a need and a right to express their essential nature is part of a strategy that allows white men to reclaim some of their lost prestige, status and power in a world where the interests, rights, and cultural values of formerly subordinate segments of the population have much more influence than they once did (p. 60-1).

What is evident in OFAH's strategy, and what Dunk unpacks, is a vested interest in using a presumed relationship with wilderness to lay claims to particular privileges (on the basis of

gender and race). Phillips' (1997) discussion of adventure stories, as well as scholarship on hunting, demonstrates how particular activities work to produce and maintain desirable masculinities in and through contact with wilderness and wildlife.

Adventure recreation in Canada is tied to the legacy of exploration and conquest as well as the fantasy of a powerful white nation (Braun, 2003; Erickson, 2002, 2003). Erickson (2002) describes how mountaineering in Canada is embedded in a history of exploration, cartography and nationbuilding. He goes on to argue that mountains, as a specific type of nature, are imagined as influential to the making of both Canada and its political leaders, such as Trudeau and Chrétien. Further, Erickson (2002) details how mountaineering as adventure and nationbuilding projects have effectively undermined Aboriginal peoples' land claims by marking this mountainous nature space as white. In the previous section, I examined Braun's (2003) analyses of how risk, as a central component of adventure recreation, is linked to whiteness. He argues that risky adventures, such as mountaineering and rock climbing, enable white recreationists to make claims to whiteness and a history that connects whiteness and masculinity with exploration and adventure. In this way, white adventure seekers can make claims to the privileges of white masculinity through their involvement in adventure recreation. Here, recreation acts as a marker for a particular subject position with explicit political implications: providing rationale for masculine and white privilege. Braun (2003) details how adventure recreation offers white male recreationists the myth that their ability to take risks (in recreation or in other spheres, such as business, politics, and academia) has led directly to their privilege as white men. In short, white male privilege is legitimated by their risky adventures and is demonstrated by their physical and intellectual prowess.

Adventure recreation has also facilitated a proto-type for how particular men can gain access, through recreation, to the privileges of whiteness. Braun (2003) refers to this process as a “purification machine” (p. 197) and details how nature works as a site for white recreationists to escape the city in order to experience risk and adventure, and return unscathed and purified. He describes adventure recreation as a racialized journey and nature as “a place where people become white” (2003, p. 197). This form of recreation clearly envisions wilderness as a transformative space for adventurers, albeit at times in radically different ways for different subjects. If nature is dangerous and foreboding, the quest into nature is risky for the respectable white recreationist. For example in Atwood (1995) and Phillips (1997), where nature is envisioned as hostile, respectable subjects could slip into degeneracy or savagery during their journey into nature; however, their safe return would mark them as unquestionably physically, and mentally robust. Having conquered the wilderness and any wildness within themselves, they are now adequately trained for their role as economic and political leaders. Here, the city is marked as respectable and the wilderness as degenerate. In contrast, a pristine and sublime wilderness operates in a much different fashion. With the city marked as degenerate and the wilderness as pure (see Manore, 1998; Nash, 2001), the journey into wilderness works to cleanse the recreation subject. Francis (1997b) suggests that this pattern of entering the wilderness and returning to the city is an essential rhythm to Canadian life (see also Shields, 1991). Wilderness excursions work to repair tattered whiteness for middle class and ruling class urbanites, almost a whiteness wilderness therapy program. In these outdoor recreation narratives, wilderness and whiteness are explicitly linked, demonstrating how the production of subjects is intricately tied to the ways we have come to understand and shape wilderness.

*Journey rather than adventure: women in outdoor recreation*

The scholarship on recreation as adventure identifies links between leisure, masculinity, whiteness and Canadian-ness. There is a small body of research that critically engages with the operations of femininity in outdoor recreation (see Bell, 1992; Haun-Moss, 2002; Lacombe, 1998; McDermott, 2000; Newberry, 2000). Although there is a substantive literature on women and outdoor recreation (Allin, 2000; Bialeshcki, 1992; Coble, Selin & Erickson, 2003; Collins, 2000; Henderson, 1992; Jordan, 1992; Lugg, 2003; Mitten, 1992; Mitten & Dutton, 1996; Warren, 1999), this literature reproduces stereotypes about women and normalizes hegemonic femininities while ignoring racism and heterosexism in outdoor recreation. This literature also frames wilderness or nature as a neutral site.

Critical scholarship on women, gender and femininity in outdoor recreation has analyzed how outdoor recreation, for women, has been used as a stepping stone to established forms of social and political power (Haun-Moss, 2002; Lacombe, 1998; McDermott, 2000). Additionally, scholars such as Bell (1992), McDermott (2000) and Newberry (2000) have reconceptualized leadership and participation in outdoor recreation without erasing differences between women. One of the most intriguing pieces of research is from Newberry, who employs a feminist post-structural approach to examine identity and outdoor pedagogy. She focuses on the blurring of gender boundaries and the difficult negotiations that female outdoor leaders make with hegemonic femininity. Newberry focuses on how race, class and sexuality script femininities in the outdoors and troubles colonial discourses on nature and nation that structure Canadian outdoor recreation.

Scholarship on women in outdoor recreation tends to emphasize the importance of reflective journeying rather than conquest-oriented adventure (Collins, 2000; Jordan, 1992;

Lugg, 2003; Mitten, 1992, Mitten & Dutton, 1996). This component of the literature grabbed my attention. Women's outdoor recreation is often positioned as somehow different from conventional, male-oriented adventure recreation. This literature insists that women's recreation focuses on cooperation, team work and self esteem rather than competition and challenge. I find this distinction interesting – both for what it supposedly tells us about what women need from outdoor recreation and for what it reveals about the potential for recreation to transform us. Many of the proponents of women's outdoor recreation advocate that their position is radically different than conventionally male-oriented outdoor recreation. However, I observe a striking similarity. In this literature, it is again presumed that the recreation we engage in will have direct bearing on the types of people we will become and ideally it will transform us into better people. While the descriptions of what is considered desirable may be deeply gendered as well as racialized, what underlines this literature is the emphasis on becoming a better subject. Further, what is evident in both of these bodies of scholarship is the way in which wilderness functions as a backdrop for these transformative experiences. The wilderness is, at times, perceived to be a blank slate that can be used to fulfill a particular narrative and can be invested with certain meanings in order to suit the needs of the recreationists who move through it.

### *National Recreation*

One of the central features of Canadian outdoor recreation history and imagery is the canoe. The canoe, an important symbol of Canada, wilderness and masculinity, participates in the construction of respectable subjects (Haun-Moss, 2002; McDermott, 2000). Both Haun-Moss (2002) and McDermott (2000) detail how the canoe was used in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by white, ruling class men for sporting competition, travel and work. Haun-Moss describes the emergence of canoeing clubs for wealthy colonialists in the area that is now known as Ontario. The canoe

was historically and continues to also be used by women to negotiate a position in both outdoor recreation and the Canadian nation (Haun-Moss, 2002; McDermott, 2000). Both Haun-Moss (2002) and McDermott (2000) view this history with a critical eye, showing the extent to which canoeing for recreation in Canada is embedded in colonial practice and the privileging of white, middle and upper class men and women. Canoeing is one of many components of aboriginal cultures and technologies that have been appropriated for use in colonial projects. The canoe is now marked as a symbol of respectability (Baldwin, 2004); and it is no longer linked with the degeneracy of the aboriginal other. In his analysis of the Boreal Rendezvous,<sup>16</sup> Baldwin (2004) explains how canoeing now references iconic Canadians, such as Pierre Trudeau, and argues that it can be safely used as a reference of white, masculine Canadian nationalism. The canoe has been whitened and in turn it enables the whitening of recreational canoeists (Haun-Moss, 2002).

The appropriation of Aboriginal peoples' cultures and technologies is abundant and pervasive in Canadian culture. It is worthwhile to consider how recreation specifically has functioned as an influential site for this colonial project. Atwood (1995) hints at how early 20<sup>th</sup> century figures such as Grey Owl and Ernest Thompson Seton played an influential role in shaping Canada's nature culture. Grey Owl, or Archibald Belaney, was a white English man who transformed himself into the spokesperson for nature by impersonating Aboriginal people. Ernest Thompson Seton, as the founder of the Woodcraft Indians, later to become the Boy Scouts and Girls Guides, envisioned performing "Indian" as desirable and possibly even necessary for white boys and men. Grey Owl and Seton saw performing or even impersonating Indian(s) as a potential cure for the ills of civilized men. Francis (1997b) proposes that Grey Owl and Seton

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<sup>16</sup> The Boreal Rendezvous is "a series of multi-day canoe expeditions along 10 prominent rivers running throughout the Canadian boreal forest" (Baldwin, 2004, p. 185). This 2003 event was sponsored by Mountain Equipment Co-op and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and is intended to raise awareness of the environmental threats that these important national nature places are encountering.

epitomize the Canadian legacy of playing at “going native” and that this continues to be played out in the modern weekend canoe trip. Grey Owl and Seton quite clearly demonstrate how appropriating aboriginal culture, as historical or as nature-loving, is an essential component of white Canadian culture. This is evident in tourism in Canada, where Aboriginal people are represented as central to the nation yet relegated to the historical past or are lodged into stereotypical roles as nature’s caretakers (Blundell, 2002; Braun, 2002; Francis, 1997b).

Although figures such as Grey Owl have been exposed as fraudulent, what they represented still holds remarkable cultural currency in outdoor recreation. I propose that Canadian outdoor recreation needs Grey Owl to enable a particular fantasy about nature. In order for outdoor recreationists to imagine ourselves as caring for and connected to nature, we must continue the legacy of “going native” as leisure. Further, Grey Owl and Seton’s appropriation of aboriginal cultures is intricately linked with the myth of the doomed or even imaginary Indian (Francis, 1997a, 1997b). Atwood (1995) explains how, during the time of Seton’s *Woodcraft* Indians and the camp movement for young white children (where they could pretend to be native), Aboriginal children were confined in residential schools where they were taught to be white. Grey Owl’s and Seton’s appropriation of aboriginal cultures explicitly relies on the erasure of Aboriginal peoples, turning the role of nature caretaking over to white men, women, and children (see also Dunk, 2002). Francis (1997a, 1997b) describes the imaginary or doomed Indian in Canadian culture as a central aspect of what white Canadians allow themselves to remember. What has been strategically erased is colonization, genocide and theft – precisely what Lawrence (2002) seeks to reintroduce into national memory. As previously discussed, Lawrence pinpoints this strategic forgetting as an essential component of Canadian national identity. Further, the appropriation of aboriginal cultures and technologies in outdoor recreation



seems reminiscent of what Bannerji (2000) and Mackey (2002) have described as toothless and depoliticized multiculturalism: aboriginal cultures are reduced to interesting artifacts for mainstream white Canadian culture to celebrate while precluding more politicized discussions of aboriginal sovereignty and self determination.

I argue in this thesis that outdoor recreation is deeply embedded in nation-building and that viewing recreation in this way enables us to see what we undertake through our leisure. Reading scholarship on race and nation allows us to question what we imagine ourselves to be doing when traipsing about in the wilderness and what we risk reproducing in the process. Yet, I fear that questions about Grey Owl, the use of the canoe and the whiteness of the journey might be prematurely put to rest as a relic of the past. While we might look at this history with distrust, we are wont to see it in our own modern leisure practices. A few scholars, notably Braun, Baldwin and Erickson, continue to ask probing questions about current recreation texts, practices and subjects. They insist that we look at the current formations of recreation, often in conjunction with environmental activism, in order to see the continuing legacy of colonization.

Some of the first questions I asked in developing my research were: what does outdoor recreation look like now? What investments can be seen in the current forms of outdoor recreation? What texts tell the stories of outdoor recreation? Who contributes to the discourses of nature and nation in outdoor recreation? Underneath the questions about how discourses of nature, nation and recreation intertwine and operate, I have more personal questions. As an outdoor recreationist, someone who has found herself on mountain tops, in canoes and with her foot in grizzly bear tracks, my own investments and pleasure in outdoor recreation clearly impact the significance of asking and researching this area. Further, the claims that emerge in the literature of journeying into nature for rest and rejuvenation are real to me. I do not conduct this

research with any even remote claims to objectivity or analytical distance. I see myself in the literature, much as I know I will find myself in the texts I analyze. I do wonder: will undertaking this project spoil my leisure enjoyment indefinitely? What is at stake for my own sense of self as I put my own leisure practices under a microscope? What privileges will be revealed? What investments? How will I elect to play in light of what I may encounter? My research and the questions I hazard to ask are both analytical and intimate: I cannot imagine myself outside of this process. And yet, these questions, the texts, practices and subjects examined are not a personal narrative. Rather, my task is to unravel how discourses of nature, nation and recreation operate in outdoor recreation texts. I cannot escape my presence within these discourses but I am not so indulgent to imagine myself sole author and participant in their re/production.

#### Nature, Nation, Recreation

The literature on “Social Nature,” “National Mythologies” and “Rational Recreation” share considerable areas of overlap. While the work of Phillips, Braun, and Baldwin informs my thinking I do not want to simply replicate their research. Rather, I aim to bring these diverse bodies of scholarship together in order to place recreation at the forefront, rather than appending it as an afterthought. I examine how recreation functions as a focal point for how we have come to understand nature and nation, rather than viewing it as an innocuous activity. Further, I approach recreation as meaningful because of the socio-cultural, national and oftentimes personal significance that is placed on leisure.

In reading across these bodies of scholarship, a number of debates can be identified. With a substantial amount of the literature focused on historical practices, texts and subjects, it is necessary to consider how, in more recent years, we continue to engage in the production of nature, the imagining of the nation and the scripting of recreation practices. Certainly, the

historical legacy of how the Canadian nation was imagined by colonialists, ruling class urbanites and wilderness/wildlife officials influences current practices and discourses. At the same time I want to question how these historical discourses continue to work, as well as probe what competing discourses emerged. This has led me to investigate present day outdoor recreation institutions and current texts. I am prompted to grapple with forms of Canadian nationalism that seem most salient today and to examine how particular national mythologies are made palatable and desirable. Further, as most contemporary outdoor recreation only plays at exploration, how are ideas of adventure and journey reformatted and made relevant. Plainly put, I investigate how discourses of nature, nation and recreation operate in recent outdoor recreation texts and to what effect.

A second area that emerges is the role of the everyday in shaping our recreation experiences. A number of the scholars I have discussed focus on documents that are rarely, if ever, readily available to the vast majority of Canadians and/or outdoor recreationists. Scholars, such as Braun, Thorpe and Baldwin, who have looked at recent shifts in the discursive production of nature and nation, examine formal and difficult-to-access documents: policy documents, archival materials, forestry planning and detailed correspondence that are unlikely to have landed in the hands of many inhabitants and visitors to wilderness places. Further, while they may shape policy decisions and institutional practices, these documents have a very limited readership and for most outdoor recreationists have little immediate bearing on their understanding and experiences. Braun, Baldwin and Thorpe, along with Stoddart (2008), also examine more commonplace texts, such as advertisements and promotional materials.<sup>17</sup> Stoddart (2008), in his analysis of skiing culture, makes use of widely read ski and snowboard

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<sup>17</sup> Baldwin's research also includes television coverage, commemorative books and brochures for the Boreal Rendezvous.

magazines. He examines discourses of wilderness, environmentalism and mountains as a type of national space. Stoddart's research, along with the work of Baldwin, Bran and Thorpe, prompted me to consider what other texts, institutions, organizations and products are embedded in shaping how outdoor recreation is understood. Therefore, I want to analyze the texts that have found their way into the backpacks and on to coffee tables of outdoor recreationists. In particular, I am interested in texts that do not require readers to possess specialized knowledge, skills or language in order to peruse and enjoy reading. I am curious about the wilderness places that function as the backdrop for recreation activities and want to consider what discourses function in everyday recreation practices. These materials will not necessarily contradict formal documents which have shaped outdoor recreation; rather, they may offer insight into how official discourses are made knowable to practitioners. In many ways, these everyday texts might allow us to see how particular official discourses are made concrete and put into practice. I anticipate that it is in these texts that common understandings of nature and nation are coherently and simply assembled. It is to these sorts of texts that I intend to unravel how recreation institutions call up and reproduce natural and national stories and how these stories are meaningfully represented in specific texts.

A third area of concern that emerged from reviewing literatures for this research is the gaps between these disciplines and the complex lines of questioning that have been left unaddressed. After reading about how nature is constructed or nation is imagined, I have unanswered questions about the relationship between these discourses. For example, anti-racist, feminist scholars such as Lawrence, Mackey and Bannerji interrogate the Canadian nation and critique the construction of benevolent multiculturalism; and scholars on social nature, such as Shields and Berger, point to how wilderness has been used to shape national identity and

consciousness. Similarly, scholars examining outdoor recreation, for example Stoddart or Braun, investigate the utility and meaning recreationists place on their leisure practices and how recreation informs how they come to know themselves as particular sorts of subjects. The social nature and recreation scholarship touches only briefly on questions and insights from anti-racist and feminist scholarship.<sup>18</sup> For example, consideration and interrogation is needed of the relationship between Canada's fantasy of benevolence and leisure practices. Further, I am curious to uncover how, in outdoor recreation texts, certain wildernesses are represented as authentically Canadian. I want to draw these areas of scholarship together because no single body of literature can adequately address queries and questions I raise in this review. My research is therefore necessarily interdisciplinary in order to make it possible to grapple with these questions.

I have posed many questions in this review. I intend to ask three core questions:

- How is nature understood?
- How is Canada imagined?
- How are certain subjects produced through outdoor recreation?

In focusing on these questions, I am not seeking to uncover "real nature" by examining how nature is constructed. Rather, I explore how nature is represented in outdoor recreation texts and what power relationships are at stake in seeing this as the real nature. Similarly, I am not hoping to prove that outdoor recreation neglects who Canadians really are; instead I am concerned with how we have come to understand particular practices and discourses as fundamentally Canadian in outdoor recreation texts. In looking at representations of nature in outdoor recreation, I intend to illuminate some of the intricate ways in which nature is manufactured. I consider how

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<sup>18</sup> Moore, Pandian & Kosek's (2003) collection *Race, Nature and the Politics of Difference* is exceptional in its detailed contribution to studies of race and nature.

knowledge about nature is ordered and assembled and work to articulate how particular ideas come to be understood as the truth (about nature). I work to unpack the making of Canadian-ness in outdoor recreation. My goal is not to create a “how-to guide” for more equitable outdoor recreation. Rather, it is to explore how understandings of nature and nation are fundamental to naturalizing some outdoor recreation practices and subjects while estranging others.

Examining discursive constructions of nature and nation enables me to make sense of the subjects that are produced in and through outdoor recreation. I want to explore how discourses on nature and nation sustain outdoor recreation and produce certain subjects as desirable actors in the outdoor recreation game. I am going to investigate how subjects of outdoor recreation are made knowable and how these subjects work to discursively produce the interconnected and interdependent triad of nature, nation and recreation. At the crux of this examination is an investigation of the political and social consequences of this subject production. As clearly demonstrated through previous scholarship, the production of particular subjects has very real and tangible consequences for how we understand and encounter wilderness. The production of subjects is also deeply significant for how we understand the nation and who counts as authentically Canadian. Finally, recreation practices offer the potential to be transformed and to take up, even intermittently, particular subject positions. Making sense of these arrangements may offer insight into how outdoor recreation has been deeply uneven and inequitable and consider what is possible and necessary for change to occur.

In my next chapter, *Theory and Methods*, I take the questions that emerge from this literature review and outline the theoretical and methodological tools I use to anchor my research. The three broad questions emerging from this review will be fleshed out in greater detail. I articulate how particular theoretical constructs, such as discourse and

subject/subjectivity, will be understood and employed in my examination of Canadian outdoor recreation. Additionally, I identify the recreation texts I have selected for analysis. I will also explore the methodological challenges I encounter and techniques I adopt in developing and undertaking my research.

## Chapter 2: Theory and Methodology

*Technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (Foucault, 2003b, p. 146).*

In this chapter, I take the three questions from my literature review and outline the theoretical tools and methods that I employ in my analysis of Canadian outdoor recreation texts. This chapter is divided into two sections. First, I outline the theoretical work that I draw on to develop and guide my research. I discuss why particular theoretical constructs are used, the central constructs that are employed in this thesis along with the link between this theoretical framework and the approach or structure of the four remaining chapters. Second, I address the methods I employ in this research. I introduce the specific sites and data I have selected, discuss issues that arose in the gathering of the data and describe how particular texts were located. Finally, I outline a number of strategies, techniques and methods that I use to analyze the data. The goal of this chapter is to bridge the previous chapter's discussion of the literature with the analysis chapters that follow. In this chapter, I outline my theoretical approach and arguments in order to connect my research questions with analysis of specific texts.

### Theory

#### *Genealogy*

I consider my methodology a form of Foucauldian genealogy. However, Foucault is not the only theorist who led me to the questions I ask, and neither does his work provide the only framework informing my research. Rather, Foucault's work provides conceptual tools that I find best articulated by feminist and anti-racist theorists such as Cooper (1994), Davies (2000), Flax (1993), McLaren (2002), McNay (1992), Mills (2003) and Stoler (1995); they first prompted me



to question what we think we know to be true. In this thesis then, I make use of Foucault's tools, some of his central concepts and his modes of questioning and incorporate insight from feminist and antiracist theorists in order to design and undertake an analysis of Canadian outdoor recreation in a politically intuitive way.

Foucault's methods are notoriously difficult to define and perhaps even more difficult to apply because he rarely provides or articulates his methods (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). To fully describe Foucault's methods is beyond the scope of this overview.<sup>19</sup> Here, I outline the specific ways in which I utilize Foucault's concept of genealogy. In stating that I am undertaking a genealogy, I do not intend to replicate Foucault's work or even to think *like* Foucault. Rather, I aim to think *with* Foucault in order to ask genealogical questions and to undertake a study that is concerned with the processes of reading and analyzing texts rather than simply finding a short and one dimensional approach to "answers."

I approach genealogy as a mode of inquiry which builds on and complicates Foucauldian archaeology in order to analyze operations of power (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). Foucault's genealogical method, probably most clearly demonstrated in his popular works, *Discipline and Punish* and the *History of Sexuality Volume I*, is often discussed in relation to archaeology (Gutting, 2005). Archaeology and genealogy are best understood as works in progress, rather than as opposites. Archaeological analysis, for Foucault, is about describing the contexts and rules of the archive in order to illustrate how some discourses, and not others, have come to be understood as truth (Mills, 2003, p. 64; see also Kendall & Wickham, 1999). In both genealogical and archaeological methods of inquiry, the process of seeking to understand how a particular discourse comes to be known as "true" requires consideration of what alternate

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<sup>19</sup> Useful resources which try to explain Foucault's methods include Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham's (1999) methodology guide for students using Foucault, Stuart Hall's (1997) work on analysis of discourse and representation and Gillian Rose's (2001) work on visual methodology and discourse analysis.

discourses were discounted and how credentials to claim or verify truth were located within particular institutions, systems of knowledge or groups. Genealogy builds on archaeology in a specific area, analyses of the operations of power in discourse (Kendall & Wickham. 1999; Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). This component of Foucault's genealogy is useful for collaboration with feminist and anti-racist theory.

Foucault (2003a) defines his genealogical project as multipronged. He explains the three possible projects he imagines:

First, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents. (2003a, p. 110)

What is apparent in all three possible strains of genealogy is a fascination with making sense of how we shape ourselves as subjects in relation to knowledge or truth (*The Birth of the Clinic*), power (*Discipline and Punish*) and ethics (*The History of Sexuality*). For my research, I draw from each of these areas of genealogy. I interrogate the relationship between the truth about wilderness and how outdoor recreation subjects are constituted. I am interested in how, in the context of outdoor recreation, power operates and is employed in ways that could allow us to be read as particular sorts of subjects. And finally, I consider the detailed and extensive sets of recreation practices recommended and attributed to good outdoor recreation subjects.

Most discussions of genealogy offer few details of what precisely one must do (in terms of research methods). Rather, genealogy requires translation or interpretation. I conceptualize

Foucault's genealogy as a challenge to researchers and readers to rethink and unpack taken for granted or apparent truths. Markula and Pringle (2006) provide this insightful description:

Genealogy is an examination of the relations between history, discourse, bodies and power in an attempt to help understand social practices or objects of knowledge 'that continue to exist and have value for us all' (Foucault 1977c: 146). (p. 32)

Genealogy can be understood as a gradual untangling of discourse and a close attention to the processes which shape what counts as truth and desirable ways of being. Genealogical inquiry is concerned with what has come to be seen as normal, natural and moral or ethical. To raise genealogical questions is to consider the emergence and circulation of discourses and practices.

Foucault presents several challenges which I take up in my analysis. To begin, he urges us to abandon the goal of finding the truth, one beginning or an origin. Foucault (1994a) insists that, in order to undertake genealogical inquiries, it is necessary to abandon a desire to "get to the bottom of things." In many ways, to resist the urge to find "the truth" or "the source" seems counterintuitive to the conventional research process. If I have questions, then the research process should lead me to answers. Employing a genealogical analysis requires the suspension of this seemingly logical quest. Instead, I aim to look at data from outdoor recreation institutions in order to identify the discourses at work. It is not my intention to follow this data in order to locate the origins of how we think about nature, nation or recreation. Rather, I examine these discourses to see how they operate and shape power relations. Yet, my examination is partial and temporal; other possible analyses, interpretations and discussions are possible and purposeful.

What I examine in the data are the ways in which discourses operate, thus my attention is on the processes by which certain discourses come to be understood as true. With archaeology, there is a focus on creating snapshots from webs of discourse (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). With

genealogy, I must attend not to these pockets per se but to the processes that constitute them.

Mills (2004) posits that analyses of discourse such as genealogy are an examination of discursive structures. She explains:

the main reason for conducting an analysis of the structures of discourses is not to uncover the truth or the origin of a statement but rather to discover the support mechanisms which allow it to be said and keep it in place. (p. 45)

In this way, to analyze discourse is not to find the truth, but to consider how a truth emerges and is secured in place. For example, rather than looking at each of the moments where nature is described or inscribed, I attend to how particular truths about nature are produced in historically specific instances and through a network of discursive arrangements. I string these snapshots together and disrupt how they are made to appear seamless, coherent and logical. Further, in examining the discursive production of wilderness, I consider what is perceived to be good or moral, as well as real for the wilderness. Claims are often made not just on the basis of what is the “true” way but about what is the “right” or correct way of seeing wilderness. Tracing the discursive production of wilderness requires consideration of both knowledge and ethics.

Paying attention to discursive processes necessitates posing specific types of questions. Rather than asking “what” or “why,” Foucault (1994b) urges us to ask “how.” The shift in how to pose questions to the data is congruent with Foucault’s skepticism of master narratives. Kendall and Wickham (1999) urge scholars hoping to use Foucault’s ideas to suspend second order judgments. By asking “how” rather than “why,” I am pushed to investigate the materials through radically different methods. I cannot find a tidy answer such as “sexism” or “class inequality” to make sense of how particular discourses operate in and through nature, nation and recreation. In many ways, changing the questions one asks makes possible the suspension of

judgment if only momentarily. It is important to note here that suspension of judgment is not meant to eradicate critical evaluations of the operations of power. Many feminists have mobilized Foucault to pose profound critiques of power (Cooper, 1994; Fellows & Razack, 1998; Flax, 1993). I have worked to conceptualize this suspension of judgment as a way to look for more, to refuse to be satisfied with an initial reading and to demand a more thorough and detailed investigation of discourse and the operations of power.

*Key Concepts:*

*Power*

It is from feminist poststructuralism that I was first led to consider the work of Foucault. In particular, his work on power and the utility it offered to feminist thought had real appeal for questions I grappled with. While I heard the claims that poststructuralism would eradicate the possibility to challenge power and bring about social change, there remained, for me, something compelling about changing how I understood power.

Foucault's conceptualization of power challenges the notion of power as something that one group possesses and which enables them to constrain other groups (Foucault, 1978; Mills, 2003). Foucault sees power as something employed rather than possessed. Power is understood as web-like; it is interspersed and operates through an elaborate series of networks (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). Power, when understood as a web rather than a binary relation, is enacted by everyone through the process of power relations, rather than simply by those perceived to be wielding it. Davies aptly describes power as "a complex set of relations amongst people and in the relations between people and knowledge systems – or patterns of discourse" (2000, p. 18). Understanding power as a web of relations positions all individuals, groups and institutions

within it. Inclusion within the web of power is not to suggest an equal positioning and that the operations of power are equally consequential.

One of the most promising or compelling aspects of Foucault's work on power is the interconnectedness of power and resistance. Foucault explains this relationship as follows:

where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always "inside" power, there is no "escaping" it there is no absolute outside where it is concerned, because one is subject of the law in any case? Or that, history being the ruse of reason, power the ruse of history, always emerging the winner? This would be to misunderstand the strictly relational character of power relationships. Their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance... These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable, others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. But this does not mean that they are only a reaction or a rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat.

(1978, p. 95-96)

This emphasis on resistance drew many feminists to Foucault's work on power. The insistence on the constitutive relationship between power and resistance is useful for those aiming to shift social relations and the operations of power. Further, Foucault's ideas of resistance challenge the

idea that resistance is always a formal and strategic process. Rather, the forms resistance takes are multiple and operate unexpectedly at times. Attending to links between resistance and power also helps to further illustrate the web like operations of power, with resistance emerging from varied points.

Shifting how power is understood as a web or network raises the question: if power does not only suppress or restrict – what does power do? Cooper explains that “Foucauldian feminists who have focused on power’s productive properties tend to concentrate on the ways in which regimes construct knowledge, bodies and subjects, rather than on the nature of the power relationship” (1994, p. 438). Foucault’s approach to power offers insight into how the production of knowledge is always and already intricately tied to power, bodies, discourse and the subject. The intricate connection led him to focus on what he described as power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980).

The ability to produce knowledge is an incredibly powerful force and difficult to disentangle because of the ways in which “truth” is constructed. The ability to produce knowledge engenders power; in turn power cannot be exercised without knowledge (Mills, 2003). Foucault’s studies of sexuality illustrate how knowledge production is instrumental to power relations. He draws attention to how the “incitement to discourse” (1978, p. 17) around sexuality functions to produce an abundance of thought about sexuality rather than to repress discussion entirely. He illustrates how the ability to produce knowledge about particular groups, such as the hysterical woman or the masturbating child, hold far more weight than simply the ability to repress. This power to produce knowledge defines what we consider to be knowable: what counts as true.

Foucault insists that power is about the ability to produce rather than suppress. He explains that power

operates on the field of possibilities in which the behaviour of active subjects is able to inscribe itself. It is a set of actions on possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; it releases or contrives, makes more probable or less; in the extreme, it constrains or forbids absolutely, but it is always a way of acting upon one or more acting subjects...a set of actions upon other actions. (2003c, p. 138)

The operation of power, according to Foucault, directly shapes the possible actions of different subjects. He links power to the idea of governmentality, thinking not of state institutions but of how conduct is directed. He explains that “to govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action for others” (2003c, p. 138). For Foucault, power is about shaping the conduct of particular subjects by foreclosing what is considered acceptable. Foucault suggests that the operation of power rarely relies on violence or force, as it works primarily by limiting what is perceived to be possible. Foucault’s work on governmentality is intricately tied to the notion of ethics or technologies of the self; scholars such as Nikolas Rose (1999) draw on Foucault’s work on governmentality to consider how subjects are compelled to take up particular practices in order to prove themselves to be responsible citizens (see also Rose, O’Malley & Valverde (2006). In this line of thinking, I approach outdoor recreation institutions not as heavy handed entities which penalize outdoor recreationists who act inappropriately. Rather, I take up how, in the context of outdoor recreation, particular practices are represented as responsible and desirable, and thereby limit other ways of engaging.

What we must consider, in employing the work of Foucault and poststructural feminisms, is that the “truth” is constantly under negotiation through various competing discourses. Thus,



discourses which shape the truth about us, about nature and about the nation, are not necessarily stable. Rather there is continuous discursive tension underway: truths might not unfold in a linear fashion, and we do not gradually gain more knowledge and understand the world better. Rather, the emergence of a new truth reflects discursive shifts. But what does it mean to talk about discourse? How should one approach the use of this slippery and confusing concept?

### *Discourse*

In my study, I consider the discursive production of wilderness and the relationship between discourse, practices and subjects in the context of Canadian outdoor recreation. I draw from Foucault and feminist poststructuralists to build my understanding of discourse. Bronwyn Davies explains discourse as:

[a]n institutionalized use of language and language-like sign systems. Institutionalization can occur at the disciplinary, the political, the cultural and the small group level. There can also be a discourse that develops around a specific topic, such as gender or class.  
(2000, p. 88)

Discourse, in this sense, can be viewed as a clustering of statements or patterns of what is considered to be knowable. In Foucault's work, discourse is very much enmeshed in discussions of power, knowledge and truth. He argues that "discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (1978, p. 101). Discourses define and organize what counts as truth, competing with and discounting alternate discourses (Davies, 2000; Mills, 2003). Mills (2004) explains how discourses articulate the limits of truth in a threefold approach. First, the field is narrowed; what gets to be included and to count as significant is curtailed. Second, the authority to speak is defined – thereby marking what knowledge will be permissible. And finally, discourse ensures

future statements will continuously reinstate and solidify its particular truths. Thus, the process of truth creation is an elaborate and intricate system that is constantly negotiated.

Discourse cannot simply be uncovered through language and speech: its links to power requires the consideration of practices. Discursive practices draw attention to the ways in which knowledge is produced. Discursive practices are the machinations of truth production: authority is invoked and presented as logical and coherent. I am most interested in how discursive practices work to produce subjects. Southgate describes discourse as “a theoretical tool that can account for relationships between knowledge, practice, subjectivity, and power” (2003, p. 180). From Southgate’s definition, I understand discourse as the link or connection joining many of Foucault’s concepts. Mills explains “it’s not that there is nothing outside of discourse but that without it we cannot make sense of it” (2004, p. 49). Discursive practices are integral to the process of defining the limits of what counts as knowable. A central aspect of discourse is its relation to the subject, specifically the production of subjects. I see discourses then as determining what counts as truth as well as structuring how it is possible to understand ourselves. Particular subjects, such as the outdoor recreation subjects I examine in this thesis, are made knowable through specific techniques and practices. My examination of wilderness discourses is also about how certain subjects are produced in through outdoor recreation texts and how particular recreation practices are understood as desirable.

### *Subjectivity*

I draw on Davies (2000), an important theorist in the areas of poststructural feminism, to ground my understanding of subjectivity.<sup>20</sup> She writes:

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<sup>20</sup> Oftentimes, the terms subjectivity, subject and identity are used interchangeably in scholarly literature. While there are certainly areas of overlap in these concepts, there are notable differences. Davies (2000) explains identity as stemming from humanist traditions, and is understood as “continuous, unified, rational, and coherent” (p. 57). In contrast, subjectivity emerges from poststructural thought. Subjectivity is intended to encompass poststructural

the experience of being a person is captured in the notion of subjectivity. Subjectivity is constituted through those discourses in which the person is being positioned at any one point in time, both through their own and other's acts of speaking/writing. One discourse that contradicts another does not undo one's constitutions in terms of the original discourse. One's subjectivity is therefore necessarily contradictory. It is also to some extent outside of or larger than those aspects of being that come under rational or conscious control. (p. 57)

Davies points to both the myriad ways in which subjectivity is produced and the varied subject positions we take up. The production of subjects, through discourse and power, is an intricate and kinetic process which is continuously underway. Davies illustrates how one's subjectivity is persistently re/produced, is temporal and outside of the realm of individual or rational choice. Davies is engaged in challenging, complicating and complementing identity politics through her examination of subjectivity. As a result of this work, the possibility of concrete, universal, timeless identities for individuals or groups is overturned; instead an interrupted and dynamic understanding of the self is proposed through subjectivity.

In my thesis, I draw from poststructural work on subjectivity to unpack subject positions in outdoor recreation texts. Davies (2000) explains the relationship between discourse and subject position saying

a subject position is made available within a discourse. For example, in the discourse of romantic love there are two major complementary subject positions made available – the male hero or prince...and the female heroine or princess...if two people are living out some version of the romantic love narrative, then they will position themselves and each

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understandings of personhood. While we embody our subjectivity; it may be possible to take up multiple subject positions.

other in the complementary subject positions made available within the discourse of romantic love. In other words, they will engage in the discursive practices through which romantic love is made into a lived narrative. (p. 96)

Davies suggests that embedded in particular discourses are desirable subject positions which reestablish the validity or truthfulness of discourse. While Davies interrogates the discourse of romantic love, I examine wilderness discourse (as dangerous, threatened, etc) and the subject positions which are made available to outdoor recreationists through specific texts.

Foucault insists that his work is not a study of power, but that his interest lies in understanding how we become subjects (2003b, p. 126). Foucault's examinations of the subject, tied together with his approach to power, address "three modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects" (2003b, p. 126). In this thesis, I address primarily how the third mode, which Foucault identifies as "the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject" (2003b, p. 126), is represented through common recreation materials. My focus is informed by what Foucault terms the technologies of the self (2003c). My examination of the relationship between discourse, power and the subject focuses on how Mountain Equipment Co-op, the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Bruce Peninsula National Park represent wilderness in order to advocate for particular practices. MEC, the BTC and the BPNP suggest that engagement in particular practices will clearly mark one out as a good and moral subject. I hone in on recreation practices in order to make sense of how outdoor recreation subjects are read as moral and responsible. Foucault explains the technologies of the self as techniques

which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way

of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality. (2003c, p. 146)

I intend to make sense of how subjects are produced in the context of outdoor recreation. I consider how specific wilderness discourses shape this process and recreation practices are presented as a means by which to produce oneself as a moral, responsible and respectable subject.

Foucault's work on technologies of the self is also used to illustrate how individualized practices are drawn into the service of "collective" interests. For example, Rabinow and Rose (2006), in their work on biopower or biosociality, argue that often "individuals are brought to work on themselves ... in the name of their own life or health, that of their family or some other collectivity, or indeed in the name of the life or health of the population as a whole" (p. 197). Rabinow and Rose signal that certain practices can be undertaken by individuals with the intention of serving a wider social, biological or political project. I find this suggestion instructive for my research; particular outdoor recreation practices are often represented as serving collective interests such as saving the environment. In considering the techniques through which outdoor recreation subjects are produced, it is worthwhile to interrogate what broader environmental or national projects are referenced and in turn, how subjects are prompted to work on themselves for the service of nature or nation. Further, Rose (1999) explains that very often, to be a good person now entails making a contribution to collective interests (or at the very least to avoid using up public goods). Rose's work on self governance is particularly useful for my work on wilderness discourse and the production of responsible subjects because he closely examines how neoliberal discourse is drawn into and employed in the shaping of what constitutes good and moral citizenship. Rose makes plain how increasingly individualized

practices, in particular consumption practices, become the sole technique through which to effect oneself as ideal citizen-subject (see also Johnston, 2008; Miller and Rose, 1997). From Rose, I draw that analyses of the good practices espoused in outdoor recreation texts, must consider on what basis these practices are advocated and with what promise to recreation subjects.

My research on outdoor recreation subjects is indebted to Davies' (2000) work on the subjectivity of women. She theorizes how women embody multiple subject positions simultaneously and are deeply embedded in the process of shaping the subjectivity of women (in ways that may or may not stem from personal agency). Davies' attention to the multiplicity of our subjectivities is deeply instructive for my examination of discourse, power and the subject in the context of outdoor recreation. I am particularly drawn to Davies' work on how particular subject positions emerge in particular texts, narratives and stories. What I intend to examine in my thesis is how particular subjects positions emerge from wilderness discourse in commonplace recreation texts. From my data, I cannot ascertain what exactly outdoor recreationists will do with these subject positions; however, unpacking what subject positions are normalized and produced as good and ethical is purposeful for understanding operations of power within these texts.

*How to use these concepts?*

*Approach to study of discourse, subjects, practices*

Even as I work to articulate how I understand concepts such as discourse, subject positions and power, I fear that they risk becoming meaningless. I want to point to how I work with these concepts and the patterns I examine in my research, in order to sketch out a method that is particularly relevant to the data I examine here.

As mentioned earlier, I intend to undertake a form of genealogy. This thesis traces discourse through an archive of carefully selected materials in order to see how particular ideas about nature or wilderness come to be understood as true. Tracing “nature” requires consideration of what informs how we think about nature and what counts as real in the realm of nature. I consider how wilderness discourses come to be understood as true and observe how discursive practices establish and secure this truth. There are simultaneously multiple truths to be told about wilderness. In this thesis, I examine a limited set of “wildernesses”; unquestionably other investigations may highlight other wilderness truths. Rather than tracing what is true about wilderness across a timeline, this research examines multiple competing discourses that work across my research sites and considers what is articulated in each.

The four chapters to follow each address one particular truth about wilderness that emerges in these sites. Working across the three research sites and through a tangled web of data, I illustrate how some discourses rather than others are asserted as true. I consider the authority and repetition that is utilized to ensure that one particular way of conceptualizing wilderness is presented as logical, even self-evident. This process allows us to see how multiple discourses operate simultaneously in certain texts. While this process reveals how wilderness is invested with multiple and layered meanings, the discourses I examine function beyond just explaining how to understand wilderness: they explain how we should come to understand ourselves and articulate the sorts of conduct that we ought to undertake in order to become good subjects.

In working to trace how particular discourses emerge in the data, I outline the subjects that are embedded within them. In each wilderness discourse, particular subjects are presented as suitable extensions: if wilderness is understood in a particular way, certain subjects are imagined as in relation to it. Or, a certain subject is presented as an obvious and desired response to this

discursive arrangement. For example, if wilderness is seen as under threat, then particular subject positions quickly materialize: those who would protect it and those who would accelerate its demise. I argue that discourse works to present particular subject positions as desirable outcomes or extensions of particular truths. Moreover, in the texts, recreation practices are represented as the means by which to produce oneself as a proper subject corresponding with specific wilderness discourses.

The pattern I trace in each chapter extends further from the discursive production of wilderness and corresponding subject positions. I want to consider what practices are vital to reproducing discursive arrangements. How do certain practices come to be understood as appropriate and necessary as a result of how wilderness is understood? Alongside how these practices work to reestablish the validity of a specific discourse on wilderness, I interrogate how particular practices figure into the production of subjects. I outline how certain practices secure subject positions as real and recognizable. Foucault (1990), in his work on technologies of the self and the production of moral subjects, is particularly useful here. The practices that I take up might be best understood as manuals of self-conduct. While Foucault was concerned primarily with the production of ethical subjects in ancient Greece, I investigate how contemporary emerging ethics, such as environmental ethics, play out. I examine how, according to MEC, the BTC and the BPNP, it might be possible to become a moral, responsible subject in the context of outdoor recreation. In each chapter that follows, I consider how certain modes of conduct function to secure desirable subjectivities. These conducts allow for one to competently demonstrate and take up a subject position. In these elaborate sets of conduct, it is possible to see both how particular subjects are positioned as desirable and moral, but also how specific truths



are reaffirmed. These practices allow for certain discourses and subject positions to be kept in positions of power. The practices are the very structures which keep discourses intact.

After lengthy consideration of patterns that emerge in the data, I structure the four remaining chapters as overlapping examinations of the relationship between discourse, practices and subjects. The patterns which emerge, in how discourses produce subjects in and through particular practices, are useful for structuring genealogical inquiry. I claim that employing these theoretical constructs in this pattern is insightful and productive for four key reasons. First and foremost, this approach or pattern allows for a detailed examination of the ways in which discourses become true. Discourse analysis requires careful and detailed discussion. To consider how any idea comes to be understood as true requires thorough combing through of a range of materials to see how, in each sentence and image, a particular way of thinking about wilderness is crafted or disassembled. Further, by taking up multiple “truths” about wilderness, an allowance is made for how competing discourses work simultaneously in similar sites. There is not one discourse, but multiple and, at times, contradictory ways of understanding what wilderness is.

Second, this approach allows us to see the roles that discourse plays in the production of subjects. In theoretical discussions of subject positions and discourse, it can be difficult to understand how these two constructs are linked and to identify this constitutional relationship in everyday examples. In each of the following chapters, the detailed ways in which particular subjects are presented as logical and coherent extensions of discursive arrangements and the nuanced techniques underlying these arrangements are uncovered. Rather than stating the link between discourse and subject positions, I investigate how particular subjects are embedded in discursive arrangements. The discourses examined rely heavily on the existence of particular

subjects; in this examination, it is evident how subject positions and discourse are intricately connected in real and tangible ways.

Third, this pattern draws out how specific practices are intricately tied to the discursive construction of wilderness and the production of varied subjectivities. Very often, our leisure practices are seemingly innocuous and disconnected from the realm of theory. However, what I do in the following chapters is illustrate how daily activities are tied to discourses, subject positions and the operations of power. By drawing out and examining the interconnectedness of “everyday” discourse, subject positions and practices in the realm of nature, nation and recreation, I develop a means by which to understand the theoretical links between these concepts as well as the ways in which theory holds real purpose for understanding daily life. Further, these practices, while seemingly innocuous at times, reinforce and reproduce discourse and subjects. I insist that these practices could be understood as the discursive structures which secure particular truths.

Finally, this approach allows for a close look at how power circulates and is operating in places and through practices which might have once been imagined as innocent or apolitical. While this inquiry might be particularly useful for seeing the ways in which power operates in leisure practices and in how wilderness and nation are understood, further to this, it offers a point of entry for social change. Rather than tracing how discourse works solely to illustrate its contours, this inquiry enables a critical investigation of practices and experiences which are conventionally distanced from discussions of power. By examining how particular practices are tied to discourse and subjectivity, this thesis creates a possible site for intervention and change. Should the discursive structures be rattled, what counts as truth will be unsettled and allow alternate truths to be possible. If it is possible to intervene in this very tight cycle of discourse,

subjects and practice, it is possible to imagine other ways of understanding wilderness and the subject positions adopted through recreation practice.

*Gender, race, nation*

In the previous chapter, I discuss feminist, anti-racist scholars, such as Mackey (2002), Razack (2002) and Lawrence (2002), whose work informs my research. I also examine key scholarship on nationalism, including Mohanram (1999) and Anderson (1991/1983) and discuss how outdoor recreation is used to secure white privilege and male privilege. Before discussing the data and methods of analysis, I briefly revisit critical scholarship on gender, race and nation in order to point to specific insights which have shaped my project.

The theoretical insights I draw from feminist post-structuralism, in particular the work of Davies (2000), are focused primarily on women's subjectivity. Questions of femininity, agency and subjecthood are examined closely. Masculinity, however, is cursorily addressed; I consider then what critical scholarship on masculinity can lend to my analysis. I look specifically to scholarship on masculinity that draws on feminism and anti-racism in order to avoid some of the traps of studying masculinity. First, I do not wish inadvertently to wade into or contribute to scholarship which is concerned with the perceived erosion of the rights of boys and men (such as the "what about the boys" discourses in education) (see also Dunk, 2002; Fine, 2000; Franklin, 1998 on hunting as salve for emasculated men and boys). Second, I do not approach masculinity, in particular in the context of physical culture, as a cultural evil which must be rooted out at all costs. Abdel-Shehid (2005) refers to sort of analysis as "Good Boy Feminism"; he critiques this model for its inattention to racialization and perceived use of feminine qualities as salve for demonized masculinities.

Abdel-Shehid's (2005) study of masculinity, blackness, sport and the (Canadian) nation, *Who Da Man: Black Masculinities and Sporting Cultures*, is purposeful precisely because it critically interrogates masculinity without presuming that feminization of sport is necessarily desirable. Scholars such as Braun (2003), Baldwin (2003, 2004), Erickson (2003) and Phillips (1997) grapple with how masculinity is produced in outdoor recreation. They emphasize how assertions of physical strength and toughness are central to the production of outdoor recreation masculinities; simultaneously, these scholars point to how whiteness, respectability and morality are embedded in claims to masculine privilege. Interestingly, scholarship on women's outdoor recreation often emphasizes how co-operative and caring models of outdoor recreation challenge the problematic masculinities espoused in conventional male dominated adventure oriented recreation. However, this scholarship is critiqued for its erasure of race and class difference by relying on universal assertions about "women"<sup>21</sup> and inattention to homophobia. In many ways, the non-competitive models of outdoor recreation espoused by some feminist outdoor recreation scholars reproduces race and class privilege which are the basis of masculine privilege in outdoor recreation. In reading Abdel-Shehid's work and considering the limitations of women's outdoor recreation scholarship, it is evident that critiques of hegemonic masculinity in the context of physical culture require analysis of race, heteronormativity and nation.

Analyses of physical culture, long perceived as the purview of men, including outdoor recreation, are likely to encounter discourses of gender, race and nation which are richly enmeshed. Nagel (1998) asserts that "the modern form of Western masculinity emerged at about the same time and place as modern nationalism" (p. 249). Her argument traces how contemporary discourses of masculinity draw on imperial and colonial discourses of race and

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<sup>21</sup> For example, assuming that all women share similar sets of concerns or political struggle – that there are 'women's issues' or 'women's experiences' which apply to all women in identical ways.

class in order to advocate for corporeal masculinities such as those espoused in the discourse of Muscular Christianity. Similarly, Bederman (2006) explains how “the American middle class fashioned masculinity along racial and gender lines in order to establish the white middle-class male as the exemplary citizen of the American nation” (p. 190). Both Bederman and Nagel signal how the production of masculinity is a national project; it is intricately tied to claims about belonging to the nation.<sup>22</sup> Abdel-Shehid, drawing on Bederman, explains how black masculinity during post-Civil War United States was used as a marker of that which is uncivilized and thus outside of the fantasies of white nationhood (p. 52; see also Bederman, 2006). What Abdel-Shehid signals here is how critiques of masculinity espoused by “Good Boy Feminism” lack the theoretical sophistication and attention to race and nation that is needed to both understand and interrogate hegemonic masculinity in physical culture. He challenges readers to mount complex examinations of masculinity which do not erase or ignore the interconnectedness of contemporary western masculinities to white privilege and the imagining of Canada as a national community.

I approach masculinity, as encountered in western culture, as deeply embedded in nationalism more broadly and Canadian nationalism specifically. I consider how colonial imperatives and claims to race and class privilege play out in the discursive production of masculinity in outdoor recreation texts. Throughout the remaining four chapters of this thesis, I regularly draw from critical whiteness scholarship and anti-racist and feminist theory in order to anchor my analyses of race, gender and nation in outdoor recreation texts.

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<sup>22</sup> Numerous other scholars, including Yuval-Davis (1997) and Enloe (2006), have examined nationhood pointing to how masculinity figures centrally, whereas femininity (and by extension women) have tenuous relationships with the nation.

## Methodology

Theory offers insight into how this project is conceptualized and what I hope to accomplish through this research. However, my research methodology determines what and how I enact these theories. In short – what data have I used and how have I undertaken the process of analyzing it? My methodology cannot be kept neatly separated from theory: the theoretical framings of my study guided the choices I make in terms of selecting meaningful and relevant data as well as the analytical approaches I developed.

In the following section, I introduce and explain the three sites of my analysis and outline why particular texts were chosen. I explain how I located specific documents and various challenges to this process. I discuss how I analyzed the data through the development of question guides (Appendix B, D, F), analytical methods and various logistical and organizational tactics to manage the scope of the data included. This section links the texts and sites of my research with the theoretical grounding and bodies of scholarship which inform my project.

### *Mountain Equipment Co-op*

Mountain Equipment Co-op first brought me to this project. Following an ordinary shopping trip with a friend to the Toronto MEC, I began to ponder what MEC specifically, as well as outdoor recreation more generally, does to shape us as subjects. In mapping out my project, MEC was always at the top of my list of potential research sites. The reasons for this are multiple, layered and compelling.

Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) is a consumer co-op that was formed in 1971 by a group of outdoor enthusiasts, primarily climbers, mountaineers and backcountry skiers. MEC was formed to address a gap in the Canadian outdoor recreation equipment market and to meet the needs of an outdoor community which was primarily shopping in the USA for gear. When it

began, MEC was operating out of a van with a photocopied supply list. In contrast, today, MEC is the largest supplier of outdoor equipment in Canada. In 2009, there were approximately 3 million members in close to 200 countries worldwide. MEC has 13 stores in major urban centres and operates a print and online catalogue with web/phone/mail order services. MEC is clearly a significant site of consumption and to ignore its ever expanding presence in Canadian outdoor recreation would be a substantive oversight.

MEC's sheer size ensures its position of prominence in Canadian outdoor recreation. However, it is the co-operative structure of MEC which makes it unique. In contrast to other outdoor recreation retailers and brands (i.e. Coast Mountain Sports/Atmosphere, Europe Bound, Patagonia, The North Face, etc), MEC does not operate to generate a maximum amount of profit. MEC is a consumer co-op; this suggests that members do not engage with MEC exclusively through consumption. MEC members are encouraged to participate in elections, co-op meetings and discussions of issues pertinent to outdoor recreationists. Further, MEC is involved in various forms of advocacy and donates extensively to various outdoor recreation projects including research, activism, land acquisition and education. While MEC is a significant player in the outdoor recreation market, its role as an outdoor recreation institution extends beyond this. Over the course of this research project, I have encountered dozens of ventures that MEC has funded in my own recreation practices and the MEC logo finds itself on an abundance of signs, websites and brochures for various outdoor recreation projects, places and organizations.<sup>23</sup>

The size of the co-op and the extent of its advocacy points to the centrality of MEC in Canadian outdoor recreation. However, perhaps what interests me most about MEC is the role it has come to play for Canadian nationalism. Canadians often muse about how they are able to

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<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, MEC is a supporter of multiple Bruce Trail Conservancy initiatives, another 'site' in this project.

spot other Canadians abroad because of their MEC gear. MEC has been quick to recognize this trend and capitalize on its significance. Former director, Linda Bartlett states “the MEC logo has been proudly worn throughout Canada and has become informally recognized throughout the world as a symbol of this country” (MEC Summer 2004, p. 5). I argue that what is unique about MEC is not simply its size or its advocacy but how it has come to be understood as fundamentally “Canadian.” Further to this, when a logo replaces the infamous Canadian flag (sewn on one’s backpack), it is useful to consider why this substitution works and what is significant about it.

#### *Mountain Equipment Co-op data*

Selecting data that is meaningful and relevant to my analysis of the everyday of Canadian outdoor recreation required me to think as a member<sup>24</sup> and to consider the primary types of correspondence that MEC has with its membership. The biannual catalogue is the central means by which MEC communicates with its membership. Millions of catalogues find their way across coffee tables, recreation centres, outdoor shops (other than MEC) and backs of toilets twice yearly. The arrival of the catalogue hallmarks the approaching change in seasons and corresponding recreation activities. In the early stages of my research, many friends, family members and colleagues started handing me their tattered copies of catalogues “just in case I need it” but hoping to get it back in order to refer to it for the remainder of the season. Only very recently has MEC undertaken any sort of advertising; the catalogue has for the vast majority of the co-op’s history been its primary means of correspondence and promotion.

The MEC catalogue is the venue through which it showcases its products. In the late 1980s, the MEC catalogue ranged in length from 40 to 60 pages with the summer catalogue typically longer and more detailed than winter. By the late 1990s, the catalogue had ballooned to

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<sup>24</sup> I have been an MEC member since 1999.



nearly 150 pages. Present day catalogues are typically about 100 pages with most of the MEC products profiled online rather than in the catalogue. The MEC catalogue has several characteristic components. The catalogue typically features member submitted photos prominently in the catalogue; the cover image, in all but one of the catalogues analyzed, is a member submitted photo. The catalogues often feature short articles and/or a small newsletter which detail news and information about the co-op such as details about elections, member meetings, product development and production. The remainder of the catalogue contains images and descriptions of products; some descriptions are more detailed and comedic while others are focused on specifics of the products such as weight and length. The catalogue circulation has grown progressively with the membership size (currently over 3 million); each member is delivered a catalogue twice yearly unless they request it to be suspended. The catalogue, once a few sheets of paper stapled together has for more than two decades been a lengthy, glossy tome that members turn to for product details, co-op information and perhaps even photographic inspiration. Until the introduction of the website and webstore in 2001, the catalogue was the primary information source for MEC members about products and the co-op. For those not located in urban centres, it had been their only connection with the co-op. The catalogue is much more than a clinical description of products. The catalogue functions as a photo album, a message board and a discussion venue for MEC members. The catalogue is evidently about the consumption of MEC products but it is simultaneously engaged in a range of other projects.

Locating all the MEC catalogues was a tremendous challenge. While it was fairly straightforward to find recent catalogues, locating a full set was quite a different process. I posted extensively on message boards, listserves and used personal connections with little success. MEC itself was unable to provide me with copies – as they recycle all back issues and

only MEC stores have full sets of all catalogues starting from their date of opening (i.e. Toronto has from 1985 forward). Following multiple attempts through the MEC head office and the Toronto store, it appeared as though my research project might be thwarted by the inability to access these documents. I am very grateful to a store manager who decided it would be acceptable for me to borrow the Toronto store collection, in sections and for short periods (1 to 2 days). All the MEC catalogues were scanned in 300DPI (minimum required image quality for reproduction) and converted to PDFs; a digital collection of all catalogues and covers that I was able to locate were assembled.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, a staff member at head office provided me with a small number of missing catalogues and covers and these were sent between a staff member and me through a courier. This allowed me to locate some catalogues from prior to 1985 which provided me with a greater sense of the co-op's history. From the time period included in this project, 1987 through 2007, 3 of the 42 catalogues are missing (see Appendix A). Despite repeated attempts through contact with multiple MEC locations, MEC head office, online postings and personal contacts, it has not been possible to locate these remaining issues.

In addition to the catalogues, several other MEC documents were included (see Appendix A). These MEC documents are frequently referenced in the catalogue and likely consulted by MEC members. These documents are readily available to MEC members and contain important information about how MEC conceptualizes itself. Additionally, at particular points in the research process, portions of the MEC website were consulted. As MEC is transitioning to become paper free, the website is increasingly becoming the key forum for information about the co-op.

### *Bruce Trail Conservancy*

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<sup>25</sup> A copy of these files has been offered to MEC.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) is a charitable, community organization comprised of approximately 8000 members. The central goal of the BTC is the development and maintenance of a hiking trail along the Niagara Escarpment from Niagara to Tobermory for public use. The Bruce Trail Conservancy (formerly the Bruce Trail Association) was first organized as the Bruce Trail Committee in 1960 by Norman Pearson, Ray Lowes, Robert MacLaren and Philip Gosling. In 1963, the Regional Clubs were established and were responsible for organization, landowner approvals, construction and maintenance. The majority of the BTC's operations are done by volunteers. The goal of a public foot trail along the Niagara Escarpment was actualized in 1967. The trail, over 800 kilometres<sup>26</sup> in length, was officially opened in Tobermory in 1967.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy offers an exciting point of entry into my analysis of outdoor recreation. I selected the BTC for a number of reasons. First, the Bruce Trail runs along the Niagara Escarpment, which is a nationally and internationally recognized nature area. The Escarpment was named a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Biosphere Reserve marking it as a unique and significant nature space deemed to be worthy of conservation. In selecting sites for my research, I was drawn to the Bruce Trail because of its intricate relationship with the Niagara Escarpment. I am particularly interested in this wilderness space because it has become understood as more worthy of conservation and thus functions as a site where conceptualizing nature in very specific ways is presented as urgent and necessary.

Second, the Bruce Trail is geographically accessible from my home in Toronto. Although there are other UNESCO sites in Canada and other wildernesses that play important roles in the Canadian imaginary – many of these are logistically, in terms of times, access and cost, too far

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<sup>26</sup> The length of the trail is constantly changing as routes are slightly altered and new routes are negotiated.

away. The Bruce Trail travels through some of the most densely populated areas of Canada and is an important recreation site for southern Ontarians. Further, I aimed to select research sites that have links between them. The Bruce Trail runs through the Bruce Peninsula National Park and some of the most well known and desired sections of the Trail lie within the park boundaries. Additionally, the BTC regularly receives funding through the MEC Environment Fund for trail maintenance and development. The BTC is connected, in very tangible ways, to the other research sites.

Third, in addition to including consumer (MEC) and national sites (BPNP), it seemed necessary to include a community organization. The BTC operates with very nominal support from regional, provincial and federal governments and relies primarily on the efforts of volunteers. The BTC is a community organization that focuses on specific forms of outdoor recreation, namely hiking, walking, skiing, bird watching and camping along the Bruce Trail. Including a community organization offers another point of entry into my examination of outdoor recreation. The BTC, as a community organization, has different interests than a consumer co-op or a national park. Further, while MEC is very clearly anchored in the city and the BPNP might be considered a wilderness space, the Bruce Trail travels primarily through rural communities (with the exception of Niagara, Hamilton, Toronto and Owen Sound area clubs). The BTC then is clearly connected to both MEC and the BPNP, yet offers a distinct point of entry into examinations of Canadian outdoor recreation.

#### *Bruce Trail Conservancy Data*

The Bruce Trail Conservancy produces the *Bruce Trail Magazine* quarterly; this magazine is a key mode of communication for the BTC to reach its membership. The magazine is only sent to members who are paying yearly fees. The circulation of the magazine is rather

small: they produce between 8,000 and 10,000 depending on the size of the membership. It is also available in a limited number of bookstores close to the trail. The magazines are, on average, 48 pages in length. The magazine details BTC news and reports on meetings, elections and board operations. It also provides discussion of natural features and creatures along the trail, details about hiking and trekking culture and explores political and ecological news that is deemed of interest to membership. Trail reroutes and upgrades are profiled and mapped in great detail in each issue. Donations to the BTC, through a variety of different campaigns and new memberships are solicited through the magazine. The magazine is intended to be a forum for members to contribute to by submitting letters to the editors and essays and photos, and completing surveys included in the magazine. Members also receive updates and information about upcoming meetings and other modes of engagement with the Conservancy. The magazine provides insight into the operations of the organization, but also the shifting opinions and struggles amongst the membership.

Locating the *Bruce Trail Magazine* proved to be quite challenging. The BTC, as indicated, is run primarily by volunteers. The small administrative staff is extensively overtaxed and works from a small and cramped office in the Rasperry House inside Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, Ontario. A staff member there was infinitely helpful in assisting me to locate copies of the magazine. I was able to borrow sets of the magazines for short periods (3 to 5 days) in order to scan the magazines and create a digital archive.<sup>27</sup> However, the collection of magazines kept by the BTC is incomplete. I located some additional copies through the Peel Archives where a larger collection of BTC materials is housed. However, despite numerous message board and list serve postings, I was unable to access 15 of the magazines I had hoped to

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<sup>27</sup> A copy has been offered to the BTC.

include. The number of magazines included for analysis totaled 69 stretching from 1987 through 2007 (see Appendix C).

I initially considered including the BTC Annual Reports; however, I discovered that a detailed summary of the Annual Report was featured in the magazine and including these documents in my analysis would be redundant. Similarly, the BTC website features many details that are also covered in the magazines, such as upcoming events, membership information, organization values and mission, trail reroutes, photos and fundraising information/calls for donations. Some portions of the website are cited in order to provide the most up to date details, such as membership numbers and trail length. The BTC member clubs also produce various texts, such as newsletters and posters. These texts were excluded for two reasons. First, the local club materials are exceedingly difficult to locate – these materials are not archived with the BTC. Second, regional texts would likely have been more purposeful for research which examines the BTC exclusively and is concerned with unraveling the differences between organizational and locally produced materials. Additionally, the Trail Guide, in its 26<sup>th</sup> edition in 2010, although a key text for trail users was excluded. The Trail Guide consists primarily of detailed, precisely scaled maps of the trail, information about entry and access points and parking locations. Much of the descriptive text and images featured in the Guide is duplicated in the magazines. The magazine functioned as the primary source from the BTC. The magazine offers excellent insight into the operations of the BTC, the tensions and debates amongst its membership, and provides information to understand the BTC's role in shaping Canadian outdoor recreation.

#### *Bruce Peninsula National Park*

The Bruce Peninsula National Park was established in 1987 on the northern section of the Bruce Peninsula. It was created from a network of surrounding lands including the former

Cyprus Lake Provincial Park, various regional parks, conservation areas, Crown land and private properties. The BPNP covers over 155 square kilometers, borders both Georgian Bay and Lake Huron and encompasses many unique natural features, such as caves, the Niagara Escapment, dunes, alvars and a variety of flora and fauna including 43 species of orchids, 23 kinds of ferns, fishers, flying squirrels and black bears. It borders the Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada, well known for its scuba diving and shipwrecks. The Bruce Peninsula National Park (BPNP) is the newest of the five National Parks in Ontario. The BPNP, as a newly developed park, is embedded in processes of park development where community consultation is undertaken.<sup>28</sup> Although the national park itself is assembled recently, the presence of park land (provincial, regional, etc.) on the Upper Bruce is not. Similarly, the consultative process undertaken by Parks Canada was to negotiate with Peninsula communities the effects (economic (tourism, employment) social (community impacts, seasonal residents), environmental (hunting regulations, park overuse)) of the present park space becoming a national park not to ascertain whether park space should exist in the area. The park is new only in the sense that it has recently become nationally governed. The BPNP offers a unique point of entry to consider how Parks Canada has drawn the Upper Bruce into the purview of nationally significant nature and is currently working to shape discourses of nation, nature and recreation.

The decision to include a national park in a study of Canadian outdoor recreation seems rather straightforward. Clearly, national parks, as sites in which a significant portion of outdoor recreation takes place, are deeply significant in shaping these practices. National parks are also places which hallmark the purportedly most significant forms of Canadian nature; the parks

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<sup>28</sup> This is the case following the disastrous development of Kouchibouguac National Park where numerous local residents were displaced and Parks Canada was the subject of extensive criticism. Previously developed parks such as Banff or Jasper were undertaken at a time in which settlers and Indigenous people were forcibly removed rather than consulted.

function as a way to safeguard particular nature places for citizens. Although outdoor recreation certainly happens in a much wider variety of places, national (along with provincial and regional) parks are often the backdrop of popular wilderness excursions.

Since I am concerned with the relationship between nature and nation in the context of outdoor recreation, it is necessary to consider those forms of nature that the state has been most deeply involved in producing, both discursively and materially. In selecting an appropriate park or parks for analysis, I decided that it would be useful to focus on a park that has not been the subject of detailed study. While Parks Canada manages 42 national parks, in addition to national historic sites and marine parks, only a select number of parks have been closely analyzed in the social sciences. The BPNP is a useful site of analysis for understanding how Parks Canada aims to develop, manage and market parks in recent years. Looking at this park allows for an examination of “wilderness” that has been recently designated to be nationally significant. Further, given the BPNP’s short tenure as a national park, it is a useful site from which to address the common mythology that parks exist in uninhabited spaces and explore how park wilderness is carefully manufactured to correspond with human interests (including but not limited to leisure).

Logistically, the BPNP was a frontrunner in selecting a park as it is considerably more geographically and financially accessible from my home in Toronto. Further, the BPNP is well connected to the BTC; the Bruce Trail runs through the park. The BTC was consulted extensively with regard to the development of a national park and was one of the chief advocates for endorsing its implementation. The park and the trail work collectively to preserve, protect and celebrate a place considered beautiful, wild and precious.

*Bruce Peninsula National Park Data*



Working with MEC and the BTC posed significant challenges, in particular with locating staff members willing to assist me in accessing documents. In contrast, working with the BPNP was considerably more straightforward despite the administrative hurdles. Any research with Parks Canada requires a research permit and applying for this permit is a lengthy and detailed process. I am grateful to the Parks Canada / Bruce Peninsula National Park staff who assisted me in managing this task and who later provided extensive support while I was on site at the park. It quickly became apparent to me, in the process of applying for a research permit and speaking with the Parks research coordinator, that it was quite unusual for “non-science” researchers to apply for permits or visit the park to undertake research. Both my research itself and my presence in the park were seen as at best unique and interesting and at worst ridiculous and absurd by the staff I encountered.

Following my approval for a research permit, I made several trips to the Bruce Peninsula National Park (BPNP) from the fall of 2007 through the fall of 2008. During these visits, I was provided with a research desk in the Marine Operations Unit and assisted in locating and cataloguing documents. Many park staff, both the “science” people who worked from the Marine Operations base and the “culture” people who worked from the Visitor Centre offered help. I was able to comb through the loosely organized BPNP archive and locate relevant documents: this archive also contains two master’s theses undertaken by social science researchers. I was able to locate and scan most of the BPNP newsletters. This is the news brochure that is available to campers and day use visitors to the park; it is the main means of correspondence with the public that the park provides. Each visitor to the park is offered a brochure. In the late 1980s, the park saw approximately 100,000 visitors per year. However, by mid 2000s that number had more than doubled with numbers closer to 250,000 per year. These brochures contain maps of the parks,

campground rules, photos, short articles about park history, geology, flora/fauna and activities, Parks Canada information and announcements about events. My goal was to include park brochures from 1988 through 2007. Prior to 1988, the park was still administrated provincially and no brochure was produced by Parks Canada. I was able to locate 17 of the desired 20 brochures; unfortunately, despite extensive searching and countless efforts by Parks Canada employees, I was unable to locate these remaining copies (see Appendix E). In addition to the brochures, I have included a selection of other BPNP texts that respond to my research questions and are typical examples of Parks Canada produced texts (see Appendix E). I read extensive materials assembled by outside research firms about the community consultation and park design; these materials are intended to gauge the political and economic context of the Upper Bruce Peninsula at the time of the BPNP development for specialized readers working to implement the national park. I found these texts useful as background resources but have not included them in the data analysis as they are technical and specific rather than commonplace recreation texts.

In addition to these texts, I include the recently built Visitor Centre in Tobermory, Ontario in my analysis. This visitor centre is intended as a site for public education and entertainment about the Park and surrounding areas. I visited the Visitor Centre on 10 separate occasions, took detailed notes and extensive photographs of the exhibits, building and surrounding features (lookout tower, parking lots, and Bruce Trail connections). The Visitor Centre is one of the most expansive, expensive and detailed features of the park; its presence is heavily promoted and is intended to function as the centre of all park activities, such as diver registration, reports of animals sightings, guided walks, social events and meetings. Contained within the Visitor Centre is a small movie theatre which regularly screens the film *Life on the*

*Edge*. This film is a short educational film that explains some of the impressive natural features and history of the area, as well as the role of Parks Canada. This centre is an excellent text which structures outdoor recreation in the park on a daily basis. It is intended for the general public and in contrast to many of the other materials from the BPNP, as well as MEC and BTC texts, which are for adults; the centre is designed to appeal to children.

During my visits to the BPNP, I also toured various sections of the park, took photos and made notes about these areas of the parks, including signage, significant places (Singing Sands, the Grotto, etc.) and campground set up. This allowed me to both contextualize the places discussed in the texts I analyze, but also to see how Parks Canada extends the instructional capacity beyond its brochures and Visitor Centre into structural design of the park. My visits to the park were some of the most enjoyable, but also the most costly, tiring and challenging portions of my research.

### Analytical Tools

One of the most daunting tasks of undertaking this genealogical study is to research, design and employ complex analytical tools. Given that my data consists of a variety of everyday materials that include numerous types of images and texts, it is necessary to draw from scholars who employ visual methodologies in addition to those who analyze more conventional texts.

The first task I undertake in the following four chapters is to unravel the discursive production of wilderness. My examination of these wilderness discourses is a study of representation: I intend to articulate the meaning that is attributed to wilderness. Representation, according to Hall (1997), is a process by which members of a culture come to understand and share meaning; it makes communication through language and images possible. Hall, in his explanation of discursive approaches to the study of representation, draws heavily on Foucault,

insisting that examinations of systems of representation require attention to multiple processes: to how statements are made; to the how subjects come to exemplify particular discourses; to the practices or conduct required of subjects and to the temporality of “true” discourses. Hall maintains that studies of representation, such as my examination of wilderness discourses, must consider who the subject of this knowledge is in order to be attuned to Foucault’s approach. In my study, I examine five representations of wilderness and consider what subjects coincide with these imagined wildernesses. Hall insists that studies of representation are always partial; thus, my examination of outdoor recreation texts illuminates some of the ways in which wilderness is represented and subsequently a limited number of possible subject positions.

In addition to Hall, I also found Berger’s (1972) *Ways of Seeing* helpful in considering how to analyze outdoor recreation texts. Berger’s work on the male gaze and publicity challenged me to think through in detail what exactly our interaction with visual culture does: does it reestablish normative relations or respond to our desires for transformation? Berger and Hall both argue that analyses of visual culture and representation are in fact very temporal and fluid processes. However, I draw from their insights that although analyses will be contingent, critical examinations of visual culture are imperative because they allow for critique of how meaning is produced and provide tools to grapple with the consequences (of representation). Further to this, I find in Hall and Berger three useful insights for developing my analytical tools. First, the way we look at images (and text) is highly structured. How we look at images is shaped by our experiences and knowledge, our “shared conceptual map” (Hall, 1997, p. 18) and by the techniques employed in the material construction of a particular representation (such as camera angles). Second, Hall and Berger both suggest that analyses of images and texts are not straightforward readings whereby the meanings are uncovered. They suggest engagement with

visual culture is an important aspect of shaping what things mean; they maintain that meanings can change depending on how particular images and texts are used.<sup>29</sup> Third, Hall and Berger insist that we compare various forms of representation to learn something about ourselves and others. Their work attends to the desire and difference in the process of how we come to understand ourselves as particular types of subjects. Hall, in his work on the “spectacle of the Other,” and Berger, in his work on the male gaze, argue that by looking at particular representations we make claims about ourselves by infusing racial or gender difference with meaning. Similarly, many representations, especially advertisements, intentionally invoke desire in order to convey meaning to us: this desire is often intended to speak to the sorts of people we would like to be. I find Hall’s and Berger’s work instructive for my research. In the analyses I make of wilderness discourses, I pay close attention to subject positions which arise from the meanings embedded in representations of wilderness. In particular, I attend to the meanings attached to notions of difference in the production of outdoor recreation subjects.

While Hall and Berger are useful for thinking conceptually about methodology, I looked for some detailed and concrete suggestions from Rose (2001) and Lutz and Collins (1993). Rose, in *Visual Methodologies*, provides a series of guidelines and recommendations for researchers undertaking a discursive analysis of visual culture. I employed four of her techniques in my research process. First, Rose insists that data selection is one of the most important aspects of the methodological process. To undertake discourse analysis, it is necessary to draw together

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<sup>29</sup> While both Hall and Berger gesture towards how experience shape interpretation of images, in their respective work, the focus is not on discussing with audiences their experiences of visual culture. Similarly, in my research, I do not investigate readers’/viewers’ responses to MEC, BTC and BPNP texts. Rather, what I draw from Hall and Berger is the importance of recognizing how analyses of representation are deeply impacted by experience (for myself, as the researcher, for those reading my work and for those offering alternate analyses). To study representation is to acknowledge the impact of experience but not necessarily to study experiences specifically.

meaningful and complex sets of data. In the previous section, I outlined in considerable detail the types of data selected and the rationale for including it.

The second recommendation I incorporate from Rose is the task of immersing oneself in the data. Rose suggests that any analysis of discourse is a lengthy and time-consuming process which requires multiple reading and re-readings of material. The texts of my thesis were fixtures in my daily life for four years. The magazines, catalogues, brochures, film and photos were strewn about my home, taped to the walls around my desk and functioned for many months as my digital desktop. I had the opportunity to read, watch or view my data on multiple occasions as a result of my decision to create a digital archive. Additionally, I have made a concerted effort to visit my research sites repeatedly to observe changes and to spur my thinking about these outdoor recreation institutions. One of the most difficult tasks of my thesis was reaching the conclusion that I had sufficiently immersed myself in the data, and needed to start writing before I drowned in data.

Rose argues that while coding conventions can be used in analyzing discourse, their premature application can foreclose alternate meanings and approaches. While reading my data, I began watching for certain themes that emerged early on (such as the lone wolf or calls to consumption). However, many of the codes I employ in my research were developed only after close readings and notes were taken on all data. For example, the wilderness discourses of the four following chapters (dangerous, threatened, sublime and nation) stem from a set of codes established after all data had been read. Additionally, some coded themes although noted in earlier readings, were later discarded or set aside in light of new and more prominent themes.

Finally, Rose cautions researchers undertaking discourse analysis to exercise considerable reserve with regards to their analytical claims. She states that “[s]ince discourse

analyses cannot argue that they are the only, true analysis of the materials discussed, discourse analysis aim to be persuasive rather than truthful” (2001, p. 160). In arranging the analysis in my chapters, I do not claim to assemble the final and true interpretation of this data. My task is to convince the reader that my detailed and multi-layered analyses are plausible, if only temporarily. In order to make this possible, I work to provide the intricate evidence and analysis which Rose insists is necessary of researchers employing this type of methodology.

While scholars such as Kendall and Wickham (1999), Hall (1997), Rose (2001) and Mills (2003, 2004) provide useful discussions of how to employ Foucault’s work, it is necessary to develop more precise and tangible analytical tools to ground my methodology. One of the most useful texts for developing these tools was Lutz and Collins’ (1993) *Reading National Geographic*. Lutz and Collins frame their study as explicitly addressing the process through which the images of the magazine are produced, selected and read; they draw their approach to National Geographic from Gramsci’s hegemony which they state is “not so much a structure as a process” (p. 11). This examination of the infamous periodical provides incredibly useful sets of analytical questions to employ in my examination of images and text. The inclusion of their analysis codes for images in the appendices of this text prompted me to develop my own analytical guides (Appendices B, D, and F) to focus my study.

In keeping with Foucault’s genealogy, my analysis focuses on the detailed ways in which wilderness discourses operate in outdoor recreation texts. I developed a series of questions that enabled me to consider the “how” of discursive arrangements. While my broad research questions are useful, it is necessary to ask a more intricate set of questions in order to fully unpack how discourses of nature, nation and recreation emerge in the texts. Further, in order to manage the scope of the data, a more systematic method of inquiry is both useful and essential.

Modeling my analytical tools after Lutz' and Collins' work, I developed a series of questions to pose to both texts and images in an attempt to draw out how nature, nation and recreation are produced. I developed these lists through a four step process. First, a preliminary reading was made of a sampling of that data (MEC catalogues, BTC magazines and BPNP brochures) to determine common images and text. Second, I developed a set of questions that would be helpful to direct and focus my reading. Third, I brought both samples of my data and various question sets to a number of researchers familiar with Foucault's methods and my research area. I solicited feedback on the scope of the questions, the extent to which the questions were purposeful for the data being analyzed and how attuned the guides were to Foucault's genealogical method. Finally, with this feedback, I make final adjustments to the phrasing and scope of the questions in the analysis guides. The MEC guide (Appendix B) was developed first and subsequent guides follow a similar format. Although in the guides I divide between textual and visual questions; often questions were used to interrogate both types of data. For example, although there is a question regarding the emotive tone of the images, a parallel question was posed to text in order to determine what types of emotions were being invoked.

### *Organization*

The data analyzed is lengthy and cumbersome (in both print and digital formats). Although organizational techniques are rarely formally considered to be methodology, it is worthwhile to note some of the strategies employed to make data analysis manageable. All data sets were scanned and formatted into PDF documents. This allowed me to have access to the full data set throughout my research. The BPNP Visitor Centre and adjacent areas were catalogued with digital photography. While time consuming, this process was incredibly useful for undertaking a genealogical analysis. This work allowed me to revisit my material throughout the



research process and made it possible to compare the various types of texts. Additionally, having access to the texts has allowed me to bring my data to other researchers at points where I hit stumbling blocks in my analysis. While struggling with a particular image or text – being able to send this piece along with questions to scholars working with Foucault, nature and recreation allowed me to overcome intellectual hurdles. Finally, creating full digital copies allows me to offer something back to the organizations that I have worked with. Organizations such as the BTC are understaffed and there is little time to spare with creating digital archives. While creating a digital collection for my research, I am able to offer copies to interested organizations for their own files, freeing up staff from undertaking this rather dull and tedious task.

Following the assembly of this digital data set, each set of documents was read in sequence and in its entirety. In order to adequately consider the ways in which both discourses and subjects are produced in the texts, it is necessary to follow each text closely. Selective reading of texts would not have allowed for the type of close and detailed analysis required in genealogy. Notes on the content of the material were taken on a page per page basis with analysis notes corresponding to each text page. Notes, even if brief, were made about every page. This resulted in a lengthy set of analysis notes: each MEC catalogue resulting in between eight to ten pages of notes and each BTC magazine/BPNP brochure typically resulting in four to five pages of notes. To ensure that these notes would not simply become another unmanageable set of material, detailed summary notes were made at the close of each catalogue, brochure, magazine or other text. These summary notes hallmarked particularly interesting and detailed passages and flagged emerging trends in the data. Finally, all analysis notes were assembled together in print form and read against one another to examine how particular discourses emerge across the three research sites.

### *Texts and People*

In locating and determining the sites to include in my research, the choice to focus on texts was deliberate. It allowed for an examination of the formalized set of knowledge produced by MEC, the BTC and the BPNP. Yet, texts are produced and cared for by people and my access to certain texts often relied on the finessing of relations with people. While I was not including interviews or other research that involved human subjects, inevitably the research process led me to people and their questions and concerns about what my work was about.

My contact with people, on my route to various texts, led me to consider a number of ethical conundrums about text-based research. In my quest to locate texts, I was making numerous requests of overextended staff. Often my need of assistance in locating catalogues, brochures, magazines and other texts were passed on to staff with little workplace control. Part time store managers, receptionists and part time staff were most involved in assisting me. These staff members were often fitting me in (to pick up or return materials, ask questions, locate information) during their busy days and occasionally during their scheduled breaks. I am extremely grateful for the assistance of various staff members. Yet, these staff members may have made themselves vulnerable for assisting me. Should the organizations determine that this thesis is incongruent with their image or goals, the ramifications may be felt most severely for the staff who assisted me.

Most of the staff that I spoke with had questions and concerns relating to my research. Many staff, in particular though not exclusively at the BPNP, had insight and interest in shaping the potential direction in which my research might head. While working in Tobermory with the BPNP staff, I wrestled considerably with the possibility of including interviews to address the growing interest in my research project. Alongside this interest, I quickly became a sounding

board for staff with grievances with their employer, fellow staff, the public and the community at large. More than anticipated, I found myself hearing conversations that I might otherwise never have had access to. I often found myself in various staff offices hearing a long and detailed set of comments about pertinent issues: about their employment, about the nation and about nature. This information was at times overwhelming and I could not always shake the feeling that to be ethical in my research practices, I ought to offer something in return. The experience of working with people in the research process led me to query what ethical behaviour is required of researchers working primarily with texts. Is simple courtesy and gestures of appreciation the only thing required? What sort of ethical accountability is owed to those who assist in the locating of text? To those who wrote and produced various texts? How can we begin to address the ethics of the people who are drawn into our research processes, not as participants but as research assistants? In this thesis, I open up this line of questioning but it is not a central area of focus in my research; it is, however, an unexpected concern that arose from my research process which I intend to address in future writing and analysis.

### *Getting started*

After struggling and sifting through a complicated set of theoretical constructs, methodological hurdles and logistical challenges, I was ready for the navigation of my data. In the following chapters, I deal with a threefold challenge. I begin by articulating how wilderness is understood. This entails reading across my research sites to articulate how wilderness is represented in outdoor recreation texts. This first task is unquestionably an exploration of what wilderness means. After unpacking the construction of wilderness, I consider how a particular subject is presented as belonging or arising from this wilderness discourse. I examine how this subject is produced and detail the conduct required of this subject. Following my discussion of

the meanings of wilderness is an examination of how wilderness is employed by outdoor recreationists in order to construct themselves as particular sorts of subjects. Given the influence of Foucault, feminism and anti-racism in my analysis, I pay close attention to the operations of power in each discourse-subject-practice relationship that I address. While providing ample detail and assembling careful analysis, I understand and appreciate that the analyses I develop here are temporal and contingent. I craft these chapters cautiously yet retain excitement for other possible readings and understandings of nature, nation and recreation.

### Chapter 3: The Calculating Adventurer

In the first section of this chapter, I examine how wilderness is imagined as devoid of human inhabitants and human presence. I begin by exploring the discursive construction of wilderness as empty because each of the four wilderness discourses discussed in this thesis work from the assumption that wilderness is un-peopled and untouched. Wilderness, once stripped of any human presence, becomes a blank slate that is infused with divergent meanings. In order for wilderness to meaningfully represent danger or sublimity, it must first be made empty. It needs to be a place without stories, people or meaning.

I then consider the meaning attached to emptied wilderness and I trace how this space is represented as dangerous and inhospitable. Wilderness is produced as a foreboding and profoundly difficult place to navigate; journeys in the wilderness could be perilous. Dangerous wilderness suggests that only a specific sort of subject can effectively traverse the wilderness. The calculating adventurer is presented as capable of negotiating the risks of the wilderness with his elaborate bevy of knowledge, skills and tools. In demonstrating his ability to cope with the volatile and dangerous wilderness, this subject lays claims to rationality, respectability and power.

#### Emptying the wilderness

How is wilderness made empty? I begin with this question because it unsettles the very logical presentation of wilderness as a place without people. I want to examine how it is that wilderness, for Mountain Equipment Co-op, the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Bruce Peninsula National Park, came to be understood as a place that was devoid of humans and human interference. Further, I consider how wilderness is made empty in outdoor recreation texts. While there are certainly very material practices such as the forced removal of humans and their mark

on the land, my focus here is on how specific texts present wilderness as always and already vacant in order to allow a strategic forgetting of how wilderness has been emptied.

In order to produce wilderness as untouched, a variety of discursive strategies are employed. There is a profuse number of images in MEC catalogues, BTC magazines and BPNP materials which present wilderness as a place without people. Readers of these texts are offered wilderness images that emphasize the extent to which these places are untouched and unpopulated. For example, it is common for these images to feature specific nature scenes, such as mountaintop vistas and shorelines. These images signal a considerable stretch of space that is untouched and difficult to inhabit. Interestingly, other equally uninhabitable places such as deserts and marshes are rarely included. The preference for particular wilderness images suggests these are desired places to visit. While a swampy, mosquito infested marsh and a rocky cliff edge are theoretically equally inhospitable to those wishing to “settle” an area, temporary visits to the shoreline cliff are likely to appeal to the outdoor recreationists perusing these texts.

In the BTC’s various fundraising campaigns, including “Burn the Mortgage” (BTC Spring 1995, p. 46) and “Footsteps” (BTC Summer 1998, p. 48; BTC Fall 2000, p. 30-33), there is a frequent emphasis on the preservation of significant wilderness places, most often unique shorelines adjacent to the Niagara Escarpment. These fundraising campaigns prominently feature sunrise/sunset scenes along an empty and rocky shoreline. There is a sense that these places are and always were devoid of humans and human presence (aside from the occasional brave explorer who ventured to the hazardous cliff edges). In the BPNP video *Life on the Edge* (2006) numerous shots of the shoreline are featured and rarely are people present on the landscape. In

fact, even the narrator of the film, Ethan Meleg,<sup>30</sup> is often physically removed from the landscape. Only his voice travels with the viewer through several portions of the video. This strategy affords Meleg a position of authority over the vacant wilderness he surveys. There are also several stretches of the video where only music accompanies the viewer as they traverse the shorelines and forests of the Bruce Peninsula. These empty nature images are presented to the viewer alongside descriptions which shape and interpret the images. *Life on the Edge* bears remarkable resemblance to nature films, such as the work of Jacques Cousteau and National Geographic, and more recently Ken Burn's (2009) documentary *The National Parks*, which include didactic narration on how to view wilderness, as well as long, uninterrupted shots of various plants and animals (Wilson, 1991).<sup>31</sup> The film prompts the audience to marvel at the wilderness of the Upper Bruce while strategically abstracting it from the social, cultural, economic and political context of the human communities in the region.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Bruce Peninsula National Park repeatedly reference wilderness spaces with a particular set of discourses. *Life on the Edge* describes the Bruce Peninsula as "still rugged and wild". Similarly, the BTC highlights the praises of then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Premier Bob Rae in their description of the trail as "raw, unspoiled beauty" (BTC Fall 1992, p. 8). In promoting the Rush Cove fundraising campaign, the BTC describe the cove as an "untouched shoreline" (BTC Fall 2006, p. 27). These descriptions shape, without completely determining, how these images can be read. While the various shots of forests, mountains and shorelines might be a random collection of images intended to appeal to readers and viewers, the descriptors that correspond with these types of images suggest there is a

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<sup>30</sup> Ethan Meleg is a Parks Canada staff member. At the time of my research, he was working at the Bruce Peninsula National Park and was featured in the film. Meleg is also a nature photographer; his work is featured in multiple issues of the Bruce Trail Magazine and the Bruce Peninsula National Park.

<sup>31</sup> See also Berger (1972) for his work on captioning. The narration of the film shapes how the audience is to see the wilderness of the BPNP ensuring that it is read in particular ways.

“correct” way to perceive this emptiness. The descriptions secure the authenticity of wilderness as empty of human presence; to suggest otherwise is to call into question the wildness of these places. The BPNP, in explaining the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designation given to the Niagara Escarpment, uses emotive language to articulate how readers should understand wilderness. A description of the area proposes that the Niagara Escarpment has maintained “a strong feeling of wilderness” (BPNP 2000, p. 14). By implying that one experiences wilderness, senses it, feels it, there is little more that is necessary to articulate this place as authentically wild. The wilderness is presumed to exist because one is able to feel it.

Yet, these types of images and descriptors only begin the work needed to shape how wilderness is understood. In many ways, these images are the obvious and commonplace representations of wilderness in Canadian iconography. Numerous scholars have attended to how the empty wilderness is omnipresent in Canadian culture more broadly and in outdoor recreation specifically (in particular Bordo, 1997; Braun, 2002; Campbell, 2003; Jasen, 1995; MacLaren, 1999; Moray, 1998). These examples are perhaps too easy and familiar. It is necessary to consider the multiple ways that wilderness is constructed. While these images reveal familiar terrain in the examination of Canadian wilderness, there is still considerable work needed to reinforce the reading of wilderness as empty of human presence.

In the texts I review, there are countless images and references to wilderness places that have been accessed by people, yet evidence of human existence does not interrupt the fantasy of uninhabited wilderness. Images of wilderness that include people emphasize the arrival of humans to the space. The images suggest that the point of contact is being documented and that encountering untouched wilderness is both possible and desirable. The focus of these peopled



representations is to draw the attention of readers to the existence of pure, unmarked wildernesses even as the image catalogues its disruption. There are two trends to how peopled wilderness photos construct empty wilderness. I term these two trends “the lone wolf” and “the viewfinder.”

The “lone wolf” references a particular kind of image from the MEC catalogue. In these images, a solo recreationist appears in an impressive nature backdrop. Winter MEC catalogue covers frequently feature solo skiers in a vast and snowy scene (MEC Winter 1987-88, p. 1; MEC Winter 1990, p. 1; MEC Winter 1994, p. 1; see Appendix G Image 1). The skiers are typically small, nearly unnoticed specks amongst striking white backdrops. The overwhelming focus in the images is on the large and looming piles of snow and ice (MEC Winter 1990, p. 1). These scenes show a small figure entering from the periphery of the image – there are no previous trails or footprints - leaving the impression that the moment of contact is being captured. This solo adventurer is imagined to embark on the first excursion into untouched wilderness. Though this strategic positioning of the skier, human presence does not undermine the discursive production of an empty wilderness. Rather, by presenting an isolated person arriving in an untouched place, the very real status of an empty wilderness is secured.

The “lone wolf” is not just a skier. Hikers, campers and kayakers are presented in a similar fashion. Through these isolated adventurers, it is possible to look out into mountain vistas, haunting sounds (MEC Summer 1989, p. 2-3) and misty shorelines (MEC Summer 1994, p. 4-5). Rather than relying on snow to demonstrate the absence of human interference – footsteps and paddle marks are easier to erase than ski trails - these images highlight the incredible and vast empty place ahead of the adventurer. In these images, there are no signs of human interference, no cell phone towers, no buildings, no other adventurers, no signposts or

garbage bins. The scene is left to speak for itself. No one except the solo recreationist, the “lone wolf,” is present. More importantly, no one has been here previously to leave proof of human presence. There is a sense that the adventurer has found his way far enough away from other humans to be completely alone and encounter the authentic empty wilderness.

In the lone wolf images, we often encounter a figure that is very small, barely noticeable. The entry into the empty wilderness is so subtle it is undetected: entering and exiting the scene does not fundamentally alter it. In many ways this dictates how one is expected to encounter nature – to leave it apparently untouched. The lone wolf images suggest that the viewer is witnessing a private moment between the adventurer and nature. These images differ considerably from the next set of images I discuss. In the “viewfinder” images, the people included in photos have located a desirable scene and readers are invited to experience the wilderness through these adventurers. Rather than witnessing this very subtle encounter with nature, the “viewfinder” invites readers to bask in the impressiveness of empty wilderness and to see it through the adventurers’ eyes.

The “viewfinder” opens up expansive and enticing scenes; this figure embodies our anticipated experience of encountering an empty wilderness scene. On the MEC Summer 2005 catalogue cover, a sole woman on a mountaintop looks over a vast and impressive scene below her. Similarly, on the MEC Summer 2006 cover (see Appendix G, Image 2), a lone man, arms outstretched, greets the morning sun at the base of a wide mountain range. Each of these figures is presented as spontaneously encountering these scenes: no gear or camp equipment is visible. These fortunate recreationists manage to capture a view that is remarkable and representative of the type of wilderness presumably desired by MEC members. These figures invite readers to gaze with them at the wilderness. Similarly, the BPNP video *Life on the Edge* follows a couple

hiking along a rugged trail and finally settles with them on a cliff looking out over Georgian Bay as the sun sets over the water. This portion of the film simulates the experience of being on the cliff edge soaking in the final rays of the setting sun. In a BTC magazine, an author narrates his experience of hiking and the majestic views he enjoys at a summit and his photo allows the reader to share the experience (BTC Fall 1987, p. 6). These adventurers seek out and locate notable, breathtaking wilderness places, offering their encounter to readers. These images capture an experience that outdoor recreationists are imagined to envy. It is possible for readers to interpolate themselves into the image and to imagine embodying the figure of the viewfinder. MEC, the BTC and the BPNP use these pictures because the possibility of locating an immense and extraordinary wilderness scene appeals to its readers; they long for the encounter. Berger (1972) explains that envy forms the basis of a substantive amount of advertising methods. While these outdoor recreation institutions are not advertising a specific product in these photos, a certain degree of allegiance or affiliation with the co-op or conservancy is built through these “viewfinder” shots because they encapsulate an experience recreationists wish to either personally experience or be associated with.

As with the solo recreationist from the “lone wolf” images, the “viewfinders” do not mar the scene they track down. The wilderness represented in these images is kept distinct from the viewer embedded within it. This figure has merely located a particular pristine wilderness and now functions in the image as bodily extension of the viewer. Rather than undermining the presentation of the particular wilderness as a place that is free of human presence, this “viewfinder” reveals this authentic wilderness. In many ways, the task of locating these places is a form of exploration and the captured image a souvenir of its discovery. The presence of these people in the wilderness demonstrates the very real possibility of locating an empty space. The

“viewfinder’s” discoveries and their adventurous poses reference a colonial story. The adventurer who locates and reveals a wilderness continues a tradition in studies of Canadian outdoor recreation (Baldwin, 2003, 2004; Erickson, 2002). I now turn to how this figure (and others like him) are used to entice outdoor recreationists to play at “discovery.”

### *Playing discovery*

The discursive production of wilderness as empty relies on recognizable tropes and conventions in order to be perceived as real. Outdoor recreation texts invoke wilderness as empty by employing specific language, images and narratives that reference colonization in Canada. In some of the images already discussed, such as the “lone wolf” and “viewfinder” images, the recreationist is positioned in an explorer pose (for example, BTA Fall 1987 p. 6; MEC Winter 1987-88, p. 1; BPNP Visitor Centre, see Appendix I, Image 1). This type of pose typically consists of the subject looking out over a vista. Occasionally, hands are positioned to shield the eyes from the sun or with hands on knees or hips: this bodily position references the colonial explorer. This type of stance suggests a surveying of the landscape as well as a position of accomplishment, conquest and possession.<sup>32</sup> By including these types of photos, MEC, the BTC and the BPNP are able to call up a particular trope in the minds of their readers. The posturing of the explorer is significant because it suggests appropriate and desirable ways of looking at the wilderness. Further, this bodily position suggests mastery and surveillance: a rational and thoughtful examination of a space. The colonial subject is positioned in such a way that, regardless of the size of the figure, he is to be understood as distinct from the space that surrounds him. In a MEC cover (MEC Winter 1987-88, p. 1; Appendix G, Image 1), a tiny figure

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<sup>32</sup> While examples of this sort of colonial stance are prolific in Canadian culture, an excellent example is the Champlain statue at Nepean Point on the Ottawa River. Looking out over the landscape, this statue depicts Samuel de Champlain holding an astrolabe with his hand on his hip and feet spread apart. While modern day ‘explorers’ are likely to be holding binoculars or simply shielding their eyes from the sun, this physical positioning of this statue is subtly replicated in outdoor recreation texts.

at the bottom of the image structures the shot in a particular way; he is not intended to fully blend in to the scene. Rather, he is overseeing the vast display of clouds and mountains around him. His prominent position is not eclipsed by the impressive wilderness: he is read as an adventurer/explorer who has discovered and mastered this location and made possible its viewing.

Outdoor recreation institutions invoke colonial tropes through the positioning of bodies and a number of other strategies. Another way that MEC, the BTC and the BPNP call up colonial narratives is by referencing particular historical figures and national myths. MEC held a “self-propelled adventure story” contest in the winter of 1997; the winning entry for this contest makes reference to both Franklin and Mackenzie (MEC Winter 1997, p. 42). These Canadian “explorers” and their encounters with the northern Canadian wilderness make this story work: the references allow the story to be readily understood as adventurous and authentically Canadian. This story is part of the broader use of discourse which calls up a history of exploitation, discovery and colonization. In the Spring 1988 *Bruce Trail Magazine*, a group of recreationists refer to themselves as a “group of rugged voyageurs” (p. 31). In a 1997 issue, an article discusses those who were involved with “pioneering the trail” (BTC Summer 1997, p. 21). An account of travels to Newfoundland in a Spring 1989 *Bruce Trail* issue focuses on Mina Hubbard and her noted role as the “first” person to document the caribou and Indigenous people of the area (p. 38). In addition, there are extensive references to the “discovery” of particular parts of North America in the BTC magazines and BPNP materials.

I draw attention to the circulation of these images and textual references because it conveys how wilderness is discursively produced as empty. Invoking colonial tropes strategically links a particular history to present day understandings of nature. By recounting colonial

narratives of adventure and discovery, it is possible to conceptualize the wilderness as a place that is empty of human inhabitants. It would not be possible to “discover” a particular location if the presence of other human inhabitants was readily acknowledged. To understand the Canadian wilderness as inhabited would warrant the use of radically different language: invasion would replace discovery. Further, the discourse of Canadian wilderness relies on specific colonial tools, such as the legal definition of *terra nullius* to define particular places as empty of human inhabitants. Employing the language of colonialism enables a particular reading of wilderness. Calling up colonial discourse allows for MEC, the BTC and the BPNP to suggest that the wilderness now being encountered shares something with the wilderness once “discovered” by voyageurs, adventurers and explorers; it allows wilderness to be conceptualized as an unoccupied place that is ready to be entered and explored by worthy and rugged adventurers.

### *Erasing Indigenous people*

The presence of Indigenous peoples significantly challenges the “truth” of an empty wilderness. There are three key strategies which outdoor recreation texts rely on to ensure that indigenous presence does not interrupt the discursive production of wilderness as empty. First, indigeneity is securely anchored in the past. Second, indigenous presence is categorized as being part of nature, rather than civilization. Third, white subjects strive to symbolically take up indigeneity thereby ensuring that the presence of Indigenous people is imagined as purely fantastical, historical and illusory. Little space is left for accounts of Indigenous peoples and presence in outdoor recreation discourse; they have been strategically erased.

One of the ways in which Indigenous people and presence are erased from the wilderness is by deliberately securing their presence in the past. McClintock (1995) refers to this process as a way of lodging Indigenous people in “anachronistic space and time” (p. 130). This allows for

the concession that there were, at one point in time, Indigenous people in the wilderness spaces that outdoor recreationists desire to use without impinging on the fantasy of empty space. Frequent mention of how particular places were *once* home to Indigenous people is one of the ways in which this is accomplished. For example, in the discussion of the environmentalists struggle in Temagami, the area is referred to as the “ancestral home” of native people (BTC Summer 1990, p. 5-6). The struggle over this particular wilderness is represented as a conflict between industry and environmentalists and recreationists; Indigenous people are either framed as nonexistent or in agreement with environmentalists about how to use this space (similar framing of these environmental tensions is done in reference to the Carmanah Valley, p. 13 and Stein Valley, p. 27). The presence of Indigenous people is often relegated to the past and therefore only relevant only in shaping the “spirit” of a place. In the Spring issue of the BTC 1995 magazine, the following description of the Crawford Lake area is outlined: “although we can never know the words or faces of the Crawford Lake’s peoples...[we can] listen to their silence” (p. 19). Similarly, a historical presence of Indigenous peoples is often discounted. The Creemore area is described as though it were empty despite the presence of Indigenous peoples; “the land was unoccupied with the exception of the Ojibway who used the Creemore hills and valleys as seasonal hunting and fishing grounds” (BTC Spring 2000, p. 26).<sup>33</sup> Both in Creemore and Crawford Lake, readers are given the sense that there is no way to ascertain what sort of Indigenous peoples’ history took place in these areas. Vague descriptions and an emphasis on the spiritual mark left on the wilderness by Indigenous peoples suggest that these places were abandoned long before colonization and present day recreationists’ encounters with the

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<sup>33</sup> This description of how the Creemore area was used by indigenous peoples clearly references the legal definition of *terra nullius* used to define land as empty and thus available for the use of white settlers. Culhane explains this concept: inhabited areas “were simply legally *deemed to be uninhabited* if the people were not Christian, not agricultural, not commercial, not ‘sufficiently evolved’ or simply in the way” (in Razack, 2002, p. 3).

wilderness. The story of how these places came to be under the control of white settlers is obscured. The assumption underlying these types of narratives is that Indigenous peoples are now, for reasons unknown, absent.

Indigenous peoples and presence are often described as sharing qualities with wilderness. This connection between the apparent qualities of Indigenous people and wilderness allows for an understanding of wilderness that is still empty. This approach sees Indigenous peoples as somehow similar to wilderness and thus not damaging its untouched status. The Bruce Trail magazine, in describing the Stein Valley, presents it as a place free of human interference while noting indigenous presence. In the Winter 1991 issue, this description illustrates how this is possible: “the ancient presence of man is the other treasure of the Stein; but the marks are unobtrusive...a record of humans living in harmony with the world around them” (p. 31). The suggestion that Indigenous people leave an almost imperceptible mark on wilderness is significant; it allows their presence to be ignored not on the basis of its absence but because of the perception of indigenous presence as contiguous with wilderness. Rather than fundamentally altering the space, making it notably peopled, this presence is perceived to be “unobtrusive.” Further, the presence of people is marked as prehistorical: it is an “ancient” occurrence rather than a recent effect. It is worth noting that this wording suggests that Indigenous peoples are better caretakers of nature; this is echoed in MEC’s wilderness charter (MEC Winter 1991, p. 28) and the BPNP Visitor Centre exhibit entitled “Wisdom of the Old Ways” (see Appendix I, Image 2, 3). This is perhaps meant as both praise for principles from indigenous cultures and a critique of a wasteful and destructive western culture. However, it is worth pausing to consider how this discursive arrangement works to simultaneously conflate Indigenous people with nature and allows for the perpetuation of a fantasy of empty nature.



representations of Indigenous people as absent or only present historically in the Canadian wilderness by MEC, the BPNP and the BTC bears remarkable resemblance to how Indigenous people in Canada are understood in Canadian culture. Francis (1997b) explains how Indigenous people are presumed to be without a clear history or culture and are frequently conflated with nature. He explains how the fantasy of the “noble savage,” particularly in reference to the Inuit, is often employed by non-native Canadians to make claims about themselves as good and moral people. Francis (1997a) also points to how cultural representations of Indigenous people are most often pre-contact. These pre-colonization texts, such as the paintings of Paul Kane<sup>34</sup> and Emily Carr, suggest that Indigenous people and cultures are slowly dying out (see also Moray, 1998). Francis (1997b) refers to this as painting the “doomed Indian.” In the outdoor recreation texts I examine, I observe a similar mournful recollection for partially admired but unequivocally absent Indigenous peoples.

Finally, perhaps one of the most troubling ways in which indigenous presence is erased from the wilderness is by enabling white subjects to take up roles, positions and knowledges once embodied by Indigenous peoples. MEC catalogues make frequent reference to the concept of a weekend warrior. In the MEC Winter 2007 catalogue, one of these warriors is featured charging up a hillside. The category of the “weekend warrior” is interesting as it suggests that it is possible to play at savagery without any permanence. The weekend warrior mirrors the privileged adventuring boys from colonial fiction (Phillips, 1997) and risk taking middle and upper class, white male recreationists (Braun, 2003). Francis (1997b) suggests that the weekend canoe trip is one of the popular modern day manifestations of how non-native Canadians “go

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<sup>34</sup> The painting included in the Wisdom of the Old Ways exhibit in the BPNP Visitor Centre includes the Paul Kane painting entitled “Indian Encampment on Lake Huron c. 1845.”

native” (p. 149). The weekend warrior is able to escape one’s life and work in the city and tear through the wilderness with a vengeance. He is able to play at savagery on the weekends but ultimately to be able to return unscathed. This recreationist is an honorary or temporary warrior, one who is brave and rugged but whose civility is not completely undone. In a different approach to playing savagery, MEC also profiles, through its adventure story contest, a white subject who usurps the place of Indigenous people. One adventure story describes how the participant had “dreamed the dreams of the Inuit and the Dene” in a place where it was possible to experience the “ghosts of the Inuit” (MEC Summer 2001, p. 71-2). This narrative allows the white subject to possess a place once inhabited by Indigenous people while simultaneously relegating Indigenous people to the place of history and dreams rather than a physical, material present day place. This story, as well as the weekend warrior, suggests that there is a gap where Indigenous people once were that can now be filled by white subjects. Wilderness becomes a place where white people can play at and become temporarily native.

Canada has a long history of white people playing at being indigenous. From figures such as Grey Owl to the campfire narratives of boy scouts, white people are allowed to become temporarily indigenous and praised for the authenticity they bring to this role.<sup>35</sup> By allowing white subjects to take up this position, the possibility of accounting for non white indigenous presence becomes tremendously challenging. If figures such as Grey Owl or the weekend warrior become more readily accepted and desired as representations of indigeneity in Canadian culture, it seems unlikely that there will be room for Indigenous peoples to determine what counts as indigenous knowledge or practice. Perhaps even more alarming, as white subjects take up and

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<sup>35</sup> While some white people’s ability to embody or perform indigeneity garnered praise, such as Archibald Belaney’s Grey Owl or privileged white children at summer camps, others were perceived as at best inauthentic and more likely as savage and no longer white (see Jasen, 1995; Mawani, 2002, 2005 on racialization of working class white people and mixed race people). Unquestionably, class contributes to which white people are able to play at being aboriginal while being able to continue to secure claims to respectability and white privilege.

lay claims to their superior abilities at performing indigeneity, the possibility for Indigenous communities to make and achieve sovereignty, rights and retributions is increasingly undermined. Dunk (2002), in his examination of the Spring Bear Hunt in Ontario, demonstrates how white hunters' claims to their superior role as guardians of nature, a role once afforded to Indigenous peoples, has created considerable contestation over the hunting and fishing rights of Indigenous peoples (see also Grant (1998) on indigenous sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic). In outdoor recreation, as white subjects are encouraged to play at being authentically and rightfully indigenous, it is worrisome to imagine what might be made possible through this leisure practice.

By addressing some of the discursive techniques that are employed to empty out the wilderness and produce it as a place free of human interference, I do not wish to minimize the violent, material ways in which Indigenous peoples have been and continue to be removed from wilderness places. Scholars such as Spence (1999) and MacLaren (1999) have addressed historical examples of the forced removal of Indigenous peoples. Further to this, recent confrontation by the Ontario Provincial Police and the Stony Point First Nations at Ipperwash and the death of Dudley George indicate that those nature spaces that are most desired continue to be forcibly and violently emptied. My attention to the discursive is not to suggest that the process is purely in the realm of ideas with no material consequences. Rather, I address these discursive shifts in order to see how both discursive and material violence is made possible and how the emptiness of wilderness is produced. In turn, the violence required to enact this emptiness is made to appear necessary.

#### Wilderness: dangerous, inhospitable, unpredictable

The outdoor recreation texts I examine engage seriously and in nuanced ways with the discursive construction of wilderness. From the detailed analysis thus far, it is possible to begin

to see how wilderness is imagined as vacant: a place free of human inhabitants and human interference. In the chapters that follow, this particular discursive arrangement continues to be relevant. However, there is a significant divergence in the meaning of an empty wilderness. In the remaining portions of this chapter, I consider how nature is produced as a dangerous and inhospitable place. I trace how, according to MEC, the BTC and the BPNP, this perilous place requires extensive knowledge, skills and equipment in order to be traversed. I describe the subject who is imagined to capably and competently navigate this treacherous wilderness as a *calculating adventurer*.

I have previously reviewed scholarship which examines how wilderness, in western culture more broadly and Canadian culture specifically, has been conceptualized as a dangerous, inhospitable and unpredictable place. Scholars have articulated how this particular tradition has relied on Judeo Christian notions of wilderness (Cronon, 1996b; Nash, 2001) which see wilderness as a place of savagery and danger: a place outside of civilization. In Canadian contexts, nature is often imagined as a place that can undo one's civility, making it a fearsome and hostile place (Atwood, 1995). It is compelling to consider how wilderness continues to be imagined as a dangerous place and how this discursive production of wilderness is employed in the production of a civilized subject.

Mountain Equipment Co-op frequently features images of its members in dangerous scenes where the risks of being out in the wilderness are immediate and concerning. In the MEC Summer 1990 catalogue, a photo shows a group of hikers tied together, each hiker heavily laden with tremendous packs and trudging through a considerable amount of snow (p. 34). The rope between members, combined with the heavy packs (full of presumably necessary equipment) and the unwelcoming snow scene suggest this is not a casual sojourn into the wilderness. Rather,

these images imply that contact with wilderness is, in fact, a rather dangerous affair that requires extensive gear and the ability to successfully calculate and plan for risks. The substantive risk of being out in the wild is immediately evident. Further, although some efforts are made to mitigate the risk – the rope, the packs – it is clear that these do not overcome the danger. Similarly, MEC often shows its members in places that are readily understood as inhospitable, such as the Cirque of Unclimbables (MEC Summer 2000, p. 102) or the Uyani Salt Flats (MEC Summer 1994, p. 3). In contrast, certain nature places are imagined as more stable and secure. For example, in describing a backcountry experience, one member writes how a “patch of forest became our sanctuary” (MEC Winter 2006, p. 46). In contrast to the hostile alpine environment, the forest is positioned as a rather tame and inviting environment. The calm, quiet forest is a place where survival is likely and recreationists can experience both mental and physical respite from inhospitable conditions. In the MEC catalogue, it is common to see these varied descriptions applied to the backcountry and the imagined front country. The backcountry is clearly positioned as a place where risks are real and the comforts of home are far off. In contrast, front country visitors, such as car campers and day hikers, are unlikely to be encountering that risky and hostile wilderness that is imagined to be in the backcountry. This distinction is particularly useful for MEC as backcountry visits require more specialized equipment and are imagined as far more exciting and compelling for members. Later, as I examine the subjects and practices that correspond with discourses of a hostile and inhospitable wilderness, I illustrate how and why the backcountry excursions are far more enticing to MEC members specifically and outdoor recreationists more broadly.

The BTC and the BPNP focus primarily on a specific wilderness area, the Niagara Escarpment. These institutions rarely rely on images of distant and difficult to reach places in

order to shape how wilderness is understood. Nonetheless, despite the proximity of the Escarpment to dense urban areas, this wilderness is still imagined as potentially dangerous and hostile. The BTC magazine frequently features articles highlighting the potential risks wilderness poses to hikers. A profile of an end to ender,<sup>36</sup> for example, spends considerable time detailing the physical hardships endured. The blistered feet, the rugged terrain and the psychological toughness required to overcome the challenge of completing the 800km trail receive much attention (BTC Fall 1988, p. 30). Although the wilderness of the trail is not presented as dangerous in the same way as an isolated mountain range, the focus remains on the risks that nature poses to the safety and comforts of recreationists. Articles which address issues such as hypothermia (BTC Winter 1991, p. 5) emphasize the impact that wilderness could have should it be approached without sufficient caution. The BPNP park brochures repeatedly stress the risks wilderness presents to visitors. The most common threats are Massassauga rattlesnakes, poison ivy, black bears, injuries from the terrain (falls, sprains, cliff jumping) and inclement weather (BPNP 2003, p. 10, 15). Park signage also indicates that wilderness can be hazardous (Appendix I, Image 4, 5, 6). Here again, the unexpected dangers of wilderness are highlighted. Although this is not the hostile backcountry imagined in the MEC catalogue, this wilderness can still pose real and alarming risks.

Considerable effort is expended by MEC, the BTC and the BPNP toward directing how wilderness is understood. The task of shaping wilderness is important because it influences how we understand ourselves. Recalling Evernden (1992), it is vital to see how particular “truths” about ourselves are made apparent through the ways wilderness is imagined. I am interested in considering the subject positions that are made possible in these discursive arrangements. What

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<sup>36</sup> An end to ender is a hiker who has hiked the entire Bruce Trail. Although typically end to enders complete the trail over multiple separate trips, a limited number of end-to-enders hike the entire trail without interruption.

is achieved by producing wilderness as a place that is both empty and dangerous? What sorts of subjects are embedded in this wilderness? Further still, what practices secure both this particular wilderness discourse and its imagined subjects? As I unravel the subject of this emptied and hostile wilderness, it will be possible to see in greater detail both who is imagined to traverse this wilderness and what precautions and practices are advocated for in these outdoor recreation texts.

### Subjects and practices: A calculating adventurer and his methods

I now move to consider how a specific subject is produced through wilderness. I enter into this discussion of the production of a particular subject by acknowledging that my analysis of the discursive construction of wilderness is incomplete. The meanings invested into wilderness through these outdoor recreation texts are myriad, layered and multifaceted. While I hazard to articulate a limited number of wilderness discourses, I willingly concede that there are areas left unexplored. Similarly, the subject I work with in the remainder of this chapter, the calculating adventurer, is one of many subjects that emerge in the texts. I attend to the production of this subject and the types of practices advocated for through this position not because it is the *only* subject that exists in the wilderness discourses of MEC, the BPNP and the BTC but because of what is made possible in and through this subject position for outdoor recreationists.

By considering how wilderness is understood as dangerous, foreboding and uninhabited, it is possible to see who is imagined to be able to traverse this particular space. Here, I focus on the construction of a subject who is able to navigate the dangerous wilderness rather than succumb to it. I examine the capable and calculating adventurer because of the centrality and desirability of this subject in these texts. In many ways, the production of the calculating adventurer is only effective if this subject position taps into how outdoor recreationists already

think of themselves. In scripting this subject, MEC, the BPNP and the BTC acknowledge that the calculating adventurer holds sway among their audience. The texts have an imagined audience and are formatted to address outdoor recreationists who see themselves in this rational and responsible subject. Hall (1997) explains this concept of address as a way in which producers (or advertisers) design their products or texts with a particular group in mind. Hall claims “[w]ho they imagine you are effects the way the product is constructed, the way it speaks to you, or solicits your attention...[t]he way we address someone incorporates a position for that person” (p. 369-70). The calculating adventurer is the subject to which these texts are intended to speak. As with many of the subjects of modes of address, such as the imagined student in curricula texts or the imagined woman in home magazines, the calculating adventurer is a position that is difficult for many outdoor recreationists to adopt. Nonetheless, this position is highly desirable because it promises outdoor recreationists the opportunity to construct themselves as a particular type of subject. The calculating adventurer does not require warnings and cautions about wilderness yet heeds them because he has already assessed the risks wilderness poses. He is already “in the know” about the dangers that wilderness presents and is prepared to navigate this perilous terrain.

*Gear: The tools of the calculating adventurer*

At the crux of the calculating adventurer’s ability to negotiate the dangers of the wilderness is the possession of the appropriate and necessary gear.<sup>37</sup> Having a bevy of tools, toys

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<sup>37</sup> The use of the term ‘gear’ specifically, as opposed to equipment or product, lends real credence to an outdoor recreationist’s claims to participating in challenging backcountry endeavors. To describe one’s ‘stuff’ as equipment or even toys is to call attention one’s outsider status. The equipment, tools, toys and accoutrement of outdoor recreationists is encompassed in the term ‘gear’; outdoor recreation stores are referred to as ‘gear shops’ and those with a special passion and knowledge about products are referred to as ‘gearheads.’ Prior to embarking on my doctoral research, I worked in several ‘gear’ shops and encountered my fair share of ‘gear’ heads and perused a number of ‘gear’ magazines. *Explore* magazine’s yearly ‘Gear Guide’ is considered one of the most trusted consumer resources for evaluations of gear quality. Its popularity might be compared to the *Maclean’s* magazine’s Canadian university guide.



and outfits at one's disposal mitigates the effects that wilderness could have on safety and comfort. But the possession of this gear is far more significant than just keeping one warm or dry, it speaks to the knowledge one possesses both about the wilderness and the complex tools needed to navigate it. Locating the proper gear demonstrates the ability to understand the wilderness, its dangers and how to select and use complicated devices in order to survive it.

Two categories of gear receive repeat attention in outdoor recreation texts: gear for measuring danger and gear for mitigating danger. Tools for measuring danger (such as avalanche beacons and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices) are discussed frequently by MEC, whereas gear to mitigate danger, such as first aid kits and wicking clothing, is discussed extensively by MEC as well as the BPNP and the BTC. To negotiate the dangerous terrain and climate of the wilderness, readers are quickly made aware that an extensive set of complicated tools is required. On the cover of the MEC Winter 1991 catalogue, a man is featured on a mountain top, beard caked in snow and ice, in a place that seems unbearably cold, windy and hostile. What is interesting about this cover is both the smiling face of this member as well as the extensive equipment strapped to his body. His outfit is a network of carabineers, rope, insulated clothing and devices; he is cloaked in equipment. This image displays the gear required to negotiate this space. MEC's winter catalogues are replete with descriptions of wilderness weather as unpredictable, dangerous and dynamic (MEC Winter 1999, p. 12-13). These descriptions most often correspond with the detailing of specific products designed to aid in navigating hostile conditions and present the devices as necessary safety materials. Gear such as avalanche beacons and GPS devices, as well as topographical maps and navigational materials, are used for interpreting a dynamic wilderness. What is interesting about these specific materials is that they simultaneously present wilderness as a space that is clearly hostile yet offer up

particular tools as ways to cope with the hazards it poses. While wilderness is imagined as dangerous, what also becomes apparent is that with a particular set of products and the ability to use these products confidently and effectively, it is possible to evade the blows wilderness might otherwise deliver.

The possession of these particular types of gear reveals a thoughtful and rational approach that the imagined subject of the catalogues might employ. Rather than risking being swept into the brutality of the wilderness, the calculating adventurer attempts to understand and navigate this dynamic, hostile space through a set of scientific and technological tools. These types of gear allow everyday adventurers to wield the scientific knowledge of geography, climate and terrain with confidence. While historically, traipsing into places where the terrain or climate is erratic or the climate is unforgiving and volatile might have meant certain death. Today, knowledgeable and technologically savvy adventurers are able to make use of expertise once held only by specialists. The calculating adventurer is thus able to take up and play the role of scientist, cartographer, meteorologist and researcher through the use of certain types of gear.

The gear designed to read and interpret the dangerous and elusive qualities of wilderness is quite limited. Perhaps the prohibitive pricing of these items precludes these devices from becoming available to the general outdoor recreation community through the MEC catalogue.<sup>38</sup> Further, a considerable amount of technological competence and interest is required to make proper use of some of these devices. This could contribute to the scarce discussion of gear designed to measure the danger of the wilderness. More probable is the fact that a limited

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<sup>38</sup> I point to the pricing of these items not to suggest that the other catalogue items are inexpensive. Overwhelmingly, outdoor recreation gear is expensive, and most outdoor recreation activities (skiing, camping, canoeing) are prohibitively costly. While avalanche beacons cost upwards of \$500, boots, tents and mountaineering clothing can cost nearly as much. However, given that gear for measuring danger serves a very limited set of uses, the ability to purchase these items (and travel to locations where they can be used) is likely only available to very limited numbers of MEC members (to say nothing of their accessibility to broader Canadian populations).

number of recreationists actually embark on leisure excursions into avalanche territory or mark their own route through rugged terrain. Yet, the risks of the more accessible backcountry and front country are not diminished in outdoor recreation texts. Rather, the focus shifts from interpreting/reading to mitigating/negotiating the discomforts and dangers of the wilderness. Gear designed to help the adventuring subject encounter nature more safely and comfortably is abundant: moisture absorbent or resistant clothing, first aid kits, moleskin blister pads, water filters, titanium tent pegs, bear bells and bug spray amongst hundreds of other items are presented as necessary equipment to safely traipse into the wilderness.

What is quickly apparent from analyzing outdoor recreation texts is that any sort of clothing, camping or outdoor recreation gear is not necessarily sufficient. In an MEC article entitled “The Right Stuff,” great attention is paid to the types of gear (along with attitude, skills and knowledge) required to safely encounter nature (MEC Winter 1998, p. 47). This article details how high quality gear will impact the experience of being in the wilderness. Making good shopping decisions is important and members are encouraged to bear in mind that “rarely will you look back and wish you had bought the cheaper sleeping bag” (MEC Winter 1998, p. 47). According to MEC, it is quality rather than price which ought to guide decision making. Although the possibility of making these “choices” rests upon one’s class position, it is framed as dependent on the ability to possess appropriate types of knowledge and effectively evaluate what counts as needed gear. This same article suggests that certain knowledge of the wilderness (the landscape, climate) is as important as understanding the appropriate gear. Similarly, in outlining what could be potentially dangerous encounters with wilderness, both the BTC and the BPNP posit that particular types of gear will insulate one from the full wrath of the wilderness, whether a chilly breeze or a venomous snake bite. The BTC, in addressing the dangers posed by cold and

the risks of hypothermia, places substantial emphasis on appropriate layers of clothing (BTC Winter 1991, p. 5). Similarly, hikers are encouraged to see the wilderness as hostile, the water as contaminated and each rock as a potential site for an injured ankle (BTC Summer 1992, p. 30). Evidently, the way to mitigate these encounters with nature is through the selection of high quality, durable gear. Warm, absorbent clothing will help to manage the risks hypothermia poses and water filters will purify the contaminated streams.

*Gear: a note on footwear*

One set of products which receives extensive attention from all three research sites is footwear. Overwhelmingly, these institutions call for the use of sensible and terrain appropriate footwear to avoid injury. The BTC in a piece on safe hiking specifically references the importance of wearing proper sturdy footwear (BTC 1992, p. 30). The BTC repeats this warning frequently; nearly every issue of the magazine reminds hikers of the importance of proper hiking footwear. Similarly, each year the BPNP newsletter instructs park visitors that proper footwear is required for hiking. Additionally, the BPNP often mentions that boots which cover the ankle can also protect against Massassauga rattlesnake bites. Perhaps one of the most interesting images in the MEC catalogue is a photo of a trail sign (MEC Summer 1989, p. 30; see Appendix G, Image 3) reminding hikers of the need for appropriate footwear.<sup>39</sup> This sign reminds MEC members what constitutes a responsible footwear choice; however, it simultaneously shapes how footwear choices correspond with particular gendered practices. Sturdy hiking boots pervade the MEC catalogue, the BTC magazine, the BPNP newsletter and the BPNP Visitor Centre (Appendix I, Image 7, 8). The high-heeled shoe on this sign functions as a gendered sign of feminine frivolity

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<sup>39</sup> This sign is in German; it reads: “Anyone continuing along the path should only continue if hiker clothing and footwear is mountain appropriate”. Translation provided by Jana Vander Kloet.

and foolishness. This gendering of footwear is consequential for how members come to recognize the sorts of subjects imagined to be traversing a dangerous wilderness.

The big, sturdy boots embedded in the warnings about dangerous terrain and erratic snakes reveal who is thought to be putting on those boots and embarking on an excursion. Sturdy boots reference a type of rugged masculinity that holds tremendous currency in the Canadian imaginary. The hefty boots of these outdoor recreation texts remind Canadians of their ability (and need) to navigate a complex wilderness place. The men of Canadian mythology – Franklin, MacKenzie, the courier du bois – are represented with feet in sturdy boots traversing (some more effectively than others) the wilderness. In sharp contrast, the high heeled shoe references a decadent, urban and feminine subject – who is engaged in radically different types of leisure. The inclusion of this high heeled shoe on the sign is laughable; clearly the terrain envisioned around the sign is not possibly crossed with this footwear. Yet, the sign speaks to how conventional signs of femininity are constructed as absurd in the wilderness. The high heeled shoe is out of place and illogical. And it is both men and women who are encouraged to laugh at this image; it is unlikely that the image is included to alienate female members. Rather, I argue that the image invites women to laugh and thereby participate temporarily in a particular masculinized subject. The responsible hiking boots which are clearly positioned as essential gear for the safe traversal of the wilderness are “big shoes to fill” and to fit into these shoes requires a denigration of feminine accoutrements and qualities.

While the BTC and the BPNP might simply call for the use of particular gear (boots, warm clothes, water filters), it is MEC who provides the equipment. Yet, MEC is cautious to propose to members that purchasing endless gear is in fact morally good and well informed. MEC tempers the call for consumption by readily acknowledging that we need to exercise

caution (both in how we shop and in how we play) (MEC Winter 1997, p. 41; MEC Winter 1998, p. 47; MEC Summer 2000, p. 68). The call for a particular type of consumption is crucial to understand the production of the calculating adventurer.

MEC's approach to the use of and purchase of gear focuses on members' desires to make responsible choices about how to encounter the risky wilderness, not on the desire to consume unthinkingly. This choice deliberately produces the calculating adventurer as a moral and rational subject. This is accomplished by acknowledging and reproducing wilderness as a place that is dangerous and inhospitable. Further to this, proper gear is presented as the means necessary to navigate the wilderness. The location and selection of gear must correspond with desirable qualities for the calculating adventurer. At the outset, it is clear that the selection of gear cannot be conflated with shopping. The uncritical and feminized task of shopping does not allow for this subject's rational and discerning thought processes. Shopping for gear itself is not intended to be a site of pleasure and power; rather, it is a necessary burden and logical preparatory step to one's entry into the wilderness. Yet, as I will show, like feminized shopping, the selection of the right gear is an activity invested with desire in that getting the best and most appropriate gear is integral to the constitution of this subject.

The selection of gear becomes a highly technical process. The MEC catalogue is a tangled web of intricate details, complex terminology and coded descriptions. To competently use the catalogue one requires substantial knowledge about equipment. Although there are occasional instructional boxes in the catalogue to help purchasers, the assumption is the selection of gear is a difficult and strategic task. For example, listing of the weight of all clothing, packs and other gear is seemingly irrelevant to novice hikers who would not know that you should both calculate what you might anticipate carrying and ultimately weigh your pack before you depart.

For example, tents often include various weight listings, which mark out what is the minimum or maximum number of tent components you could include to effectively use a tent. These meanings are rarely explained. In perusing the catalogue, it is apparent that the process of selecting gear is complicated and requires an extensive understanding not just of the risks of the wilderness, but of the gear used to navigate it.

In describing the methods of selecting and using particular types of gear to navigate the wilderness, I intend to flag how these practices racialize and gender the subject who is imagined to participate in them. The emphasis on carefully reading the risks of the wilderness and effectively and responsibly planning for potential disasters (falls, sprains, bites, etc) signal the sorts of thought processes or analysis undertaken by the calculating adventurer. Critical race scholars (Dyer, 1997; Mohanram, 1999) have pointed to how rational, scientific and measured thinking is often attributed to whiteness. This is tied to the association of whiteness with restraint and calculated thinking. Rather than working from an impulsive, emotive or “gut” reading of the wilderness, the calculating subject reads and interprets risk using particular scientific tools.<sup>40</sup> The use of technological gadgetry, such as avalanche beacons and GPS devices clearly seeks to align the calculating adventurer with the knowledge of the engineer (Mohanram, 1999). The relationship that the calculating adventurer interacts with the landscape is not one fueled by emotion, by intuitive knowledge, or even by cultural reference points. The wilderness is imagined as entirely distinct from this subject and thus his ability to navigate it must stem from the employment of scientific interpretations and assessments of risk. This emphasis on rational thought and patient and calculating interpretation of wilderness dangers produces a racialized, white subject.

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<sup>40</sup> Even the assumption that these gadgets are tools, rather than toys, clearly shapes how this leisure practices is to be read. These are not things to ‘fool around’ with or to add pleasure to one’s experience – rather they serve a function. They are presented as essential interpretative technologies rather than superfluous trinkets.

The selection of gear also speaks to the gendering of the calculating adventurer. Shopping for gear is not a pleasurable task. Instead, it is to be read as a responsibility that is focused primarily on careful reading in order to determine what is necessary for survival. Shopping itself is not leisure for the adventurer. Shopping, understood as a feminized (as well as racialized and classed) leisure practice must be reconfigured as a masculine pursuit. This is accomplished by turning the selection of gear into a complex and calculating task that requires all products be weighed and assessed to ensure that only the necessary equipment will be secured. The focus of shopping is not on frivolous, fashion choices (such as colour choices, sizing/cut of garments); rather the emphasis is on the technological features, the performance of the item and the details which speak to longevity of the product (warranties, repair kit additions). Gear selection contributes to the discursive production of white masculinity as deeply rooted in rational thinking, independence and self-reliance and intellectual competence.

The gear of the calculating adventurer interprets and mitigates the dangers posed by the wilderness. This gear and its usage provide insight into how this subject is produced. Yet, perhaps what is even more telling is the specific knowledge that this adventurer is presumed to possess. Although the selection of gear points to the need for technological expertise of products, there is additional knowledge needed of the wilderness specifically. I turn my attention now to the sorts of knowledge the calculating adventurer is presumed to have and what work this knowledge possession does in shaping how this subject is to be understood.

*Knowledge: the brains of this operation*

This study's research sites place value on scientific and academic knowledge, training and expertise. The ability to make sense of the wilderness through scholarly training is considered both a tremendous accomplishment and assurance of the accuracy and validity of the



types of knowledge possessed. In the BPNP video *Life on the Edge*, a shot of researchers tagging black bears is featured. In this scene, researchers, marked with their Parks Canada gear, technological gadgets and authoritative gestures, pull baby cubs from a den to measure and tag them. Through the video, we witness scientists dealing expertly with the black bear, one of the wilderness inhabitants the BPNP repeatedly warns visitors about. Evidently, the knowledge and tools of these researchers insulate them from the dangers of reaching into a bear den. While park visitors might be encouraged to emulate the activities of other characters in the video, these scientists are distinct and transcendent. They embody a particular type of knowledge in the film that is represented as worthy of admiration and respect. The representation of scientists and scientific knowledge is mirrored in various exhibits in the BPNP Visitor Centre. For example, there is an exhibit that focuses on scientific research into the habitat and population health of the Massasauga rattlesnake along Highway 6 in the upper Bruce Peninsula. While the BPNP brochure often advises visitors to be cautious when hiking in rattlesnake habitat, this exhibit profiles knowledge gained from scientists about this snake. The information and knowledge of the scientist changes the way this dangerous wilderness dweller is presented to visitors: although dangerous, it is obvious that scientists are able to mitigate that risk in order to research the snake. Further to this, the knowledge of the scientist suggests that the fearful relationship ought to be reversed – with snakes fearing humans – given the high incidence of snakes being run over by automobiles on Highway 6. The scientists' knowledge debunks fear and instructs visitors to “respect” rather than fear snakes.

Scientific knowledge and academically trained researchers are given praise and support in Bruce Trail magazines, BPNP brochures and Visitor Centre exhibits. For example, in narrating particular hikes, BTC contributors frequently mention who joined them on hikes and the

knowledge they gleaned from the experience. An American hiker was described as a man “with a degree in biology and very knowledgeable regarding the local flora and fauna” (BTC Spring 1989, p. 6). This knowledge is set out from colloquial knowledges and the owner of this knowledge (an American with a biology degree) is presumed to be presenting accurate and scientifically informed observations about the wilderness. In the BTC magazines and the BPNP brochures and Visitor Centre exhibits, the work of University of Guelph professor Doug Larson is often profiled. Larson heads up the Cliff Ecology Research Group that examines the ancient cedars clinging to life on the edge of the escarpment. The incredible longevity of the white cedars along the escarpment is discussed in detail and Larson’s research is positioned as central to understanding the ecological significance of this region. While I share the sentiment that Larson’s work is compelling, I argue that the position of prominence that his knowledge of region’s ecology is given speaks to the prioritizing of academic, scientific training and research in how the wilderness of the Bruce Peninsula and the Niagara Escarpment is represented in these texts.

The value attached to scientific knowledge is significant. While the wilderness has been discursively produced as dangerous, scientific knowledge is presented as the means by which to navigate or interpret components of the wilderness that we have been instructed to fear, or at least to exercise caution and restraint around. This scientific knowledge facilitates a transition from irrational fear to a calculating respect for an inhospitable wilderness. The work of scientists on rattlesnakes and cliff edge ecology is prominently featured suggesting acknowledgement amongst readers/members/visitors that this type of knowledge is useful, valuable and instrumental to understanding the wilderness. To support this type of knowledge as the key to understanding wilderness speaks both to how particular ways of knowing the wilderness and

“knowing” subjects are rationalized. Mohanram (1999) argues this rational/scientific knowledge is presumed to belong to white subjects. She describes this subject as the “engineer.” The engineer understands and interprets the landscape using scientific knowledge, research and rational thinking (in contrast to the bricoleur who relies on spiritual and cultural modes of interpretation). According to Mohanram, the engineer does not rely on intuition, myth or an emotive relationship with nature in order to read and know it; this is the technique of the bricoleur who is racialized as black. In contrast, the engineer, through his technological and abstract approach to nature, is racialized as white. The engineer comes to know nature or landscape as distinct from himself through a complex system of knowledge-making. Mohanram’s theorizing on how knowledge and “knowers” are racialized is useful in making sense of the how outdoor recreation institutions produce knowledge, research and knowledgeable subjects. The knowledge and the techniques for knowledge acquisition reflect a system of knowledge production that corresponds with the interests, experiences and values of middle and upper class, white people. Considering the discursive production of the calculating adventurer, the repeated accolades and power afforded to scientific study of the wilderness presumes a certain readership.

And yet, valuing this knowledge keeps the calculating adventurer at a distance from connoisseurs and specialists of scientific knowledge production. Both the BTC and the BPNP provide numerous examples of scholars and scientists who are making important contributions to the “correct” understanding of wilderness. Yet, there are limited opportunities for recreationists to take up and participate in knowledge production. MEC offers a point of intervention to ensure that the calculating adventurer maintains access to the privileges of whiteness through his understanding of the wilderness and its dangers. While it might be impractical and implausible

for most MEC members to pursue higher education in order to lay claims to the expert knowledge of scientists and researchers, MEC proposes an alternative: workshops at store locations on wilderness first aid, back country survival, regional flora and fauna, and travel resources/reflections which provide the illusion of scientific specialization or authority on a specific area.<sup>41</sup> These workshops allow MEC members to gain access to a specialized set of knowledge that might otherwise be the exclusive purview of academically trained experts. These workshops enable MEC members to actively hone their knowledge of how to navigate the wilderness. MEC members are able to gain access, through these workshops, to the necessary information about the risks the wilderness poses and how to cope with them.

Participation in the workshops, in addition to offering knowledge and skills to survive out of doors, provides those attending with the opportunity to embody expertise. By taking part in these training sessions, members are attributed the qualities of the informed and analytical scientist. Workshop participants are learning to navigate the wilderness from the safety of stores in urban centres; there is little expectation of experiential knowledge in this context. Rather the expertise that is to be gained is scientific and technological. MEC instructs members to see nature or wilderness as an untamed force, which they must learn to understand (MEC Winter 1998, p. 46). Gathering of skills, knowledge and equipment is part of how one mitigates risk but again the focus remains on calculating the dangers and approaching them with a sense of expertise. In an article about the necessary attributes of a MEC member who ventures into the backcountry, knowledge of oneself and scientific knowledge of nature are considered essential: “in the end, backcountry safety comes down to how well you understand yourself and reality, imagine possibilities, weigh risks and accept responsibilities” (MEC Winter 1998, p. 47). This

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<sup>41</sup> The BTC, as a part of its annual membership meeting, includes some guided walks and/or talks about Escarpment geology and ecology.

concluding statement explains the sort of qualities, knowledge and skills that are deemed necessary. To know “reality” one must gather scientific knowledge and gadgets in order to accurately interpret the wilderness and the dangers it poses. To “imagine possibilities” is clearly to imagine not in a creative and interpretive sense but to anticipate based on scientific and rational reading of wilderness. Finally, to “accept responsibilities” is to take up one’s encounter with wilderness as a solo task – that you must get oneself out of any disaster you might find yourself in. It is assumed that, even with the careful reading of wilderness and the intricate planning of equipment, wilderness remains dangerous. It is unrelenting even with all of the right precautions.

MEC’s emphasis on individual responsibility and accountability echoes the language of neo-liberal governance through self regulation examined by scholars such as Rose (1999), Johnston (2008) and Hermer (2002). The calculating adventurer, an idealized neoliberal citizen who ensures his own survival, knows better than to haphazardly venture into the wilderness not simply because it is physically dangerous but because it is irresponsible. Should he require rescue, he will unquestionably be taxing public resources. His decision to be responsible, through careful research and the acquisition of necessary gear, marks him as a good citizen.

Braun (2003) explains how white masculinity increasingly relies on perceived risk to ensure a stake in respectability. To secure and naturalize the privileges of whiteness and masculinity in a racist and sexist culture, particular discourses and discursive practices are put to use. Braun argues that white men’s engagement with risk serves to insulate against claims that privileges and power are undeserved. He argues that participating in risky activities, such as outdoor recreation, functions as a new site for white, middle and ruling class men to enact these claims. Similarly, Canadian outdoor recreation institutions work to produce the calculating

adventurer as a specific form of white masculinity. What emerges in these texts is a careful assembly of qualities, skills, knowledges and descriptions that correspond with discourses of whiteness and hegemonic masculinity. It allows for these characteristics to appear as the normal and necessary features of an outdoor adventurer, a MEC member or a visitor to the BPNP and the Bruce Trail. Yet, to suggest this subject is naturally found in the wilderness obscures the complex discursive work necessary to place him there.

### Responsible, Rational, Rewarded: The Calculated Adventurer

One of the most central ways through which the calculating adventurer is seen as logically placed in the wilderness stems from the attribution of rationality, independence and analytical thought to this subject. The careful selection of gear, the researched understandings of the wilderness and the knowledge about risks and tactics for survival culminates in the rational, clear thinking and independent calculating adventurer. This is not the sort of adventurer who embarks on a hike without taking necessary precautions; he does not expect to need help in an emergency. He intends to be self-reliant and to make choices through analytical processes. In many ways, the characteristics of this adventurer suggest that most risk can be eliminated through sufficient attention to detail. These attributes suggest that outdoor recreationists aspire to independence and rugged individualism. Readers of these texts are not imagined to be the foolish campers or hikers who were rescued by helicopter. It is not their bags that get torn into by bears. They did not get lost in the wilderness; they are not Christopher McCandless.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps what is so appealing to outdoor recreationists about this calculating adventurer subject is it distances

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<sup>42</sup> Christopher McCandless aka Alexander Supertramp is a young, middle class white American man who ventured into the Alaskan wilderness with nearly no equipment; he starved to death and was later found by local hunters. His travels and fascination with wilderness is recorded in the bestselling book *'Into the Wild'* by John Krakauer (1996). The popularity of this book in addition to the films *'Into the Wild'* directed by Sean Penn (2007) and documentary *'The Call of the Wild'* by Ron Lamothe (1997) has resulted in a growing number of young men who wish to emulate McCandless – at tremendous cost and nuisance to the U.S. National Park Service in Alaska.

themselves from the unwise and ill-equipped recreationists who venture into the wilderness and are swallowed by its forces. The calculating adventurer insists on preparation and intends to thoroughly read each encounter; he does not plan to be a burden and use up resources in order to secure his safe return. To require assistance or rescue would forfeit the claims to whiteness and hegemonic masculinity that have been invested in this subject.<sup>43</sup> To succumb to savagery, through emotive responses or unthinking actions, will undermine this subject's access to power. The importance of survival mirrors the way in which hegemonic masculinity and whiteness are made available to adventurers (Braun, 2003; Phillips, 1997). How one adventures is understood to be integral to understanding the character of a subject. The attributes of the calculating adventurer mark him as responsible, rational and independent – qualities and values associated with white men. His survival in the hostile wilderness is not simply to preserve his life; it is to preserve the privileges he experiences.

But, the wilderness is still acknowledged as dangerous – and not just in the context of discursive analysis. It is possible to die in the wilderness. The stakes then seem particularly high for the calculating adventurer – is it worth it to traipse about in the wilderness? Certainly, white privilege and male privilege are not articulated in these recreation texts as the rationale for wanting to embark on an adventure that is admittedly going to be uncomfortable and potentially dangerous. What then compels adventurers to head out? Why not stay at home and sip tea by the window? What is out there that draws hikers, campers and adventurers into the hostile

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<sup>43</sup> The considerable uneasiness around injuries is noteworthy. The calculating adventurer, in his quest for independence and careful examination of the dangerous wilderness, is evidently invested in his physical strength and competence. The fear of injury suggests a heightened anxiety about the possibility of dis/ability. The overemphasis on self responsibility and self reliance suggests that any degree of interdependence or dependence is undesirable. Injuries, for the calculating adventurer, may signal a loss of one's claims to responsible citizenship and subsequently to respectability.

wilderness? A frequent answer found in these texts is that freedom can be found in the wilderness.

Despite the emphasis on the dangers of the wilderness and the intricate and detailed planning and preparation required to embark on an excursion, the promise of freedom makes this effort worthwhile. Two quotations from MEC members in the catalogue encapsulate the value attributed to adventuring in the wilderness. One backcountry skier writes “I love skiing the backcountry because I can be free from everything” (MEC Winter 2005, p. 40). Another member, in describing backcountry trekking, writes: “hoisting a pack signifies a declaration of self sufficiency, whether for a day or a night or days on end. A pack is a load, but also a liberation” (MEC Winter 2002, p. 32). Similarly, one MEC member and self-described weekend warrior insists on the need for frequent escape into the wilderness from his full time job (MEC Winter 2007, p. 6). In each of these descriptions, it is apparent that the excursion is not just a chance to demonstrate one’s technological competence in the wilderness. Rather, there is the promise that to this leisure is liberating. What precisely is liberating about being stuck in the forest, bitten by black flies and fearing for your safety?

In many ways, this claim to freedom is based on the ability to embody a particular type of masculinity. To the escape to the wilderness and to be liberated by a physically challenging adventure is to reclaim a rugged and tough masculinity. It is essential to how the calculating adventurer is imagined. The adventurer is not simply a book smart and technologically savvy man. On top of his technological competence and wealth of knowledge about wilderness and survival, he is a rough and strong soul who finds and experiences his most authentic self through physical challenges. This claim to freedom heads off critique of this subject as a technology obsessed geek who lacks physical prowess. The calculating adventurer is not emasculated by his



bevy of toys, tools and certifications; his claims to freedom insulate him from this critique. At his core, he desires to just head out at the first available moment into the wilderness. Yet, he tempers this manly impulse with pensive and cautious planning. This might be conceptualized as a way to make hegemonic masculinity and whiteness sit comfortably in the same subject. To lay full claim to the privileges of masculinity and to be readily understood as rough, strong and tough is important to the calculating adventurer. And yet, he does not want to be impulsive or needlessly boastful – the need for managed and rational action is accepted given the risks of the wilderness. Once again, the emphasis on restraint allows this subject to be read as white as well as masculine.

The emphasis on freedom as a desired quality once again ties the calculating adventurer to neoliberal discourses of choice and responsibility. Rose (1999) insists that freedom is integral to governing subjects in liberal or advanced liberal societies. The crux of how subjects are prompted to take on the regulation of the self is on the basis of freedom: we are free to choose our own path and to take responsibility for the choices we make. Rose, O'Malley and Valverde (2006), discussing Rose's *Governing the Soul* (1999), explain that "[s]ubjects were obliged to be free and were required to conduct themselves responsibly, to account for their own lives" (p. 90). Drawing from Rose, I read the desire for freedom in outdoor recreation texts as indicative of the extent to which neo-liberal discourses of self-responsibilization and regulation inform the production of the calculating adventurer. In tying responsibility ("load") to freedom ("liberation"), these texts are situated within and contribute to conditions and practices of neoliberalism.

The calculated adventurer achieves his freedom and rewards as a result of the carefully organized, yet highly dangerous expeditions he embarks on. The practices this subject undertakes

- the careful interpretation of wilderness dangers, selection of appropriate gear, and gathering of scientific knowledge - produce a responsible and rational subjectivity. Desiring to be perceived as knowledgeable and physically strong, adventurous yet intelligent, this subject imagines himself to be truly autonomous in his recreation pursuits. The practices he takes on mark him as white and male by invoking rationality, responsibility and respectability. Once he has demonstrated his competence as an adventurer, he seeks the rewards of freedom, rather than the privileges of whiteness and masculinity. He seeks freedom as the prize for good and responsible recreation in a dangerous and dynamic wilderness. I see his quest for freedom as a technique through which he produces himself as responsible and respectable. By seeking freedom, the calculated adventurer manages to make his recreation interests appear to be about the pursuit of a morality or ethics which is inherently good. This quest for “freedom” and “liberation” is not directed towards a particular source of subordination and repression. What exactly is the calculated adventurer seeking freedom from? It appears that what he seeks most urgently is the establishment of his own privileged position and pursuit of his pleasurable leisure interests. To concede that dangerous recreation interests are selfish and illogical would compromise the calculated adventurers’ ability to produce himself as a rational and responsible subject. Further to this, in the production of the calculating adventurer, it is possible to see how whiteness and masculinity are put to the service of reproducing the logic of neoliberal citizenship.

The subject of this chapter, the calculated adventurer constructs himself as a rational and responsible subject through his managed interactions with a dangerous and inhospitable wilderness. The claim to seek freedom or liberation suggests that this subject pursues a greater good than his own recreation interests. In the chapter that follows, I examine another outdoor recreation subject who insists on pursuing certain practices as a means of rescuing wilderness. I

illustrate how undertaking seemingly selfless practices function to again produce a particular subject that is deeply desirable to the members and visitors of MEC, the BTC and the BPNP.

## Chapter 4: The Conscientious Consumer

“We know that without wild places, there’s nowhere to go with our gear”  
(MEC Summer 2007, p. 111).

In the previous chapter, I outlined how wilderness is framed as a place void of human inhabitants and presence. From this discussion, I developed an analysis of the production of wilderness as a dangerous and risky place – a site where informed and rational subjects might be able to navigate with an extensive amount of knowledge and equipment. In this chapter, my focus shifts to the discursive production of wilderness as threatened in texts from Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), the Bruce Peninsula National Park (BPNP) and the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC). Extensive discussion and prolific examples suggest urgency in conveying this particular wilderness discourse. As with the previous chapter, I show how seeing wilderness as threatened relies on the discourse of wilderness as untouched and un-peopled. As this chapter unfolds, the over reliance on the link between the destruction of wilderness and the presence of people becomes apparent, offering another angle or point of entry into the wildernesses imagined through outdoor recreation.

At the outset of this chapter, I am apprehensive about the unintended consequences of arguing that wilderness is constructed. Although I previously acknowledge that I am not engaged in a discussion of what is real or true, any work that addresses threats to the natural environment could be interpreted in ways that may have serious ramifications for collective understanding of environmental degradation. My fear is to inadvertently lend support to pro-capitalist assertions that environmental destruction is still “up for debate.” I assuage this concern by acknowledging that the task of this chapter is not to argue whether or not the wilderness - and by extension the planet – is at risk. Instead, I aim to work to understand the political and social significance of certain constructions of wilderness as threatened. I grapple with the questions: what does

conceptualizing wilderness as endangered do and what does it allow? What sort of subject is constituted as the responsible actor in this understanding and what practices are presumed to be necessary to protect wilderness against threats? As in the previous chapter, I argue that how wilderness is understood has considerable bearing on the subject positions of outdoor recreationists. Here, I continue to search for insight into how outdoor recreationists subjects come to be understood in relation to the discursive production of wilderness.

Popular discussion of environmental destruction pays considerable attention to issues of responsibility and accountability and often prompts debate about the causes of environmental devastation and how they ought to be addressed. This set of tensions parallels tensions uncovered in my own research. In this chapter, I first examine how wilderness is produced as endangered. At the crux of this is a discussion of what or who is responsible for environmental devastation. Since MEC, the BPNP and the BTC frame wilderness threats as undesirable and insist that wilderness must be protected from destructive forces, I investigate what practices are advocated for outdoor recreationists. The primary means of solving the dilemma of environmental destruction is, according to these outdoor recreation organizations, conscientious and informed consumption. By considering how wilderness is represented as threatened and the types of consumption practices promoted, I propose that a particular subject, a *conscientious consumer*, is produced. This subject, whose practices and qualities are the imagined salve for the damaged wilderness, is consequential for outdoor recreation and the development of an environmental ethics because of how political engagement is conceptualized in and through this position.

#### Wilderness: damaged, destroyed, devastated

The intricate and densely woven collection of text and images in my data construct the wilderness as threatened. There are numerous examples: to ignore the abundance of references in

the data would be disingenuous. The most urgent and forceful discursive intervention that MEC, the BTC and the BPNP undertake is to represent wilderness as endangered. Although there is an echo of concern for the preservation of wilderness on a global scale, it is the risks to Canadian wilderness that raise the most resounding alarm. In the chapters that follow, *The Transformed Traveler* and *The Wilderness Citizen*, the significance of preserving wilderness specifically for Canadian outdoor recreationists is addressed in greater detail. Here, I focus on how wilderness is read as endangered and what or who is identified as sources of threat. I then examine how outdoor recreation institutions articulate and advocate possible solutions to this environmental crisis.

The wilderness is understood, according to MEC, as “threatened, if not vanishing” (MEC Winter 2001, p. 3). MEC is rarely engaged in discussion with its members about whether or not wilderness is endangered. Wilderness’s threatened state is undisputed. Instead, the focus of much of MEC’s correspondence pinpoints the scale and sources of destruction as well as possible solutions. MEC’s assertion is shared by the BPNP and the BTC and mirrored in their correspondence with park visitors and members. The BTC regularly covers environmental issues in its magazine. In the Summer 1987 issue, the BTC reported on a Canadian premiers’ meeting explaining to its members: “Canada is in danger of running out of real wilderness” (p. 32). In this same issue, the BTC shares details from a recent Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) report which argues “Canadians are suffering from a myth of endless wilderness” (p. 32). CPAWS continues to assert “we can never create more wilderness” (p. 32). These statements suggest that wilderness in Canada faces looming peril, but that Canadians might somehow misinterpret this reality. The BTC focuses on these issues to ensure these errors in comprehension are prevented or corrected amongst its membership. The attention to

understanding is significant here: it is assumed members likely will not contest that wilderness is threatened; rather, the concern is with appropriate understanding of the scope and ramifications of its devastation. The way in which MEC and the BTC frame their engagement with the issues of wilderness destruction implies their readers have shared assumptions. The assumption, from the ways in which the readers of these texts are addressed, is that outdoor recreationists already believe wilderness is threatened. Readers are positioned as knowledgeable and informed about the presence of this issue but perhaps are seeking more information about the extent of the problem.

The BPNP's participation in producing wilderness is primarily conveyed through Parks Canada (PC) documents such as *The National Park System Plan* and *Parks Canada Messages*. These documents focus heavily on the role of PC in protection and preservation beyond the boundaries of national parks (National Park System Plan, p. 77). Parks Canada is specifically focused on threats to and the maintenance of "ecological integrity" (Parks Canada Messages 2001, p. 27).<sup>44</sup> The BPNP poses a considerable challenge to protecting Canada's wilderness given its proximity to the "most human altered regions of Canada" (National Park System Plan, p. 77). The BPNP, as with the BTC and MEC, is not engaging in debate about whether wilderness is at risk. Here again the task is to articulate the causes of its destruction and to stall or even reverse the detrimental effects to the health of the nation's wilderness.

MEC, the BTC and the BPNP each present readers with intermittent claims regarding wilderness' vulnerable state. However, it is in the minutiae of how wilderness is threatened that it is possible to better understand how these outdoor recreation institutions frame the sources of

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<sup>44</sup> According to the National Park Act, ecological integrity "means, with respect to a park, a condition that is determined to be characteristic of its natural region and likely to persist including abiotic components and the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change and supporting processes (BPNP, National Parks Act, 2000, p. 1).

wilderness devastation to their audiences. In pointing to specific causes of environmental degradation, it is possible to see how these institutions understand the forces which threaten the wilderness, as well as strategies that protect it from impending doom.

### *Careless recreation*

Presumably, the readers of the recreation texts I examine share a common interest in outdoor recreation. On the surface, these texts appear to make a few other assumptions about their readership and work from the premise that anyone could be reading them. I examine this closely by drawing attention to how these presumably widely accessible texts in fact speak to quite specific audiences. I show how the texts purport to address issues that are presumed to be relevant to the vast majority of their readers. The focus on a love of outdoor recreation is comfortable and predictable. Yet, there are other, more precarious themes at play, including the notion that recreation itself may represent a threat to the environment. For these texts to frame recreation as a source of environmental degradation is difficult. It is necessary for MEC, the BPNP and the BTC to cautiously suggest that recreation is as a possible hazard to wilderness health without implicating their audiences.

Through the *Parks Canada Messages*, one of the goals that Parks Canada embarks on is to explain that too much tourism and visitor use - too much love of nature - is a possible source of environmental destruction (2001, p. 28; see also BTC Spring 2004, p. 20 on the “tragedy of the commons”). The conclusion that PC reaches is not to cut off access to the wildernesses it governs but to manage contact through a series of rules, restrictions and recommendations. In each brochure for visitors, the BPNP provides a detailed set of rules for hikers and campers regarding how to interact with the wilderness in order to ensure its continued existence. Rules about garbage disposal, coping with wildlife, campfire regulations and trail use are laid out year



after year. Rules and restrictions are juxtaposed with explanations about the damage which could be caused from carelessness. For example, failure to adhere to campfire regulations might result in forest fires and failure to stay on the trail could result in the trampling of rare orchids (BPNP 1989, p. 6). These warnings are mirrored in other park texts including various detailed signs (Appendix I, Image 9, 10, 11) and Visitor Centre exhibits (Appendix I, Image 12, 13). Embedded in these rules is the assumption that park visitors share Parks Canada's assertion that wilderness destruction is in fact undesirable and that this series of rules is in the best interest of visitors and the wilderness. This is evident in a later set of restrictions (requiring camp permits) imposed on backcountry campers; the BPNP rationalizes this decision by arguing this permit system will "minimize impacts and ensure backcountry campers a quality experience" (BPNP 1999, p. 2). The assumption is that compliance will be a non-issue as rules are presented as self-evident since they guarantee visitors the wilderness experience they desire.

The audience of these texts is not imagined as the threat to nature but rather as informed recreationists who recognize that restrictions on activities and access to the wilderness are the only way to guarantee its protection. Yet, there are warnings about "those" (other) recreationists who do not adhere and thus risk ruining wilderness and outdoor recreation for everyone. Caveats about the use of bolts in climbing locations (MEC Summer 1994, p. 13) or the practice of having fires while backcountry camping (BTC Fall 1990, p. 17,18) remind readers of how others' erroneous ways risk compromising the wilderness. These types of warnings turn the focus away from the risks of overrunning the wilderness with the sheer number of visitors by drawing attention to how one engages in outdoor recreation. Both the BTC and MEC are eager to suggest that the approach one takes to recreation significantly impacts whether or not one's recreation is destructive.

In 2006, MEC began a partnership with Leave No Trace Canada to promote an environmental ethos which hones in on educating and promoting particular practices. These vague practices are focused on the task of cleaning up after oneself when out in the wild; these tidy principles are encompassed in the campaign's catch phrase "Nature has no chambermaid" (MEC Summer 2006, p. 44-45; see Appendix G, Image 4, 5). With this slogan over a dense green and presumed-to-be untouched forest, readers have little choice but to assume that wilderness will be secure provided that various wastes are dealt with appropriately. I pause on this particular MEC feature because it speaks to MEC's imagined readers. This promotional spread, through the inclusion of the "Do not disturb" doorknob hanger and reference to a chambermaid, suggests that MEC members might themselves have a maid at home. The person who normally tidies up - presumably female, poor and non-white<sup>45</sup> - is not available to the wilderness, but may be in the homes of MEC members. By utilizing the gendered and class-based tropes of "the chambermaid," this promotion implies a middle and upper class audience. MEC members are produced as middle or ruling class who might, in locations other than the wilderness such as their homes or hotels they visit, have a poor or working class woman clean up after them.

A similar ethos is reflected in the BTC's introduction of a cartoon character, Bruce Trayle, who is intended to remind readers of sound environmental practices. This character relies primarily on trite adages such as "take nothing but photos, leave only your thanks" (BTC Fall 1998, p. 10),<sup>46</sup> to explain what is necessary to ensure recreation is unthreatening to wilderness. These messages are safe and do little to challenge the belief that recreation itself is problematic.

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<sup>45</sup> I use non-white here to point to how those working as 'maids' are unlikely to have access to the privileges of whiteness and may have, at times been racialized as non-white.

<sup>46</sup> This phrase seems to play on the oft cited principle of 'take only photographs and leave only footprints' perhaps taken to another level suggesting that it is possible to traverse through the wilderness without leaving any mark.

Rather, the central message is to be careful and tidy without requiring any sacrifice of pleasurable activities or access to wilderness.

Part of the task of positioning some recreation activities as less detrimental to the wilderness requires guidelines that demarcate what types of leisure will be deemed salvageable. The environmental ethos of “taking only photos” and “cleaning up your refuse” is workable only from the parameters of certain types of recreation. For MEC this entails “self propelled wilderness oriented recreation” (MEC *Mission and Values*, 2005b, [www.mec.ca](http://www.mec.ca)) such as cross-country skiing, canoeing or hiking. MEC shows open disdain for outdoor motor sports, such as snowmobiling and rarely addresses self-propelled *urban/suburban* recreation such as parkour.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, MEC deems certain mountain sports, such as downhill skiing and snowboarding, to be a grey area as it is possible, though improbable, that recreationists are using this gear for self-propelled activities. Likewise, the BTC is particularly invested in promoting activities such as hiking, camping and bird watching, while eschewing others, notably snowmobiling and trail use by ATVs and dirt bikes.<sup>48</sup> Considerable debate occurs in the BTC magazine regarding mountain biking on the trail with some advocating that mountain bikes damage the trail and its surrounding nature (BTC Winter 1995, p. 20) and others contesting that mountain biking is no more damaging than the existence of the trail itself (BTC Winter 1998, p. 9) and that bikers might also be hikers who contribute to trail maintenance (BTC Spring 2002, p. 6). This strategic outlining of what constitutes “environmentally friendly” or “destructive” forms

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<sup>47</sup> Parkour is an urban recreational activity which began in France and which consists of running, jumping and maneuvering through city space. Also called freerunning, parkour is characterized as non-competitive and incorporates skills from gymnastics, dance and track such as jumping, vaulting and spins, in order to navigate urban terrain.

<sup>48</sup> Snowmobile groups are a particular concern for the BTC. They are recognized as well organized, well funded and already in possession of an elaborate network of trails. The BTC is wont to engage with snowmobile trail organizers in trail advocacy projects seeing their interests as incompatible; this is clearly evident in growing ‘Rail to Trail’ initiatives occurring across the country and the continent. Further discussion of the BTC tension with snowmobile groups is explored in the following chapter, the *Transformed Traveler*.

of recreation signals the importance readers place on how their own practices are positioned. In addition, the consensus amongst these outdoor recreation institutions is that certain damaging practices and careless recreationists are to blame for the threatened state the wilderness is in, whereas desired practices are responsible, careful and unthreatening.

### *Automobiles & highways*

One of the frequently acknowledged perils to wilderness's security is the automobile (and to a lesser extent the corresponding car dependent culture of North America). Both the BTC and MEC wrestle with their relationship to the car by advocating limited use at best. For example, MEC's Vancouver location has prioritized making it difficult to drive to the store by restricting and charging for parking and encouraging bike use (MEC Winter 1993, p. 26). The BTC, after electing to include car advertisements for Subaru in the late 1990s, had substantial discussion about whether or not the organization should actively support (through inclusion of advertisements) automobile use. The inclusion of these ads spawned heated debate in the letters to the editor about the appropriateness of this decision (BTC Winter 1999, p. 6). In a BPNP Visitor Centre exhibit entitled "Deadly Highway #6" (Appendix I, Image 14, 15), personal automobiles are directly implicated in undermining the safety and security of the wilderness. Highway 6, which cuts through the centre of the Bruce Peninsula, is the main traffic corridor between Tobermory and the ferry service to Manitoulin Island and the south of the Peninsula and the city of Owen Sound. Highway 6 divides the east and west portions of the Bruce Peninsula National Park, and it is known to take a toll on local wildlife, a concern echoed in the Visitor Centre exhibit.<sup>49</sup> The Highway is imagined to fracture the park and to endanger its sustainability.

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<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, Highway 6 is also known to take a toll on people – primarily through the abundance of 'speed traps' placed by OPP officers between Wiarton and Tobermory. During my numerous research trips to the BPNP, one of the first details that locals and park staff shared with me is about how to avoid getting ticketed. After having driven this 70km stretch of road more than 50 times in one year, I am grateful for their insight.

Its presence is lamented. This sentiment is shared by the BTC; there is growing concern that “nice pieces of land are getting turned into convenience stores and fast food emporiums” (BTC Winter 1990, p. 20). The automobile and its adjacent structural demands (highways, fast food drive-through restaurants) are quickly positioned as detrimental to wilderness – often carving into the limited precious wilderness which is still available. This is a particular worry for the BTC and the BPNP, given the proximity of the trail and the park to densely populated southern Ontario.

Yet, MEC, the BTC and the BPNP do not advocate that their readers abandon the use of personal automobiles entirely. Rather, the possibility of balance is presented. While MEC might promote cycling, they provide car parking at all stores. Similarly, the BTC argues it “understand[s] the solution lies in striking a fine balance between allowing people to have the quality of life they seek while protecting the environmental systems that are the foundations of our wellbeing” (BTC Spring 2006, p. 23). The BPNP Visitor Centre provides their own take on the need for balance with a display titled “Ecosystem Balancing” which includes a variety of nature “things” and human “things” including automobiles, set up on a balance. The intention of this display is self evident: it is possible to have a balance of human conveniences and still preserve nature, but there is a need for restraint. Humans and their destructive devices need to be kept at bay in order to ensure that wilderness is able to first survive but ultimately to thrive.

### *Overconsumption*

The need for restraint and balance is mirrored in other areas of these outdoor recreation texts. This is evidenced most clearly in the anxiety imagined amongst readers about the meaning and effect of their consumption but perhaps more broadly about their disproportionate share of the world’s natural resources (and thus of the wilderness). The BPNP contributes little to

discussions of how consumer culture or overconsumption is damaging the wilderness, yet, it would be a misnomer to interpret this as collusion with the values of consumer capitalism by the BPNP. Rather, the BPNP focuses attention on practices directly corresponding to the park. Since consumption, in the financial sense, is very limited in the park, the need to respond to visitor concerns about commercialism is minimal. This is in sharp contrast to MEC and the BTC, where discussion of consumption permeates the catalogues and magazines.

MEC is a large consumer co-operative; it comes as no surprise that the catalogue devotes considerable attention to the problem of overconsumption for wilderness sustainability. The abundant references in the catalogues to this issue suggest that members harbour considerable anxiety about the consequences of their consumption. MEC takes up this concern referring to consumerism as “the plague of North American society” (MEC Winter 1997, p. 41). MEC acknowledges that overconsumption is a serious environmental concern and a social justice issue. MEC explains that

to have a future, we must all work at reducing our consumption of resources. We feel that a just society can work more effectively towards sustainable living than a society that unfairly exploits many of its members. We would like to see a world in which the gap between the richest and the poorest is much smaller, in which the bulk of wealth is not controlled by so few people. We want to see people working in healthy, safe workplaces, earning wages that enable them to live with dignity (MEC Winter 2002, p. 4).

In this statement, MEC ties consumerism and inequitable distribution of wealth to environmental destruction and social inequality. Yet, these critical statements are rare. Far more frequently, MEC addresses consumption and sustainability through more palatable language and emotion.

For example, in a discussion of sustainability, MEC assures readers of their position. An article opens with:

This article is about sustainability. Wait! Don't flip that page just yet. There will be no doom and gloom here. No endless lists of statistics describing how the world is falling to pieces. No powerfully ambiguous prose designed to make you feel bad about those "sinful" choices you made each and every day. This is MEC talking, remember? MEC is a toy store. We are about having fun, not making you feel bad. MEC doesn't preach" (MEC Summer 2000, p. 68).

Here, MEC acknowledges that overconsumption is concerning and that members already know that their consumption may impact the wilderness that they love dearly. The task here is not to convince readers of this as it is assumed they already agree. The link between overconsumption and wilderness degradation is acknowledged, thus the task for MEC is not to ensure that readers understand this to be true. Rather, the challenge is to shape how the membership sees MEC in relation to this concern and to determine whether this critique of overconsumption will be tolerated as palatable.

The BTC approaches overconsumption through a more uniformly critical tone than MEC. The BTC is troubled by North America's preoccupation with consumption and the threats it poses to environmental sustainability (BTC Summer 1991, p. 11). Interestingly, this cultural critique is juxtaposed with Europe, a "culture" presumed to be more environmentally attentive because of differing approaches to communal space, personal automobiles, use of private footpaths and mass transit. While holding Europe up as exemplary, the BTC draws attention to the environmental exploitation of the global south. For example, in explaining a number of environmental issues occurring in Thailand and Malaysia, the BTC is hesitant to place blame on

these nations and suggests that the issue is the global North's insatiable demand for economic growth at the expense of ecological sustainability (BTC Fall 1989, p. 35). The BTC constructs a somewhat critical evaluation of North American culture and is seemingly unconcerned with the conclusions that readers might draw about themselves or about the BTC. Since the BTC is not focused on selling material goods, it is unsurprising that they are able to challenge their readers more aggressively than MEC.

*Resource extraction in special places: Temagami, Carmanah, Stein, Niagara Escarpment*

Concern for the security of the wilderness is perhaps most amplified in those places deemed special or emblematic. While wilderness more broadly is positioned as under threat, there are particular wildernesses facing degradation which invoke a more insistent alarm, perhaps stemming from the significance these places play for the Canadian nation. Although there are concessions that recreationists might have an impact on the wilderness (for example in discussion of the Smoke Bluffs in British Columbia (MEC Winter 1988-89, p. 24), another cause of environmental degradation discussed in these texts is industry, population growth and urban sprawl.

Beginning in the late 1980s, both MEC and the BTC began to concentrate on heavily reported environmental conflicts in Temagami, Clayoquot Sound, the Stein Valley and Carmanah Valley. These were/are hotbeds of environmental struggle which were discussed at length in mainstream media and were at the forefront of national consciousness (see Braun, 2002; Thorpe, 2008). In the Summer 1989 catalogue, MEC emphasizes the uniqueness of the Stein Valley (p. 44). This same description is extended to the Carmanah Valley by the BTC in the Summer 1990 magazine (p. 13-4). Temagami is described as "sacred" (BTC Summer 1990, p. 6) and as a "haven of unspoiled beauty" (MEC Winter 1990, p. 51). Interestingly, although the



Niagara Escarpment has not received the same laud and eloquent descriptions, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designation is prominently featured in numerous BTC magazines and in the BPNP Visitor Centre. The international recognition of Niagara Escarpment as one of the world's significant biospheres (under the Biosphere Reserves, Man and the Biosphere program) is acknowledged as a signal of the urgency of preserving this wilderness (BTC Fall 2007, p. 3). These are places that are envisioned as extraordinary and priceless wildernesses.

Despite the beauty of these places, it is evident that considerable tension exists in how to use these wildernesses. The logging of the Stein Valley (BTC Summer 1990, p. 27), the Carmanah Valley (MEC Winter 1990 p. 28) and Temagami (MEC, Winter 1990, p. 51; BTC Summer 1990, p. 5-6) is framed to readers as a threat to the safety and sanctity of the wilderness which warrants attention from outdoor recreationists who wish to use these places for their leisure. The use of the wilderness is often framed as a struggle between recreationists who appreciate nature and logging corporations who abuse and destroy it. Only intermittently are Aboriginal people included in the tension and they are presumed to side with recreationists in the preservation of nature (BTC Summer 1989, p. 33; BTC Summer 1990, p. 27). The BTC frames the relationship between Aboriginal people and white recreationists in the Stein Valley in this way: "the bands have joined with sympathetic white supporters to upgrade their traditional trails for hikers" (BTC Winter 1991, p. 30). What is evident in the struggle over these spaces is that industry is imagined as a serious threat to the wilderness and that other groups (environmentalists, recreationists, Aboriginal people) are united in their resistance to this dangerous force. The differing interests of these groups receive little attention. Instead the focus is on the fast approaching and senseless destruction of precious wildernesses. Any amount of

logging is presumed to permanently scar the forest (MEC Winter 1990, p. 28). The BPNP Visitor Centre also features exhibits which explain the threats logging posed to the Bruce Peninsula forests. These forests are described as being the “last stand”; the Upper Bruce forests faced threats historically from logging and fires and at present from urban sprawl. Resource extraction is deemed incongruous with the interests of outdoor recreationists and environmentalists.

*What will environmental destruction result in?*

The threats to environmental sustainability and to the preservation of Canadian wildernesses are myriad. Attending to the impact of overconsumption, or careless recreation, automobile use and industry suggests that MEC, the BPNP and the BTC are interested in tackling this issue from multiple angles. Yet, there is a need to draw readers into shared understanding of what is at stake in the destruction of the wilderness to pinpoint what could be lost.

Some mention is made of the need to sustain wilderness because of its key role in human survival or to what the BTC describes as “the environmental systems that are the foundation of our wellbeing” (BTC Spring 2006 p. 23). Similarly, both MEC and the BPNP concede that environmental destruction will at some point undermine the ability of humans to survive. The BPNP is quick to acknowledge that, although it sees the parks system as central to environmental protection, the work of environmental sustainability requires protection far beyond park boundaries (BPNP 1999, p. 2). The environmental systems that are needed in order for humans to continue to exist are positioned as in need of preservation. Possible widespread and catastrophic global destruction is given substantially less attention than the possibility that wildernesses needed for recreation will be damaged, overcrowded or otherwise ruined.

The alarm about wilderness destruction is most succinctly encompassed in a promotional feature about the partnership between MEC and The Big Wild, a CPAWS initiative described as “Canada’s wilderness protection movement” (MEC Winter 2007, p. 35). This promotion shows a sole man camping in a roundabout with cars whirling past: his presence is ridiculous, his tent plainly illogical given the rows of white picket fenced homes. The pleasure of sitting with a mug of tea is undermined by the concrete, cars and graffiti covered signs around him (Appendix G, Image 6). This representation hallmarks the greatest fear that the destruction of wilderness presents – that one’s leisure will be fundamentally altered and that paradise will be paved.

Although the possibility of losing the environment we need for survival is alarming; outdoor recreation institutions prioritize discussion of the loss of recreation space. It is afforded comparable, even increased cause for concern and calls to action. I shift now to examine what possible solutions are developed to address the degradation of wilderness; this requires extensive contemplation of what wilderness is for. Evidently, MEC, the BTC and the BPNP assert that wilderness is needed for survival and for pleasurable use. As I begin to unpack the proposed solutions, it is possible to see what else outdoor recreationists need wilderness for. I argue wilderness is required in order to produce and sustain particular subject positions. Its threatened state and the actions undertaken to rectify this might reveal as much about desired subjects as it does about the wilderness they desire to preserve. In the chapters that follow, *The Transformed Traveler* and *The Wilderness Citizen*, further discussions of the specific meanings invested in nature are explored. The importance of preserving wilderness given its significance in the imagining of outdoor recreationists and Canadians, further demonstrates why the preservation of wilderness is required for our material survival but even more so to facilitate the discursive production of moral and respectable subjects.

### How can the wilderness be saved?

There is little doubt that the wilderness requires safeguarding; it is not shocking, given the pervasive cultural focus on environmental issues, that outdoor recreation institutions would weigh in with their perspectives on what is needed. At the forefront of the possible solutions offered by MEC, the BTC and the BPNP is the possibility of participating in a form of consumer activism. In the task of rescuing the wilderness, the sounding call to action is to consume. But this consumption is not to be the unreflective overconsumption that has plagued the wilderness; rather it is to be a meticulously researched process which reflects one's commitment to environmental sustainability. While the attention to the problem of overconsumption could lead one to conclude that consumption is the problem; MEC, the BTC and the BPNP are invested in leading their respective and collective audiences to conclude that consumption, provided it is responsible, attentive and ethical, might also be the solution.

#### *Salvation according to Mountain Equipment Co-op*

In the late 1980s, MEC members were concerned with environmental issues and desired to have the co-op reflect this. Members asserted that the co-op should take on a more environmentalist identity and protect the wilderness rather than only supplying gear for participation in recreation in it. The board of directors, described as "somewhat conservative and cautious" (MEC Summer 1990, p. 41) was reluctant to undertake this. At the 1987 Annual General Meeting, member survey results indicated overwhelming support, with some objection from urban centres (Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary), for MEC to become involved both politically and financially in environmental projects (MEC Winter 1988, p. 23, 25). It is this set of survey results that motivated the board to alter their position. The environmental initiative was originally intended to focus on the preservation of wilderness spaces and educating MEC

members on the safe and environmentally sound use of MEC products (MEC Winter 1988, p. 22). It was determined that a fraction of a percentage of sales<sup>50</sup> would be put towards the Environment Fund in order to fund preservation organizations whose environmental ethos was matched by MEC's. One of the earliest funded projects was the preservation of Smoke Bluffs, a popular climbing spot in British Columbia. There was a concern that the Smoke Bluffs might be shut down due to environmental damage and liability concerns from landowners. MEC funds were used to provide amenities such as toilets and picnicking areas and to assist organizations seeking to purchase and preserve the land (both the natural space and its use for climbing). Other early initiatives include funding organizations involved with wilderness research (with the intent of advocating preservation), repair of trails and outdoor recreation amenities, and land acquisition. By 2006, the fund had provided over seven million Canadian dollars to a vast array of projects and initiatives (MEC Summer 2006, p. 4). In 2007, the fund was organized into four distinct areas: research projects, land acquisition, education, and advocacy projects.

The development of the Environment Fund was intended to address concerns and critiques of members; one founding member outlines this initiative:

[w]e felt the Board should become more representative of the outdoor community, and this environmental issue was simply a part of that. As well as environmental advocacy we wanted *some consumer advocacy*, more democratic involvement, and more recognition of our roots – of the importance of mountain climbing and back-country skiing as opposed to the selling of trendy clothing. (MEC Summer 1990, p. 41, emphasis added)

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<sup>50</sup> In 1987, .2% of gross sales went to the Fund. In 1995, this amount was increased to .4%; a vast majority of this increased funding went to Jedediah Island land acquisitions to transition the island from private property to park (national or provincial). Currently, the fund receives 1% of gross pre-tax sales.

In responding to these concerns, MEC positions consumption as a way to meet members' interests in shaping the co-op's identity. Although there may have been a call for improved democratic involvement in the co-op, the answer provided has resoundingly been one of consumption. It would seem that consumption is made tenable to members by positioning it as a means to convey who they "really are," something that was at risk of being lost if MEC became just another sporting goods store.

The launch of the Environment Fund marked the arrival of a variety of "green" products in the catalogue, including printed t-shirts, maps, books, and clothing. Beginning in 1988, a number of print screened t-shirts with "environmental" messages were featured in the catalogue. With the development of these t-shirts, it is possible to see how MEC members are invited to consume as a means of participating in environmental initiatives. Screened "political" t-shirts, such as the Temagami "The Last Wild Stand", include descriptions of how purchases will aid in the "battle to save this precious heritage" (MEC Summer 1990, p. 50). Similarly, a Carmanah Valley t-shirt raises funds to build a boardwalk in a heavily visited area (MEC Summer 1990, p. 50). Descriptions of books, pamphlets, and other t-shirts echo this sentiment. Purchasing these items is a way of participating in the environmental projects; in a few instances, other means of participating (through donations directly to wilderness organizations) are offered. Aside from financial contributions, there is little space carved out for MEC members to become involved in these projects.

Tying products to particular wilderness issues is one of the ways in which the MEC membership is invited to consumer critically and responsibly. Two other examples illustrate how MEC constructs its products and their consumers as fundamentally different from mainstream consumer culture. For the MEC member hesitant to wear an explicitly political t-shirt, the MEC

heavyweight canvas shirt offers an alternative. This shirt features buttons made from the Tagua nut; this nut was “once common for button production before World War II, it fell out of favour with the introduction of cheap plastics” (MEC Summer 1991, p. 20). The revival of this button industry was undertaken in conjunction with Conservation International and the Tagua Initiative in order to offer an alternative industry in Ecuadorian rainforests which might otherwise be destroyed (MEC Summer 1991, p. 20). Moreover, a percentage of the funds from the sale of these shirts is allotted for education and training for local communities. With this shirt, consumption is assumed to make possible the revival of once thriving industries, save rainforests and sustain the economies of local communities. Similarly, in 2001, MEC transitioned to using organic cotton in its clothing out of concern for the environmental damage done to the earth by the cotton industry. Organic cotton is positioned as a logical, sustainable, and affordable alternative to conventional cotton; the price difference for consumers (at MEC) is approximately an additional 10%. In a small article about the introduction of organic cotton to the MEC line, MEC indicates that they “hope you will partner with us in this environmental initiative, which you can support by voting with your dollars through your purchases” (MEC Summer 2001, p. 102).<sup>51</sup> Further still, with minimal price difference and comparable texture and wear, MEC suggests “about the only difference you might imagine you notice is a slight increase in warmth, but that’d just be your flow of virtue” (p. 102). Here, the MEC membership is invited to view their consumption as a part of this project and to relish the moral rewards of participating in it.

*Bruce Peninsula National Park: consuming for the park?*

Since MEC is a consumer co-operative, it might be expected to present consumption as a viable means of engagement with the issue of environmental degradation. The BPNP is a

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<sup>51</sup> The phrase ‘voting with your dollars’ can be linked to notions of consumer citizenship within neoliberal forms of governance whereby the focus of citizenship and politics shifted from states to markets (see Johnston, 2008; Rose, 2009).

fundamentally different sort of recreation institution. Aside from entry and camping fees and the purchase of firewood, there are few opportunities for consumption in the park. There is obviously the possibility for forms of consumption other than economic to occur.<sup>52</sup> However, the focus here is on how consumption (of goods or services) is used to allay fears about wilderness destruction. Although other forms of consumption are certainly interesting, detailed discussion of these is not undertaken in this thesis.

The BPNP offers limited methods to consume as a strategy for engaging with visitors' concerns about wilderness destruction. The primary means by which park visitors are encouraged to consume is through its associated organization "The Friends of the Bruce District Parks Association" which is a "friend" to both Fathom Five National Marine Park and the BPNP. This association organizes educational and social events in the parks, has a gift shop inside the Visitor Centre and is focused on "supporting" the parks. This association is a not-for-profit organization. The Friends' initiatives often emphasize consumption as a way for visitors to support the parks. Either by shopping in the gift store at the Visitor Centre or by donating to projects that the association is developing (BPNP 1989, p. 3; BPNP, 1997, p. 5), it is possible to support the park. While some of the projects that the Friends undertake are described in detail, such as the maintenance of a historic lighthouse (BPNP 1997, p. 5), it is not always apparent what the support that visitors are implored to lend to the "Friends" will be used for. It is assumed that the Friends, the BPNP and visitors have similar desires and expectations of the wilderness of the park.

The BPNP rarely explicitly asserts that consumption is a viable means of saving the wilderness from impending destruction. Rather, the BPNP proposes other strategies for

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<sup>52</sup> Further still, there is the possibility of economic consumption done within the park that was not anticipated by the BPNP, for example domestic labour and childcare, illegal sales of drugs and alcohol, sex work or the use of the parks for other economic ventures such as guiding or photography.



wilderness preservation which correspond with the consumer activism of MEC and the BTC. In doing this, it is apparent that although the BPNP does not focus on consumption, there is notable similarity in how wilderness destruction is understood and the types of engagement that are imagined as solutions. As this chapter unfolds, the relationship between the consumption of MEC and the BTC and the proposed behaviours of the BPNP become increasingly clear.

*Bruce Trail Conservancy: buying the trail*

In contrast to the BPNP, the BTC offers many opportunities for members to participate in rescuing nature through consumption. The BTC's primary mandate is to maintain a hiking trail for public use. More recently, the BTC has begun to advocate for the development of a "conservation corridor" (BTC *About Us*, [www.brucetrail.org](http://www.brucetrail.org)) containing the footpath. This transition marks the BTC's shift from being a collective of hikers concerned with maintaining the trail to a conservation group for the area around the trail. This is evidenced in the recent change to the organization's name from the Bruce Trail Association (1960-2006) to the Bruce Trail Conservancy (2007 to present). Yet, the invitation to consume to protect nature is not limited to the recent focus on conservation; there are numerous examples from throughout the 1980s and 1990s which suggest BTC members can make some of their most important contributions with their chequebooks and credit cards in hand.

The BTC, in each of its magazines, includes a one or two page spread entitled the "Bruce Trail Store." This store, which sells BTC branded mugs, clothing, trail guides, books and collectables, generates a sizable portion of the BTC's revenue.<sup>53</sup> The store's products are often described as the "gift that gives twice" (BTC Winter 1996, p. 4). Members are encouraged to purchase items that are described as "fashionable and environmentally friendly" (BTC Fall 2006,

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<sup>53</sup> In 1997, the Store accounted for 20% of the BTC's total revenue (BTC Winter 1997, p. 7). Since 1997, the BTC has aimed to expand the store in order to generate more funds for the organization.

p. 29), although what specific features of the products result in the descriptor “environmentally friendly” is not articulated. The Bruce Trail Store is a small but consistent feature of the magazine that urges members to shop as a gesture of their support to the trail. To a lesser extent, the purchase of memberships to the BTC is also prominently featured in the magazine. However, paying for memberships is more often framed as the fair and right thing for hikers who use the trail to do. There is ongoing debate regarding whether trail use by non-members is in some way immoral thievery or if the point of the Trail and the BTC is to provide something for the good of the general public (regardless of whether or not they are members).

The BTC, rather than persuading members to purchase specific goods to demonstrate their commitment to the preservation of wilderness, heavily promotes various donor programs. The BTC has run many fundraisers, some lasting multiple years, in order to secure certain portions of the trail.<sup>54</sup> Their campaigns are frequently headlined with questions such as “How much do you love the Bruce Trail?” (BTC Winter 1990, p. 24) or “Have you considered an Ontario without the Bruce Trail?” (BTC Summer 1992, p. 9). These emotive taglines suggest that without donations both the Bruce Trail and the Escarpment it runs along are at risk. Further, it is clear that these are outcomes that members dread and that they would willingly donate to the cause in order for these results to be avoided. The campaigns, such as “Burn the Mortgage” (BTC Spring 1995, p. 46) and “Footsteps”<sup>55</sup> (BTC Summer 1998, p. 48; BTC Fall 2000, p. 30-33), claim that by making a donation either a specific piece of wilderness is being preserved or that the entire Trail route is being safeguarded. Many of these campaigns are fundraisers to

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<sup>54</sup> Although the Bruce Trail has been established for many years, the BTC continues to work at developing more desirable routes for the trail. For example, there are numerous stretches of trail along roads that the BTC would prefer to see routed through green space. Additionally, some sections of the trail run through private property requiring frequent negotiation and re-negotiation with landowners as properties are bought and sold.

<sup>55</sup> The use of the term footprints in a fundraiser works doubly – both to signal the steps of members along the trail and to reference the environmental adage ‘take only photographs, leave only footprints.’ Naming the campaign in this way signals to members that the BTC is ‘in the know’ about the key phrases and practices of environmentalist recreationists.

purchase properties to ensure the trail runs through the optimal (or most green and picturesque) route. According to the BTC, “the question is not whether we can afford to acquire the key properties currently available, but rather whether we can afford to risk losing them forever” (BTC Spring 1990, p. 20). The BTC fundraising campaigns indicate that wilderness along the trail is at risk and the ideal solution to this threat is to donate funds to ensure the BTC becomes the owner of these places. The assumption here is that properties either owned by the BTC or managed by them are sufficiently protected; in contrast, members of the general public who might purchase these scenic locales might prevent the trail from being routed through them. It is not only the preservation of wilderness which is at stake according to the BTC but the possibility of continued access to it for members and outdoor recreationists. MEC shares this sentiment stating “we know that without wild places, there’s nowhere to go with our gear” (MEC Summer 2007, p. 111). The central concern then for outdoor recreationists is the loss of wilderness for outdoor recreation. The proposed solution to ensure that one’s leisure is not disrupted is critical and ethical consumption.

#### What will consumption mean for outdoor recreationists?

The call to consume is presented as an opportunity to do something about the destruction of wilderness. MEC, the BPNP and the BTC assure outdoor recreationists that shopping and donations will, at least partially, preserve the wilderness. Yet, to consume through very specific channels offers more than a helping hand to the wilderness – it also works to shape how outdoor recreationists can come to understand themselves and their practices. Processes of consumption construct particular subjects that are tempting to outdoor recreationists.

For outdoor recreationists to imagine themselves as consumers, the processes of consumption need to be presented as significant and reflective of their interests. MEC, the BPNP

and the BTC must offer consumption as a meaningful activity to their respective and combined audiences. The task is to frame consumption as a key method for outdoor recreationists to convey something about themselves as individuals and about their values. If consumption is presented as corresponding with the values that outdoor recreationists hold in high regard, it will appear to be a more compelling act. At the crux of how consumption works, as a practice, is what it will do to construct a particular subject in relation to the wilderness. As is evidenced by the detailed attention given to outlining how wilderness is threatened, outdoor recreationists are imagined to be seriously concerned with pinpointing who or what is responsible for the destruction of wilderness. The invitation to consume might be best understood as a form of insurance against accusations of responsibility for destroying the wilderness. Above all else, the decision to consume, either through the purchasing of specific goods or through donations to “noble” causes, is an assurance of one’s moral virtue. Consumption becomes a technique for outdoor recreation subjects to produce themselves as ethical and responsible; it allows them to attain what Foucault describes as “a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection” (2003c, p. 146). Further to this, consumption becomes the means by which to engage politically.

How is this accomplished? How does the decision to buy an organic cotton shirt inoculate its purchaser from critiques about North American greed, selfishness and environmental degradation? I argue this is accomplished by tying consumptive practices to the construction of ethical and responsible subjects. The discursive production of wilderness as endangered and the presentation of consumption as a logical response to this concern rely on the construction of conscientious consumers. This subject position needs to be made desirable in order for this response to wilderness’s endangerment to work. The production of this subject must speak to the fantasies outdoor recreationists have about themselves and correspond with who they imagine

themselves to be. What is offered to these consumers is much more than neat and “green” outdoor gear or the chance to save a favourite piece of wilderness. What is at stake is how they might produce themselves as ethical, moral and responsible subjects.

Yet, consumption is not assumed to be a suitable means of tackling the issue of ecological devastation. These outdoor recreation institutions have been critical of western culture’s preoccupation with consumption and the environmental and social consequences that result from this. It is necessary to distinguish the type of conscientious consumption they promote from other, less critical forms. The BTC, the BPNP and MEC must provide some assurances that the products and programs they advocate are distinct and indicative of an environmental conscience rather than superfluous desires for new, shiny things. I explore how these institutions mark their call to consumption as radically different and further how a particular subject, the conscientious consumer, is produced as one of its key effects.

MEC works to frame consumption as critical and selfless rather than indulgent and unnecessary. MEC readily acknowledges, in an article entitled “An Environmental Quandary”, that some of its products are manufactured in environmentally damaging ways and cannot biodegrade such as nylon climbing ropes (MEC Summer 1995, p. 55, 58). However, MEC circumvents the conclusion that outdoor recreation and the production of its gear should be halted by citing the “reduce, reuse, recycle” adage. By offering limited colour selections in clothing, they reduce the amount of dye used. By promoting gear swaps, they encourage reuse of equipment, and by purchasing recycled fleece and later by developing a polyester recycling program (MEC Winter 2007, p. 70-71, 84), they are able to produce new products from old, worn-out ones. This article is one of numerous catalogue pieces that emphasize how consumption at MEC is carefully thought through, nearly always out of necessity. Alongside

these articles, MEC also includes features such as “Retro Gear.” This series of images shows MEC members in clothing they have been using for many years. Retro Gear demonstrates that MEC members are unlikely to head out to buy a new item simply for a more current fashion and are primarily looking for function and longevity in their products. MEC goes to great lengths to assure its members that their consumption is different: when MEC members shop it is out of necessity rather than greed or selfish desire.

In 1999, MEC drew attention to the quality products designed and manufactured by the Co-op.<sup>56</sup> These features entitled “MEC products Made for the Wilds” (MEC Winter 1999, p. 6) and later “MEC Brand Products Made for Wild Places” (MEC Summer 2001, p. 4), emphasize the “intelligent design...superior materials...uncompromising attention to detail [and] a clear conscience” (MEC Summer 2001, p. 4). The intention is to produce superior products that do not need to be replaced and which inspire confidence. Equally important to the development of superior quality products is the need for socially and environmentally responsible production that offers this subject “a clear conscience” (MEC Summer 2001, p. 4) about their consumption. This is a sentiment which is mirrored in how organic cotton is marketed by MEC as a specific product that will reflect the values of its members.

MEC actively links the purchase of certain products with the production of a moral and selfless subject. The co-op urges its members to imagine themselves as good and decent people, capable of restraining themselves against the vices of Western consumer culture. The focus on careful and critical selection of goods is significant. The repeated calls for cautious, rational, and nearly scientific forms of consumption shape how the MEC consumer is raced and gendered.

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<sup>56</sup> Numerous previous catalogues have focused on the superior design of MEC products and have worked to educate the membership on the superior design (MEC Summer 1989, p. 38; MEC Summer 1997, p. 59-61; MEC Winter 2007, p. 70-71), manufacturing (MEC Summer 1990, p. 41; MEC Summer 1997, p. 59-61; MEC Summer 2007, p. 83; MEC Winter 2007, p. 59), and gear testing (MEC Summer 1989, p. 38) undertaken by the co-op.

The MEC consumer is invited to *consume* on the basis of critical and careful evaluation unlike a feminized consumer who irrationally *shops*. The pleasure does not stem from the task of shopping. Rather, for MEC members, the elation stems from the contribution shopping makes to the preservation of wilderness. Consumption by MEC members is thus not for oneself, but for the greater good of the earth. It is a selfless act, an analytical act which demonstrates one's knowledge of complex problems. It could be argued that MEC promotes a form of neoliberal citizenship through consumption (Johnston, 2008; Miller and Rose, 1997; Rose, 1999). Rose (1999) explains that "the primary economic image offered to the modern citizen is not that of producer but of the consumer...through consumption we are urged to shape our lives by the use of our purchasing power" (p. 103). Rose addresses how neoliberal citizens are prompted to engage politically through consumption while Johnston (2008) argues that consumer activism is increasingly presented as the solution of environmental destruction. She writes: "as states deferred responsibility for environmental regulations, consumers became increasingly responsible to self-manage environmental risks through consumption decisions" (p. 246). In MEC texts, I argue the language of neoliberal citizenship is employed suggesting that good consumers, such as the conscientious consumer subject, can preserve the wilderness for everyone.

Similar to the calculating adventurer discussed in the previous chapter, the conscientious consumer distinguishes himself by his ability to analyze and understand the needs of the wilderness. The conscientious consumer, as with the calculating adventurer, mirrors the engineer (Mohanram, 1999, p. 8-10), a subject who uses scientific knowledge in order to evaluate, compare, and reach informed conclusions through carefully thought-out processes. But there is more to the conscientious consumer than his reliance on analytical thinking; the qualities of this

subject extend beyond the ability to critically consume into the sort of moral attributes demonstrated through restraint.

By purchasing only when necessary and by willingly choosing to shop at a store that provides a limited selection of styles and colours (because this is advantageous for the wilderness), consumers demonstrate considerable moral character. Dyer (1997) emphasizes how restraint is one of the overwhelming qualities associated with whiteness. The ability to withstand temptation and to resist the urge to give in to sources of pleasure (from food, from sex, from material possessions) is one of the hallmarks of the morality attributed to whiteness. From reading the MEC catalogues, the ability to restrain oneself from over-consuming or uncritically consuming is linked with how its members are believed to possess certain values. The conscientious consumer puts the preservation of wilderness ahead of one's personal pleasures.<sup>57</sup> MEC readily acknowledges that the preservation of wilderness is important – as otherwise there will be no place for outdoor recreation to take place. However, the BTC and the BPNP spend more time pointing to how the preservation of wilderness, as accomplished through critical consumption, is a selfless act serving the interest of the broader public.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy runs a full spectrum of donation programs and opportunities to contribute to the preservation of wilderness. These programs are clearly intended to preserve various properties along the trail corridor and ensure the most scenic and pleasurable route is secured. Encouraging members to donate to various initiatives, such as “Burn the Mortgage” or “Footsteps,” is based on what can be done for the wilderness through these programs and what can be done for you. These programs offer a way for Bruce Trail members to

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<sup>57</sup> The preservation of wilderness, although presumed to be a selfless act is often very much a self interested process. Further than just preserving a place that is for one's leisure; the preservation of wilderness is also integral to shaping how outdoor recreationists are understood. In chapters 3 and 4 (*The Transformed Traveler* and *The Wilderness Citizen*) this is explored in far greater detail.



imagine themselves as particular subjects. For example, in one promotion, the BTC indicates that they are seeking a “white knight (or *Conservation Investor*)” to purchase and hold properties for the BTC until they can afford to buy them (BTC Spring 2007, p. 9). There are layers of implied meaning in this invitation to BTC members to consume as a demonstration of their character. To begin, the term “white knight” suggests rescue and salvation as well as selflessness. Using white as a descriptor which references goodness is one of the key ways in which white people are racialized as morally advanced (Dyer, 1997). Similarly, notions of selflessness and rescue in this conservation initiative rely on how the links between Christian morality and the figure of Jesus (symbolic of sacrifice and goodness) have been used in the discursive production of whiteness. This is perhaps most evident in the colonial encounter in North America where the acquisition and possession of land was rationalized on the basis of racial entitlement. White settlers who embarked on adventures and drew the frontier into their possession were able to do so by asserting that native peoples inadequately used or even misused the land (Dyer, 1997; see also Lawrence, 2002; Razack, 2002; Spence, 1999). The idea of safeguarding the land from those who might misuse it, the charging orders of this “white knight,” bears remarkable resemblance to how settlers wielded the legal construct of *terra nullius*. The conservation investor, as an emblem of altruism and ethical environmentalism, racializes the conscientious consumer as unquestionably white.

Further to this, the BTC allays its members’ concerns that donations towards trail conservation are anything less than selfless. The white knight of conservation might trigger recollections of the colonial history of wilderness preservation that was self serving such as the development of game reserves in North America and Africa for white hunters (Adams and Mulligan, 2003b; Alston and Brown, 1993; Loo, 2006; Magome and Murombedzi, 2003;

Murombedzi, 2003). The BTC assures readers their task is different; it is selfless and not motivated out of conquest or greed but out of an interest in preserving something unique for the greater good. When the BTC changed its name from the Bruce Trail Association to the Bruce Trail Conservancy, one of the key concerns was how the organization and its various campaigns would be interpreted by outsiders. The name change is explained in this way “[i]t says to potential funders...that we’re not just a self serving recreation organization that wants their money so we can go for a leisurely stroll or a vigorous hike. We want to save what the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) consider one of the biospheres in the world that needs protection” (BTC Fall 2007, p. 3). Evidently, to pursue one’s interests – to save the wilderness because it is the site of one’s leisure and source of pleasure - is inadequate. The BTC invites members to conceptualize the act of donating as serving the interests of the collective rather than the individual. Perhaps more importantly, the BTC embarks to save a Canadian wilderness that is acknowledged internationally as worthy of preservation.

The impetus to save the earth is thus not linked to what is scientifically necessary for our survival, rather MEC and the BTC focus heavily on the morality of this task. Buying organic cotton or donating to a fundraiser is acknowledged as the right thing to do. Different than the calculating adventurer, the conscientious consumer is produced through assertions of superior moral values drawn from ethical and responsible consumption rather than demonstrations of scientific knowledge and expertise. Focusing on the inherent goodness of this subject and the altruistic practices he engages in secures a claim to innocence and respectability. The white knight, the avenger of the wilderness’ pillage and destruction, is understood as outside of the troubling practices and ideologies that have led to the demise of wilderness. In contrast to the selfishness embedded in consumer culture or the foolishness of unthinking outdoor

recreationists, the conscientious consumer takes great care to ensure that his choices are sound and his motives are honourable. It is through this connection to morality and virtue that the way this subject is racialized becomes apparent. Dyer (1997) explains how notions of Christian morality, in particular an emphasis on selflessness and restraint come to be attributed to whiteness. The wilderness, how it is understood and how one interacts with it, has been used of as a marker of race (Lawrence, 2002; Phillips, 1997). In the crafting of the conscientious consumer, the wilderness has first been presented as endangered by the behaviours of unethical individuals and a morally bankrupt culture. Consumption is then presented as a viable, even preferred means of addressing the issue of environmental degradation. Consumption is framed as a desirable set of practices because of what it will do for those outdoor recreationists who imagine themselves as conscientious consumers more than what it might necessarily offer to the preservation of wilderness.

It is not surprising that MEC and the BTC are interested in motivating their respective memberships to see themselves as conscientious consumers. MEC is a consumer cooperative – the primary means by which members engage with the co-op is through shopping. Similarly, the BTC requires funds to secure the optimal route for the trail. What is compelling is how consumption is imagined as a political project that can rescue the wilderness, even as consumption as a cultural obsession is critiqued. Further, it is necessary to consider how the invitation to consume as a form of political engagement is linked to the BPNP given that examples of consumption in BPNP texts are limited.

From the examples drawn from the BTC and MEC, I observe clear demonstrations of how this subject, the conscientious consumer, is racialized. As with the calculating adventurer, the implications for what race discourses are reproduced through outdoor recreation texts are

troubling. I now turn to the effects of this subject on future forms of political and environmental action in outdoor recreation, not to suggest that the racialization of this subject is without consequence. Rather, I consider how the production of the consumer subject is consequential both in what it reveals about power relations but also for what it forecloses in terms of social change. Further, I am interested in how purposeful this subject is for shaping the environmental ethos and activism needed to effectively address environmental destruction. Additionally, I examine how the practices of this ethical shopper correspond with other practices and political sensibilities advocated by the BTC, MEC and the BPNP. Specifically, I address what is imagined as politically possible as a result of seeing ourselves as conscientious consumers.

#### What happened while we were out shopping?

It is perhaps redundant to point out that advocating for consumption as salve for the issue of overconsumption is profoundly problematic. Unmistakably, the call from MEC and the BTC to implore its members to shop or make donations in order to address environmental destruction is intended to appeal to the cultural imperative to shop. It also nourishes the growing trend towards identity construction through shopping. The shift towards discussions of lifestyles, rather than ascribed identities (such as gender, race and class), entails new means of identity formation including the making of the self through consumption of particular products. The rush towards “green” in all aspects of our culture (from hybrid cars to organic pet food to Coca Cola’s PlantBottle) demonstrate how environmentalist subjectivities are increasingly being understood to be about how one shops more than one’s political orientation or whether one shops at all.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Interesting, corresponding with the prolific number of green products is an increased fascination with those living ‘off the grid.’ Rather than hijacking a whaling boat or the proverbial chaining oneself to a tree being the cultural reference for extreme environmentalism, to build a windmill or grow one’s food is the new hallmark of being just a bit ‘out there.’

The conscientious consumer is also presented as a subjectivity that is universal. The only quality for inclusion is presumed to be a desire to care for the wilderness and to make discerning choices about how to spend one's money. In the invitation to consume and to build one's identity on the basis of consumption, the material access to this subjectivity is never questioned. The explicit linking of consumer choice with identity-building and autonomy while eschewing notions of collectivity or society are key aspects of neoliberalism (Luxton, 2010). The increased expense of organic items or the financial toll of leaving a "legacy" for the Bruce Trail might pose are framed as sacrifices which outdoor recreationists can and will make in the service of saving wilderness. Presumably, the choices being made are about what guides one's moral compass rather than a matter of income. The emphasis on choice, again a cornerstone of consumer culture and neoliberal discourse, reveals how deeply classed and racialized this subject position and its discursive and material underpinnings are. The extent to which class precludes who is able to bask in the virtuous glow that this consumer subjectivity offers is not acknowledged by MEC, the BTC or the BPNP. Rather, these institutions espouse that the "choices" made by outdoor recreationists are best interpreted as resulting from a sound moral code; this corresponds to neoliberal claims about the equality of the market where all individuals can extend their influence and find opportunities (Luxton, 2010). In short, participation in conscientious consumption is based on one's individual strengths and capacity for selflessness rather than on class, race or gender.

The emphasis on individuality and choice in the production of consumer subjectivity is not altogether surprising. Linking individuality with choice corresponds with how neoliberal citizens are prompted to produce themselves as particular sorts of subjects. Rose (1999) explains how "each individual must render his or her life as meaningful as if it were the outcome of

individual choices made in the furtherance of a biographical project of self-realization” (p. ix).

What Rose points to is how choice, in particular with regards to the undertaking of particular self-regulatory practices, is repeatedly emphasized because it is the means by which subjects can produce themselves as ethical subjects. The effect of these forms of self realization is a gradual erasure of notions of collective forms of identity (such as race or gender) and the pursuit of morality, or justice for the society more broadly.

Outdoor recreation texts frame environmental destruction; they illustrate the effects of what scholars such as Rose (1999), Luxton (2010) and Johnston (2008) attribute to neoliberal discourse. Ecological devastation is framed by MEC, the BTC and the BPNP as the result of poor decision-making and selfish actions. The implication is that the devastation of our natural environment will come to affect us all. As environmental devastation is pushed to the forefront of public consciousness, one of the key discourses is that belief that everyone will experience the consequences of this destruction in similar ways. Concern about environmental devastation is employed as a means to create a global community: to suggest that there are core issues, concerns and values that must bind us together as a human race. This conceptualization of wilderness destruction erases the very different ways in which ecological damage is already affecting poor and racialized communities (Alston & Brown, 1993; Bullard, 1993a, 1993b; Shiva, 1997). Further, it ignores how on a global scale, developing countries are asked to shoulder the burden of global environmental devastation, while the developing world is asked to “green” their lifestyles (Johnston, 2008; Maniates, 2001; Shiva, 1997).<sup>59</sup> Further, it would be naïve to posit that all in the global north are equally privileged and that the effects of ecological devastation are evenly experienced. Research suggests that poor, working class and people of

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<sup>59</sup> In the 2010 United Nations Climate Change conference in Copenhagen, this was a central area of dispute. African nations were at the forefront of rejecting sanctions against developing countries and pointing to how the global south is being told to shoulder the burden of environmental devastation.

colour in the global north bear a disproportionate burden for the damage done to the earth (Bullard, 1993b). Bullard (1993b) has termed this “environmental racism,” pointing to how the effects of ecological devastation are unevenly felt and that discussion of environmental issues must coincide with questions of social justice. The conscientious eco-consumer in these outdoor recreation texts stands in sharp contrast to the assertions of scholars concerned with environmental racism; the production of this subject as universal and as responding to the sources of environmental destruction deliberately elides questions of race, class and gender inequality.<sup>60</sup>

The disingenuous universality of both wilderness destruction and the production of the conscientious consumer is one area of concern and it is worthwhile to attend to the competing discourses at work here. Additionally, I examine the consequences of these discursive arrangements. If we imagine a world where this subject and this version of wilderness are understood as true – what is made possible?

One of the key features of the conscientious consumer is the extent to which his or her means of political engagement is individualized. This consumer spends time evaluating various products and making particular selections on the basis of what is important to him. He then enjoys the rewards of contributing and is read as a caring and selfless. There is little impetus for the conscientious consumer to band together with others; his process and project are undertaken alone. Pursuing individual acts of consumption, though with an interest in preserving wilderness, the conscientious consumer is what Johnston (2008) identifies as a “hybrid citizen-consumer” (p. 232). Johnston explains how this hybrid subject works to make seemingly antithetical discourses

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<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, this is not necessarily what members of these organizations indicate a desire for – there are moments where there is a keen interest in taking social *and* environmental responsibility for the production of goods and for the leisure experiences desired. However, somehow, a desire for social justice was interpreted as a call for primarily different methods of shopping.

of citizenship and consumerism appear logically interconnected.<sup>61</sup> I observe that with MEC and the BTC, it is possible to shop or donate without having to see or speak to another person. The connection this consumer might share with fellow shoppers is esoteric at best and his ties to producers of goods are even more abstract. The links that are presumably shared, with other citizen-consumers, are based purely on the values embedded within an individual's heart or mind. This distant and individualized form of political engagement is troubling and the consequences of embodying this subject may have real implications for what is politically possible in the environmental movement.

The conscientious consumer and his practices are worrisome because of the focus on individualized responses to complex problems. MEC, the BTC and the BPNP frame wilderness destruction as stemming from poor individual practices that are cause for alarm. To a lesser extent, systemic issues are addressed. Maniates (2001) is deeply critical of positioning environmental degradation as stemming from the poor behaviour and decision making by morally bankrupt or shortsighted individuals; he refers to this as the “*individualization of responsibility*” (p. 33, emphasis in original). Maniates argues that if environmental destruction is presented as the result of individualized behaviours then individualized responses are rationalized.<sup>62</sup> This is not to suggest that individual practices are without consequence and that as individuals we have no need to be accountable for the choices we make. But Maniates insists that we see both the limits and the risks of this type of response. He speculates that this type of environmentalism “appears to be apolitical and non-confrontational, and thus ripe for success. Such an approach is anything but, insofar as it works to constrain our imagination about what is

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<sup>61</sup> Miller and Rose (1997) argue that one of the effects of consumer subjects is to “offer new ethics and techniques of living that do not set self-gratification and civility in opposition” (p. 32). It is unsurprising then that outdoor recreation texts frame shopping (self-gratification) and environmental salvation (civility) as possibly congruent.

<sup>62</sup> Maniates' argument is unquestionably a challenge to the pervasiveness of neo-liberal discourse and how it has infused environmental politics.



possible and what is worth working towards” (p. 50). Maniates draws attention to what implications individualized practices – such as those attributed to the conscientious consumer – have on our collective imagination. By turning outdoor recreationists’ attention to strategic forms of consumption, little room is left for other types of engagement. While busily researching how our dollars might best be spent in the service of protecting the wilderness, minimal effort is put towards strategizing about other contributions that might be made. Collective responses that address systemic causes of wilderness devastation are left off the agenda of MEC, the BTC and the BPNP’s version of environmentalism and environmental ethics. The possibility of buying a solution is, as Maniates anticipated, successful because it is familiar and comfortable for the imagined audience of these outdoor recreation texts: white, middle and upper class recreationists, both those who desire to bring about change without any inconvenience to their daily lives and those who have been unable to imagine other means of engagement. Subsequently, MEC and BTC members and BPNP visitors are not prompted to think about any sort of political will and action is required to address environmental destruction in more in-depth and nuanced ways. The desire for environmental activism is pacified with consumer activism.

Maniates warns of a shift towards apolitical and individualized responses, something well evidenced in the consumer subjectivity produced in these outdoor recreation texts. However, it is noteworthy that this consumer subject exists alongside other individualized responses to environmental destruction. It is through these parallel behaviours that it is possible to understand how the BPNP participates in shaping what sorts of responses are presumably necessary for addressing wilderness destruction. Although the BPNP offers limited examples of opportunities to consume as a means of coping with ecological destruction, there is an abundance of other individualized approaches which they advocate. These approaches function along the same lines

as the consumer activism endorsed by MEC and the BTC by suggesting that solving the issue of wilderness destruction can be addressed through well thought-out and well-intended practices by virtuous recreationists. In each newsletter, the BPNP carefully lays out what sorts of interactions are expected of visitors. Fires are to be carefully managed in designated pits; fire regulations are to be adhered to. Flowers are not to be picked. Animals and birds must not to be fed. Hikers are to stay on the trails. Campers are to ensure that all wastes are deposited in appropriate locations. These practices, echoed by MEC and the BTC, are presented as necessary for the preservation of wilderness. MEC explicitly names these practices as vital to preserving the wilderness for all in stating “wild areas belong to everyone and everything” (MEC Winter 1995, p. 30-31; see also MEC partnership with Leave No Trace Canada in MEC Summer 2006, p. 44-45, Appendix G, Image 4,5). The BPNP visitors’ rules is also similar to the BTC’s trail user guide as they emphasize careful and considerate practices that outdoor recreationists ought to engage in to demonstrate their commitment to preserving wilderness (BTC Spring 1988, p. 22). These behaviour codes are often presented and explained as self-evident, straightforward and developed as a method of preserving nature, rather than as methods of regulating subjects.<sup>63</sup>

These codes of conduct, much like the consumer subjectivity produced herein, once again, reinforce the idea that individual practices are the most logical method of coping with environmental devastation. Political activism is framed as a discrete, self-motivated and individually undertaken venture. This model of environmental activism corresponds with rather than contradicts many of the central assertions of the Western consumer culture. An overemphasis on individuality and identity formation through lifestyle, considerable significance afforded to the meaning of one’s consumption habits and the presumed link between agency, power and consumption or lifestyle choices are some of the key aspects of consumer culture

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<sup>63</sup> See Hermer’s (2002) analysis of regional and national park rules as forms of governmentality.

(Horne, 2006; Lury, 1996). These qualities are mirrored in the consumer activism and the other lifestyle choices that outdoor recreationists might make. At the core of all of these practices is the unquestioned belief that it is our own personal choices, behaviours and interests that will be most meaningful in defining us as people and that the sort of subjects that we will become is of our own choosing. This pursuit of becoming an ethical subject through careful self-critique and self-management is at the crux of neoliberal citizenship. Rose (1999) insists that it is in these quests for “self realization” that it is possible to observe how subjects are, under the guise of freedom, embedded in and complicit in neoliberal forms of governance.

*Not itemized on the receipt*

Celia Lury (1996), in her text *Consumer Culture*, argues that: “the actuality of consumption fails to live up the dream or the fantasy. This persistent cycle of pleasurable expectation and disappointment explains the never-ending, insatiable character of modern consumption, why people continue to shop until they drop” (p. 77). In the consumer activism detailed by the BTC and MEC, a similar cycle is evident. New and more ethical products and promotions are constantly developed, each providing a more detailed and nuanced assurance that this purchase will make a difference. Outdoor recreationists buy into these promises because of what they offer to them: a chance to be understood as good and moral subjects. The heightened anxiety of outdoor recreationists about the consequences that their actions might be having on the wilderness can only be partially and temporarily quelled through consumption.

With outdoor recreationists lodged into a cycle of trying to assert their claim to a respectable and responsible subject position, there is little chance that other forms of environmental activism will be undertaken. Maniates insists that this cycle is a key issue for environmentalism, as a social movement, arguing that as we become attached to the far more

appealing, individualized and consumer responses, the probability of conceptualizing and actualizing collective, systemic responses becomes vanishingly small. Thus, the greatest potential consequence of the production of the conscientious consumer is not what it enables but what it forecloses: actions made improbable, questions left unasked and political challenges not undertaken. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the claims made by the BTC. In making decisions about the future of the organization, the BTC asserts that they are facing “new financial, political and social realities” (BTC Summer 2000, p. 6) and that there is little choice but to adapt to “new” arrangements. What is immediately evident in this discussion is that the BTC has no choice but to become accustomed to these shifts; they do not have any means of resistance. Further, the assumption is that the membership and the BTC itself have not been central to enabling and authoring these new realities. There is little sense of our collective power both to actualize and resist these arrangements. We merely respond to these ubiquitous, external forces. Our only area to exercise power is in the realm of the personal, choosing our clothes, our food and our leisure practices.

I believe that both MEC and the BTC, as member driven organizations, need not continue to adhere to this model of environmental activism. It is possible for collective interest to lead to shifts in how members might come to think of themselves as political actors. Subsequently, although it is unlikely that consumption will be removed as a political strategy, it may not be presented as the sole means of engagement available to outdoor recreationists. The BPNP, as an extension of the state, is more likely to shift its focus at the behest of political motivation from citizen outcry. Should Parks Canada be imagined by citizens as tied less to leisure and more to research and innovation in wilderness preservation, both within and outside of the parks, it is probable that the BPNP could begin to make demands of a collective and systemic nature rather

than hoping for individual goodwill. Thus, even though the impetus to consume appears to be the only possible solution, the structure of these organizations suggests that there are other options. It is not necessary for outdoor recreation to take up only apolitical and comforting stances in an attempt to address environmental destruction. It is possible, and with hope, even plausible, that these organizations might be at the forefront of insisting on more radical and diverse forms of political engagement from the outdoor recreation community.

In this chapter, there is a key question that has yet to be asked: why save the wilderness? It might seem immediately obvious that, if we don't save the wilderness, we compromise our ability to survive. We risk our own security in failing to protect our access to clean water, air and food. Surely, this is cause for alarm. We need to extend this question to consider what else we need wilderness for. Given the centrality of wilderness for defining Canadian identity, it forces consideration of how wilderness is employed in the discursive production of citizen subjects. It is necessary then to ask: what sorts of national myths and fantasies are embedded in wilderness and why do we seek to rescue them? What do we need the wilderness for? What will it help us to understand about those who sojourn through it? In the two chapters that follow, I grapple with these questions in order to make sense of what we need from the wilderness. The task of the chapters, *The Transformed Traveler* and *The Wilderness Citizen* is to look closely at how MEC, the BTC and the BPNP present the wilderness as a site where we can come to understand ourselves as particular sorts of subjects. These final two chapters illuminate what exactly wilderness promises allowing for another reading of the perceived urgency of its preservation. Perhaps, in saving the wilderness, it is not simply survival that is ensured but the ability for outdoor recreationists to assert themselves as good and respectable subjects.

## Chapter 5: The Transformed Traveler

“civilization created wilderness” (Nash, 2001, p. xi)

“appreciation of wilderness began in the cities” (Nash, 2001, p. 44)

“All paths lead nowhere, so it is important to choose a path that has heart. *Carlos Castaneda*”  
(MEC Summer 1996, p. 29)

The importance of saving nature is given considerable attention by Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) and the Bruce Peninsula National Park (BPNP). The outdoor recreation texts I examine indicate that wilderness’s threatened state is cause for alarm. In the preceding chapter, the *Conscientious Consumer* engages in responsible and ethical forms of consumption to try and mitigate wilderness destruction. I traced the importance of saving wilderness in order to ensure that outdoor recreation in it continues to be possible. While the conscientious consumer strategically shops to save the wilderness, its preservation is evidently important for reasons beyond our material survival. Watching consumer activism seep into outdoor recreation, in this chapter I propose that it is necessary to pause and consider why precisely wilderness is needed. I investigate how representations of wilderness are used to make claims about the subjects of outdoor recreation. Here again, I illustrate the constitutive relationship between how wilderness is represented and the production of outdoor recreation subjects.

In this chapter, I foreground the construction of wilderness as sublime and restorative. I argue that representations of wilderness as sublime appear true even as they emerge in the same texts as the dangerous wilderness and threatened wilderness previously discussed. The production of different representations of wilderness in these outdoor recreation texts demonstrates how Foucault (1978) conceptualized discourse as multiple, competing and at times contradictory (see also Davies, 2000; Mills, 2003). Wilderness is produced in myriad ways, each

time appearing to be authentic, coherent and logical. However, while I point to the multiplicity and complexity of wilderness discourses, I do not suggest that these are all weighted equally and afforded comparable attention. Subtle shifts occur in the discursive production of wilderness, making particular “wildernesses” more desirable and acknowledged as “true.” As with the production of wilderness as threatened, its production as sublime holds enormous cultural currency. To suggest wilderness is anything but peaceful and awe-inspiring in the context of outdoor recreation is an affront to collective consciousness. Even nature that should be feared, dangerous rock ledges or large predatory mammals, is afforded profuse if anxiety-invoking wonderment. Wilderness has become a place where comfort, restoration and insight are sought. We come to nature to marvel at it and with a hope that something of the experience will rub off on us. I describe the subject of the sublime wilderness as the *Transformed Traveler*, signaling how this subject experiences personal transformation through travel in the wilderness.

After considering how the sublime wilderness is created, I detail what contact with it will result in for travelers. More so than the conscientious consumer, the production of the transformed traveler is dependent on material interaction with wilderness in order to assert claims to goodness, respectability and innocence. The conscientious consumer does not require actual encounters with the wilderness in order to be understood as a good and moral subject. Rather it was merely through his behaviours and his indicative objects (such as organic cotton t-shirts) that he is read in this way. In contrast, the transformed traveler is explicitly tied to the space of wilderness. Perhaps then, the need for wilderness and the need to preserve it from threat and erasure are more urgent for the transformed traveler. He is deeply invested in ensuring the preservation of this wilderness, as it is the sole means by which he can assert himself as a respectable subject. At the same time, the subjects of each of these chapters, as with the

wilderness discourses bump up against one another, overlap and at times, work collectively and at other times in competition. The transformed traveler might simultaneously be a conscientious consumer.

I open this chapter by outlining some emblematic wilderness images from the MEC, BTC and BPNP texts. I describe the qualities attributed to wilderness through these representations and the types of experiences wilderness is expected to provide. I then move to examine the conduct expected in the sublime wilderness. The sublime wilderness, when engaged with appropriately through the prescribed practices, offers the opportunity to become particular sorts of subjects. The *Transformed Traveler* is restored, rejuvenated, even redeemed through his wilderness excursions. He sheds what ails him, emerging a good and moral subject. I deliberately refer to the transformed traveler as male at the outset of this chapter. Many of the practices espoused for this subject centre around altering how men have encountered the wilderness and much of the discursive work is focused on the restoration and transformation of outdoor recreation masculinities.

### Sublime Wilderness

According to the Bruce Trail Conservancy, “part of the reason we go hiking is to experience nature and wildlife” (BTC Spring 1988, p. 12). This assertion, which appears as a commonsense statement, begs the question – what will be experienced? How exactly should we experience nature and wildlife? What is interesting about this statement from the BTC is that readers are assumed to understand that the type of nature experiencing referenced here is very specific. The experience of hiking in nature is neither intended simply as a mode of transporting oneself to an ideal hunting spot, nor is it about subjecting oneself to something terrifying or unsettling, as one might experience a horror film. What is embedded in this claim about



experiencing the wilderness is that it will be a pleasurable and positive occurrence. The possibility of experiencing nature offers something so enticing that outdoor recreationists willingly endure any number of inconveniences and discomforts<sup>64</sup> in hope of a moment of gratification. What wilderness provides then is a truly profound and desirable experience for outdoor recreationists.

Encounters with wilderness are carefully scripted in the outdoor recreation texts that I examined. How it is possible to experience the wilderness is shaped by the terms of engagement made available. Throughout the MEC catalogues, BTC magazines and BPNP materials, a series of adjectives coach readers into how to understand the wilderness. There are many images that correspond with these descriptors; yet, it is the words employed that help to structure how the viewer will “see” wilderness. The wilderness has been described as “breathtaking” (BTC Fall 1989, p. 8), “magical...amazing...spectacular” (BPNP, *Life on the Edge*) and “priceless” (MEC Summer 1989, p. 44). Particular wilderness features are explained in similarly euphoric language; for example, the BPNP refers to “captivating views” (BPNP 2001, p. 8) and “stunning scenery” (BPNP 2003, p. 15) along the trail. The BTC describes the Niagara Escarpment as a “natural masterpiece” (BTC Summer 2004, p. 8). These accounts of the wilderness are framed to elicit a specific type of response from viewers and readers. By describing vistas and scenes as breathtaking or priceless, readers are unlikely to conclude that these scenes are trite and uninteresting. Further, these sorts of adjectives are replete in the texts. The repetition of these phrases makes other ways of imagining and describing nature seem illogical or disruptive. Truthfulness is emphasized through repetition. Mills (2004) points to how one of the central features of discourse is the task of shaping the range of possible future statements that can be

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<sup>64</sup> Mosquito bites, black fly bites, skunk sprays, blisters, sun burns, sun stroke, dehydration, scrapes, sprains, disrupted sleep, damp boots, poison ivy, frostbite, etc.

made. As readers encounter particular turns of phrase over and again, other terms or descriptions are less likely to be considered. To conceive of wilderness in any other way becomes nonsensical, even heretical.

There is no shortage of wilderness images intended to convey restfulness and wonderment in texts from MEC, the BTC and the BPNP. I begin by looking at images that do not include people examining mountain vistas, scenic locales and intimate portraits of flora and fauna. I then move on to consider the images that include people – to observe what the addition of a human subject does in shaping how the viewer should look at the wilderness. I then explore how the sublime wilderness is often contrasted with the city.

As I turn to examine a series of images, I want to pause to re-articulate some key methodological insights I have drawn from visual culture theorists to guide my analysis. First and foremost, analyses of visual culture seek to unpack meaning or to consider how representation works. Looking at the images from outdoor recreation texts, the key task I undertake is to consider how the meaning of wilderness is conveyed. Second, I am compelled by scholars such as Hall (1997), Berger (1972), Lutz and Collins (1993) and Rose (2001) who insist that analyses of images is about the quest to understand and define ourselves. Lutz and Collins (1993) assert that images are identity making tools (p. 203). Similarly, Hall (1997), in his analysis of the “spectacle of the Other,” explains that representations of difference are central to how we understand ourselves. He goes on to argue that although gender or racial difference is often inconsequential, the process of representation infuses it with meaning. Third, analyses of visual culture are temporal and contingent readings which are unquestionably shaped by power relations, the reader of the images and the available terms of engagement (Berger, 1972). Fourth, my analysis of visual culture is concerned with the content of the images, rather than the process

of assembling and producing the images. I examine these outdoor recreation texts to seek out conventions, tropes or themes are presumed to be already familiar to readers. Further, I consider how the images are instructive to readers and point to what I read is being conveyed through the image. Throughout this first section of the chapter, I gesture to specific scholars whose work I incorporate in building my interpretations of these images.

*Empty wildernesses:*

*The vista*

Here I consider three types of empty (of humans) wilderness images. The first type of image is of large vistas of shorelines and mountains. MEC features dozens of mountain vistas. In the backdrop of numerous catalogues from the late 1980s and early 1990s, mountain scenes unfold behind smaller inset photos of boots, backpacks and other equipment and apparel.<sup>65</sup> Unlike professionally shot photos of packs or footwear, members typically submit these mountain scenes for inclusion in the catalogue. Often there is nothing specific about the mountain scene that grabs the attention of the viewer; these images serve as a background to the larger focal images that feature the products for members to peruse. These mountain scenes often include the glow of a sunrise or sunset. These images demonstrate the vastness, immense size and power of the mountains. Mountains are understood to be grand and impressive, symbols of strength and power. Although mountains are recognized as beautiful and awe-inspiring, their enormity invokes both reverence and fear (Stoddart, 2008). Mountaineering (a pastime that drove the development of MEC) is understood as a leisure interest of strong and powerful (and typically white and ruling class) men (Erickson, 2002; Stoddart, 2008). The inclusion of many

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<sup>65</sup> By the late 1990s, MEC abandons the use of background shots submitted by members amongst foreground professionally shot images of products. MEC members continue to submit photos however, the content of member submitted photos is now primarily of recreationists in wilderness (as opposed to empty wilderness scenes). Also, nearly all product pages have uniform coloured backgrounds with few shots of people in amongst products.

mountain vistas in MEC catalogues suggests that this type of landscape has relevance for members: that they see in it a desirable wilderness. The repetitive inclusion of images that highlight the size, danger and splendour of the mountains ensures that readers are familiar with how to read this landscape and feel appropriate responses. The mountainous images are also decidedly pristine; polluted mountain-scapes are never included.

In the BPNP's *Life on the Edge*, outdoor recreationists encounter a rather different vista of shorelines and forests.<sup>66</sup> In this video, instrumental music and narration coach viewers on how to immerse themselves in and interpret the Bruce Peninsula wilderness. These conventions of nature films prompt the viewer to see wilderness as a place of wonderment and awe (Wilson, 1991). As previously mentioned, the film's narrator, Ethan Meleg describes wilderness as "magical", "amazing" and "spectacular". The long pauses between descriptions provide viewers with the opportunity to engross themselves in the wilderness. Long panning shots suggest the incredible length of shorelines, height of cliffs and expanses of water. The wilderness of the Upper Bruce Peninsula is seemingly never ending, a long, tangled and bumpy spread of trees, rocks and pristine water. These shots invite the viewer in to experience the impressive and vast scenes. The shoreline vistas differ from mountainscapes in terms of the anticipated effect on viewers. While mountains may invoke awe and admiration for their grandeur and danger, the lapping shorelines and stretches of green forest convey calm, quiet and restfulness. The scenes are welcoming, and many of the panning shots include short pauses on particular surroundings such as cliff edges, and on unique bits of flora such as the region's celebrated orchids. The film teaches the viewer that these are wilderness features worthy of lengthy appreciation.

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<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, they also encounter wilderness in the Visitor Centre when watching this film. Having one's wilderness experience in a darkened cinema might seem antithetical. Yet, it is in fact quite practical for the BPNP to direct park visitors into this type of wilderness experience given some pragmatic concerns the park is coping with including lack of revenue (access to the film requires paying the Visitor Centre entry fee) and overuse of park space (specifically trails in and around the Grotto).

### *The scenic spot*

The large and expansive vista is one of the more rare types of wilderness images represented in these outdoor recreation texts. One of the most common types of wilderness image is of a smaller scene, for example, a waterfall, a lakeshore or a snowy forest path. The BTC magazine is replete with images of this sort; I look closely at two images to see how they work to convey meaning about the wilderness. I selected these two covers because they encompass wildernesses that are frequently featured in the BTC magazine: waterfalls and forests. These images are of commonplace wilderness scenes that members have likely encountered along the trail; unlike the enormous and stunning vista, these scenic spot images are wilderness places into which members are likely and easily able to venture.

The first scene is on the cover of the Spring 2005 issue (see Appendix H, Image 1). The cover is of a deciduous forest with dark trunks and bright leafy greens hanging down. Growing up to meet the hanging leaves is an abundance of small purple and white flowers that cover the forest floor. The cover page, aside from the title header, includes only one subtitle “Spring Thoughts”. This scene prompts readers to gaze at the wilderness through specific mental and emotional lenses. The minimal text on the front cover makes plain the desire for viewers to see this flowered forest as simple, pristine and perhaps above all else best left to a moment of quiet reflection. The subtitle “Spring Thoughts” instructs the viewer about where to direct his mental energy and what is deserving of attention at this time of year. Berger (1972) and Rose (2001) both point to the importance of captioning in shaping how images are read. The minimal title instructs viewers to associate this scene with the spring season and with thoughtfulness and reflection. This is a scene that warrants careful and specific types of reflective thought. Should the text on this cover have read “Poison Ivy: Identification Tips,” the plethora of white and

purple flowers would be perceived as unwelcome camouflage for the dreaded itch-inducing poison ivy. This scene would be a veritable sea of unpleasant possibilities best avoided at all costs.

The subtitle given makes certain readings of this image possible. Examining this image, I observe the stillness of the leaves and flowers as possible indication of a windless day. The absence of birds, animals, people or human presence suggests a profound quietness. The forest envisioned here is calm, lush and inviting. This soothing forest is a place of stillness where outdoor recreationists can take in the greens, whites and purples of the foliage and turn their attention to nature's beauty. I argue that this quiet, flowered forest is a place for reflection and restoration; it is uncomplicated, pleasurable and easy. Berger (1972) and Hall (1997) claim that interpretations of visual culture rely on cultural and social conventions already made familiar to readers. For example, flowers, themselves inconsequential, become symbolic of particular emotions. Red roses given on Valentines' Day symbolize (hetero)sexual and romantic love. Flower arrangements at gravesites are gestures of remembrance and mourning. The quiet forest scene in this image functions as a peaceful and reflective place because it draws on previous representations of windless, flowered fields as places of calm. The soothing meadow is a core symbol of the nature ethos and imagery espoused by renowned American naturalists Thoreau and Muir. The iconic meadow of Yosemite National Park is lavished with praise and adoration by Muir as a site of spiritual and mental retreat (Nash, 2001; Olwig, 1996). Still, serene forest and meadow scenes have become emblematic of wilderness's restorative potential. The BTC, by including this sort of image, does not challenge readers to interpret an image that is unusual. The audience it addresses is presumably familiar with the iconic qualities of this image and is urged to read it as a suitable place to retreat into one's spring thoughts.

The second BTC image calls on similar discursive conventions in how it represents wilderness. The cover is of a narrow, tall waterfall (BTC Spring 1996). This cover is somewhat different than the peaceful forest from the Spring 2005 issue. This waterfall is fairly dark, with the water the lightest and brightest focus in the image. The lush green mosses and ferns around the waterfall hang out from the rocky cliff edge. The water splashes vibrantly white against a black, rocky pool below. The cover also includes a number of orange subheadings: “A visit to Cape Croker” “Land Trusts: Considering the Options” and “Conservation Authorities: Spring and Summer Events”. These subtitles, visually distinct from the image, do not reference the waterfall and I suggest are not particularly insightful in the reading of this image. This waterfall scene is not the same sort of quiet, still place as the flowered forest. The scene, although certainly not busy, highlights the active waterfall with the viewer able to imagine the constant sound of water running over and splashing into the rocky pool below. The drone of this wilderness scene is persistent yet inviting. Like the lapping of waves or the chatter of the forest birds and animals, this waterfall is the type of noise that is not loud and disruptive but comforting evidence that the wilderness is alive. As with the flowered forest, this waterfall image invites the viewer to see nature as a place of calm. The waterfall is not frightening or dangerous; it is enticing and soothing. There is a sense of stumbling across a scene that is both commonplace and unique: a place that is everywhere and yet seems to warrant a moment of pause and reflection. It is a site that invites “appreciation.” I argue it is possible to read this waterfall as site for wonderment and admiration because of the centrality of waterfalls in the discursive production of wilderness as sublime. As with the flowered forest and the soothing meadow, the waterfall became symbolic of a marvelous and spiritual wilderness. The iconic waterfall of North America, Niagara Falls, was a key wilderness tourist destination that exemplifies the production

of wilderness as sublime (Jasen, 1995; Nash, 2001; Spirn, 1996). Given the familiarity of Niagara Falls and its interpretation as a place to gaze spellbound at the wilderness, it is unsurprising that the BTC is able to employ waterfall images as markers of an empty and admirable wilderness.

### *The Close-up*

While the vista might be impressive and the scenic spot beautiful and inviting, there is a third type of wilderness portrait that is prominently featured in outdoor recreation texts. Both the BTC and the BPNP include numerous close-up shots of various flora and fauna. MEC includes minimal close up images with occasional exceptions for unique wildflowers. The BTC and the BPNP regularly include zoomed-in shots of various animals including but not limited to raccoons, squirrels, owls, hawks, finches, bears, frogs, salamanders and a variety of plants with special emphasis on orchids.<sup>67</sup> These close-up shots (see Appendix J Image 1 for an example I contribute to this theme) serve to draw attention to the minutiae and fragility of the wilderness. Rather than simply seeing the vast landscape or its larger features, these close-ups entice the viewer to get closer to nature. Readers are invited into the intimacy of the squirrel hole and to watch a raindrop caress the edge of the orchid's leaves.

By looking at these zoom lens facilitated forays into the lives of Escarpment flora and fauna, there is something that ought to be felt. The viewer is being afforded a glimpse into the smallest and most intimate features of the wilderness that might otherwise be impossible to find. In looking at these images, we sense that we are experiencing something quite special, something that cannot be detected with the naked eye. These close-up portraits allow for a new level of admiration for the intricate details of a bird's feathers or a frog's webbed feet. The feather, the

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<sup>67</sup> The Upper Bruce Peninsula provides the habitat for 42 types of orchids; these flowers are given special prominence in publications and are a source of regional pride.



webbing and the underside of a mushroom demonstrate that wilderness is both big and small, but above all else, impressive and worthy of reflective looking. The close-up images appeal to one's childlike sensibilities by addressing a desire to see things up close and to understand how they work. This wonderment and fascination with nature are said to be integral to childhood, an assertion I examine more closely later in the chapter. Further, gazing with fascination at nature and to be inspired and intrigued by it is believed to be a cornerstone around which children's environmental ethos will be built (Wilson, 1991). Taking the time to engage with the prolific number of cute animals and delicate flowers is an invitation then to reconnect with our childlike ways of seeing or with the means by which outdoor recreationists learned to look at nature since childhood: in other words, it is to look without the cynicism or despair that taints the adult experience of the wilderness. For example, it is only possible to enjoy looking at the wings of the hawk if you fail to notice the garbage on the forest floor and ignore the chime of your Blackberry. The zoomed in image allows for a careful suspension of disbelief (see Berger, 1972 on camera angles). Outdoor recreationists are afforded, even if briefly, the possibility to look at something that is uncontaminated and to relish the chance to see it.

The three types of wilderness images I discuss each invite their viewers to look at nature in order to experience an emotional connection with the wilderness. The careful attention to developing particular viewing experiences structures how outdoor recreationists are supposed to look at nature (and in turn what they are expected to feel). These sentiments are made even more explicit when a human subject is included in the photo. To some extent, the empty photo provides the viewer with a moment of interpretation, perhaps allowing for a greater spectrum of possible readings of wilderness images. The inclusion of a human provides a clear example for outdoor recreationists to emulate foreclosing other imaginable ways of seeing the wilderness.

*A visitor to the sublime wilderness:*

There are myriad shots of MEC members, BTC members and BPNP visitors in the wilderness. I examine three images of outdoor recreationists in the wilderness; I look at two MEC images and one from the BTC. These images are useful for two reasons. First, by looking at the outdoor recreationist in the wilderness, it is possible to ascertain what qualities or meanings are invested in the wilderness. Through the bodies of these subjects, it is possible to understand how wilderness is constructed. Second, by examining images which include people, I am able to draw together the meanings invested in wilderness with the production of particular subjects. By examining these images, I am able to make claims about what sorts of practices and subjects are positioned as desirable. This section is followed by a discussion of wilderness's antithesis: the city. I then move to consider the acceptable practices which should be undertaken if the wilderness is to be understood as a beautiful, inspiring and restful place.

The first image is from the Summer 1987 MEC catalogue. Positioned between two rows of backpacks, the image is of a sole white, male hiker moving through a mountainous trail (p. 19). The snowy mountain peaks behind him, the large rocks at his feet and clouds in the background suggest a place without human presence, perhaps the idealized empty wilderness that is already very familiar to outdoor recreationists. He wears a plain white t-shirt and a cropped pair of pants, his bare arms and legs suggest a warm and pleasurable hike through the mountains. His journey is not one that is impeded by horrifying mountain climate conditions; rather, his minimal outfitting and carefree facial expression suggest that this hike is "a walk in the park." This photo is undoubtedly included in the catalogue because it is presumed to appeal to MEC's audience. This image and the surrounding backpacks function in much the same way that conventional advertising might. This image envisions a person and an experience that are

believed to be desirable to MEC members; the image works on the notion of what Berger (1972) would see as “envy.” Members look at this image and earnestly yearn for the opportunity to walk through this sun splashed mountain scene; their access to it is through the purchase of the adjacent backpacks. However, it is the possibility of finding this experience worthy of envy which signals how wilderness is understood. In this picture, the wilderness encountered is a site of pleasure, of carefree leisure. The wilderness is produced as a place where arms are swung in the sunshine, where toothy smiles are abundant and worries about tomorrow are left aside. While evidently it took some effort to get to this location, the pleasurable experience and joy it offers is substantial (perhaps far outweighing the inconveniences of getting there).

A later MEC cover shot (Summer 2006; Appendix G, Image 2) exhibits another white, male outdoor recreationist having an emotional interaction with the wilderness. In this 2006 cover, the reader observes a man from behind with his arms outstretched to the sky. A jagged mountain range (identified as part of Cathedral Park, British Columbia) dwarfs his figure. The text on the cover reads “All night I tried in vain to keep warm, pacing in circles while I shot the night sky. I’ve never been so relieved to see the sun” (MEC Summer 2006, p. 1; Appendix G, Image 2). While the text might hint that wilderness is an unpleasant place to be, the man’s outstretched arms greeting the sun suggests something different. The sun’s arrival is a moment to be celebrated, in particular against the backdrop of a mountain scene. The raised arms mark a triumph and demonstrate the excitement of this MEC member.<sup>68</sup> This pose and text make it possible to attribute a sense of reverence to the wilderness while acknowledging the discomforts it can bestow on its guests. The outstretched arms, the celebration of the sun’s arrival and the

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<sup>68</sup> Please see Appendix J, Image 2 for an image of the author in a similar pose. This image struck a personal chord for me – as I can recall the sentiment and emotion expressed in this cover: a simultaneous frustration with nature and an outpouring of amazement at an incredible wilderness scene. The author photo is self timed taken at the height of the Chilkoot Pass.

location (Cathedral Park) invoke Muir's popularized ideal of wilderness as a sanctuary or natural cathedral (Nash, 2001; Olwig, 1996). Muir's writing and environmental ethos affixed sublime and quasi-religious descriptions to the wilderness; his ideas were integrated into early parks development and literature, in particular at Yosemite. Reverent gazing at the peaceful and inspiring wilderness was popularized by Muir and continues to be a cornerstone of how national parks in Canada and the USA construct wilderness (Hermer, 2002; Olwig, 1996). Hermer explains how the "park destination is depicted as a primitive playland, an Eden-like garden" (2002, p. 3). This image then invokes wilderness discourses already familiar to outdoor recreationists, many of whom encounter wilderness in national, provincial and regional parks, in order to be read appropriately. Finally, I want to point briefly to the importance of sunrises which is featured in this image. Sunrises symbolize change: day to night, darkness to light, renewal and new beginnings. The inclusion of a sunrise in this image enables possible readings of the wilderness as a site for transformation. It is the site where it is possible for outdoor recreationists to undergo an awakening, an experience they are eager for, "relieved" with its long awaited arrival.

The final image I examine is from the BTC Winter 1993 cover (Appendix H, Image 3) shot is akin to the lone wolf images discussed in *The Calculated Adventurer*. In the image is a sole cross country skier shot from behind, entering a snow covered coniferous forest trail. Yet, the image is much closer than the distant lone wolf images, resulting in a rather different perspective on how wilderness is to be understood. As with the flowered forest cover from the BTC (Spring 2005, p. 1; Appendix H, Image 1), this cover reflects a wilderness that is quiet and calm. There is no evidence of wind; the snow hangs heavy on the tree branches. Piles of snow insulate the scene with the only potential sound being the glide of the skis and breathe of the

skier. Watching the skier enter this quiet forest patch might elicit a pang of jealousy from the viewer who longs for a quiet sojourn in the forest. There is no fear of what lurks in the forest or a copiously laden outdoor recreationist to suggest discomfort; this journey into the wilderness for perhaps an afternoon is pleasurable, calm and quiet. The pure and peaceful qualities of the forest are conveyed through the abundance of snow in the image; snow, identified by Berger (1970) and Shields (1991) as hallmarks of white Canadianness, blankets this patch of trees. Canadian outdoor recreationists who presumably thrive in a cold northern climate are able to read the snow as familiar and welcoming because of the central role that snow has played in the making of national myths. The image of conifers, snow and skiers works because of the establishing mythologies about Canada.

These peopled images mark out how wilderness is to be imagined. The recreationists gaze at wilderness with calm, reverence and elation; it is not a fearful or inhospitable place. Rather, what emerges is an understanding and acknowledgment of the soothing and enjoyable qualities of wilderness. There is a sense that these moments are treasures to be savoured. The opportunity to be in the wilderness is a rare and delightful experience that the audience of outdoor recreation texts are likely to be jealous of. To see others relishing their journeys into the wilderness prompts readers to yearn for this encounter with wilderness. The wilderness that emerges in these images is unquestionably, a place outdoor recreationists long to find themselves in.

*Wilderness's antithesis: The city*

In contrast to these soothing wilderness images, the city is represented as a dirty, noisy and distracting place. While acknowledged as the place where many Canadians live, the city is

barely tolerable; it is the antithesis of the wilderness. The city does not offer the comforting and pensive potential seen in the wilderness of MEC, BTC and BPNP texts.

The city is often associated with danger and noise. One area of persistent focus is on the link between the city and crime. MEC emphasizes, primarily through discussion of their cycling gear, that urban spaces are risky and require careful navigation. For example, bike computers<sup>69</sup> are described in the following way: “water repellent and detach quickly so you don’t have to leave them on your bike when parked in friendly downtown Toronto” (MEC Winter 1988, p. 43; MEC Winter 1991, p. 55). The assumption of this satirical description is that theft is commonplace in the city and that the city is anything but friendly. MEC repeatedly focuses on how unsafe the city is for cyclists (MEC Winter 2006, p. 28; MEC Summer 1989, p. 66-7). Although to some extent this is presumably mitigated by proper behaviour on behalf of cyclists, one member explains: “I think many cyclists struggle with the fact that motorists tend not to acknowledge our presence on the streets. Either they truly don’t see us or they choose to ignore us. Accidents can be avoided by safe drivers and safe cyclists wearing safe gear” (MEC Winter 2005, p. 34). In this quote, it is evident that MEC imagines its audience to be the cautious and responsible cyclists – not the dangerous motorists or the bike computer thieves. The city is made dangerous as a result of those who are not MEC members. What is implied in these descriptions is that the source of danger to the security of MEC members and their belongings is not other members but an unnamed threat presumed to be rooted in the city.

Some descriptions of the city are neutral or even positive, for example in backpack descriptions that acknowledge that many members will likely use them “to carry books while riding the bus or subway to school or work” (MEC Summer 2001, p. 50-1). Similarly, the city is

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<sup>69</sup> Bike computers are handlebar mounted technological devices; they can be used to track details for cyclists such as distance traveled and speed.

perceived as a centre for design and fashion; jackets are described as having “urban styling” (MEC Summer 1988, p. 12). Other bags are explained to be “styled after the big-city DJ bags seen cruising through the subways and metros of the world’s cutting edge cities” (MEC Summer 2004, p. 54). These descriptions from MEC are interesting in that they acknowledge that its equipment and clothing are used in contexts other than wilderness excursions, yet they do little to disrupt the production of wilderness as a place that is antithetical to the city. The city imagined as dangerous and unpleasant, if occasionally hip, stands in sharp contrast to the soothing and awe-inspiring wilderness. Similarly, the experiences imagined in the city seem fraught with worry and stress, something that the wilderness promises to erase. In a story from the BT magazine, a woman describes her experience of camping alone and coping with instances of fear from nighttime noises: “they can also be alarming, but they are not as intimate or as puzzling as the things that go bump in the night” (BTC Fall 1987, p. 13). It is presumed that even things that might be frightening about the wilderness pale in comparison to the dangers posed by the city.

The city is not featured prominently in these outdoor recreation texts. It appears solely as a reference for what outdoor recreationists might seek to escape during their daily, weekly or seasonal exodus from their homes in cities and suburbs. What remains the central focus is the wilderness. A place attributed with an infinite number of passionate and positive qualities, the wilderness promises outdoor recreationists what the city is presumed to be unable to provide: calm, rest and restoration. It is the beauty and magnificence of the wilderness that inspires its visitors. The wilderness, its forests, mountains and shorelines, offers up a chance to experience a sort of purification from the stresses, filth and criminality that is presumed to infest the city. The wilderness’s impressive features are understood to be powerful, so much so that mere contact with wild places might be sufficient to transform those within it.

### Appropriate conduct for outdoor recreationists

The images and descriptions I have analyzed thus far suggest that wilderness is impressive and inspiring. The subjects envisioned in this wilderness experience it as a transformative place where rest, renewal and relaxation are made possible. Some of the representations of outdoor recreationists I examine hint at the sort of conduct that is expected in the sublime wilderness. I turn my attention here to the sorts of practices which are determined to be appropriate (and inappropriate) for respectable subjects according to MEC, the BTC and the BPNP.

#### *Poor choices: inappropriate conduct for good and responsible subjects*

The BTC, BPNP and MEC expand considerable energy explaining what should *not* be done in the wilderness more so than what should. The texts often work from the position that readers will be able to ascertain what to do by first understanding what should be avoided. This is similar to Foucault's approach in explaining his project or task by first mapping out what he is not doing. The attention to what types of behaviour or practices are undesirable very much focused on manufacturing particular types of experiences in the wilderness. As in the images and texts previously discussed, wilderness is intended to be a place that is sublime. Thus, the practices of outdoor recreationists must coincide with this discursive arrangement. Behaviours and activities that disrupt this wilderness discourse must be suppressed to allow for the fantasy of sublime wilderness to remain intact. In sum, what is done in the wilderness must correspond with how it has been constructed.

The BTC describes the trail and surrounding Escarpment as a "jewel in the midst of continued development" (BTC Spring 2000, p. 30). Parks Canada espouses a similar version of how the parks, including the BPNP, are to be understood. Parks are described as "your



treasures...yours to cherish and protect” (BPNP 2002, p. 2). These blessed and priceless wildernesses need to be carefully coddled to ensure their preservation. In the previous chapter, *The Conscientious Consumer*, I show how certain practices are deemed problematic for the survival of wilderness. Here, I detail how these outdoor recreation organizations are interested in preserving a particular version of the wilderness. This wilderness must be preserved and “cherished” in specifically designated ways. The attention is not exclusively on practices that might damage particular natural features (as with forest fires and urban sprawl) but on leisure practices that might compromise the way wilderness ought to “feel.” The BPNP, in outlining the rules of the park, expressly indicates that this is intended to preserve a particular wilderness experience for all park visitors (BPNP 1989, p. 6).

In the discursive production of wilderness as a sublime and restorative place, it is imperative that one is able to enjoy particular sensory experiences. While containing oneself in a personal bubble with headphones is presumed to be an acceptable practice in the city (perhaps to drown out the unpleasant *noise* of the city), when in the wilderness, one should experience “the symphony of life” (BTC Spring 2002, p. 7). MEC, in descriptions of a bag, sinfully acknowledges that it could be used to carry a Walkman; they are apparently “not supposed to tell you things like that at the co-op” (MEC Summer 1987, p. 18). Similarly, in a BTC story, a father chastises his son who wants to listen to his Walkman in the woods; he claims that this would undermine the authentic wilderness experience being created on this family hike (BTC Fall 1988, p. 14). The BPNP explains that the “use of generators and radios is discouraged” in campgrounds to allow other campers to experience the sounds of the forest (BPNP 2004, p. 6).<sup>70</sup> Experiencing wilderness, according to these outdoor recreation texts, comes with a pre-established soundtrack.

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<sup>70</sup> Interestingly, a very noisy Pepsi machine hums non-stop on the deck of the Visitor Centre; apparently, cold pop occasionally takes precedence over listening to nature’s concerto.

Good recreationists want to listen to the wilderness and “take on its rhythms” (BTC Winter 1991, p. 32). This also evident in the BPNP Visitor Centre where some exhibits feature a soundtrack of “nature noises” to lend authenticity to and structure how visitors understand what wilderness encounters (even those manufactured inside a building) ought to be like. The blaring music of headphones or hum of a generator is deemed to be an inappropriate method of listening in the wilderness. These devices associated with the urban space and the vices of civilization distract from the experience of sublime nature that is being carefully assembled by these outdoor recreation organizations.

A deep distrust or dislike of any interruptions to nature’s rhythms extends beyond certain sounds to another spectrum of activities deemed disruptive. MEC specifically articulates a desire to promote “self-propelled wilderness-oriented recreation”; the BTC and BPNP share a similar distrust of motorized leisure.<sup>71</sup> Of particular concern is the use of all terrain vehicles (ATV) and snowmobiles in areas frequented by cross country skiers, hikers and campers. The BTC expresses considerable anxiety about snowmobile clubs and their potential to disrupt hikers’ claims to trails. The concern with ATV and snowmobile use appears to be two-fold. First, as it is not self-propelled, these practices are deemed incongruent with a desire to participate in wilderness-friendly recreation. Undoubtedly, recreation that requires the use of a two-stroke, gas-guzzling engine is certainly not “environmentally friendly.”<sup>72</sup> However, there is more to the objection to these leisure practices than their environmental toll. The issue with snowmobile and

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<sup>71</sup> Quite obviously, snowmobilers are also outdoor recreationists by strict definition. Here I set snowmobilers apart not to suggest that they are not outdoor recreationists but to try and keep with how MEC, the BTC and the BPNP have worked to define who and what will be included in the umbrella of outdoor recreation.

<sup>72</sup> Of course, the idea of the outdoor recreation of MEC members, BTC members and BPNP visitors as self propelled is largely fictional. Most outdoor recreation requires the use of private automobiles and/or air travel. For example, the BPNP is only accessible by personal automobiles; there is no rail service and very intermittent, seasonal access to the peninsula by private bus services. Additionally, snowmobile manufacturers are developing less toxic models which release fewer hydrocarbons either by including a direct fuel injection two stroke engine or switching to a four stroke.

ATV use in the wilderness is tied to what contact with the wilderness is supposed to be like. To be out in the wilderness is presumed to be an experience that evokes a sense of peacefulness, calm and reflective appreciation. Snowmobiling or ATV-ing is incongruent with this approach to wilderness. To race along a trail, to be focused on tight turns or opportunities to get a bit of “air” contradicts what wilderness is presumed to be for. The tensions regarding how to use wilderness is well evidenced in the struggle around mountain bike use of the Bruce Trail. The BTC magazine features an abundance of discussion about what the trail should be used for with many advocating that the trail can be used for only one activity: hiking. However, the trail is frequently used by mountain bikers and this use is deemed troublesome (BTC Spring 1992, p. 19; BTC Winter 1992, p. 24; BTC Winter 1999, p. 16; BTC Summer 2001, p. 12). While mountain biking is self-propelled, tensions erupt because of how its practitioners make use of the wilderness. These leisure practices contradict the desire for environmentally friendly or self-propelled leisure and the discursive production of wilderness as a place that is awe-inspiring and restful. The tension around mountain biking and snowmobile/ATV use is also deeply embedded in class and age tensions around how to be in the wilderness. As I explore practices deemed to be desirable and how a particular subject is produced therein I expand this discussion to consider how discourses of age, class (along with race and gender) play out in outdoor recreation.

*Desirable practices: good behaviour in the sublime wilderness*

What then should one do in the wilderness? Evidently, there are certain activities that are unpalatable to outdoor recreationists who conceptualize wilderness as sublime. Yet, there are practices that outdoor recreation organizations are eager to advocate. One activity that is extended considerable support is photography. MEC, in every catalogue, invites members to submit photos for inclusion in the catalogue. Members’ photos comprise a considerable portion

of the catalogue and nearly all cover images are member submissions. The BTC frequently includes member contributed photos. The BPNP includes an abundance of visitors' photos and a substantial number of photos from Ethan Meleg, a Parks Canada employee and professional photographer.<sup>73</sup> The BTC also regularly includes articles about various flora and fauna detailing how photographic techniques were employed and particular shots accomplished. Interestingly, photography equipment is not conceptualized as a type of distracting technology that outdoor recreationists are keen to escape in their travels in the wilderness. Photography is praised in the environmental adage "take only photographs, leave only foot prints" or "your thanks" according to the BTC (Fall 1998, p. 10). Photography is understood to be environmentally sound and an appropriate demonstration of one's appreciation for nature. The sounds of the camera do not disrupt the aural aesthetic of the wilderness. Further still, the lengthy and drawn out attention to the wilderness that is undertaken in photography is one way to demonstrate awe and fascination for grand and minute wilderness features. Finally, photography allows for the recreationist to bring the wilderness experience home. This is perhaps one of the most important aspects of photography for the outdoor recreationist. Since it is unlikely that most recreationists gaze out their front windows at mountain ranges, waterfalls and rare and unique flora and fauna, photography offers a way to connect with the wilderness when they return to the city. Additionally, there is perhaps no better evidence of one's status as an authentic outdoor recreationist than to catalogue oneself in the sublime wilderness (see author photo in Appendix J, Image 2).

One of the sole criticisms of photography comes from proponents of nature journaling who posit that it is too modern and insufficiently drawn out and pensive. John Muir, an American naturalist and founder of the Sierra Club, is referenced as one of the most renowned

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<sup>73</sup> Meleg's photos are often frequently featured in issues of Bruce Trail Magazine.

nature journal practitioners. John Muir, although not Canadian, is afforded special importance by the BTC and the BPNP as a result of his travels on the Bruce Peninsula and the considerable praise he lavished on the wilderness of the upper Bruce (Fox, 1952). The BPNP includes a trail and a commemorative plaque profiling Muir. Muir kept extensive journals in which he described and sketched various features of the wilderness (Fox, 1952; Nash, 2001). The practice of nature journaling is presented as a way to demonstrate one's profound appreciation of wilderness and the ability to catalogue this in an intricate form through methods employed by iconographic naturalists such as Muir. In a BTC Winter 1998 article, journaling is imagined as something quite powerful and transformative:

to a culture that has historically viewed nature as something to be overcome, a culture which still gobbles up pristine pieces of nature and spits them out ugly, nature journaling helps us savour and appreciate the natural gifts we have been given. In an economy that dupes us into believing things of lasting value are made quickly, mechanically, and by someone else, nature journaling can convince us that by ourselves, with patience and attention, we can create a treasure. (p. 21)

In these claims about nature journaling, several key components of appreciating nature are referenced. To appreciate nature requires a degree of slowness to one's actions, responses and thoughts along with a commitment to spending sizable chunks of time in the wilderness (and later reflecting on it). Bowerbank (2002) explains that nature writing, such as journaling, has worked in North American culture as a form of eco-confession. She suggests that by engaging in the process of reflective writing about nature, outdoor recreationists or environmentalists are able to produce themselves as good and moral subjects. She likens nature journaling to a form of technology of the self – a form of conduct for effecting oneself as a particular type of subject.

Participation in nature journaling marks subjects as richly invested in nature and sharing a close intimacy with it; the journal catalogues this subject's relationship to nature. This subject then, undertakes natural journaling as demonstration of his profoundly rich and spiritual connection to nature presented as distinct from how mainstream culture understands and values the wilderness.

Appreciation of wilderness, in the nature journaling practice, seems to rely on a eschewing or at least a temporary disdain of urban, industrialized production of goods and culture. To care deeply about the wilderness is to reject some of the key aspects of western culture, notably industrial and consumer capitalism, technology and urbanization. Bowerbank critically analyzes this practice of escaping into and reflecting on the wilderness. She claims that the "wilderness retreat, at least as it has been practiced, is a luxury product of the very culture the practitioner learns to despise" (2002, p. 177). These sentiments are well evidenced in how the BTC frames nature journaling as a means of engaging with the wilderness. By undertaking nature journaling, one might be able to demarcate oneself as somehow separate or innocent of the "sins" of western culture – such as widespread environmental devastation and the adjacent colonial discourses that were at the crux of engaging with the wilderness in this way. Here, outdoor recreationists do not wish to imagine themselves as attempting to conquer the wilderness, but as connecting deeply with it. This positioning of one's recreation practices further enables a strategic distancing from a colonial history that entailed not simply environmental devastation but systematic genocide and destruction of Indigenous people, knowledge and culture. Conceptualizing outdoor recreation, specifically to espouse particular practices as assurances of personal and collective innocence opens up new ways for recreationists to imagine themselves as particular sorts of subjects. Here we can see how outdoor recreationists might be encouraged to draw connections between their experiences in the

wilderness and that of Indigenous people in Canada. I explore this link in greater detail in my next chapter, *The Wilderness Citizen*. I suggest here that this link relies on the possibility of establishing a spiritual relationship with a sublime wilderness.

A key feature of proper recreation activities is the emphasis on slowness and appreciation. What one should do in the wilderness is truly relish it – and this is presented as a task that is best done at a leisurely pace, with certain accessories and a particular state of mind. What the description of nature-journaling references is a shift in how outdoor recreation is to be undertaken. Rather than recreation being modeled after a colonial excursion into the wilderness, a time for rugged men to demonstrate their capacity for conquest and adventure, the sublime wilderness demands another sort of wilderness travel. To head out into the wilderness is to undertake a physical, as well as a mental and spiritual journey. The journey is a chance for the outdoor recreationist to experience a time of both restoration and transformation. This journey is not the tough expedition of the courier du bois, the calculating adventurer or the young men of colonial tales; it is not a chance to become hardened and strong. This is the opportunity for outdoor recreationists to feel, to soften and to be remade into a still masculine yet emotionally savvy modern subject.

MEC, beginning in 2006, introduces a journey theme into its catalogue with the tagline “your journey starts here...” (MEC Summer 2006, p. 2-3). This theme is focused on the idea of recreation as a time for travel and change; this is not a new development, rather it solidifies the value and importance of this type of experience for outdoor recreationists. The journey espoused in these outdoor recreation texts is far more about individual and collective spiritual and emotive experiences than about accomplishment. MEC, in the Winter 2007 catalogue, suggests to its readers: “the most beautiful adventures are not those we go to seek” (p. 3). The profoundly

moving experiences are not ones that can be specifically pinpointed; the promises of outdoor recreation are elusive. Outdoor recreationists can only hope to gain access to the perks the journey offers.

*Experiences of the sublime wilderness:*

*Escape*

One of the promises of the journey into wilderness is that individual recreationists, weary from life in cities will experience rest and renewal. One hiker writes: “I was tired with the type of exhaustion that only a vigorous tramp away from people and cities could cure” (BTC Spring 1991, p. 14). The need for weary urbanites to escape the city, a discourse popularized by Americans like Muir, Leopold, Emerson and Thoreau, is given credence in these outdoor recreation texts. A hiking book review suggests: “it is useful for urban residents who need a quick escape from the city’s pressures but don’t have all day to go hiking” (BTC Fall 1994, p. 19). MEC member profiles often emphasize the need to escape; for example one member writes about his love of skiing and indicates that it means he “can be free from everything, no cellphones, no contact with the outside world. It’s my way to get recharged and feel at one with my world” (MEC Winter 2005, p. 40). The possibility for outdoor recreationists to experience personal transformation rests heavily on escaping the technologies, responsibilities and experiences attributed to urban life. The BTC, in an article about relaxing, explains how “hiking allows you to relax your mind. For those few hours on the trail, you can forget about that mountain of paperwork at the office” (BTC Summer 1988, p. 30). The Bruce Trail is imagined as a place where one can “seek refuge from the rigours [sic] of busy modern life” (BTC Spring 2007, p. 10). Heading out of the city then is a chance to escape the stresses of the everyday and



to substitute worry for peace of mind. The wilderness is presented as a desirable backdrop for this exchange.

What recreationists might experience is twofold: to be both newly mindful and inspired by the wilderness and to be deliberately forgetful of all else. It is a simultaneous forgetting (of one's daily life stresses) and remembering (of the beauty of nature). MEC members describe instances where they become forgetful of distances traveled or locations as a result of being overtaken by the beauty of surrounding wilderness (MEC Summer 2006, p. 46; MEC Summer 2007, p. 72). The BPNP anticipates particular experiences for visitors in suggesting "[w]e hope that the beauty of the parks will leave you with a sense of awe and recognition of their importance" (BPNP 2002, p. 2). What outdoor recreationists count on from the wilderness is a chance to forget the everyday and escape into a place of beauty and inspiration. Recreationists are given the opportunity to allow the sublime qualities of wilderness to wash over them, rinsing them clean of the emotional and mental grit of the city. Further to this, the wilderness might even act as a type of protection from the troubles of the city. For example, a BTC article details the experiences of two men who were hiking the Bruce Trail on a multi-day trek during 9/11 (BTC Spring 2002, p. 14). The hikers describe the wilderness as sheltering them from the event and the complex issues that surround it. Being away from the city on this excursion enabled them a few more days of peaceful, uncomplicated time in the forest.

### *Intimacy*

To some extent, these outdoor recreation organizations are concerned with how each individual recreationist might encounter the wilderness. Additional attention is paid to the consequences of being in the wilderness for the relationships among outdoor recreationists. The wilderness, given its acknowledged ability to erase stresses and woes, provides a unique venue

for outdoor recreationists to address relationships that have become frayed as a result of urban life. One MEC member explains how “hiking gives us a chance to reconnect and talk in a way we can’t at home when we’re cooking dinner, competing with the TV, or worrying about tomorrow’s meeting” (MEC Summer 2007, p. 48). Watching this member and his wife ascend a mountainside allows the reader to see their smiling, yet tired faces and to understand that this activity draws them together. This couple is perhaps demonstrating the type of heterosexual romantic relationship that is presumed to thrive in the wilderness. This quote, while focused on the importance of wilderness sojourns, simultaneously shapes what constitutes modern family life. The emphasis on workplace responsibilities, preparation of family dinner and undesirable forms of popular culture produces a heteronormative, middle-class family as a meaningful reference for readers. Further, the suggestion is that this discourse of family is, to some extent, hollow for outdoor recreationists seeking more rich and connected relationships. It appears that heterosexual partners share a complex interpersonal bond that is not sufficiently fostered in the routine practices of everyday family life; a supportive environment, the wilderness, is needed to foster heterosexual romantic love.

There is no shortage of heterosexual couples in MEC catalogues, BTC magazines and BPNP newsletters and film; readers are repeatedly shown images of happy couples nestled in sleeping bags, walking hand in hand or gazing at sunsets. The wilderness offers a place where loving (heterosexual) couples can renew their connection and experience true intimacy provided the distractions of their daily lives are temporarily suspended. The BTC includes a profile of a couple that married along the Bruce Trail; their “romance on the trail” is provided as a testament of their love for each other and for nature (BTC Winter 1997, p. 10). It is presumed that wilderness is simply an aesthetically lovely and peaceful backdrop in which romantic partners

can abandon the woes of their relationship. The wilderness, lacking its own histories, stories or political contexts, becomes a site for pureness, restoration and romance.

The chance for relationship restoration is not limited to heterosexual romantic partnerships – the wilderness promises to provide soothing and strengthening to families and friendships as well. Parents express frequent concern about how their children's contact with urban vices, such as television, risks compromising their familial bond (BTC Winter 1997, p. 8). Excursions into the wilderness are imagined as a way for parents to reconnect with children, in particular for fathers to reconnect with sons (BTC Summer 1987, p. 30, BTC Summer 1989, p. 13-14). These familial travels are imagined as a chance to abandon "complexity and materialism in lieu of simplicity and spontaneity" (BTC Summer 1989, p. 13). In repairing and building parental, or more specifically fatherly, bonds, the wilderness is ideal as it allows children (presumably distracted by television) and fathers (distracted with work) to shed the confining strictures of their urban relationships and reconnect with one another. The fostering of father-son/child bonds in BTC magazines bears remarkable similarity to how hunting and fishing have been advocated as a salve for masculinities compromised by urban life (Bye, 2003; Dunk, 2002; Fine, 2000). Further, the tattered relationships between fathers and children presumes a heteronormative family model where it is possible for men to prioritize work over family. The assumption of this healing recreation is that there has been a mother actively parenting children; her bonds to children do not require the fortifications wilderness offers.

A similar sentiment is expressed in relation to friendships in the wilderness. MEC, in an explanation of its partnership with Patagonia, argues: "finding a compatible companion for self propelled adventures is one of life's sweetest pleasures. You want a partner whose strengths complement yours as yours complement theirs. You want a partner who shares your values"

(MEC Winter 2006, p. 6-7). This quote is imposed over an image of two men dressed in nearly identical outfits taking a break on a snowy mountainside. While MEC is using this image and quote to justify its economic partnership with another outdoor goods company, it works because it speaks to the sorts of friendships readers desire to have and maintain. This profile of two men is one of many male bonding images in the MEC catalogues. Shots of pairs or groups of men smiling, sometimes despite clearly evidenced pain and injury, suggest the wilderness is an ideal site for men to reconnect and foster their male friendships (MEC Winter 2006, p. 1; MEC Summer 2006, p. 102, see Appendix G, Image 7). Female friendships are not neglected by MEC; an image of two laughing women curled up inside a hammock conveys intimacy and comfort. The laughing scene is overlaid with a quote from one member saying “things seem funnier when you’re camping. It’s just so much easier to laugh about random things out here compared to the city” (MEC Summer 2007, p. 18). Clearly, for these women in the hammock, a scene of trees and a lake behind them, being in the wilderness makes their friendship simpler and more pleasurable. Perhaps the distance from the city allows for a shedding of inhibitions and opens up lines of communication. The BTC reports on a group of female hikers (BTC Fall 1998, p. 9; BTC Fall 2001, p. 17). These profiles emphasize how groups of women have used hiking to solidify their friendships and how their time on the trail allowed for a closeness and intimacy that might not otherwise have been possible. The experience of hiking together allowed for them to be truly supportive of one another (in coping with illness, stress, etc) and to celebrate their collective and individual accomplishments. There is evidently a wilderness quality which positively affects human relationships. The desire to disconnect from certain technologies, from the city and from one’s work is at the centre of this, along with a belief in wilderness, and a shared ideology surrounding its use and effects. An image of another cheery MEC member,

surrounded by a group of friends, is quoted saying: “Every river bend we paddled revealed new wonders. Every campsite was more beautiful than the last. Every meal was a feast of food and friendship” (MEC Summer 2006, p. 102, Appendix G, Image 7) suggests that being in the wilderness, experiencing it fully, contributes powerfully to the development and sustaining of friendships. In these journeys, to be amongst like-minded friends heightens the beauty and wonder of the wilderness in previously unimagined ways.

### *Rest*

Wilderness is quickly presented as a salve for what ails us – be it an overdependence on certain technologies, preoccupations with work or the disintegration of relationships. Journeys into the wilderness enable intimacy, rest and restoration. It is unsurprising then, that actual sleep is presented as an integral part of the process of journeying into the wilderness. MEC advocates that “[a] good night’s sleep after a day of honest exercise is one of the simple, satisfying pleasures of self propelled wilderness travel” (MEC Summer 2001, p. 58). In the MEC catalogue, there are an abundance of photos of MEC members in their tents, in sleeping bags and gathering around late night or early morning fires. The reader is drawn into these intimate spaces. For example, shots of two friends cozy in their yellow tent, laughing and pretending to read (MEC Summer 2006, p.36), a group gathered to eat in a large base camp tent (MEC Summer 1990, p. 68) or a just waking member in an alpine meadow with grazing sheep (MEC Summer 2005, p. 66) all provide the reader with a view into intimate, restful places that would otherwise be deemed off limits.<sup>74</sup> The restful sleep in the wilderness is essential for “rallying a dispirited mind” (MEC Summer 2002, p. 64). Sleeping well, when journeying, is very important.

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<sup>74</sup> The tent is acknowledged as private space. You would not rifle around in someone else’s tent or even open the zipper. A shake of the tent pole or some rather loud movements or talking are usually intended to attract the tent’s inhabitants. Tents are very often designed with mesh that is easy to see out but partially obscures outsiders from seeing in.

MEC explains how “the sublime beauty of wilderness can easily be spoiled by a sleepless night tossing and turning, trying to stay warm (MEC Winter 2002, p. 42). Restful nights in the wilderness may be emblematic of the journey experience. The well-earned rest at the end of the day parallels the need recreationists have to rest from their work lives in urban settings. The respite that sleep offers is similar to what the journey promises – to feel refreshed and capable of coping with the challenges of life. The return from the journey might feel as though one is waking from a long and restful sleep. One’s body and mind are renewed. The stresses of the previous day, whether piles of work or a fight with a loved one, become more manageable. The worries that might have kept us awake are no longer troubling.

Through my examination of how wilderness is produced as sublime and my tracing of activities that are considered appropriate within it, a subject emerges as desirable. This subject understands and appreciates the sublime wilderness and enters into it reverently acknowledging its power. This subject seeks more than a beautiful sunset. He searches for ways to connect with the wilderness, to have its effects rub off on him. To be in the wilderness is not sufficient; neither is simply having a good time while camping or hiking. The task of this subject is to experience renewal, restoration and a type of cleansing. Escaping the city and fleeing to the wilderness is integral to the production of this subject; above all else, the subject is in motion. To travel, to embark on a journey into the wilderness is the means by which personal transformation is made possible. The subject of sublime wilderness, the transformed traveler, heads out in search of a splendid shoreline, a quiet meadow or awe inspiring mountainside not to conquer it but to immerse himself in its ascribed qualities. The transformed traveler seeks the wilderness not for what he can do for the wilderness but for what the wilderness might do for him.

### A transformed traveler

The transformed traveler is a discursively produced subject stemming from shifts in the meaning attached to wilderness and specific outdoor recreation practices. While much of the work I undertake in this thesis works in the realm of theory where I find myself considering how particular truths are made knowable, there are moments when material realities require attention. In considering the shifts toward seeing wilderness as sublime and advocating for particular recreation experiences, it is apparent that often concrete needs of particular recreation communities are being woven into the discursive realm.

The material realities of outdoor recreation participation are evident in the disputes about what wilderness is for which erupt around the use of snowmobiles, ATVs and mountain bikes along the Bruce Trail. The tensions between and amongst, snowmobilers, mountain bikers and hikers are telling of how class, age and location shape the meanings attributed to the wilderness. Both MEC and the BPNP documents target large populations (approximately 3 million and 250'000-500'000 respectively) and likely direct their materials to address what is perceived to be the greatest number of their readers. In sharp contrast, the BTC is a much smaller organization comprised primarily of older, educated, white middle class adults. BTC materials at times present their organizational make-up as troubling, when, for example, they point to dwindling membership numbers. However, a considerable portion of the BTC's initiatives target this group. For example fundraisers that recommend including the BTC in one's will are obviously directed towards those with both financial resources and for whom retirement and end of life plans are likely topics of discussion. Further, there is no shortage of middle-aged, senior and elderly members depicted in the magazines; by comparison, representation of older adults is virtually non-existent in MEC catalogues and limited in the BPNP newsletters, film and Visitor Centre.

Despite the BTC's understanding of their demographics, they rarely advocate for their organization on this basis. In fact, the BTC is adamant that their interests are universal and repeatedly indicate that they are not a "special interest group" (BTC Spring 1988, p. 33; BTC Fall 1988, p. 6; BTC Fall 1990, p. 7). The production of the wilderness as sublime and an appreciation of wilderness that incorporates a certain degree of slowness, reverence for famed naturalists and quiet, technology free introspection are hardly universal. Mountain bikers have critiqued the BTC arguing that mountain biking is not necessarily any more environmentally destructive than hiking and a legitimate means of experiencing the wilderness (BTC Winter 1998, p. 9).

These struggles around how to be in the forest seem to call up stereotypes of elderly people as constantly frustrated with loud music and fast moving young people. Yet, what I find interesting in this conflict is how the BTC engages in the argument. Rather than positing that the BTC built, advocated for and maintains the trail and that it will subsequently serve their interests in quiet day hikes, the position is taken that this is in fact done in the interest of the public. It is a selfless act whereby the BTC offers up a valuable treasure that is presumed to speak to the interests of all outdoor recreationists, hikers, residents along the trail and Canadians. The insistence that the BTC speaks to universal rather than specific interests reveals perhaps much more about race and class privilege than age.

The privileging of self-propelled recreation is telling of who and what leisure is imagined to be for. Snowmobiling is an affront to the sensibilities of middle and upper class outdoor recreationists seeking respite in the wilderness. It upsets that clear division between city and wilderness by drawing motorized transport, noise, speed and possibly competition into a place that is intended to be quiet, restful and traversed by one's own physical strength and mental



aptitude. Further, snowmobiling also signals that the wilderness is also a leisure space for those who live in rural and wilderness areas. While snowmobiling is an interest of some middle class, urban residents, this group is not imagined as the same group of middle class recreationists from the MEC catalogue or the BTC magazine. The droves of middle class recreationists heading out into the wilderness for a break from urban life mirrors longstanding traditions in Ontario (Jasen, 1995; Lacombe, 1998). Accustomed to seeing rural and wilderness residents (both white and Indigenous, albeit in different ways) as guides and facilitators of their wilderness excursions, middle class recreationists are surprised to find well organized snowmobiling, in addition to hunting and fishing groups who are uninterested in continuing to play the role of ‘local expert’ for urban residents visiting the wilderness. The presence of snowmobilers in the forest challenges whom the wilderness is presumed to be for and how it ought to be used. The BTC concern about the power of snowmobiling groups and the BPNP and MEC distaste for any non-self propelled activities signals a potential threat to the discursive production of wilderness as sublime. Further still, it is a considerable challenge to the perceived universality of experiencing wilderness in particular ways. As I unravel what exactly is promised to outdoor recreationists in their journeys through the wilderness, the potential to destabilize this process posed by snowmobilers can be understood as a disruptive counter discourse.

#### *Claims to innocence*

To describe wilderness as sublime entails an understanding that this is a place of beauty, awesomeness, wonder and inspiration. In the production of wilderness as sublime in these outdoor recreation texts, it quickly becomes apparent that these descriptions coincide with the belief that the wilderness is a place of goodness and purity. It is a place where it is possible to escape ugliness, filth and noise. The wilderness then becomes Edenic; it is not a place to fear, a

place of savagery or danger. The purity of the wilderness, contrasted with the degeneracy and dirt of the city, is deeply longed for and understood to be worthy of appreciation. The wilderness is a place to cherish as it is presumed to be unique, powerful and integral for both our physical survival and to our mental and emotional wellbeing. To construct the wilderness as sublime and in turn to make a detailed set of claims about what contact with it enables accomplishes something for the transformed traveler. I assert there are two claims to innocence that are enabled through the production of the transformed traveler. In each of these claims, it is possible to see how the transformed traveler is presumed to be wrestling with a series of moral and emotional conundrums. As I close this chapter, the importance of these emotional struggles for understanding the transformed traveler is unpacked.

The production of the transformed traveler rests on two key ways of asserting innocence. The transformed traveler is presumed to be undergoing change as a result of being in contact with the sublime wilderness. As is evidenced in the descriptions of healed relationships, calmed woes and restful sleeps, the leisure practices of this subject are working gradually to chip away at the hardened shell of the transformed traveler. Once jaded from time spent behind a desk or navigating the noisy public transit systems of urban centres, the transformed traveler slowly strips away his typically callous exterior to reveal a softer self. The first claim to innocence rests on how this subject seeks to return to childhood through leisure practices. The wilderness of these outdoor recreation texts is clearly intended to prompt a particular way of seeing. The smiling faces, jaw dropped gazing and sensory indulgence references an uninhibited and awestruck subject. The BTC is quick to suggest that utility in engaging with nature in child-like ways, stating “we are like children again, gathering shiny stones for our treasures chests” (BTC Winter 2004, p. 9). This return to childhood in how one looks at and engages with nature is truly

desired. It is an opportunity to suspend more complicated questions and instead “feel” nature. Certainly, these childlike means of engaging with the wilderness have little to do with the interests of children and far more to do with the nostalgia of adults. This desire to return to childhood is a strategic code for a less complicated time. The BTC, in an article about beaches, explains that “beaches seem to hold a special place in the human psyche, perhaps harkening back to the primitive past or maybe just to our own childhood” (BTC Summer 2005, p. 20). The link here that is drawn between sublime wildernesses and the childhoods of outdoor recreationists allows for a strategic recalling of a presumably innocent time.

This recalling of simpler times, emotions and uncomplicated leisure that is enabled in the wilderness creates the illusion that this is a collective memory shared by all outdoor recreationists. The construction of this childhood replete with wonderment and travels to wilderness locales is presented as a universal childhood experience. I draw attention to nostalgia for childhood for two reasons. First, it presumes homogeneity among outdoor recreationists. The assumption in recalling childhood as a time of innocence takes the experiences, histories, stories and practices of white, middle class recreationists and presents it as a universal experience. Second, by referencing childhood, outdoor recreationists are encouraged to look back in longing not exclusively to their own childhoods but to a particular history of outdoor recreation. Adams (2006) explains that how nostalgia is employed in Canadian sport/leisure narratives such as Roch Carrier’s *The Sweater*, is to substantially “limit[ing] the stories we can tell about ourselves” (p. 82). In affiliating particular ways of experiencing the wilderness with childhood, outdoor recreationists foreclose other means of engagement. It becomes impossible to conceptualize the wilderness without looking through the childlike eyes that are presented as the appropriate lens through which to see it.

The childlike ways of seeing the wilderness are the first means of asserting innocence through the production of the transformed traveler. The reference to childhood is also an important technique through which this subject can evade more complex questions about the pleasures one seeks in the wilderness. The practices prescribed in the MEC catalogues, BTC magazines and BPNP materials are premised on excursions in a wilderness that is presumed to be empty of human inhabitants and available for use by weary urbanites for renewal. The second claim to innocence relies on the assumption that the wilderness being encountered is a place without histories and which is not in use by others. It is a blank space waiting to be infused with meaning and employed in the service of personal renewal and transformation. Yet, the ways in which the transformed traveler relies on the discursive production of wilderness as empty is different from how it is conceptualized by the calculating adventurer. The transformed traveler distances himself from colonial narratives that suggest that men can venture into the wilderness (a savage and dangerous site) and return toughened and respectable subjects (Phillips, 1997). The transformed traveler is not seeking to embark on a quest of conquering and exploration of the wilderness. This type of practice references a history that is deeply uncomfortable for the transformed traveler who desires to see the wilderness as a place that is blank and peaceful not the site of violent struggle and tension. Referencing childhood allows the transformed traveler to undertake journeys that are about remembering, that are focused on sensory experiences and that prioritize indulging in the fascinating features of the wilderness.

The transformed traveler then clings to hope that his leisure is somehow a good and moral practice. Careful affiliations and deliberate delineations structure how this subject can be read. At the core of this project is a desire to mark out a type of transformation resulting from journeying in the wilderness that is observably different from that of colonial adventurers. To

embrace that troubling past is profoundly disquieting for outdoor recreationists. The journeys of outdoor recreationists are in keeping with Morton's (in Francis, 1997b, p. 128) claim that Canadian life is structured around travels into the wilderness and back to civilization. For Morton, this journey, or "penetration" as he would have seen it, was very much a gendered journey (with wilderness understood as the space of men and civilization as the locale of women) (Shields, 1991, p. 182). The adventuring subject who embarked into the wilderness to assert his rugged masculinity fits, albeit somewhat awkwardly in this paradigm. In the production of the transformed traveler, a rather different journey is conceptualized. In this journey, comfort is sought in the wilderness and civilization is imagined as a terribly inhospitable place. The transformed traveler seeks to undergo change but not to become a rugged, tough man. His journey is not seen as a penetrative act but as an opportunity for return, to be enveloped in the mothering wilderness and to find respite in her bosom.

The transformed traveler seeks out the wilderness in order to experience an emotional cleansing. To erase the dogged effects of the city, s/he must enter into the wilderness and embrace its sublime qualities. Braun (2003) refers to the wilderness as a "purification machine... a place where people become white" (p. 197). His discussion of how the wilderness functions in this way focuses on how middle and ruling class white men, through the course of their risky adventure recreation, assert claims to whiteness. The wilderness then acts as site for transformation on the basis of it being a risky place – and that accomplishment in the wilderness results in a type of transformation. I find Braun's description of the wilderness as a "purification machine" powerful; it points to how mechanized and perhaps reliable this process might be. I argue that the transformation this subject experiences stems from his emotional openness and desire for connection and calm rather than through risk seeking adventure. The transformed

traveler does not go to the forest to find danger and overcome it but to find beauty, peace and inspiration and immerse himself in it. Braun's wilderness/machine metaphor speaks to the ways in which we use wilderness to make particular assertions about ourselves. Further, the effects of being in the wilderness are not surprising – we go with particular expectations and then, in asserting that we are newly rested and renewed, validate the “truth” of the process. The departure from Braun's work seen in the production of the transformed traveler is about how this machine will be put to use.

#### Becoming the transformed traveler: new masculinities for the sublime wilderness

At the crux of how the transformed traveler is understood is the centrality of emotional sophistication, mental well being and relationship building. This traveler seeks, above all else, to be seen as grounded, emotionally savvy and well connected to spouse, friends and family. There is nothing more alarming to this subject than to be ill at ease, to have one's relationships be unsettled or to disconnect from one's children. At first glance, these qualities might seem to be the purview of women: emotion, family, relationships. Yet, I posit that the transformed traveler is a subject position that engages with the discursive production of masculinity. How can the interest in stereotypically feminine traits or qualities now be read as the terrain of men? I argue that this is made possible by framing emotional aptitude, mental well-being and relationship building as integral to personal transformation in the sublime wilderness.

The transformed traveler is read as a different type of man. For example, this subject is not interested in demonstrating masculinity through repeated bouts of physical strength or power; he does not want to be known as a man who can only chop wood or aggressively berate coworkers. This subject is equally disconnected from urbanized masculinities; he is not interested in practices perceived to be superficial, concerned with appearances or overly tied to

consumption. The transformed traveler is understood to be produced by rather different masculine discourses. He is pleased with his own physical strength but eager to tout the abilities of his female and male leisure companions. He might be happy to be seen as intellectually savvy or technologically skillful but he doesn't require a leadership role; he is happy to let others lead. This is a subject who wants not a role of physical or mental prowess but to instead to be read as a suitable emotional leader. One of the great praises lavished on the transformed traveler is to be deemed emotionally intuitive. This subject is deeply invested in the idea that there are much more important things in life than wealth and power, such as fostering one's own and one's loved ones' wellbeing. In these outdoor recreation texts, we become familiar with this subject in his leisure time. However, it is possible to readily imagine this subject when he returns to the city; he might be spotted in yoga classes, pushing his children in strollers, cheering for his partner in triathlons or perusing local farmers' markets. At first glance, the transformed traveler might be a welcome breath of fresh air to those stifled by gender conformity. Yet, I urge caution in what is imagined to be possible in and through the production of this subject. As the transformed traveler is framed as a desirable subject for outdoor recreation, due consideration must be given to how this subject works to strategically distance this masculinity from others which have been come to be understood as deeply fraught.

I argue that the production of the transformed traveler points to three key claims about masculinity in the context of the sublime wilderness. First, to some extent, the transformed traveler marks a significant challenge to heteronormative masculinity. Unlike how masculinity is conventionally framed in sport and physical culture, this subject position embraces a broader spectrum of acceptable masculinities. The transformed traveler is less invested in policing masculinity and does open up divergent ways in which masculinity can be expressed. Ostensibly,

this subject draws qualities and attributes conventionally associated with femininity into the purview of masculinity while reifying heteronormativity. It would be foolish to suggest that this is not to some extent an interesting shift in the representation of masculinity in sport and leisure culture. For scholars, such as Michael Messner (2002), Gamal Abdel-Shehid (2005) and Brian Pronger (1999), exacerbated with the narrow definitions of masculinity deemed acceptable in the arena of sport, physical culture and outdoor recreation, the small concessions made to what is permissible for straight men might initially be a source of relief. To some extent, I share this sentiment and am hopeful for what could be opened up in this challenge to heteronormative masculinity. However, I observe, in the production of this subject, that while a greater spectrum of masculinities is opened up for heterosexual men, there is little discussion of how women and queer men might encounter shifting discourses of masculinity and femininity in outdoor recreation. Thus, I anticipate that the radical impact of this subject on hegemonic discourses of masculinity and femininity remains limited. Further, I am concerned with what else is at work in the production of this subject, in particular with regards to discourses of race, class and nation.

Second, the transformed traveler is carefully scripted by intersecting discourses of class and masculinity. As this subject asserts his desire to be away from his desk and out in the forest, he is quickly read as middle class. The transformed traveler negotiates his class privilege deftly, crafting out a place of innocence. This subject, through assertions that relationships and mental wellbeing should be weighted more heavily than wealth and power, distances himself from the hegemonic masculinities presumed to be responsible for gender, race and class inequality (see Kusz, 2004, 2007 for his discussion of parallel practices amongst alternative sport participants such as skateboarders). This subject is understood to be disinterested in his afforded privileges – what he values most is not his ability to profit from his class position but his capacity to



contribute to the emotional health of himself and those around him. His decision to deride the importance of wealth and power evidence his choice to do so and thus his assured position amongst those who are able to access both. Further, by asserting his emotional intuitiveness, the transformed traveler pushes conventional masculinities onto the poor and working classes. Associating now troubling masculine qualities such as strength and aggressiveness with more physical or corporeal masculinities (frequently attributed to the working class, in particular in the realm of sport and physical culture (see Bourdieu, 1984)) becomes a technique through which this middle class subject erases the extent to which he is still shaped by and profit from the discursive production of hegemonic masculinity. Lastly, the production of the transformed traveler opens up the possibility for outdoor recreationists to assert their disconnection from the privileges gained from collusion with hegemonic masculinity and subsequently to find oneself in a marginalized position. The prolific growth of men's rights and boys' rights rhetoric which asserts that reverse sexism is a central social justice issue may be lent credence through the transformed traveler.

While I posit that the transformed traveler pushes particularly fraught masculine traits onto the poor and working classes, I do not to suggest this shifting is not contested. The assertion that middle class men have staked claims to emotional intuitiveness is revealing of the discursive construction of this particular subject. It is not indicative of whether or not working class and poor men have an interest in the realm of emotion, mental wellbeing and balance or in participation in the upkeep of relationships with friends, spouses and children. What it is telling of is which men will be able to access these qualities through this particular subject position. If the transformed traveler comes to be made knowable through the cyclical journey away from one's mental labour to the restful experiences of wilderness leisure, it is possible to see how

working class and poor men are precluded from taking up this subject position. I observe here a discursive technique whereby particular truths are authored by foreclosing how it will be possible to understand this subject. It is possible that counter discourses will interrupt and challenge these claims.

Thirdly, the transformed traveler is produced as a white subject. This is accomplished through the use of emotion and the propensity this subject is presumed to have for caring and compassion. Guilt is an emotional response (to claims of racism) associated with whiteness and scholars have asserted that to feel guilty (about racism) is a technique employed to lay claims to whiteness (Dyer, 1997; Lorde, 1984). The ability to feel guilty is presumed to be tied to one's superior set of morals and allows for white people to be read as fundamentally ethical and caring. The transformed traveler's claims of emotional intuitiveness and desire for mental wellbeing and quality relationships can be read in similar ways. I assert that the desire to be read as emotional leaders and as deeply caring and considerate allows for this subject to assert oneself as a moral and respectable subject. The transformed traveler wishes to distance himself from the power hungry, ethically suspect white men from their workplaces but also from the pages of Canadian history and mythology. This subject does not imagine himself a conqueror or political savant; he cannot relate to the violent pursuit of power and wealth. It will never bring him the joy that could be experienced in gazing at a vivid sunset or witnessing a mother duck leading her young. The power-hungry aggressors (those men presumed to be responsible for racism, for colonial injustice) are simply not the type of men this subject sees as role models. Every effort is made to create distance between the transformed traveler and the unthinking and unfeeling boorish lout who is not elated at the sight of a rare orchid. This subject allows for particular claims about one's moral character; that one is thoughtful, pensive, self-reflexive and driven by a desire for

collective good and personal wellbeing. These claims also ensure that this subject can be read as white and thus lay claims to the privileges of whiteness in and through it.

It is important to note that the transformed traveler lays claims to whiteness very much in reference to other, insufficiently white subjects. The traveler asserts that he is a particular sort of white person. This is somewhat similar to how middle class whites have laid claims to white privilege not just by making assertions about people of colour but also about other white people, notably poor whites (Wray, 2006).<sup>75</sup> Yet, the transformed traveler asserts his whiteness in relation to his aggressive “superiors”; he wants to strategically distance himself from wealthy and uncritical white people with inappropriate leisure interests (mountain biking, snowmobiling). They are not the right sort of white people – too boastful, greedy and unduly rewarded for their contributions. In contrast to those unthinking, selfish white people, the transformed traveler is produced as caring, kind and invested in earning the rewards he values most (deep, intimate relationships, personal well being and experiences of sublime nature). Whatever he gains through his journey is well earned (for his willingness to appreciate nature and connect with others) and demonstrative of his superior moral character. The transformed traveler wishes to distance himself from white privilege as he does hegemonic masculinity; it is presumed to be an uncomfortable fit with who he really is. The subject position is desirable to outdoor recreationists precisely because it offers up new ways of authoring what counts as white and what counts as masculine while allowing a very strategic forgetting of how white privilege and male privilege continue to operate. It is a very tempting subject position because it suspends, perhaps even ellipses the need to ask questions about accountability.

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<sup>75</sup> This is perhaps nowhere more profoundly evident in American and Canadian culture than in the prolific number of terms used to refer to inadequate white people: white trash, rednecks and trailer trash are perhaps some of the most familiar.

The transformed traveler is perhaps best understood by his imagined accessory. He does not carry a gun, a stopwatch or a compass; he carries a camera (to capture the wilderness, his children and memories). This accessory marks him as a different sort of man; an innocent, caring and emotionally tuned in man. He feels a profound disconnect from the hegemonic masculinities and dominant forms of whiteness espoused in Canadian physical culture. Yet, despite the assertions made about how these qualities do not resonate with the transformed traveler, little is done to unravel how this subject might continue to profit from patriarchy, class privilege and white privilege. Further still, as power is something this subject shows notable disdain and disinterest in, it becomes increasingly difficult to bring discussions and questions about unequal access to power into the purview of outdoor recreationists.

The transformed traveler is at first glance a challenge to hegemonic masculinity and whiteness. Yet, I urge caution with wholesale enthusiasm about this subject. While at some points the transformed traveler presents rather divergent expressions of masculinity than what is conventionally seen in the realm of outdoor recreation and physical culture, I point to sizable concerns about the implications for how race and class privileges are obscured in this subject. It is thus with considerable trepidation that I previously expressed hope for what might be possible in the realm of outdoor recreation as a result of this subject. I insist that this subject, because of the assertions that it is a radical departure from the aggressive masculinities embodied by colonial adventurers, will make questions and demands for social justice difficult to pose and articulate. Should this subject be celebrated wholeheartedly as a marker of needed shift in the discursive construction of gender, there is considerable risk that the reproduction and re-articulation of race and class discourses will go unnoticed.

In this chapter, I work with the utility of wilderness, an empty and sublime place, in constructing the transformed traveler. This subject, shaped through prescriptive conduct, is able to assert himself as good and innocent. In the next chapter, I shift my attention to how wilderness is constructed as nation. More specifically, I work with how the Canadian wilderness comes to be understood in MEC, BTC and BPNP texts in order to produce a *wilderness citizen*. In this final chapter, I draw together the varied wildernesses - empty, dangerous, threatened and sublime – in order to articulate what wilderness means for Canada. Further to this, the challenge of this next chapter is to examine the constitutive relationship between this complex and layered Canadian wilderness with the sorts of claims that can be made about Canadians through the production of the wilderness citizen. As with the transformed traveler, my examination of this subject focuses on the types of practices advocated for and the possibilities of who outdoor recreationists are invited to become.

## Chapter 6: The Wilderness Citizen

“Canada’s powerful landscape has shaped not only the geography of this country, but also the experiences of its inhabitants and the course of history” (Parks Canada Messages, 2001, p. 24).

In previous chapters, I examined how Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) and the Bruce Peninsula National Park (BPNP) represent wilderness as empty, dangerous, threatened and sublime. The task I undertake here is to detail how wilderness is constructed for the nation. I explain how a particular subject, *The Wilderness Citizen*, is produced through specific modes of conduct. I highlight the important ways in which wilderness and particular outdoor recreation practices come to be attributed with nationally significant qualities. I focus on the wilderness citizen to lend insight into how Canada, as an imagined national community, is shaped through outdoor recreation. Further, I examine how this idealized subject serves to demarcate who belongs to and who is excluded from the nation.

The construction of wilderness as nation draws on familiar national mythologies. By extension, the wilderness citizen is produced as a subject through national myths. Razack’s definition of national mythologies is particularly applicable to Canada as a white settler society.<sup>76</sup>

National mythologies or national stories are about a nation’s origins and history. They enable citizens to think of themselves as part of a community, defining who belongs and who does not belong to the nation. The story of the land as shared and as developed by enterprising settlers is manifestly a racial story. Through claims to reciprocity and equality, the story produced European settlers as the bearers of civilization while

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<sup>76</sup> Razack (2002) defines a white settler society as “one established by Europeans on non-European soil. Its origins lie in the dispossession and near extermination of Indigenous populations by the conquering Europeans. As it evolves, a white settler society continues to be structured by a racial hierarchy” (p. 1).

simultaneously trapping Aboriginal people in the pre-modern, that is, before civilization has occurred. (2002, p. 2; see also McClintock, 1995)

National mythologies shape what is perceived as desirable for Canada and Canadians. In this chapter, I consider how particular wilderness discourses, recreation practices and subjects are integral to the imagining of Canada as a national community. One of the key questions I wrestle with is: How is wilderness employed in the telling of national stories and the construction of Canadian citizen-subjects? From Razack, I understand that analyses of national mythologies inevitably lead to questions and assertions about who belongs to and who is excluded from the nation.

In this chapter, I navigate how outdoor recreation texts from MEC, the BTC and the BPNP shape Canada into what Anderson (1991/1983) would term an “imagined community.” Looking at the discursive construction of wilderness and the production of the wilderness citizen in these texts, I interrogate the implied assertions about Canada and Canadians. In my discussion of national community and wilderness citizenship, I am using citizenship as a measurement or means to determine belonging. I work here with a notion of citizenship as connected to national community rather than exclusively to the state (and related rights based discourses). I draw from Marshall (1950) to clarify how I work with citizenship in this chapter. He writes:

Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are *full* members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of *an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed*. (p. 28-9, emphasis added)

The wilderness citizen can best be understood as an example of ideal citizenship: one's capacity to embody this subject becomes a measure of one's place in the Canadian nation. In this chapter, I point to how one of the most important ways of evaluating whether one belongs to the Canadian nation is based on building and sustaining a proper relationship with the wilderness. The wilderness citizen is the suitable visitor, advocate and protector of the wilds; he is at home in the wilderness.

### Canadian wilderness

What are specifically national features that are attributed to the Canadian wilderness? How are they working to construct the wilderness citizen? Some of the subjects of the MEC, BPNP and BTC texts - the transformed traveler, the calculating adventurer and the conscientious consumer - are subjects that could be read as traversing national lines. However, I argue that they hold a particular salience for Canadian outdoor recreationists. The wilderness citizen is presented to outdoor recreationists as authentically and desirably Canadian, its status as such does not require explication. While previous subject positions provided the means to lay claims to white, masculine and class privileges, the wilderness citizen offers, in addition, the promise of national belonging to those who are able to take it up. The wilderness citizen is embedded in the Canadian wilderness and secured through practices that demonstrate how Canadians should be, act and feel in "their" wilderness.

I want to pause to reconsider how previous chapters have provided different images or discourses of wilderness as empty, dangerous, threatened and sublime. I showed how each is understood to be Canadian in specific ways. These wilderness discourses work their way into this chapter as the fantastical representations of the "true" Canadian wilderness as a place that is free of human inhabitants, dangerous, at risk and restorative. In my opening chapter, *The*



*Calculating Adventurer*, I attend to how the wilderness is produced as a place that is assumed to be without human inhabitants or presence. The discursive production of wilderness as empty has considerable resonance for the imagining of the Canadian nation. Lawrence (2002) asserts that fantasies of Canadian benevolence and goodness rest on the erasure of Indigenous people and presence: to acknowledge Indigenous people would mean white settlers acquiesce to a role in violence, theft and injustice. Thus, the discursive production of wilderness as empty is always and already tied into national mythologies and the production of particular citizen-subjects. I then discuss how the empty wilderness is produced as a dangerous place which can only be navigated by technologically proficient, knowledgeable and responsible adventurers.

In *The Conscientious Consumer*, I detail how the wilderness comes to be understood as threatened by specific sets of, most often, individualized practices. It is worth observing that the alarm about wilderness destruction frequently focuses on Canadian wildernesses. Specific Canadian sites - notably Temagami, the Carmanah Valley, the Stein River Valley and Clayoquot Sound - have received considerable attention. These locations are afforded special significance for Canada and Canadians and thus their imminent destruction is cause for concern (and in some instances action). In this chapter, I extend my discussion about the importance of protecting nationally significant wilderness and how this wilderness is employed in the production of citizen-subjects.

In *The Transformed Traveler*, I attended to how the restorative and restful qualities attributed to the wilderness allow it to be used as a site for personal transformation by outdoor recreationists. Scholars have attributed the journey out of the city and into the wilderness with special meaning for Canada and Canadians (Braun, 2003; Phillips, 1997; Shields, 1991). The claims that contact with wilderness will somehow transform urban Canadians continue to

resonate; albeit in divergent ways. Shifts in using the wilderness to assert a more caring masculinity may be an important clue into what sorts of subjects are desirable to Canadian outdoor recreationists. Thus, I have already begun to build analyses of wilderness and its ties to nation-building. Wilderness constructed as sublime, empty, dangerous and endangered temporally figures into national mythologies.

The task of this chapter is to continue examining how a national wilderness is imagined and how it in turn produces a specific citizen-subject. It is in the wilderness citizen that many of the ideas of this thesis culminate. I argue that the production of this subject illuminates much about the role of outdoor recreation in Canadian nation-building. The wilderness citizen is intricately woven, often alongside the transformed traveler, the conscientious consumer and the calculating adventurer, into Canadian national mythologies. Examining the Canadian wilderness and this citizen-subject allows for a more in depth understanding of what is at stake in outdoor recreation.

### *Wilderness as nation*

Numerous scholars (Mohanram, 1999; Nash, 2001; Olwig, 1996) attend to how wilderness or nature is positioned as a symbol of the nation. The preservation of wilderness or environmental politics is often premised on the assumed link between nature and nation. Harvey (1996) argues that “[e]nvironmental politics then becomes caught up in handing down to future generations a sense of national identity grounded in certain environmental traits. Put the other way round, nationalism without some appeal to environmental imagery and identity is a most unlikely configuration” (p. 171). From Harvey, I draw that wilderness and particular relationships to it are integral to the construction of national identities.

Although relevant on a global scale, the wildernesses of North America have been used strategically in the making of national identity in Canada and the U.S.A. (Berger, 1966; Nash, 2001; Shields, 1991). Thus, while associating wilderness with the nation is by no means unique to Canada, there is specificity to how Canadian wilderness is employed in the construction of Canada as a national community. National parks have become key site for the making of Canadian nationalism. MacLaren (1999), in his analysis of 200 years of use of Jasper National Park by non-Aboriginal people, claims that “citizens flock to national parks and feel Canadian in them” (p. 9). He explains that the national park, as a form of wilderness, was created to meet the recreational and spiritual needs of “environmentally-committed, deskwork-weary urbanites” (p. 21; see also Hermer, 2002). The national park also rests on the discursive production of wilderness as empty of human presence. Mackey (2002) explains that the wilderness, in particular the wilderness of parks, is highly regulated in order to control how aboriginal presence is understood and controlled. She writes:

the ‘wilderness’ was inhabited for centuries by complex societies of Aboriginal people, and was not a ‘wilderness; in the way we think of it today...it was not, as it is now, a site marked out for leisure, a space of untouched nature in which to recuperate from one’s ‘real’ life. (p. 44-45)

As is evidenced in the previous chapter, *The Transformed Traveler*, the use of wilderness as a leisure site for rest and recuperation holds tremendous appeal and is highlighted in outdoor recreation texts. Parks, as a specific form of wilderness, are designed to correspond with a restorative or healing relationship with nature (Hermer, 2002; Lacombe, 1998; Mackey, 2002; MacLaren, 1999).

The national parks, as emblems of Canadian wilderness, are carefully managed. More specifically, the Canadian wilderness is strategically mapped out with the goal of encapsulating certain “wildernesses” in the parks system. Parks Canada (PC) divides Canada into 39 regions and each is described and demarcated on the basis of its unique and “representative” wilderness features (Parks Canada, *National Park System Plan*, p. 4). The Bruce Peninsula National Park falls into region 29, described as “one of the most human-altered regions of Canada” (Parks Canada, *National Park System Plan*, p. 77). The Niagara Escarpment, old growth cedars, caves, alvars, dunes and habitat for orchids, black bears and flying squirrels are listed as factors in the designation of the Upper Bruce as an important ‘representative’ wilderness for Canada.

While each park is selected and developed on the basis of its unique and “representative” natural features, there is also a perceived universal connection between all parks. Parks Canada invests considerable attention in shaping how park visitors and Canadians perceive the wilderness enclosed in the parks, eagerly noting that: “Canadians are passionate about these special places, and rank national parks and national historic sites third and fourth as symbols of Canadian identity, after the flag and the anthem” (Parks Canada Messages, 2001, p. 43). Parks are presumed to be meaningful to Canadians and Parks Canada asserts that Canadians already connect national identity with wilderness. In many ways, this claim reflects a particular era of Parks Canada mandates. Mortimer-Sandilands (2009) explains how Parks Canada, in a recent report on Ecological Integrity, works to create a seamless understanding of parks history (as always about ecological wellbeing) rather than one invested at various points over the previous century in tourism, resource extraction, wildlife conservation or cultural heritage (p. 162). Thus, although national parks have not always functioned in the same way as symbols of the nation,

the task for Parks Canada is to reinforce the presumed longstanding connection Canadians have with the wilderness of parks while suppressing their disjointed and complex histories.

The affiliation of wilderness with the Canadian nation is echoed in MEC's various partnerships. In 1991, MEC endorsed the Canadian Wilderness Charter, whose aim is to "protect[s] Canada" (MEC Winter 1991, p. 28). This turn of phrase is significant; the Charter is presumed not to simply protect the wilderness. Rather, by equating wilderness with Canada, the task undertaken is no less than the preservation of the nation. Interestingly, this charter does not suggest what specifically places wilderness, and subsequently Canada, at risk. As this chapter unfolds, the techniques through which wilderness is produced and employed in the service of nation building reveal much about why the preservation of wilderness is framed as urgent and vital to the survival of a particular Canadian nation.

#### *Wilderness heritage*

In 2004, MEC undertook a partnership with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) entitled "The Big Wild" (MEC Summer 2004, p. 127). CPAWS is described as "Canada's only national non-profit organization devoted exclusively to protecting Canada's wilderness heritage" (MEC Summer 2004, p. 127). The assertion that MEC and CPAWS will collectively preserve "wilderness heritage" appears a lofty, if somewhat illusory, goal. In promoting this new collaboration, MEC does little to articulate what constitutes "wilderness heritage" and what sort of preservation methods are needed to keep it intact. The reference to heritage suggests that what requires preservation is not simply a certain space, or habitat or landscape (as with the Parks Canada model of dividing the nation into representative regions), but that there are particular historical meanings and notions of ownership which warrant preservation in and through the wilderness. What marks certain wildernesses as national is the

belief that they belong to “us” (and we in turn to them). Collectively, Canadians are responsible to care for the wilderness. I suggest that what is protected is not just the physical wilderness but specific ways of understanding it and participating in it. What is preserved through these definitions is the use of wilderness in national mythologies.

The importance of preserving wilderness heritage is emphasized in other outdoor recreation texts. The BTC shares the desire for “the conservation of our natural heritage for future generations” (BTC Fall 1997, p. 10). The BTC describes the trail as “an invaluable environmental and cultural asset” (BTC Fall 2003, p. 3). This description is helpful in understanding the intention behind the phrase “wilderness heritage.” The suggestion that particular places, such as the Bruce Trail, are simultaneously environmentally and culturally significant reveals that wilderness heritage might be understood as key sites, moments or practices which tie together nature and culture in the service of nation building. In the *National Park System Plan*, a key objective for Parks Canada is “to protect for all time representative natural areas of Canadian significance in a system of national parks, to encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this natural heritage so as to leave it unimpaired for future generations” (Parks Canada, *National Park System Plan*, p. 2). Heritage needs protecting in ways that are distinct from methods employed in the protection of wilderness. A feature from *Parks Canada Messages*,<sup>77</sup> an instructional guide for Parks Canada staff in constructing materials (presentations, letters, and displays), is helpful in demonstrating how wilderness preservation is insufficient for the protection of wilderness heritage. One “message” indicates a key goal of PC is “to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada’s

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<sup>77</sup> This BPNP text is useful for understanding how PC intends to shape the meanings attributed to park wilderness. The ‘Messages’ are intended to guide staff in constructing uniform communications to convey effectively the ethos of Parks Canada with regards to wilderness (through parks) and culture (through national historic sites). Phrases from this document are found in the park newsletter, on park signage, in the Visitor Centre and in PC promotions, both in the BPNP but also in all other national parks and historic sites.

natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations” (Parks Canada Messages, 2001, p. 2; see also BPNP 2002, p. 23). In this quote, Parks Canada indicates that one of its central tasks is not simply to preserve park wildernesses but to shape public consciousness around the meaning of parks for the nation. The wilderness must be preserved but it must also be done in ways which facilitate desired understandings of the nation.

These messages are intended for both parks and historic sites. In terms of historical sites, the references to culture and commemoration are not altogether surprising. However, PC does little to distinguish what sorts of outcomes or experiences are anticipated in parks compared to historic sites. Given the repeated references to natural or wilderness heritage, it is plausible that parks are intended to be understood as integral to Canadian culture and to be worthy of celebration. The focus on the culture of the wilderness in Parks Canada texts is in keeping with the name change undertaken in 1993. The change from using Canada Parks Services to Parks Canada<sup>78</sup> reflects a departmental move (from Environment Canada to Canadian Heritage). In explaining the meaning of this departmental shift, then Park Superintendant Bob Day suggests that Parks Canada will “continue to play a strong role in protecting and celebrating nature and culture in Canada” (BPNP 1993, p. 2). Parks Canada more broadly, and the BPNP specifically, is tasked with fostering “Canadian heritage” by “protect[ing] natural areas...that have given us our identity” (BPNP 1993, p. 2).

Clearly, “wilderness heritage” plays an influential role in shaping how Canada and Canadians should be understood. In *Parks Canada Messages*, parks and heritage sites are

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<sup>78</sup> Parks Canada was previously used to reference the government body responsible for Canadian national parks from 1972 to 1987.

described as venues that articulate “the story of who we are and where we come from” (Parks Canada Messages, 2001, p. 14). According to Parks Canada, national parks are said to “represent the power of Canada’s natural environment and the vitality of its culture – important aspects of what it means to be Canadian” (Parks Canada Messages, 2001, p. 8). Parks, then, are key sites in which particular national mythologies operate to reveal who Canadians are and what sort of subjects we are understood to be. Parks are relied on as the site of wilderness heritage to influence how the nation and its citizens will come to be understood. Mortimer-Sandilands (2009) illustrates how the meaning of wilderness for the nation is temporal: it shifts to correspond with the needs the Canadian state has for the nation. For example, Trudeau employed the expansion of parks as sampling from representative wildernesses, a process Mortimer-Sandilands (2009) describes as “multinaturalism”, to correspond with the development of state multiculturalism (p. 174). The production of a wilderness heritage, while presented as transcending the history of the nation, is in fact produced in rather different ways to correspond with temporal national needs. The *Messages* leave little doubt that parks should be seen as integral sites to Canadian mythology; this document includes the claim that “Canada’s powerful landscape has shaped not only the geography of this country, but also the experiences of its inhabitants and the course of history” (BPNP Parks Canada Messages, 2001, p. 24). These claims from the BPNP, the BTC and MEC emphasize the importance of wilderness heritage for Canadians yet rarely explicitly articulates what exactly this heritage consists of or what can be learned about Canada through the wilderness. It prompts the question: what or whose heritage is produced in the wilderness and, how is Canada to be understood? Given my focus on data from 1987 through 2007, this analysis speaks to present day manifestations of wilderness heritage and reflects what Canada is eager to assert about itself today.



*Wilderness as priceless treasure*

From the significance placed on wilderness by these outdoor recreation organizations, it is not surprising that a special and loaded set of descriptions is attached to it. In the previous chapter, *The Transformed Traveler*, I show that wilderness is often represented through a set of descriptors that are grand, even fantastic. This is further extended in discussions of recognizably national wildernesses. The BTC includes descriptions of the trail and surrounding areas as “priceless treasures” (BTC Spring 2003, p. 5), while the BPNP refers to parks as “national treasures” (BPNP *Life on the Edge*) or “special places” (Parks Canada Messages, 2001, p. 8), suggesting to visitors that “these parks are your treasures...yours to cherish and protect” (BPNP 2002, p. 2). These descriptions suggest that Canadian wilderness is extraordinary but also that it can be used to demarcate belonging. The BPNP suggests that the wilderness is “yours” – begging the question – to whom does the wilderness belong? These descriptions are attached to specific sites, rather than to a nameless wilderness. These places are framed as wildernesses which are representative of the nation. If wilderness is approached as a central facet of Canadian identity, it becomes necessary to demonstrate that it is uniquely Canadian and deserving of a cherished position in national mythologies. Similarly, the assumption is that by protecting wilderness we demonstrate our worthiness of possessing these priceless national treasures. The wilderness can become “ours” by undertaking a proper relationship to it.

Representing wilderness as “precious” or as “treasure” suggests that it has great value to the nation and its citizens. Why use this particular set of language to describe nature? Harvey (1996) suggests that “[t]here has been a long history within bourgeois life of resistance to and research for an alternative to money as a way to express values” (p. 155). Harvey explores how nature, as with religion, family or nation, has come to be a repository for bourgeois values. Thus,

the impetus to see wilderness as treasure (or as priceless), terms which clearly invoke material wealth, emerges from a desire of the ruling class to locate value within nature. Similarly, the desire to possess and cherish wilderness suggests that it, to some extent, is property. Further, if wilderness is our precious treasure, the assumption is that it is we are eager to both celebrate and protect it. Here, I observe the suggestion of responsibility for wilderness: that for owners of precious wilderness there is a duty or obligation to protect it. What is suggested here is not only that we understand wilderness as valuable to Canada, but that we must invest ourselves in its preservation. The “Canadian-ness” of cherishing wilderness hints at how a particular, responsible subject is imagined in relation to these special places.

In referring to wilderness as (national) heritage and as (national) treasure, it is evident that wild places have come to be understood as meaningful not simple to individual citizens but to collective interests. In his work on Foucault’s governmentality and environmentalism, Luke (1995) suggests that desires for environmental protection and management, such as maintenance and development of national parks, can be understood as forms of biopower. He writes: “[s]ustainability, like sexuality, becomes a discourse about exerting power over life” (p. 76; see also Baldwin, 2003). In these outdoor recreation texts, I have analyzed how the nation’s wilderness is positioned as requiring careful management and preservation; managing national wilderness must be accomplished through “*disciplining* of individual bodies...[and] *regulation* of biological processes of human beings” (Stoler, 1995, p. 33). Stoler (1995), explaining Foucault’s work on biopower, suggests that these processes of discipline and regulation will create “a normalizing society and a new form of racism” (p. 33). Considering Luke and Stoler’s work on biopower, I suggest that the practices of “protecting and cherishing wilderness,” advocated through outdoor recreation texts, demand the disciplining of bodies and the regulation of

populations in order to serve the demands of “the wilderness” (perhaps instead of “the race” or “society”). What Luke observes is that the management of wilderness (as life in Foucault’s conceptualization of bio-power) draws nature into the purview of economic and social governance, while Stoler’s analyses enables us to see how wilderness heritage discourse also reveals how race factors into claims of belonging to national wilderness.

*Canadian wilderness, International accolades*

Before I begin to examine in greater detail the practices purported to be best suited to the task of cherishing and protecting the Canadian wilderness, I pause to consider how international recognition of Canada and its wild places is presented in these outdoor recreation texts. Each of these institutions is quick to advocate that both wilderness and their respective roles in outdoor recreation are of consequence to Canada and Canadians, as well as to a broader international community.

MEC eagerly acknowledges that “[t]he MEC logo has been worn throughout Canada and has become informally recognized throughout the world as a symbol of this country” (MEC Summer 2004, p. 5). MEC embraces how its logo has become a recognizable symbol of Canada on an international scale. This claim points to how MEC, as a brand, exploits its Canadian-ness. I draw attention to this claim of international recognition because it is presumed to signal the important role that MEC plays in shaping wilderness-oriented recreation. One might conclude that MEC plays this important role because of its presumed expertise in crafting gear for outdoor excursions in national and international wildernesses. It also reveals the sort of nation Canada is presumed to be if it can be symbolized by an outdoor recreation co-op logo as well as a flag. While MEC might clearly be understood as a Canadian symbol – it is less revealing of how Canadian wilderness is perceived internationally.

The BTC is eager to draw attention to the importance of the Bruce Trail as a nationally and internationally significant route through the unique wilderness of the Niagara Escarpment. The BTC proudly announces that the Bruce Trail has been deemed the “Best Natural outdoor site” by Attractions Canada (BTC Fall 2002, p. 16). There is also a sense of lament for the lack of local acknowledgement of the trail’s significance and potential for ecotourism growth (BTC Summer 1997, p. 31). The lack of appreciation of “world class treasures” in our own backyards is presented as a considerable oversight and disappointment to the BTC (BTC Summer 1997, p. 30). Some comfort is drawn from the international recognition from UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) of the Niagara Escarpment as a World Biosphere Reserve under the Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB). This designation is referred to frequently in BTC magazines, featured on plaques along the trail and mentioned in numerous BPNP sources, park signage and within the Visitor Centre. This designation reinforces what the BTC and the BPNP have long asserted: that these are special wildernesses worthy of adoration and protection. The frequent mention of the UNESCO designation and the concern that this special place goes unnoticed may perhaps signal that Canadians are not adequately appreciating their wilderness and thus, failing to uphold their responsibility of ensuring its protection.<sup>79</sup>

The BPNP also references American naturalist John Muir to ensure that the wilderness of the Bruce Peninsula is understood to be of national and international importance. A plaque celebrating Muir’s travels through the Bruce and marking out a trail honouring him (through Singing Sands in the BPNP) reads “the father of parks in North America and one of the first

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<sup>79</sup> Drawing praise and interest for the Canadian wilderness internationally, according to Mortimer-Sandilands (2009), has also allowed parks during periods of reduced funding (such as the Mulroney Conservative government (1984-1993) to advocate for their importance internationally in order to guarantee funding from the state. Thus, rather than insisting that there are wildernesses for the nation, national parks became wildernesses with global significance.

naturalists to recognize the richness of the Bruce”. Muir holds iconic status among outdoor recreationists, naturalists and environmentalists and his visits to the Bruce lend credibility to the assertions that the wilderness of the Upper Bruce is truly precious and worthy of protection. I suggest these references to Muir and UNESCO are a means by which these outdoor recreation organizations assert the authority and truthfulness of their claims about the special and unique qualities of Canadian wilderness. The claims that Canadian wilderness is a precious commodity that must be duly prized is reinforced by praise from internationally recognized persons and organizations. Further, these credible references imply that Canadians, without adequate persuasion, may come to different conclusions about the relationship between nation and wilderness.

The wilderness is always and already more than just a forest, a mountain range, or collection of lakes; the wilderness is a space employed in the making of the Canadian nation. It is possible to see how wilderness is presumed to be significant for Canada and Canadians. References to heritage, to preciousness and international renown equate Canada with its wildernesses. The repetition and urgency of these claims could indicate the insufficient connection that Canadians feel with the wilderness. The outdoor recreation texts I examine, while constructing wilderness as nation, illuminate the extent to which this relationship is inadequately embraced. The BTC, BPNP and MEC must frequently remind readers of this relationship and coach them in the appropriate way to both understand and interact with the wilderness. In the assertions that wilderness *is* Canada, only a modicum of detail is provided about what this discursive production of wilderness should mean for Canadians. Evidently, if wilderness is equated with the nation, it is presumed to reveal something about its citizens. The descriptions of wilderness as nation gesture to the conduct that is expected of Canadians. The

relationship between Canadians and their wilderness requires particular acts and beliefs to be assembled and maintained.

### What to do in the Canadian wilderness?

The discursive production of wilderness as nation presumes that Canadians connect with and care deeply for the wilderness; the BTC, the BPNP and MEC foster and solidify this relationship. There is concern that some outdoor recreationists, and some Canadians, do not wholeheartedly endorse the assertion that wilderness is emblematic and meaningful for Canada. According to these outdoor recreation organizations, this is a cause of concern and readers/members/visitors must be rallied to see wilderness as nation. I turn my attention here to the sort of practices which Canadians are instructed to undertake in the wilderness. I argue that these practices, framed in the texts as necessary and desirable, illustrate and articulate how wilderness reproduces national mythologies. Further, I suggest that these practices are instrumental in shaping the wilderness citizen. Through his engagement with the prescribed acts, sentiments and desires the wilderness citizen comes to be read as the desired subject of the Canadian wilderness.

The BPNP asserts that parks are one place to learn “the story of who we are and where we come from” (Parks Canada Messages, 2001, p. 14). National parks, where many Canadians encounter and experience wilderness, are key sites for the telling of national myths. The Summer 1993 MEC catalogue features a cover, as well as multiple two-page spreads, that include images from the British Columbia Archives and Record Service of various groups of men and women arranged along lake shores and on glaciers around Mount Biddle in what is identified as present day Yoho National Park, the Opabin Pass in British Columbia and the summit of the Necillewaet Glacier in British Columbia (MEC Summer 1993, p. 3). This series of images includes shots of

men pausing from work with pick axes in hand and women in dresses standing by (MEC Summer 1993, p. 2, 5). In contrast, an image of a group of women and men at a lakeshore suggests wealth and leisure (p. 1). The women, dressed in long dresses with ample petticoats and fashionable hats, pose in a wilderness they are evidently, given their dress, visiting. MEC provides no explanation for the decision to include this series of photographs in the catalogue. There are no captions included with the images and the exact year of the photos is not included. The images are completely decontextualized from their source (BC Archives and Records Service) and time period. As MEC relies almost exclusively on its members to contribute atmosphere shots, the decision to seek out these historical images is unusual and intriguing. I propose that this decision, although seemingly inconsistent with the pattern of MEC catalogues, fits with the wilderness experiences imagined to resonate with Canadian outdoor recreationists. The history recalled in these images positions wilderness as a frontier to be discovered by young adventurers. The glaciers, lakes and peaks of British Columbia are conceived as locales for bourgeois white people, eager for wilderness to explore. The shot of reclining men and women at a lakefront is emblematic of how many urban Canadians have and continue to encounter the wilderness. Seeking an escape from the city, the stunning glacial lake becomes the setting for rest and relaxation. These images are imagined to ring true with outdoor recreationists who share this popularized Canadian wilderness history. Further, invoking this leisure history suggests that to some extent the experiences of outdoor recreationists are timeless - that Canadians have always participated in these activities.

There are similarities between these images in the MEC catalogue and BTC magazines. Descriptions of the Chilkoot Trail<sup>80</sup> in a BTC article emphasize the important aspects of

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<sup>80</sup> The Chilkoot Trail is a hiking trail established through an earlier route used by 'gold rush prospectors.' It runs from just outside Skagway, Alaska to the Yukon Territory. The trail is 60+ kilometers in length and is regulated by

Canadian history that are embedded in this wilderness (BTC Spring 1989, p. 10). The mountains, forests and glaciers along the Chilkoot Trail are recognized as a part of Canadian culture alongside the manufactured objects that litter the trail and the forest floor. The trail's popularity is tied to its commemoration of frontier exploration, the Yukon Gold Rush, and the Canadian north. While the wilderness of the trail is unquestionably impressive, the aspects of the trail that secure its role in Canadian wilderness heritage are exploration fantasies and prospecting history. Like the historical MEC photos, the Chilkoot Trail is presumed to be a familiar and interesting site to outdoor recreationists because these wildernesses shape Canada as a national community.

The BPNP and BTC make frequent reference to various heritage sites within the park. Lighthouses along the shoreline and on Flowerpot Island receive considerable attention in the BPNP newsletter. Lighthouses are presented as a unique part of the landscape of the Upper Bruce – a feature that elides the division of nature and culture. Lighthouses, remembered with a certain amount of “legend and romance” (BTC Fall 2001, p. 10), are presented to readers as essential sites historically used to help settlers navigate the dangerous waters of Georgian Bay. Currently, the lighthouses, even those still in operation, are produced as nostalgic places where outdoor recreationists can reconnect with their marine heritage (BTC Fall 2001, p. 8-11).

This is the sort of heritage connection that is also taken up in the MEC “self-propelled adventure story” contest wherein two members detail their experiences of skiing in rural

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Parks Canada and the United States National Parks Service. The Trail leads hikers across an international border – requiring hikers to share citizenship information with the Parks prior to departure. The trail is littered with historical features – including remnants of base camps and a prolific amount of ‘garbage’ from prospectors that has now been deemed historical artifacts. It is commonplace to see rusted cans, stove pieces, horseshoes and other abandoned objects along the trail. In fact, these artifacts are presented as key to the Chilkoot Trail experience – which is frequently presented as a chance to walk through history and to experience the challenges of the trail as the prospectors might once have encountered it. It is a chance for present day hikers to embody the history of the region and to connect the struggles of the prospectors with their own discomforts and challenges along the trail. The trail, although administered jointly by the US National Parks Service and Parks Canada, shows notable distinctions between the US and Canadian sides. For example, on the Canadian side, the park staff who cover the trail do not carry weapons, in contrast to US park staff. Also, the trail is typically covered from south to north with the border crossing (from the Alaska to the Yukon Territory) occurring at the summit. Thus for Canadians traversing the trail, the most exhilarating part of the hike corresponds with a return to ‘home.’



Saskatchewan with their newborn child. These members invoke icons from Canadian history/mythology, including Franklin and Mackenzie (MEC Winter 1997, p. 42), perhaps lending credibility to the authenticity of their adventuring story while tugging on the heartstrings of patriotic outdoor recreationists.<sup>81</sup>

Further, history itself is embedded in the wilderness. The surroundings of Mono township<sup>82</sup> are poetically described in a BTC article as a place where “abandoned vestiges of Ontario’s heritage dissolve into the landscape” (BTC Fall 1998, p. 28). The possibility of examining Canadian history or culture as distinct from wilderness becomes increasingly implausible and wilderness becomes the site where national narratives or histories are written, where cultures are produced and where values are shaped. Both the accounts of the Chilkoot Trail and this description of Mono township suggest that national mythologies – stories about how the nation came about and who belongs to it – are written into the wilderness. Thus, it is in and through interactions with wilderness discourse that claims to authentic Canadianness are made.

The commemoration of historical leisure in the B.C. Rockies, the Chilkoot Trail, lighthouses of the Bruce Peninsula and Mono Township in outdoor recreation texts signals that these are sites of wilderness heritage. They are sites through which the audiences of MEC, the BTC and the BPNP will learn what sort of nation Canada is. Urry (1990), in his analysis of heritage tourism, suggests that the nostalgia invoked in national heritage sites is “quite different from total recall; it is a socially organized construction. The question is not whether we should or should not preserve the past, but what kind of past we have chosen to preserve” (p. 109).

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<sup>81</sup> Additionally, this story reproduces a fantasy about outdoor recreation for families. In the discussion of the wilderness family later in this chapter, I explore how notions of family are used to make claims about the wilderness citizen.

<sup>82</sup> Mono township is northwest of Toronto, Ontario. Mono Cliffs Provincial Park is in this area.

Looking at these sites, I consider not the truthfulness or accuracy of these representations, but what outdoor recreationists might be asked to remember when they view them. Who is the subject of the discourse of wilderness heritage or wilderness as nation?

The links between wilderness and Canada are slowly pulled together through these outdoor recreation texts; I now turn to consider how recreationists are invited to participate. Outdoor recreationists are drawn into various associated organizations and texts that reestablish a particular relationship between wilderness and Canada. For example, MEC points out the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alpine Club of Canada – suggesting that this longstanding club will resonate with the interests and experiences of its members (MEC Winter 2005, p. 84). Similarly, the BTC regularly profiles history books, primarily natural histories and works that connect the BTC with mountaineering, hiking, Canadian and European histories (BTC Summer 1987, p. 23). These reading suggestions to outdoor recreationists reestablish and re-circulate Canada's wilderness heritage. In these histories, Canada is read as a country with deep connections to wilderness and strong desires to preserve it. Further, Canada is tied, through outdoor pursuits, such as mountaineering and hiking, to European history and culture. References to Europe are noteworthy here. Bordo (1992), in his analysis of Group of Seven artwork, suggests that one of the key features of this iconic Canadian art is the absence of human presence – a departure from European landscape painting tradition. Arguably, this trend corresponds with historic national imperatives for Canada: it was a means of distinguishing Canada from imperial Europe. The resurgence of Europe in wilderness heritage perhaps points to how the Canadian nation is discursively produced in this moment. I cautiously suggest that the inclusion of Europe might signal who outdoor recreation organizations wish to assert as shaping Canadian history and

present. Currently, affiliations with Europe might be employed, through wilderness heritage, to demarcate who belongs to the nation.

There are physical ways that outdoor recreationists can secure the link between nation and wilderness. In addition to reading and consuming the stories presented to them in outdoor recreation texts, some recreationists have the opportunity to actualize or embody a particular relationship. For example, a volunteer lighthouse keeper program is run through the BPNP (in conjunction with the “Friends” organization) (BTC Fall 2001, p. 10). This program allows recreationists to spend brief periods of time living and “working” in historical lighthouses and, more specifically, to connect with their presumed heritage. Similarly, mapmaking is presented as an intriguing hobby for recreationists to research and take up by collecting historical maps. The history of cartography is presented as something that is unique and interesting for history and geography buffs. One BTC article describes this hobby saying, “the evolution of mapping for any region provides an interesting insight into the exploration and development of that area” (BTC Winter 1999, p. 33). In both instances, recreationists are encouraged to look at various historical practices as potential hobbies that are educational and fun. There is no discussion of the integral role that cartography played in colonization in Canada. Blomley (2003) explains how cartography, in particular surveying, is an important technique for demarcating how the landscape is to be understood and how property was violently acquired by settlers in Canada. By presenting mapmaking as a fascinating pastime without engaging in discussion or critique of this practice, outdoor recreationists are actively discouraged from conceiving of these practices, either as present day leisure or historical colonial tools, as deeply politicized. Further, these histories are presumed to reflect the experiences of outdoor recreationists which include opportunities to participate in colonialist wilderness heritage and history as self-evidenced and

unproblematic leisure activities. Otherwise these outdoor recreation organizations, by including references to lighthouses, specific trails and “collection” hobbies, would antagonize their audiences. I posit that organizations such as MEC, the BTC and the BPNP have in fact gauged their audiences rather well and tap into the national mythologies to resonate with shared understandings of wilderness and nation while deliberately excluding those whose relationship to these histories/practices may be less naïve or more contaminated by colonial history.<sup>83</sup>

These texts produce wilderness as intricately connected and integral to national mythology, with outdoor recreation practices and texts providing a continuing opportunity for their claims to authenticity and relevance to Canadians. The examples I use, including references to the Chilkoot Trail, the inclusion of images of 19<sup>th</sup> century gentry in front of mountain lakes and glaciers, and reference to particular sites and practices where wilderness and heritage are fused together, collectively hint at popular mythologies of Canada as a land that was discovered and settled by Europeans. Each of these examples point to this process - whether it is the Gold Rush or the onset of tourism to the Rockies - and suggest that Canada was gradually traversed and inhabited by gritty and clever Europeans. Encouraging outdoor recreationists to perceive practices such as mapmaking as simple historical curiosities demonstrates how unproblematic the “exploration” of Canada is presumed to have been. The possibility of seeing the arrival of Europeans as a violent encounter that is deeply politicized is undermined by the way in which outdoor recreationists are prompted to “play” at colonialism. The production of wilderness as integral to Canada rests firmly on the belief that wilderness is always and already understood to be empty (see Mackey (2002) on park wildernesses as empty leisure spaces). The ability to play at discovery or exploration is only made possible through the belief that Indigenous people either did not exist or did not object to European colonialism. The national mythology at work here is,

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<sup>83</sup> For example, Indigenous people whose land was ‘discovered’ by white settlers.

above all else, a story that explains how Canada, as a white settler society, came to be. At the crux of this narrative is the need to erase indigenous presence; otherwise, the possibility of telling this story as an act of celebration and commemoration is compromised. It can no longer be a tale that allows outdoor recreationists to perceive themselves and their historical counterparts as, for the most part, good and respectable people.

However, Indigenous people are not altogether absent from these outdoor recreation texts. Their presence creates a crack in this national mythology. It is risky to acknowledge Indigenous people and to consider how they might fit into the “Canada” that is being assembled in outdoor recreation. I want to draw attention to the issue of conservation or preservation of the wilderness. The task of protecting the wilderness becomes the fulcrum around which it is possible to bend indigenous presence in ways that seem congruent with the national mythologies played by outdoor recreationists. Canada is presented as deeply devoted to conservation. The BTC asserts that conservation “is an important part of our natural heritage” (BTC Fall 1987, p. 23). Similarly, in a BPNP Visitor Centre exhibit, visitors learn that “[t]oday, Canadians accept the need for conservation”. The need to save the wilderness and its non-human inhabitants is now presented as commonsensical. The anxieties and interests that I examined in *The Conscientious Consumer* demonstrate that conserving wilderness is an agreed upon necessity. And yet, saving the wilderness often requires at least partial acknowledgement of the failures to do just that. This conundrum presents a sizable challenge: it requires embracing an understanding of the nation’s history that is less charitable and celebratory. Reconciling past ecological “mistakes,” from the near devastation of the buffalo in western Canada (referenced in BPNP Visitor Centre exhibit quoted above) to careless fires which destroyed much of the old growth forest of the Bruce Peninsula (BPNP Visitor Centre), requires recognition of the intellectual and

moral inadequacies of white settlers who did not realize the consequences of their shortsighted approach to wilderness and wildlife. The keen attention to conservation suggests a desire to reconcile this “oversight” and to ensure it is not repeated. Interestingly, although these “mistakes” are acknowledged, the assumption is that the parks themselves have and will always be important sites of wilderness preservation. This exhibit corresponds with Parks Canada’s promotion of Ecological Integrity. Mortimer-Sandilands (2009), in her analysis of this impetus, argues

The effect of this erasure of the parks’ history [as a space of leisure and preservation] is a naturalization of integrity as the destiny of Canadian national parks. The EI [Ecological Integrity] Panel took on the role of bearers of the nation, showing the “true” purpose of the parks through the clouds of poor management and apparently, inaccurate interpretation and implementation of the 1930 Act....ecological integrity erases the messiness of that history in its quest to orient the parks along a singular preservationist thread, it erased the fact that Canada is historical rather than timeless. Ecological integrity gives the nation the natural patina of the immemorial. (p. 182-3)

What Parks Canada accomplishes then, even in acknowledging periods of error, is situating Canada’s national parks as integrated to the history of wilderness preservation. The effect of glossing over these different approaches to the use of park wilderness suggests that Canada’s deep connectedness to wilderness is omnipresent. This relationship is neither manufactured nor recent; it, like the nation, appears to be natural.

Nonetheless, acknowledging white settler errors opens up a search for additional role models for conservation efforts. In the outdoor recreation texts I examine, special significance is afforded to the insights and values of Aboriginal people with regard to wilderness preservation.

In the Spring 1988 BTC magazine, during a discussion of growing landowner relations issues, members are instructed: “that serious consideration be given to the concept of stewardship of the land as opposed to ownership, an area in which we have much to learn from Indians and Inuit” (BTC Spring 1988, p. 29). This claim demonstrates both that members are presumed to be non-Aboriginal and that all Aboriginal peoples have a coherent and shared approach to land use that can be readily employed by the BTC to reconcile their landowner relations concerns. The BTC also incorporates other random bits of aboriginal wisdom. For example, a stone along the trail was engraved with the Haida proverb “We do not inherit The Earth from Our Ancestors We Borrow it from Our Children” (BTC Fall 2005, p. 3). This engraving is presented to BTC members as source of insight into how to conceptualize their relationship with wilderness. Who the Haida are or how this particular phrase fits into a broader cosmology or environmental ethos is not shared. The BTC, in each instance, presumes that members will be able to make sense of and meaningfully employ these adages. Further, there is little questioning of the ethics of non-Aboriginal BTC members appropriating aboriginal culture for the purpose of building a conservation ethic. In this section, I describe how particular wilderness spaces, such as Temagami and the Stein Valley, have been represented in outdoor recreation texts. These places, described as ancient homes or spiritual places for Indigenous people, are presumed to hold special significance for outdoor recreationists specifically and Canadians more broadly. These particular places are drawn out of the purview of Indigenous people and pulled under the umbrella of “Canada” in much the same way that pieces of aboriginal environmental ethics are extracted and reassembled into a workable environmental ethos for outdoor recreationists. The appropriation of places and wisdom from Aboriginal peoples is presented as unproblematic because it is done from a place of respect and praise.

The BPNP, in contrast to the BTC, presents non-Aboriginal visitors with a more complicated understanding of aboriginal knowledge, histories and relationships to the wilderness. While there is an exhibit in the BPNP Visitor Centre entitled “Wisdom of the Old Ways” featuring a Paul Kane painting and a smattering of phrases and objects drawn from the ethics of the Anishnabek people of the Bruce Peninsula (Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and Saugeen Ojibway Nation), aboriginality emerges at various points in the park itself and in park literature in a way that disrupts familiar discourse. This exhibit might be familiar and comforting to non-Aboriginal visitors wishing to incorporate tidbits of aboriginal culture into their own environmental ethos but there are numerous instances where this comfort is disrupted. In the BPNP newsletter, visitors are instructed not to build inukshuks (BPNP 2005, p. 7). These symbols are described as powerful, geographically specific (and not to the Upper Bruce) and that building them as a sign that “you were there first” is offensive and incorrect. Similarly, visitors find reminders that Aboriginal people are present (not simply as exhibits) at various points. For example, a 2007 newsletter provides a welcome to visitors to “the traditional homeland of the Saugeen Ojibway Nations” (BPNP, 2001, p. 11), numerous signs are located along park borders that indicate the start of aboriginal hunting grounds (Appendix I, Image 16 & 17) and several references in park documents note the desire to include Aboriginal communities in shaping the parks and research undertaken there (BPNP 2007, p. 11, Visitor Centre exhibits on fishing research). These references make the wholesale appropriation of aboriginal culture far more problematic for non-Aboriginal outdoor recreationists as it requires at least partial acknowledgement of present day Aboriginal people living in and making claims to the space that outdoor recreationists might urgently want to save and use for their leisure.



What I find most curious about these sections is the how they sit side by side with representations of empty wilderness in a way that does not appear incongruent. I think Rosaldo's notion of "imperial nostalgia", which he explains as "a mourning for what one has destroyed" (1989, in Braun, 2002, p. 136), is particularly helpful for understanding this tension. Outdoor recreation texts make it possible to take up the environmental ethos of Aboriginal people while simultaneously asserting their absence. McClintock's (1995) explanation of how Indigenous people have been lodged in "anachronistic space" reveals how this is possible. Aboriginal people have been erased – firmly placed in a nameless historic space – yet there remains a residue left behind that non-Aboriginal people might make use of. The act of taking up aboriginal environmental ethics is, in many ways, a form of imperial nostalgia. The untouched, pristine wilderness that no longer exists in its pure and fantastical form along with a people who once inhabited it are mourned and longed for. As part of the demonstration of this profound sadness about past mistakes, non-Aboriginal people might be able to take up and symbolically use the values and ethics of Aboriginal people. This form of tribute could be read a way of reconciling what was destroyed while strategically avoiding responsibilities and discussion of reparations with present day Aboriginal communities. The task of espousing and embodying aboriginal environmental ethics is now possible through the production of the wilderness citizen.

Outdoor recreationists are prompted to appreciate and appropriate aboriginal ethics in an attempt to salvage the wilderness. They are encouraged to play out and connect with particular wilderness heritage moments in designated historically significant sites. Through outdoor recreation texts, they are prompted to engage in acts of commemoration and reflection, occasionally on imperfect histories. However, these tasks put a considerable damper on the

extent to which the wilderness citizen-subject can be understood as fun or lighthearted. It appears that the desired conduct of the wilderness citizen may be, at times, rather somber.

MEC offers alternatives to these solemn and serious thoughts suggesting that it is possible for Canadian outdoor recreationists to engage in adventures and good clean fun. The description of the Baffin Island Down Parka reads “So it’s -30/40C and your friends are at the door asking you to come out and play, climb Logan, or jumpstart their car” (MEC Winter 1987, p. 8). Similarly, the Jones Yukon Parka is described saying “Finally, eh? A down parka for those who, though they may never sit atop Everest, know that the winds can blow mighty cold in their own backyard...this isn’t a jacket folks, it’s an environment” (MEC Winter 1987, p. 8). I pause on these examples because they mark a point of tension in how the wilderness citizen is produced. MEC challenges the possible implication that heritage and commemoration may result in outdoor recreation becoming a stodgy and mournful experience. MEC disrupts the production of the wilderness citizen as entirely serious by interjecting the possibility of this subject simultaneously being lighthearted and eager for explorations. I posit that these small departures in MEC catalogues signal the tensions and ambivalence embedded in the wilderness citizen. The wilderness citizen is not simply a worried soul who stares at the dying wilderness anxious about the consequences for national belonging; he is a good friend eager to explore and willing to help. Hiking the Chilkoot Trail with the wilderness citizen then will not be solely an act of remembering and an educational experience - it will be filled with laughter and a chance to collect stories that can be told over and over again. More importantly, I argue that embodying this subject, through participation in certain forms of Canadian outdoor recreation, allows this subject to be marked simultaneously as thoughtful and keen for adventure regardless of the weather.

### Becoming the wilderness citizen

MEC, the BPNP and the BTC feature an abundance of references to the relationship between wilderness and the Canadian nation. Repeated foregrounding of history and heritage suggests that this relationship is both longstanding and integral to the nation. From the types of emotions, practices and experiences expected of outdoor recreationists, appropriate responses emphasize a commitment to cherishing, respecting and engaging with our supposed wilderness heritage. The suggestion of these prescribed acts and emotions is that an expected reaction to wilderness can be anticipated from authentic Canadians. The outdoor recreation texts I examine suggest that outdoor recreationists who can meet these expectations are Canadian wilderness citizens. The texts serve as guides of conduct for outdoor recreationists; successfully enacting particular practices demarcates the subject as belonging to Canadian wilderness and subsequently, the nation.

Before looking further at the wilderness citizen, I want to return briefly to some of the previous subjects explored in this thesis. The discursive construction of wilderness as nation proposes that certain practices will ensure the wilderness citizen is recognized as truly Canadian. Returning to the calculating adventurer, the practices expected of this subject – the careful interpretation and navigation of the dangerous wilderness – are unquestionably also practices which demarcate this subject as Canadian. By effectively traversing the wilderness, the calculating adventurer demonstrates his knowledge of the wilderness and lays claim to his rightful position within it. He masters the wilderness and experiences elated feelings of freedom within it. Presumably he belongs to the wilderness as it does to him. The conscientious consumer demonstrates a profound capacity to care for the wilderness – this subject is richly invested in preserving the wilderness. Through his individualized environmental ethics, the conscientious

consumer exhibits his capacity to cherish and value the wilderness. Thus, it is not only the wilderness citizen who engages in practices which mark him as authentically Canadian; previously discussed subjects also lay claim to authentic Canadianness and undertake practices which support this assertion.

As I venture into articulating the qualities of the wilderness citizen, I propose that it is perhaps best to think of this subject not as an individual but as a collective - as wilderness citizenry. In much of the earlier parts of this chapter, it is evident that the values, goals and experiences are intended to be collective; they to speak to the imagined fraternity of Canadians as an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991/1983). The production of the wilderness citizen rests on the possibility of it being a shared position – one that is intended for and desired by many. I want to extend my discussion of wilderness citizens by considering how these subjects are shaped interdependently.

#### *The wilderness family*

The conscientious consumer and the transformed traveler are subjects deeply connected to their broader social communities; they are not lone wolves. Both the transformed traveler and the conscientious consumer can be spotted with their like-minded friends and family, undertaking practices that suggest a desire for social good (amongst other desires). Wilderness citizenry are likewise best understood in relation to the groups (or social formations) in which they find themselves. The wilderness family is one group that is specifically telling of how to understand these subjects.

The BPNP provides perhaps the clearest definition of what constitutes the family in its campground rules; this section describes the family as a father, mother and unmarried children (BPNP 1990, p. 7); this definition is later amended to say two adults and unmarried children

(BPNP 1997, p. 12). This description, intended to outline who is permitted to stay on a campsite, shapes who will be recognized and accommodated by the park as a family.<sup>84</sup> This description is narrow and an object of critique; however, the production of the wilderness family extends beyond these explicit park rules. Children and childhood, referenced by the transformed traveler as a sign of innocence, are similarly presented here both as innocent and as a sign of hope. The BTC Spring 1988 cover features four children looking about on a rock face (see Appendix H, Image 4). The children, likely four boys, each with similar longish mops of hair and t-shirt and short ensembles look in all different directions, oblivious to the camera. They concentrate on their lunch, on the view over the water and one another. The title, “Hiking’s next generation”, implies that these young boys are not just any family or bunch of kids but the future of outdoor recreation. A Spring 2003 BTC reflection from the president includes a description of the experience of walking with grandchildren, suggesting that this makes the urgency of protecting the trail all that much more apparent (p. 5). The trail needs to be intact for future generations.

MEC expresses a similar desire to draw recollections and reflections on childhood into the purview of the wilderness citizen. The Winter 1993 catalogue features a cover, and a two-page spread of children’s drawings and paintings of skiers and mountains (MEC Winter 1993, p. 1-3). These drawings are a sharp departure from the remainder of the MEC catalogue covers that typically profile adults engaged in physically challenging feats in impressive locales. At first glance, I considered whether these paintings provide an opportunity for younger audiences to be recognized by the co-op. However, after consideration of how nostalgia operates in the

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<sup>84</sup> This definition of the family is a source of tension for many with the parks as it fails to allow for broader definitions of family. A colleague once explained this scenario to me: she lives with her son and his spouse and their children. In their home, they are a family but when they arrive at the park gates – they are not permitted to stay on a single campsite. Their family is radically reshaped by this narrow definition of family. Parks Canada is eager to suggest that the park guidelines are intended as a form of ecological protection – to ensure that each campsite is not overloaded thus endangering surrounding nature. However, the flexibility of the rule for families consisting of 2 parents with more than 4 children (the maximum number of non-family members per site is 6) suggests that in some moments ecological integrity is not the sole determining factor on who will be permitted on a campsite.

representation of childhood, I offer a different reading. I posit that the inclusion of these images of children and reproductions of children's art speak to adults waxing nostalgic for their own childhoods.<sup>85</sup> Another MEC catalogue image, of three white children licking plates at a campsite, invokes the pleasures of youth (MEC Summer 1991, p. 37). The carefree image is intended to make adults laugh; this is similar to a BTC story that lightheartedly explains that a Coleman Stove is perhaps their family's most precious (and durable) heirloom (BTC Spring 1990, p. 32).<sup>86</sup> Repeat references to future generations and images of children allow outdoor recreationists to recall their own childhoods in order to invoke the appropriate emotional response. In the previous chapter, I linked Adam's (2006) work on nostalgia with a longing not for childhood but for a time of previously unchallenged power relations. Similarly, the wilderness family is a site of fantasy where particular desires for one's childhood and for one's children (or future generations) can come to fruition. It is in this collective subject that the desires for family of outdoor recreationists can be invested. The wilderness family becomes who outdoor recreationists might have wished to be and what they hope is possible.

Repeat reference to the importance of children and nostalgia for childhood in structuring one's relationship with wilderness is revealing of how family is an important site for the anchoring of wilderness heritage. Foucault (1978) insists that the role of the family is "to anchor sexuality and provide it with permanent support" (1978, p. 108). If, as Luke (1995) suggests, sustainability or wilderness preservation is substituted for sexuality, it is possible to view the heteronormative and respectable family as a key site in securing the discursive production of

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<sup>85</sup> I conclude this because the catalogues are directed towards members, who according to MEC policies must be at least 16 years of age. Additionally, the catalogues include no other features designed to appeal to children such as games, puzzles, children's stories or poems or opportunities to contribute. While certainly children might read the catalogue, there are few aspects of the catalogue which bear any similarity to other children's cultural texts (magazines, films, television shows, books or games).

<sup>86</sup> The reference here to heirloom is also noteworthy – it again invokes possession. These nostalgic objects, much like the wilderness, signal that outdoor recreation experiences belong to particular subjects.

wilderness as national heritage or treasure. Perhaps as Foucault illustrates with sexuality, the wilderness family is the site in which particular wilderness subjects are produced. The wilderness family, while illuminating the contours of wilderness discourse, is also a site through which discourses of sexuality and gender emerge.

The wilderness family is not simply about the children; it is a site through which heteronormative partnerships are fostered.<sup>87</sup> In the *Transformed Traveler*, it was possible to see how romantic partners might be able to experience greater emotional connection while out in the wilderness. The texts assume that emotional openness is a quality that men and women equally valued and contributed to heterosexual relationships. In the wilderness family, men and women are presumed to have embodied different roles historically. This is suggested, in these outdoor recreation texts, through discussion of how these demarcated positions may be shifting. In a 1990 BTC article, the narrator details how his wife was interested in having her own Swiss Army knife. Her desire for a knife is perceived as a topic both for humour and lament; the knife is presumed to be the purview of men: to possess a knife is not ladylike (BTC Winter 1990, p. 32). His wife's interest in a knife is a type of loss for him as he will no longer be read as a technically competent leader if this tool is available to her. This article, although intended to be humorous, points to assumptions about how interactions between men and women, or more accurately husbands and wives, are supposed to unfold. In another BTC article, the Minden Dog Sled Derby is described as a family event (BTC Winter 1989, p. 9). The description of the event reveals the gender relations presumed of the wilderness family. The derby is family focused and it is alleged that this description is suitable because "sled dog racing is one sport where women and men compete on equal footing – and the women win" (BTC Winter 1989, p. 9). Linking family focus

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<sup>87</sup> This coincides with Foucault's (1978) assertion that sexuality in the family emerges along two axis (husband-wife and parent-child).

with a possible venue in which men and women are equals is an interesting observation. This description works from the assumption that most forms of competition leave women at a disadvantage in comparison to their husbands. However, it also concedes that in the context of the family, it is necessary to undertake activities that both men and women enjoy (and in which they will excel). In these descriptions of family outdoor recreation, the possibility that the dynamics between men and women in heterosexual relationships are undergoing some sort of change is highlighted. Although the competence and entitlement of men to outdoor recreation is assumed, concessions are made for women to be involved. And yet, there is a hint that men stand to lose their once exclusive claims to outdoor recreation.

The relationship between wives and husbands in the wilderness family is one that is impacted both by shifts towards gender equity and nostalgic longing for a former era of family excursions (or possibly for a time when men escaped their families in the wilderness). The wilderness family might best be understood as a collective of subjects who are lodged in a liminal space between social change and nostalgic recollection. This family becomes a site where incongruent desires can play out, where men can lament their lost privileges and simultaneously celebrate women's accomplishments in the outdoors. I frame the wilderness family as a site of change and stasis, a description that can be extended to wilderness citizenry. These subjects are written through competing discourses of social change, in terms of gender roles, and nostalgic longing for hegemonic masculinity. The wilderness citizen is produced as a subject position that solicits a desire to cling to memories of and to rewrite the meaning of wilderness heritage.

The wilderness family is a place of tension where the direction of what sort of subjects we are or aspire to be hangs in limbo. Subtle changes might tip the scales. The wilderness family, like the Canadian wilderness, is surrounded with concern about its longevity and vitality.



Recurrent concerns about preservation of wilderness for future generations alongside the frequent need to coach children and youth into appropriate outdoor recreation suggest both that the maintenance of wilderness and our (and our children's) relationship to it needs to be guarded. The wilderness family is presented as a loving and caring group, a network of wilderness subjects which fosters the development of future outdoor recreationists and guardians of significant Canadian wildernesses. The wilderness family, when read alongside Foucault's (1978) work on family and Malthusian eugenics, can be understood as an organization through which to shape the meaning of wilderness and nation in the context of outdoor recreation. It is through the wilderness family that it becomes possible to govern wilderness citizens. Further, Foucault (1990) argues the task of governing the home, much like governing the self, is of benefit to society more broadly. The need to preserve wilderness is extended then to the wilderness family because of the important role it plays in shaping how Canadians will perceive themselves (and what their values ought to be). I argue that the wilderness family is imagined as a set of subject positions through which Canadians can access their wilderness heritage. In turn, wilderness heritage or Canada's cultural relationship with wilderness prioritizes the family – ensuring that spaces, programming and texts reinforce that this formation of wilderness citizenry is integral to the present and future of the nation.

### *Canadian Canadians*

Thus far, in this chapter, I have offered a series of hints about who belongs to the nation. In some instances, descriptions of Canadians appear open, making it seemingly possible for anyone and everyone to be imagined as belonging to the nation. The artificial universality of Canadianness needs to be troubled, however, and I must ask: who counts as Canadian? I draw on Anderson's (1991/1983) argument that national communities are imagined as "inherently

limited” (p. 6), that the production of wilderness citizens rests on the possibility of including some and prohibiting others from being recognized as Canadian. And yet, these techniques of exclusion stand in contrast to popular and state discourses of multiculturalism that shape public consciousness on Canadian identity as truly available to all. This discourse of multiculturalism is best reflected in materials from the BPNP that earnestly insist that park wilderness is for *all* Canadians (and occasional international visitors) to enjoy and cherish. The film, visitor centre exhibits, newsletters, park signage and materials all reflect the uniform message – parks are for all Canadians (present and future). This is not altogether surprising, given that the BPNP is an arm of the Canadian state. As a branch of the Canadian state, the insistence that park wilderness is for everyone is resoundingly familiar and corresponds with how the state works to shape the nation as an imagined inclusive community.

Anti-racist scholars critique this version of Canadian multiculturalism and the story it tells about Canada as a place that reflects and incorporates the experiences of all citizens (Adams, 2006; Bannerji, 2000; Mackey, 2002; Razack, 2002). Mackey’s examination of the Canadian-Canadian identity reveals how, despite the claims of official multiculturalism, some Canadians are understood to be more deeply connected to Canada and perhaps to be more authentically Canadian than others. According to Mackey (2002) the description “Canadian-Canadian” emerges as a response to the hyphenated identities that have become commonplace in Canadian society. She describes Canadian-Canadians as “people who conceive of themselves as ‘mainstream’” (p. 3) and “unmarked, non-ethnic, and usually white” (p. 20). Hyphenated Canadians, for example Chinese-Canadian or Italian-Canadian, are understood to have histories that are distinct from Canadian-Canadians and Mackey explains, “some groups are widely considered more ‘ethnic’ than others” (p. 20). Hyphenated Canadians are marked, in contrast to

“ordinary” Canadian-Canadians. Mackey examines the limitations of official Canadian state multiculturalism in securing a coherent and uniformly acknowledged Canadian identity and reveals how white privilege is reestablished in the constitution of a Canadian-Canadian identity. The proposed universal appeal of and allegiance to national parks put forward by the BPNP rests on the illusion that the interests of all are represented in the history and culture of Canadian-Canadians.

MEC and the BTC, as organizations without ties to official state multiculturalism, present their respective memberships with different articulations of who Canadians are and what sort of relationship they ought to have with both wilderness and outdoor recreation. While the BPNP suggests that having an intimate relationship with wilderness is an experience that all Canadians share, the BTC and MEC suggest that some Canadians - wilderness citizenry - have deeper and more longstanding connections to the wilderness. In 2006, MEC includes a brief report about shifts in outdoor recreation trends in Canada in its Summer catalogue; part of the focus of this article is on how Canada is changing. The article reads:

The face of Canada is rapidly changing. The population is aging, the birth rate is declining, and immigration is increasing. Many immigrants come from backgrounds where “the great outdoors” is not a part of their culture. Other trends are emerging: obesity, urbanization, climate change, ecosystem degradation, fuel scarcity, and geopolitical changes, to name just a few. (MEC Summer 2006, p. 5)

This quote speaks volumes regarding who MEC members, and Canadians, are expected to be. Here, it is possible to begin to clearly see who the wilderness citizen is imagined to be. First, the way in which “change” is framed suggests that MEC members are primarily witnesses to these shifts. MEC members observe social, cultural and environmental change but they have no active

role in the process. The implication is that MEC members have to cope with the changing “face of Canada.” Second, while change is presented somewhat euphemistically, what is implied in this quote is that the birth rate amongst “Canadian-Canadians” is declining and immigration of hyphenated, likely non-white Canadians is increasing.<sup>88</sup> Coupled with the assertion that “immigrants” to Canada lack appropriate relationships to wilderness, these changes are evidently perceived of as undesirable. This quote is directed towards MEC members who recognize themselves as belonging to a “culture” which celebrates and cherishes the wilderness. Third, a troubling connection is drawn between declining birth rates or increased immigration and an influx of political troubles and ecological issues. Presenting increased immigration alongside ecosystem degradation as types of issues that MEC members must deal with suggests that these changes are inherently negative. Immigration and environmental degradation are presented side-by-side, suggesting that Canada is at risk of contamination. Both the pristine wilderness and the fantasy of Canada as a white nation are undermined by these shifts. This quotation indicates that MEC is decidedly less concerned with appealing to all Canadians or pandering to desires for a multicultural nation than reinforcing the values and wilderness practices of Canadian-Canadians.

MEC positions itself as speaking to an authentic Canadian subject, the wilderness citizen. This subject is already understood as belonging to the nation and is held up as what Marshall (1950) terms “an image of ideal citizenship” (p. 29). Interestingly, MEC produces a subject that is unmarked by race, class, gender, sexuality and history, and thereby embodies a presumed timelessness or omnipresence. Critical race scholars insist that the ability to be unmarked by race (or class, gender or sexuality) demonstrates one’s privilege (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Mackey, 2002). MEC speaks to a subject who is understood to be both unmarked and seemingly

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<sup>88</sup> See Statistics Canada *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 2003 and 2004: The fertility of visible minority women in Canada* for more details on shifting birth rates in Canada on the basis of ethnicity/race and religion.

always present in Canadian mythology. MEC history again works to reestablish its membership, addressed as or presumed to be wilderness citizenry, as decidedly in the centre, often in reference to those on the margins.

In an article describing the history of the co-op, members are told that founders were not “hippies or freaks, or counter-culture people; we were pretty middle class – mountaineering is a pretty middle class type of thing – but we found sympathy in the counter culture” (MEC Winter 1990, p. 26). In trying to build MEC, it quickly became apparent to its founders that “the universities were full of people who were of the age to need recreational equipment but there was a huge anti-business sentiment there. The idea of the co-op, and the philosophical attachments to it, it was worth a lot” (p. 27). MEC thus positions its roots in the values and interests of the middle class, suggesting that the connection to hippies or counter-culture was possibly just a clever business decision. This history suggests that MEC’s early connections to “counter-culture” are possibly inconsequential; at no point in the article are “hippies” presented as those who would shape and direct the co-op. As a result of its origins, MEC remains focused around the interest of those deemed mainstream or middle class. MEC, although targeting the recreation interests of “alternative” young people, presumes that its present readers understand and appreciate MEC’s business decisions.

The BTC, in recounting its history, expresses concern about its moments of near demise into becoming a “special interest group,” a category it expresses open disdain for. In the Spring 1988 magazine, a rough patch in the BTC history is recalled: “the Bruce Trail Association was beginning to look at times like a powerless fringe organization and, with all those British accents, even a fringe ethnic concern” (BTC Spring 1988, p. 33). A later issue includes the assertion that “the time has past [sic] when ‘nature nuts’ were a small group whose interests were

seen as rather unimportant” (BTC Fall 1990, p. 7). In each of these claims, anxieties about the BTC’s ability to speak for all Canadians must be quelled. The BTC is eager to explain that it is not a fringe group, a special interest group, the intended target of multiculturalism or somehow inconsequential. The BTC insists upon its important responsibility in shaping wilderness and Canadian outdoor recreation; it is earnestly working to prepare a trail for “all Canadians” and wants to be perceived as an appropriate voice for “Canadians.” Similar to MEC, the BTC imagines its members to identify themselves as “average” or unmarked Canadians, not as hyphenated Canadians. The BTC, while perhaps interested in attracting the attention of “other” Canadians, for example a Korean hiking club which uses the trail (BTC Summer 1998, p. 7), understands its membership as primarily white, middle class, educated, and to the lament of the BTC, aging. Sharing the anxieties of MEC, the BTC is concerned that the gradual graying of the membership might undermine its interests and role in defining Canada and with changes to the “face” of the nation.

#### Wilderness Citizenry: becoming Canadian

Wilderness citizenry are understood to be particular types of Canadians. The BTC, BPNP and MEC are eager to espouse the importance of wilderness for Canadians; it is assumed to be integral to national identity. The wilderness citizen is at the centre of the discourse of wilderness heritage. The elaborate intertwining of nature and culture that occurs in wilderness heritage enables the production of particular national myths and wilderness citizen-subjects. Here again, as in previous chapters, the subject produced is directly tied to how wilderness is understood. To frame a certain affiliation with the wilderness as integral to Canada suggests that the wilderness citizen is an authentically Canadian subject – one who unquestionably belongs to and defines the nation.

Wilderness citizens serve as models for appropriate conduct in the Canadian wilderness. Despite intermittent admissions of partial errors made by white “settlers and explorers,” the wilderness citizen, as a result of a deep desire to cherish and care for nature, is positioned as the best suited protector and owner of Canadian wilderness. It is the wilderness citizen’s profound connection to wilderness that secures this role of nature’s keeper for him; this subject and national wilderness are presumed to have shared interests. To ensure this position is unchallenged, the wilderness citizen must be continuously reestablished through discursive practice. This unchallenged status is perhaps best accomplished by foreclosing the sorts of stories that can be told about Canada. For example, the wilderness citizen is produced through personal narratives of journeys or experiences of Canadian outdoor recreation that invoke wilderness heritage. Through these narratives and experiences, outdoor recreation texts invoke the wilderness citizen, in order to articulate what sorts of practices and histories are relevant for Canada and Canadians. Simultaneously, in telling these stories, wilderness citizenry secure a place for themselves in the nation. Stories about hiking the Chilkoot Trail or about emulating Muir’s naturalist habits are instructive: they explain both how Canada is to be understood and who will be invited into the nation. The wilderness citizen becomes a subject through which we can learn to become authentically Canadian. The wilderness citizen is understood as unquestionably Canadian and this subject position is employed in evaluating how effectively “others” take up this position.

The wilderness citizen is written through competing discourses of Canadianness. The shifting production of this position signals the constant work that must be done to embody this subject position. As an exemplar of ideal citizenship, the wilderness citizen undergoes constant reinvention. This subject must be reworked and reconfigured to correspond with the fluctuating

discourses of Canada and Canadianness. The wilderness citizen cannot ever be fully and forever taken up; outdoor recreationists are lured, through the texts, to continuously shape themselves as authentic Canadians. Readers are prompted to conceive of their wilderness leisure as a means by which to work at the process of becoming Canadian.

The wilderness citizen, as with the transformed traveler, the conscientious consumer and the calculating adventurer, is a subject that is just out of reach. What I observe in outdoor recreation texts is the complex and intricate modes of conduct required of these subjects. The effect is to make embodying these subjects nearly impossible. Nonetheless, the texts I examine detail countless practices desired and expected from outdoor recreationists. To become the wilderness citizen, then, is a never-ending undertaking. Rose (1999), in his work on governmentality, writes:

the government of the soul depends upon our recognition of ourselves as *ideally and potentially* certain sorts of persons, the unease generated by a normative judgment of what we are and could become, and the incitement offered to overcome this discrepancy by following the advice of experts in the management of the self. (p. 11, emphasis added)

Rose suggests that we are urged to work on ourselves, incorporating the advice of experts, in order to effect ourselves as “certain sorts of subjects.” The outdoor recreation texts I examine provide a wealth of advice on how to conduct oneself. I argue that the practices espoused for outdoor recreationists through these texts are offered as the tools by which it is possible to produce oneself as a responsible and respectable subject. I suggest that the practices presumed to be “normal” in the context of Canadian outdoor recreation, practices which ought to demonstrate one’s capacity to “cherish and protect” the wilderness, promise the possibility of becoming the wilderness citizen.



## Conclusion

### Returning

In this thesis, I tackle three broad questions: How is wilderness understood? How is Canada imagined? How are certain subjects produced through outdoor recreation? I ask these questions in relation to three outdoor recreation institutions - Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) and the Bruce Peninsula National Park (BPNP) and the texts they produce and disseminate. Looking at commonplace texts, including catalogues, magazines, brochures and signs, I examine how meanings are constructed and invested in wilderness. I show how the specific ways that wilderness is constructed or represented presume or project a set of practices or desired forms of conduct which, in turn, articulate the production of specific subjects. The four subjects I examine are deeply implicated in particular wilderness representations and they rely on specific practices in order to be produced as desirable in the context of outdoor recreation.

What is evident in my research is that the way wilderness is represented has great bearing on the sorts of subjects that are imagined as both possible and probable for outdoor recreationists to take up. Moreover, I argue that the discursive construction of Canadian wilderness is a deeply politicized process which is both shaped by and influential in the operations of power within and beyond outdoor recreation. I showed that whiteness, masculinity, responsibility and respectability are woven into and “make up” outdoor recreation subjects. The production of the transformed traveler, the conscientious consumer, the calculating adventurer and the wilderness citizen and the ability to take up these positions, even intermittently, afford outdoor recreationists the opportunity to lay claims to the privileges of whiteness and masculinity and to assert themselves as responsible and respectable Canadian citizens. I attend to the practices espoused

by these outdoor recreation organizations precisely because they are the stepping stones or tools which might enable *some* outdoor recreationists to access temporarily these positions and the privileges embedded within them. Finally, I show that, according to specific outdoor recreation texts, both wilderness and participation in certain forms of outdoor recreation are integral to the making of Canada as an imagined community. My examination of outdoor recreation texts culminates in a consideration of how representations of the Canadian wilderness and engagement with it through leisure are used to solidify the fantasy of Canada as a white, benevolent nation.

I draw this thesis to a close with a brief outline of two areas of future inquiry that emerge from this study, followed by a discussion of four central contributions that my research makes.

#### Unexplored terrain

In order to mount detailed analyses of a specific set of outdoor recreation texts, I elected to leave some themes unexplored. To provide in depth examinations of the representations of wilderness, the production of subjects and the promotion of particular practices, it was necessary to select and follow through on defined areas of inquiry. Additionally, there are pressing questions that my research project raises which could not be answered with the data I analyzed or the methods I used. There are two key areas of inquiry which I have left untouched which I hope to address in future scholarship.

#### *Ethical Production at MEC*

In my analysis, I elected to suspend analysis of MEC's discussion of ethical production. In the MEC catalogues, it is apparent that there is considerable tension amongst co-op members, directors and staff about what constitutes ethical production. Reports from MEC membership meetings suggest that how goods, in particular MEC branded goods, are produced is concerning to members. MEC members express a vested interest in ensuring that they are promoting ethical

or socially and environmentally responsible production of goods both within Canada and overseas. In 2007, MEC began an ethical sourcing blog linked to their primary website. The central focus on this blog is to report on factory conditions, environmental impact and other production questions and concerns to MEC members. The blog is administrated by an MEC staff member tasked with evaluating production in MEC factories. Further, MEC explains the connections it builds with other goods producers who it sees as exemplary, such as Patagonia. Similarly, MEC rationalizes its decisions to include brands such as Nike who have unquestionably tainted reputations when it comes to ethical production.

Although I take up how MEC positions ethical consumption, I have not addressed the debates, questions and power relations which shape issues of production for the co-op. Choosing to suspend my analysis of this issue was a difficult choice for several reasons. First, many MEC members, upon hearing about my research, were interested in how I was going to take up this issue. It is one issue that has spurred noteworthy member response and input; members are eager to discuss and pursue the issue of ethical production. Second, MEC plays a major role in sport and recreation retailing in Canada and its decisions regarding production (both in their own brand and in the brands they agree to stock) can have a significant impact in shaping which recreation goods are made available (and subsequently what is produced). Third, electing to look at consumption without examining production more closely may have left some important lines of inquiry unattended. For example with regards to the production of MEC goods, how are different countries represented (e.g. China, Canada) in outdoor recreation texts? Additionally, on what basis is “ethical” production advocated (social, environmental, political)? Certainly, the relationship between production and consumption requires further attention in the realm of physical culture.

In spite of these concerns, I concluded that, given the data I was using it would not be possible to thoroughly investigate the issue of ethical production at MEC. Two key factors shaped my decision. First, MEC launched an ethical sourcing blog in 2007, at which point I had completed gathering my data. The blog is a central part of MEC's response to members' desire for more information about production issues. Only when this blog has been in use for some years will sufficient data be available for study as well as members' responses to this initiative. Second, in order to fully grapple with the tensions erupting in the co-op around the issue of ethical production, it would be necessary to pursue other research methods including interviews, focus groups and forms of ethnographic research (including observing membership meetings and board of director meetings). In my future research, I hope to be able speak with members who drove this issue forward, with staff members tasked with addressing it and with directors working for the co-op at different time periods in MEC history when issues of production were pertinent.

*I am not the transformed traveler: recreationists' responses*

At various stages in my research project, I faced questions regarding how outdoor recreationists would perceive my analysis and whether it would reflect their experiences of recreation or their perceptions of themselves. These are questions I could not and did not grapple with in this thesis. My decision to work exclusively with a particular set of text-based data was deliberate; I did not intend to investigate how outdoor recreationists work to effect themselves as particular subjects or to glean their interpretations of how wilderness is represented in these texts. Electing to focus on texts has produced particular insights into how outdoor recreation institutions work to shape nature, nation and recreation. Certainly, ethnographic field work and interviews which elicit consumers' and viewers' responses would produce exciting and

complimentary insights into the representation of wilderness and the production of subjects I examined here.

In building my analyses, I necessarily suspended engaging with questions about how recreationists would respond. However, given the voracious interest in this line of questioning, I believe it would be fruitful to investigate outdoor recreationists' experiences in future research. I anticipate that there are sections of this thesis which will be unappealing to or rejected by outdoor recreationists; some of the arguments and suggestions I make here could be unsettling. The subjects of this thesis - the transformed traveler, the conscientious consumer, the calculating adventurer and the wilderness citizen - may be attributed with qualities and interests which outdoor recreationists find repugnant. Similarly, many male-identified persons find themselves unsettled by critical masculinities scholarship, as would white-identified persons with critical whiteness studies. For a vast spectrum of reasons, we may not want to see ourselves in these subjects. Following other critical scholars, I would venture to pursue research which includes engagement with members of the outdoor recreation community not to "correct" this analysis, but to extend it. However, for the purposes of this thesis, I do not engage with these particular lines of investigation. In some ways, then the work I do in this thesis is unfinished. To fully understand the discursive production of wilderness, it is necessary to also consider how readers of these texts respond and in turn work to shape what wilderness means. Similarly, outdoor recreation participants, in undertaking particular practices and attributing their own meanings to their leisure will complicate and complement the assertions made in catalogues, magazines, newsletters, films and visitor centres. The discursive struggle to mould and define the wilderness will continue in the experiences and reflections of outdoor recreationists.

In my future research into outdoor recreation broadly and Mountain Equipment Co-op, the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Bruce Peninsula National Park specifically, I will include the insights of participants in outdoor recreation. Participants will include not simply those undertaking “leisure” but also those who are employed in outdoor recreation fields such as store staff, park staff, unpaid and volunteer workers. Additionally, it would be useful to consult with outdoor recreation groups perceived to be antithetical to self-propelled wilderness-oriented recreation, such as snowmobiling groups or recreational boating associations, in order to better understand the diverse meanings attributed to wilderness and the perception of what practices are desirable within it.

I have pointed to four potential areas of future investigation which I hope to take up. Undoubtedly, there are further areas which could be explored. I have detailed these four because I wrestled specifically with whether or not to include or pursue them further here. Although I have concluded that it was not feasible, given the data or focus of my thesis to include these here, there remain promising opportunities to pick up and work with these ideas in my upcoming research. I also outline these areas because they are questions and lines of inquiry which I believe are pressing given the complex operations of power at work in each of these areas. Further investigation of how these outdoor recreation institutions represent wilderness, produce subjects and advocate for particular practices would extend our knowledge of how discourses of race, class, gender, sexuality and nation shape outdoor recreation.

#### Familiar ground

In this thesis, I examine representations of wilderness, Canadian nationalism and the production of responsible and respectable subjects in commonplace outdoor recreation texts from Mountain Equipment Co-op, the Bruce Trail Association and the Bruce Peninsula National Park.

My research offers contributions to overlapping, interdisciplinary fields of study including cultural studies of outdoor recreation and physical culture, critical whiteness, anti-racist and feminist scholarship, studies of nationalism and citizenship, and examinations of self governance and neoliberalism. To draw my thesis to a close, I articulate four key insights that I make in this genealogy of outdoor recreation.

*Discourse, subjects, practices: using theoretical constructs*

One of the goals of my study is to illustrate the relationship among discourse, practices and subjects. To read claims from theorists that discourse, practices, subjects and power are deeply interconnected only partially explains how this interaction works. My objective was to explore and make sense of how theoretical constructs operate in texts of daily life. In each chapter, I began by tracing how wilderness is constructed in the recreation texts examined. The discursive production of wilderness invokes certain practices as desirable – logically suited to the imagined wilderness. In turn, undertaking these practices shapes the production of subjects invited to venture into the wilderness. In each chapter, I have worked to demonstrate how these theoretical constructs operate in outdoor recreation texts. I argued this structure is useful both for understanding how MEC, the BPNP and the BTC shape the wilderness and the possible subjects made available to outdoor recreationists, as well as offering insight into how to employ these concepts in studies of daily life. In other words, theory allows for an understanding of the everyday, and looking at textual examples from daily life allows for a contextualized understanding of how to employ theoretical constructs. My research project is a useful example of one possible way to utilize these complex concepts to fashion a methodology which draws from poststructural and Foucauldian scholarship.

*Representations of wilderness in everyday texts*

One key task of this thesis was to examine how wilderness is constructed in everyday recreation texts. Through my research, I have developed a detailed analysis of how wilderness is represented by Mountain Equipment Co-op, the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Bruce Peninsula National Park. The texts I examined were specifically selected because of their ordinariness and accessibility. Mountain Equipment Co-op catalogues are delivered to approximately 3 million members. The BPNP hands out hundreds of thousands of brochures every year and many of these visitors read park signs, tour the visitor centre and watch the film, *Life on the Edge*.<sup>89</sup> The BTC, by comparison, distributes a relatively small number of magazines, with a circulation of approximately 10,000. Collectively, these texts reach a sizable population.

There is a small group of scholars working with present day outdoor recreation texts in order to make sense of how wilderness is represented. Scholars such as Braun (2002, 2003), Baldwin (2003, 2004, 2009), Erickson (2002), and Stoddart (2008) explore how wilderness is understood in present-day outdoor recreation. Braun (2003), Stoddart (2008) and Baldwin (2003, 2004, 2009) each work with some present day texts, including magazines, advertisements, promotional materials and television programming. This thesis is an important contribution to this scholarship which grapples with the meanings attributed to wilderness.

By addressing five key ways in which wilderness is constructed (empty, dangerous, threatened, sublime and nation) this research sheds light on how wilderness is understood in present day outdoor recreation. This examination makes an important contribution because it draws on far reaching texts. These texts are commonplace; they are the sorts of texts which readers find on coffee tables, in glove boxes and on the backs of toilets. They are the type of

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<sup>89</sup> Additionally, since documents such as the Parks Canada Messages (2001) indicate that phrases and approaches to describing park wilderness are standardized across Canada, components from the BPNP newsletters is likely quite similar to materials distributed at all National Parks and Historic Sites.



material which outdoor recreationists might read partially or entirely before tossing into the fire, recycling or adding it to a well organized collection. These texts, unlike paintings in galleries or policy documents in archives, are part of everyday life. The familiarity and ordinariness of these texts is useful for understanding how wilderness discourse seeps into the everyday. Further, because of the widespread presence of these texts and their relative accessibility, they play an influential role in shaping how we come to understand “wilderness” and our relationship to it. It is because of the everyday presence of such texts that my analyses complements, complicates and extends available scholarship on other representations of wilderness from art, literature, environmental policies from industry and states, educational texts and popular culture.

*New masculinities: neoliberals in the wilderness*

This project examines the production of multiple masculine subjects. In developing this research, I did not anticipate the extent to which this thesis would focus on the discursive production of masculinity in the context of outdoor recreation. Much of the scholarship on nature, nation and recreation (Baldwin, 2003, 2004; Braun, 2003; Erickson, 2002; Phillips, 1997) discusses how white, middle and ruling class, heterosexual men encounter the wilderness and how they use it as a site to legitimize their claims to respectability and power. It is not altogether surprising that outdoor recreation, given its ties to adventure and exploration, is a site where masculinity would be shaped. Yet, the texts I examine re-define and re-position masculinity, in particular white, middle class, heterosexual masculinity (or hegemonic masculinity), suggesting that it is not through physical gestures of aggression, strength and power that outdoor recreation subjects assert their masculinity. Rather, what emerges in this research is a focus on the intellectual and emotive qualities demonstrated by masculine subjects which enable claims to respectability and re-establish access to power.

The forms of masculinity made visible in this study mark a departure from the rugged masculinities often associated with outdoor and physical culture. The masculinities produced as desirable in these outdoor recreation texts eschew both aggressive, corporeal masculinities associated with hunting/angling culture, organized contact sports and male perpetrated violence, and the elitist masculinities associated with corporate culture, finance and politics. The neoliberal, masculine citizens produced through outdoor recreation texts are imagined to be intelligent, strong and influential without being physically intimidating, selfish or shortsighted. Masculinity, for the urban, educated, middle and upper classes, becomes linked to engagement in acts of sensitivity, caring and compassion, without forfeiting one's claims to strength and privilege. Similarly, although the discursive production of masculinity marks some shifts away from conventional masculinity, as with the transformed traveler, race and class privileges ensure that this subject remains entitled to the privileges of hegemonic masculinity even while distancing himself from it.

I observe how masculinity is reworked through affiliation with environmental ethics or familial bonding, to produce responsible and respectable masculine subjects. While the calculating adventurer employs engineer-like interpretations of wilderness, which invokes familiar hegemonic discourses of whiteness and masculinity, the other subjects of this thesis, the conscientious consumer, the transformed traveler and the wilderness citizen, undertake what could be read as a refreshingly broad spectrum of expressions of masculinity. Yet the masculine subjects produced in these outdoor recreation texts continue to correspond to and reflect heteronormative masculinity, whiteness and class privilege. I argue that rather than signaling a radical departure in the production of masculinities, the masculine subjects produced through these texts re-establish the operations of power. However, it is possible to see how the "new

masculinities” of outdoor recreation texts increasingly rely on acts of self-governance to secure claims to privilege. The key shift I observe, in the production of masculinity through outdoor recreation texts, is an increased emphasis on demonstrations of good conduct and the simultaneous production of oneself as an ethical subject.

The responsible masculine subjects produced in outdoor recreation texts must participate in ethical conduct in order to “account for their own lives” (Rose, 1999, p. 90). In the furtherance of what Rose describes as a “project of self-realization” (p. ix), subjects embrace practices which exhibit an ethical relationship to self, to family, to the Canadian nation and to wilderness. It is through the specifically designated modes of conduct I discuss in this thesis, such as reconnecting with sons or effectively evaluating wilderness’s risks, that these masculine subjects are constituted as good and ethical subjects. Unlike the aggressive corporeal masculinities or elitist masculinities, the new masculinities of outdoor recreation are first and foremost tied to displays of goodness and compassion. To undertake these practices produces these new masculine subjects as responsible and respectable; through their conduct, they demonstrate proper relationships to wilderness and relish the rewards.

*White Respectability: ethical outdoor recreationists*

As I shift to outlining the contributions this research makes to the study of whiteness and respectability, I highlight how the interconnectedness of masculinity and whiteness are produced through Canadian outdoor recreation texts. My examinations of new masculinities are always and already deeply rooted in the production of whiteness. One of the core contributions of this thesis is to illustrate how whiteness is embedded in the practices endorsed and masculine subjects produced in everyday outdoor recreation texts. Central to the production of the four

subjects explored are the practices which secure claims to respectability and the privileges of whiteness for those outdoor recreationists able to embody these positions.

Throughout earlier chapters, I showed how claims to whiteness are made on the basis of ethics, morality and responsibility. Outdoor recreation subjects are presented as morally or ethically superior. Following Razack (2002) and Rose (1999), I argue that it is through demonstrations of responsible behaviour and selfless, ethical practices that the transformed traveler, conscientious consumer, calculating adventurer and wilderness citizen are able to access whiteness or be produced as white. Although intermittently, as with the calculating adventurer, assertions of advanced intellect may figure into how subjects are racialized as white, overwhelmingly, whiteness is linked to representations of principled and noble practices. Scholars such as Dyer (1997) and Berger (1966, 1970) have pointed to how whiteness is often tied to assertions of moral fortitude. I traced outdoor recreation texts to show that whiteness is associated with a capacity for caring, selflessness and spirituality. While these qualities may be shifted to the forefront of how whiteness is represented and reproduced, I also observe in the texts how claims of mastery and intellect continue to be affiliated with whiteness to some extent.

In the preceding chapters, I illustrated that outdoor recreation is a key site through which whiteness and respectability can be accessed for Canadians. Braun (2003) refers to the wilderness journeys as a “purification machine...a place where people become white” (p. 197); I see similar patterns in the texts of MEC, the BPNP and the BTC. Carefully defined recreation practices become techniques through which outdoor recreationists might produce themselves as particular sorts of subjects. I argue that these texts invite recreationists to gain from their “play” the ability to secure and maintain white privilege through practices deemed morally upright and in a context often perceived as inconsequential. My contribution to critical studies of whiteness

is to draw outdoor recreation into the realm of critique and to pinpoint how seemingly innocuous, everyday recreation practices can be utilized to secure claims to whiteness and the privileges it bestows.

The analyses of how whiteness and masculinity are produced through outdoor recreation texts contribute to critical whiteness, anti-racist and feminist scholarship. My research allows for a close interrogation of how practices (or modes of conduct) and their role in the production of subjects shape whiteness and masculinity in outdoor recreation. My research also adds to scholarship on neoliberal forms of governance. I offer detailed examinations of how outdoor recreation texts invite readers to work on themselves through participation in appropriate recreation activities. For example, consumer activism undertaken in the interest of saving wilderness corresponds with other forms of individualized, discrete practices which produce outdoor recreation subjects as caring, compassionate citizens. Johnston (2008), in her analysis of the citizen-consumer explains how consumerism and citizenship, seemingly incongruent discourses, are brought together through this subject. In my analyses of consumer activism, along with other forms of self-governance, it is possible to see how at various points, consumerism, citizenship and environmentalism are drawn on to constitute outdoor recreation subjects. Seemingly contradictory, it is through the calls for responsible self-governance that these discourses appear complementary rather than conflicting. This research outlines how outdoor recreation texts might serve as guidebooks for self-governance offering insight into how to produce oneself as a responsible and respectable subject. What I observe in these texts is the repeated assurances that it is through conduct or one's effective self governing, that it is possible to be read as a responsible and respectable subject and subsequently access the privileges of whiteness and masculinity.

Scholarship on Canadian wilderness and modes of self-governance is growing. Baldwin's (2003, 2009) work on the boreal forest, Canadian nationalism, eco-governmentality and whiteness is influential in this field. Baldwin has begun the complex task of unraveling how environmental discourse becomes infused with the language of governmentality and enables assertions of white nationhood in the project of saving the boreal forest in Canada. My research offers parallel insights by considering how representations of wilderness produce desirable subject positions which can be accessed through the strategic governing of the self. It is in the incitement to self govern, that my analyses of outdoor recreation texts is useful to broader studies of neoliberal forms of governance in daily life. I demonstrate how representations of wilderness and the desire for particular relationships with wilderness require undertaking particular modes of conduct. As only those subjects deemed responsible and respectable can lay claims to proper relationships with wilderness and access power and privilege as a result, the incitement to behave properly is sharply felt. For scholars examining forms of self-governance in daily life, my research provides useful analyses of how we are prompted to work on ourselves in order to preserve or serve the needs of a presumably universal good, such as the preservation of wilderness.

#### Heading back

Watching a sunset over a vast body of water has become an altogether different experience for me. Researching and writing for this thesis has changed what my outdoor recreation looks like and feels like. I read signs more closely. I read brochures from start to finish. I observe how outdoor recreationists behave in the wilderness. I consider how effectively my own recreation has been shaped by recreation texts. I experience wilderness differently and I second guess my gut responses to mountain vistas or spotting an owl. I am cognizant that I am

tuning into what wilderness is supposed to mean in different moments. None of this is to suggest that my outdoor recreation have been negatively transformed.

Outdoor recreation has been repeatedly described to me as truly wholesome: it became ubiquitous with Canadianness, environmentalism and, quite simply, good clean fun. At many points during my research process, I found myself performing various tasks, such as perusing the MEC website, walking a trail or photographing a shoreline, which I might, under other circumstances, have done for leisure. There were moments of enjoyment interspersed in the work of my thesis. Yet, the pleasure I drew from undertaking this research is also in the gradual unraveling and examining of endeared recreation pursuits. Through this examination of everyday texts, I have had an opportunity to examine outdoor recreation's wholesomeness. It is perhaps my enjoyment of outdoor recreation that made a critical inquiry of it possible – I know rather acutely the qualities, values, emotions and experiences one ought to have in the wilderness.

Oftentimes, when asked to critique an object, practice or experience of pleasure, the presumption is that it will be stripped of any enjoyment. That after analysis, what remains is only disillusionment and disdain. To some extent, I acknowledge that my recreation has changed – occasionally, viewing images or trail signs or reading a MEC email can leave me duly outraged. However, I continue to take pleasure in camping, hiking and other forms of “self-propelled wilderness oriented” recreation. I conclude that what I risked undertaking in this research is not a loss of pleasure but of unexamined privilege.

Through my research, I have unpacked how the practices I undertake are embedded in the reproduction and reshaping of whiteness, masculinity and Canadianness in outdoor recreation. At times, this process has resulted in a disruption or dismantlement of what Rose (1999) would term my “biographical project of self realization” (p. ix). Perhaps most importantly, undertaking this

research comes with the acknowledgement that my recreation is made meaningful through discourses I desire to actively resist. Undertaking this research has pointed out the many tensions, discursive and otherwise, within my recreation practices. I observe, perhaps most clearly in my own conduct, the contradictions and complexities entailed in fostering proper relationships with various wildernesses.



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## Appendix A:

### Mountain Equipment Co-op data

#### **Catalogues:**

- "Summer 1987 Catalogue." 1987. 1-58.
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- "Summer 1991 Catalogue." 1991. 1-84.
- "Winter 1991 Catalogue." 1991. 1-58.
- "Summer 1992 Catalogue." 1992. 1-82.
- "Winter 1992 Catalogue." 1992. 1-64.
- "Summer 1993 Catalogue." 1993. 1-96.
- "Winter 1993 Catalogue." 1993. 1-56.
- "Summer 1994 Catalogue." 1994. 1-100.
- "Winter 1994 Catalogue." 1994. 1-60.
- "Summer 1995 Catalogue." 1995. 1-112.
- "Winter 1995 Catalogue." 1995. 1-64.
- "Summer 1996 Catalogue." 1996. 1-144.
- "Winter 1996 Catalogue." 1996. 1-68.



"Summer 1997 Catalogue." 1997. 1-120.

"Winter 1997 Catalogue." 1997. 1-84.

"Summer 1998 Catalogue." 1998. 1-80.

"Winter 1998 Catalogue." 1998. 1-92.

"Winter 1999 Catalogue." 1999. 1-104.

"Summer 2000 Catalogue." 2000. 1-142.

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"Summer 2001 Catalogue." 2001. 1-140.

"Winter 2001 Catalogue." 2001. 1-104.

"Summer 2002 Catalogue." 2002. 1-142.

"Winter 2002 Catalogue." 2002. 1-104.

"Summer 2003 Catalogue." 2003. 1-142.

"Summer 2004 Catalogue." 2004. 1-132.

"Winter 2004 Catalogue." 2004. 1-104.

"Summer 2005 Catalogue." 2005. 1-132.

"Winter 2005 Catalogue." 2005. 1-104.

"Summer 2006 Catalogue." 2006. 1-132.

"Winter 2006 Catalogue." 2006. 1-84.

"Summer 2007 Catalogue." 2007. 1-132.

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**Missing Issues:**

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**MEC stores visited:**

MEC Burlington  
1030 Brant Street  
Burlington, Ontario  
L7R 0B2  
(905) 333 8559

MEC Calgary  
830 – 10th Avenue, SW  
Calgary, Alberta  
T2R 0A9  
(403) 269 2420

MEC Toronto  
400 King Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5V 1K2  
(416) 340 2667

MEC Vancouver  
130 West Broadway  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V5Y 1P3  
(604) 872 7858

MEC Victoria  
1450 Government Street,  
Victoria, British Columbia,  
V8W 1Z2  
(250) 386 2667

## Appendix B:

### Mountain Equipment Co-op data analysis guide

#### **Images: Series of questions / code descriptions**

1. Is the image primarily of wilderness, urban space, rural/countryside, indoors/studio?
2. Is the image staged or studio shot?
3. Is the image from a recognizable nation? If not, is it assumed to be Canada?
4. Are people in the image?

If yes, how many?

Are the people named?

Race? Gender? Class markers? Sexuality markers?

What are the people doing?

Leisure (what types); work (what types)

5. If there are not people in the image – is an imagined body present (clothing product images)?
6. Is the MEC logo in the image?
7. Are there any other recognizable symbols in the image? (flags, logos)
8. Is there a caption with the image or words written on the image?

If yes, does the caption direct the reader to view the image in particular ways?

9. Does the image (re)call particular tropes (national, racialized, gendered or otherwise)?

Examples) the explorer, the Indigenous caretaker of nature, the nurturing woman

10. Is there a recognizable emotive tone to the image? Fear, happiness, awe, tranquility

#### **Text: (in addition to applicable above questions)**

How is nature described?

How is nation described?

How are MECs goals, identities, members described?

What types of recreation are described and/or made desirable?

## Appendix C:

### Bruce Trail Conservancy data

#### **Bruce Trail Magazines:**

- “Spring 1987 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1987. 1-40.
- “Fall 1987 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1987. 1-36.
- “Spring 1988 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1988. 1-40.
- “Summer 1988 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1988. 1-40.
- “Fall 1988 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1988. 1-40.
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- “Fall 1989 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1989. 1-40.
- “Winter 1989 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1989. 1-40.
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- “Summer 1990 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1990. 1-40.
- “Fall 1990 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1990. 1-40.
- “Winter 1990 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1990. 1-40.
- “Spring 1991 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1991. 1-40.
- “Summer 1991 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1991. 1-40.
- “Fall 1991 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1991. 1-40.
- “Winter 1991 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1991. 1-40.
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- “Fall 1992 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1992. 1-48.
- “Winter 1992 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1992. 1-40.
- “Fall 1993 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1993. 1-48.
- “Fall 1994 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1994. 1-48.
- “Spring 1995 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1992. 1-48.
- “Winter 1995 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1992. 1-48.
- “Spring 1996 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1992. 1-48.
- “Summer 1996 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1992. 1-48.
- “Winter 1996 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1992. 1-48.
- “Spring 1997 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1997. 1-48.
- “Summer 1997 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1997. 1-48.
- “Fall 1997 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1997. 1-48.
- “Winter 1997 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1997. 1-48.
- “Summer 1998 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1998. 1-48.
- “Fall 1998 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1998. 1-48.
- “Winter 1998 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1998. 1-48.
- “Spring 1999 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1999. 1-48.
- “Winter 1999 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 1999. 1-48.
- “Spring 2000 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2000. 1-48.
- “Summer 2000 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2000. 1-48.
- “Fall 2000 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2000. 1-48.
- “Winter 2000 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2000. 1-48.
- “Spring 2001 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2001. 1-48.

“Summer 2001 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2001. 1-48.

“Fall 2001 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2001. 1-24. (first full colour issue)

“Winter 2001 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2000. 1-48.

“Spring 2002 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2002. 1-48.

“Summer 2002 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2002. 1-48.

“Fall 2002 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2002. 1-48.

“Winter 2002 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2002. 1-48.

“Spring 2003 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2003. 1-48.

“Summer 2003 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2003. 1-48.

“Fall 2003 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2003. 1-40.

“Spring 2004 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2004. 1-32.

“Summer 2004 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2004. 1-32.

“Fall 2004 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2004. 1-32.

“Winter 2004 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2004. 1-32.

“Spring 2005 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2005. 1-32.

“Summer 2005 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2005. 1-32.

“Fall 2005 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2005. 1-32.

“Winter 2005 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2005. 1-32.

“Spring 2006 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2006. 1-32.

“Summer 2006 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2006. 1-32.

“Fall 2006 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2006. 1-32.

“Winter 2006 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2006. 1-32.

“Spring 2007 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2007. 1-32.



“Summer 2007 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2007. 1-32.

“Fall 2007 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2007. 1-32.

“Winter 2007 Bruce Trail Magazine.” 2007. 1-32.

**Missing issues:**

Summer 1987

Winter 1987

Spring 1993

Summer 1993

Fall 1993

Spring 1994

Summer 1994

Winter 1994

Summer 1995

Fall 1995

Fall 1996

Spring 1988

Summer 1999

Fall 1999

Winter 2003

**Website:**

[www.brucetrail.org](http://www.brucetrail.org)

## Appendix D:

### Bruce Trail Conservancy data analysis guide

#### **Images: Series of questions / code descriptions**

1. Is the image primarily of wilderness, urban space, rural/countryside, indoors/studio?
2. Is the image staged or studio shot?
3. Is the image from a recognizable nation? If not, is it assumed to be Canada?
4. Does the location feature a 'special nature place'? ie. The Grotto
5. Are people in the image?

If yes, how many?

Are the people named?

Race? Gender? Class markers? Sexuality markers?

What are the people doing?

Leisure (what types); work (what types)

6. In pictures with no humans, what is the central focus? Non-human animals or birds?

Landscape? Is any one type of animal or landscape repeatedly or prominently featured?

7. Are there logos or recognizable symbols in the image (BT trail markers, brand logos, flags,

Parks Canada logos, municipal logos)

8. Is there a caption with the image or words written on the image?

If yes, does the caption direct the reader to view the image in particular ways?

9. Does the image (re)call particular tropes (national, racialized, gendered or otherwise)?

Examples) the explorer, the Indigenous caretaker of nature, the nurturing woman

10. Is there a recognizable emotive tone to the image? Fear, happiness, awe, tranquility

11. Are certain types of images repeatedly presented with certain text – ie, animal pictures with conservation stories, landscapes with donations, humans with education, etc.?

**Text: in addition to applicable questions from above**

How is nature described?

How is nation described?

How are the BTC's goals, identities, members described?

What types of recreation are described and/or made desirable? How and in what ways?

Are members invited to participate in constructing the magazine? How and in what ways?

## Appendix E:

### Bruce Peninsula National Park data

#### **Brochures**

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 1989.” 1989. 1-8.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 1990.” 1990. 1-8.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 1991.” 1991. 1-8.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 1992.” 1992. 1-8.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 1993.” 1993. 1-8.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 1996.” 1996. 1-8.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 1997.” 1997. 1-12.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 1998.” 1998. 1-12.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 1999.” 1999. 1-12.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada  
Visitor Guide 2000.” 2000. 1-24.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada Visitor Guide 2001.” 2001. 1-24.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada Visitor Guide 2002.” 2002. 1-24.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada Visitor Guide 2003.” 2003. 1-16.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada Visitor Guide 2004.” 2004. 1-16.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada Visitor Guide 2005.” 2005. 1-16.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada Visitor Guide 2006.” 2006. 1-16.

“Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada and Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada Visitor Guide 2007.” 2007. 1-16.

### **Other BPNP Data**

“*An Orientation Program on Ecological Integrity: A Call to Action.*” 2001. Parks Canada. 1-42.

“*Canada National Parks Act.*” 2000. Department of Justice Canada. 1-108.

“*Life on the Edge.*” 2006. Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada. Parks Canada. Runtime 15:43.

“*National Park System Plan: Introduction to National Park System Plan.*” Canadian Heritage Parks Canada. 1-106.

“*Parks Canada Messages: Toolkit for staff.*” 2001. Parks Canada. 1-38.

Bruce Peninsula National Park /  
Fathom Five National Marine Park Visitor Centre  
Chi sin tib dek Road  
Tobermory, Ontario, Canada  
N0H 2R0  
(519) 596 2233

(All photos of the Visitor Centre, park signage and features included in this thesis are taken by Marie Vander Kloet.)

## Appendix F:

### Bruce Peninsula National Park data analysis guide

#### **Images: Series of questions / code descriptions**

1. Is the image primarily of wilderness, urban space, rural/countryside, indoors/studio?
2. Is the image from a recognizable nation? If not, is it assumed to be Canada? How is this assumption conveyed?
3. Does the location feature a ‘special nature place’? ie. The Grotto, Singing Sands,
4. Are people in the image?  
If yes, how many?  
Are the people named?  
Race? Gender? Class markers? Sexuality markers?  
What are the people doing?  
Leisure (what types); work (what types)
5. In pictures with no humans, what is the central focus? Non-human animals or birds?  
Landscape? Is any one type of animal or landscape repeatedly or prominently featured?
6. Are there logos or recognizable symbols in the image (BT trail markers, brand logos, flags, Parks Canada logos, municipal logos)
7. Is there a caption with the image or words written on the image?  
If yes, does the caption direct the reader to view the image in particular ways?
8. Does the image (re)call particular tropes (national, racialized, gendered or otherwise)?  
Examples) the explorer, the Indigenous caretaker of nature, the nurturing woman
9. Is there a recognizable emotive tone to the image? Fear, happiness, awe, tranquility

10. Are certain types of images repeatedly presented with certain text – ie, animal pictures with conservation stories, landscapes with donations, humans with education, etc.?
11. Is the image instructive (of signage, rule abiding, rule breaking)? Is there a lesson from to be learned from the image? Is it implicit or conveyed with a caption?

**Text: (in addition to applicable questions above)**

How is nature described?

How is nation described?

How are the BPNP's goals, identities, members described?

What types of recreation are described and/or made desirable? How and in what ways?



Appendix G:

Mountain Equipment Co-op examples

Image 1

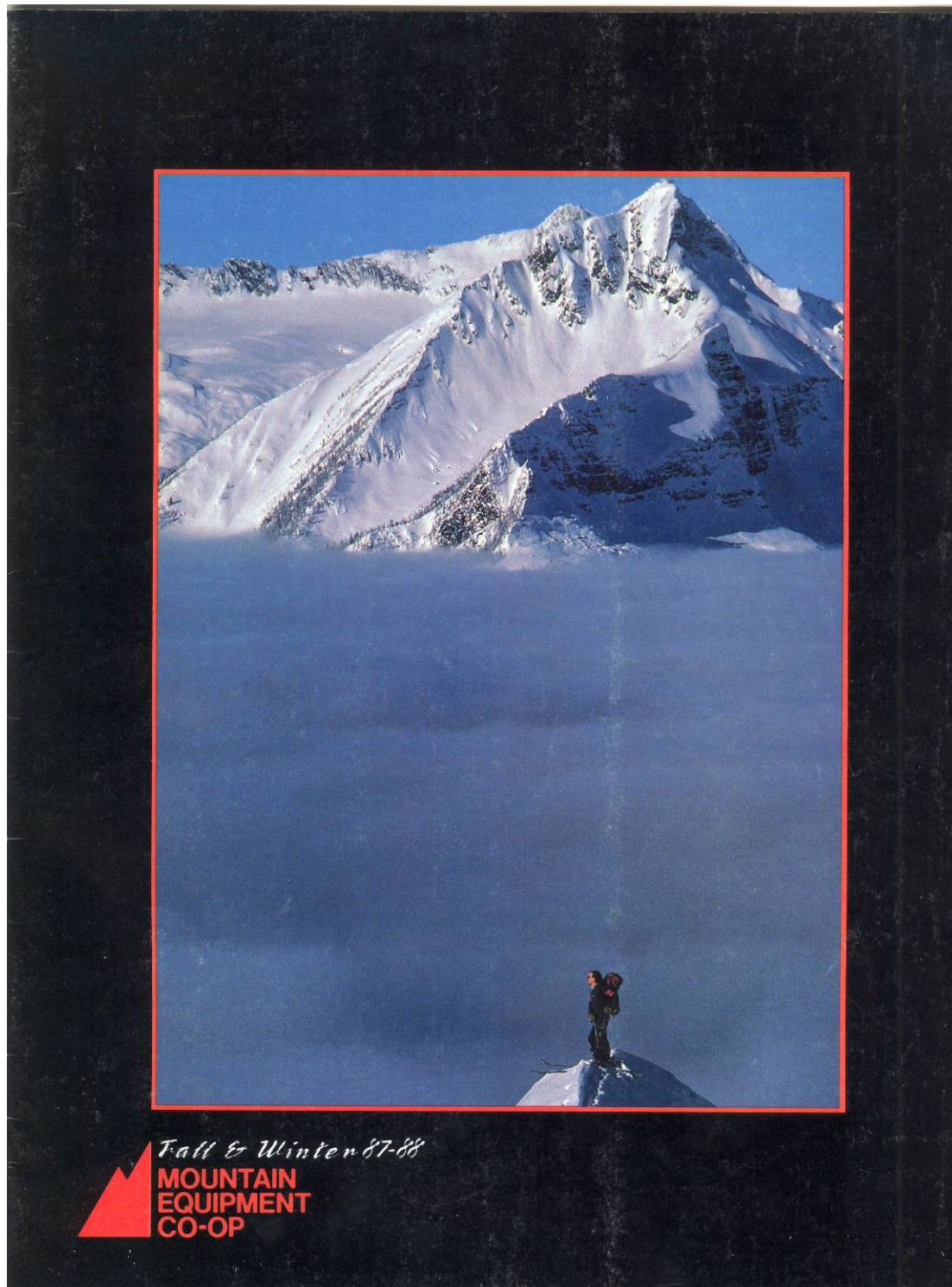
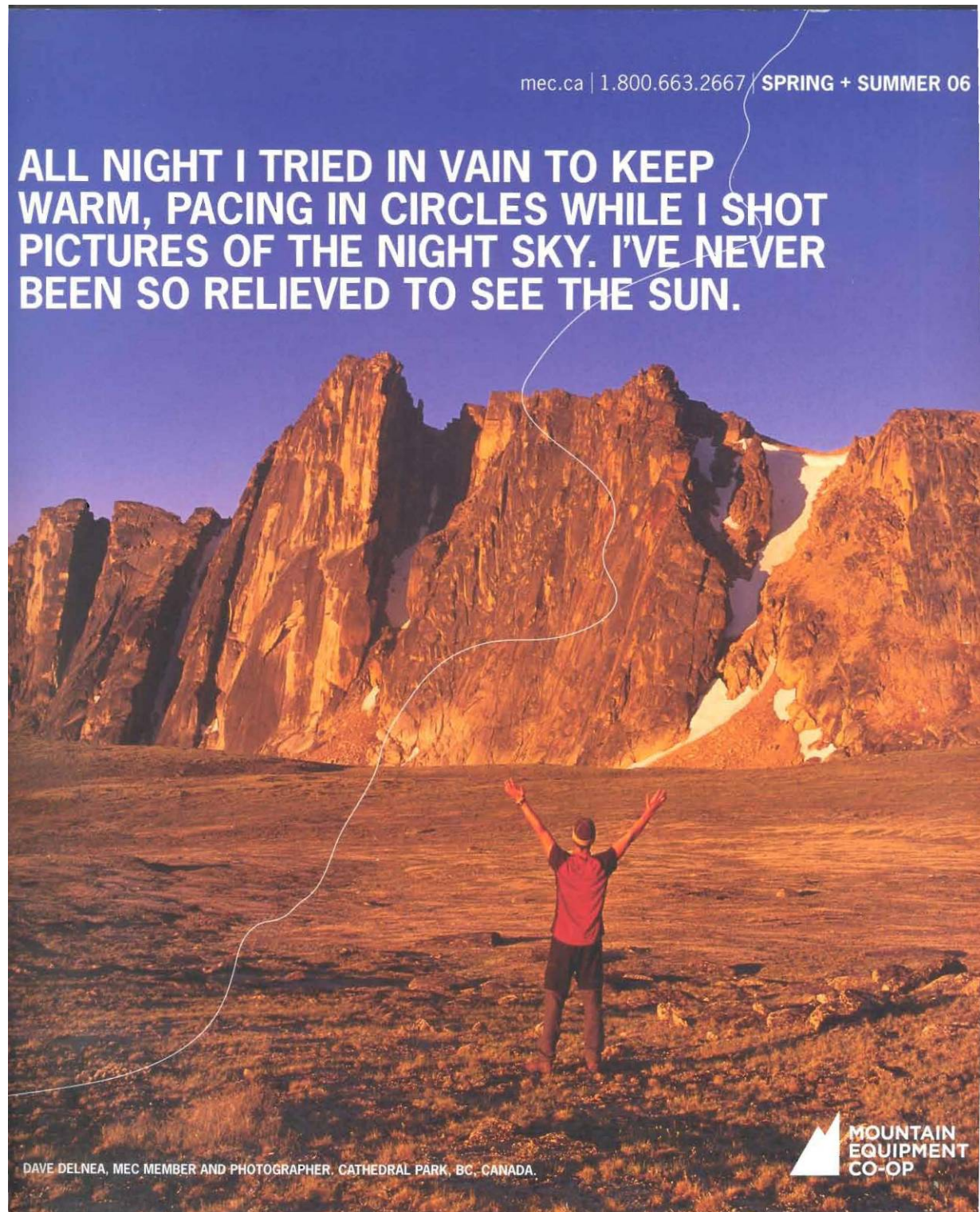





Image 2

A photograph of a person standing in a vast, open mountain valley. The person is seen from behind, wearing a red shirt and dark shorts, with their arms raised in a gesture of triumph or awe. They are looking towards a massive, rugged mountain peak that dominates the background. The mountain's face is a mix of dark rock and patches of snow. The sky is a clear, deep blue. A thin, white, wavy line is drawn across the image, starting from the bottom left and curving upwards towards the mountain peak. The overall scene conveys a sense of adventure and achievement in nature.

mec.ca | 1.800.663.2667 | **SPRING + SUMMER 06**

**ALL NIGHT I TRIED IN VAIN TO KEEP WARM, PACING IN CIRCLES WHILE I SHOT PICTURES OF THE NIGHT SKY. I'VE NEVER BEEN SO RELIEVED TO SEE THE SUN.**

DAVE DELNEA, MEC MEMBER AND PHOTOGRAPHER. CATHEDRAL PARK, BC, CANADA.

 **MOUNTAIN  
EQUIPMENT  
CO-OP**



## Image 3

### FITTING BOOTS

Buy boots in person! If you can't reach one of the Co-op stores we'll do our best to fit you by mail. Include your shoe size and tracings (on separate pieces of paper) of both feet wearing the socks you intend to wear in your boots.

Check for fit as follows: Wearing the boot unlaced, push your foot as far forward as possible—there should be about a finger's width free space behind your heel to allow toe room when your boots are laced up. Lace the boots firmly and kick down on the toe—your foot should be held in place and toes should not hit the end. Walk in the boots—heels should be held reasonably firmly. Wear the boots indoors for an hour or so—they will be stiff, but should begin to feel quite comfortable. Pressure points will require many painful hours to break in and should be avoided if at all possible.

**FIT GUARANTEE:** If your new boot don't fit you can return them — as long as they're still in as-new condition (not worn outdoors, not waterproofed, and generally clean) and provided you return them for refund or exchange within two weeks.

### TREKKING SHOES

Walking in to the base of El Cap, trekking the Annapurna circuit, mountain biking at Slickrock, or lying through your teeth at the King Eddie, this is what you put on your feet. In spite of the three different brand names, all these shoes are made in the same town (Pusan, South Korea).

**[A] Hi-Tec Granite.** Back in the summer of '84, we started carrying a shoe called the Granite from a company nobody in Canada had heard of; Hi-Tec. It was comfortable, light, durable, and cheap. Since then, Co-op members have bought more than 15,000 Granites, making it our all-time best seller. Nylon mesh and suede uppers, padded tricot lining, cushioned high carbon rubber lug sole. Reinforced heel counter and a short steel shank. Some stock in sizes 10-12, 13 at the old price \$39.50 while they last. Men's 6-12, 13.

**0705-053** 770g(8) ..... **43.50**

**[B] Nike Son of Lava Dome.** Well, it's not much like the old Lava Dome. In fact it's softer than any other shoe here. The S.L.D. is built on Nike's good-fitting lasts and features a unique rubber arch 'saddle' for support. Mesh and waxed suede upper is very breathable. No shank. The waffle sole with block heel is the best we've seen on a light hiking shoe. Men's 6-12, 13.

**0705-202** 820g(8) ..... **56.50**

**[C] New! Merrell Trail Women's.** Solid construction and an excellent fit for women! Upper is soft nylon mesh and suede with a durable Cambrelle lining. Stout reinforced heel counter and high density foam mid-wedge provide stability. High carbon rubber outsole. Women's 5-10.

**0705-079** 650g(7) ..... **48.00**

**[D] Hi-Tec DK1.** Hi-Tec and your Co-op designed the DK1 in response to requests for a more durable lightweight hiking shoe. The upper is nylon doublemesh and Nubuck full grain leather, lined with quick-drying, hard-wearing Cambrelle. There's no foam interlining to soak up water. The stiff heel counter is reinforced by a nylon support to stabilize the rear of the shoe. A short steel shank adds support. Removable footbed and high density EVA mid-wedge absorb shock, and a high carbon rubber sole provides traction. Men's 6 — 12, 13, and now 14.

**0705-186** 770g(8) ..... **56.00**

**[E] Hi-Tec Sierra Lite.** Sierra Lites have a 1000 denier nylon upper, cut higher to help keep gunk out. EVA wedge midsole with steel shank and high-carbon rubber lug sole. Men's (Grey) 6-12, 13, 14; Women's (Tan) 5-10.

**0705-137** Men's 760g(8) ..... **45.00**

**0705-145** Women's 710g(7) ..... **45.00**

**[F] Also in Women's! Hi-Tec P.C.T.** Higher cut upper, breathable nylon mesh uppers and durable Cambrelle lining. The P.C.T. also has a nylon heel counter stabilizer for additional support. (P.C.T. stands for Pacific Crest Trail). Men's 6 — 12, 13, and now in Women's 5-10.

**0705-152** Men's, 1020g(8) ..... **49.00**

**0705-160** Women's 970g(7) ..... **49.00**



**[G] Merrell Eagle.** The price is up but we still feel the Eagle offers good value in this category. Mid-height suede and 1000 denier nylon uppers with solid heel and toe counters. Durable non-absorbent Cambrelle lining. High density foam mid-wedge with air pocket for shock absorption. Made on Merrell's own lasts. Men's 7-12, 13; Women's 5-10.

**0705-228** Men's, 1020g(8) ..... **64.00**

**0705-236** Women's 850g(7) ..... **64.00**






Image 4



Photo Anne Rippey/TIPS Images.




Image 5



## NATURE HAS NO CHAMBERMAID.

Check out of any hotel room and the housekeeping staff will have it cleaned up in a matter of minutes – they're responsible for ensuring the room is left in immaculate condition for future guests to enjoy. At MEC we help our members check into the outdoors with great gear and advice, but we also want to equip them with knowledge they need to ensure they leave their favourite playgrounds pristine and ready for others to enjoy.



A group of outdoor educators approached us, looking to establish the highly regarded Leave No Trace Program in Canada. Leave No Trace Canada is a not-for-profit organization committed to maintaining Canada's wild recreational spaces. To reduce the damage caused by outdoor activities, Leave No Trace has developed seven easy and effective scientific principles based on an abiding respect for nature.

To get Leave No Trace Canada started, we offered them grants, took a seat on their steering committee, and helped them build their infrastructure. We continue to help them strengthen their roots in Canada by sponsoring workshops and courses, and encouraging our staff to become Master Educators. The ultimate goal is to have people be aware that even the smallest change in behaviour has a monumental impact on the outdoors.

At MEC, we're committed to ensuring Leave No Trace continues to grow and flourish in Canada. Can we do more? Of course. We can and will. Because Canada's wilderness playgrounds are ours to protect, preserve and maintain. And because in nature, there are no chambermaids.



**THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF LEAVE NO TRACE**

- Plan ahead and prepare*
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces*
- Dispose of waste properly*
- Leave what you find*
- Minimize campfire impacts*
- Respect wildlife*
- Be considerate of other visitors*

[www.leavenotrace.ca](http://www.leavenotrace.ca)



Image 6



**DON'T LET IT  
COME TO THIS.**

**SUSTAINABILITY AND MEC**

Far too much Canadian wilderness is being dug up, cut down, or paved over. Small, fragmented areas that are temporarily spared are not enough. Not for you. Not for wildlife.

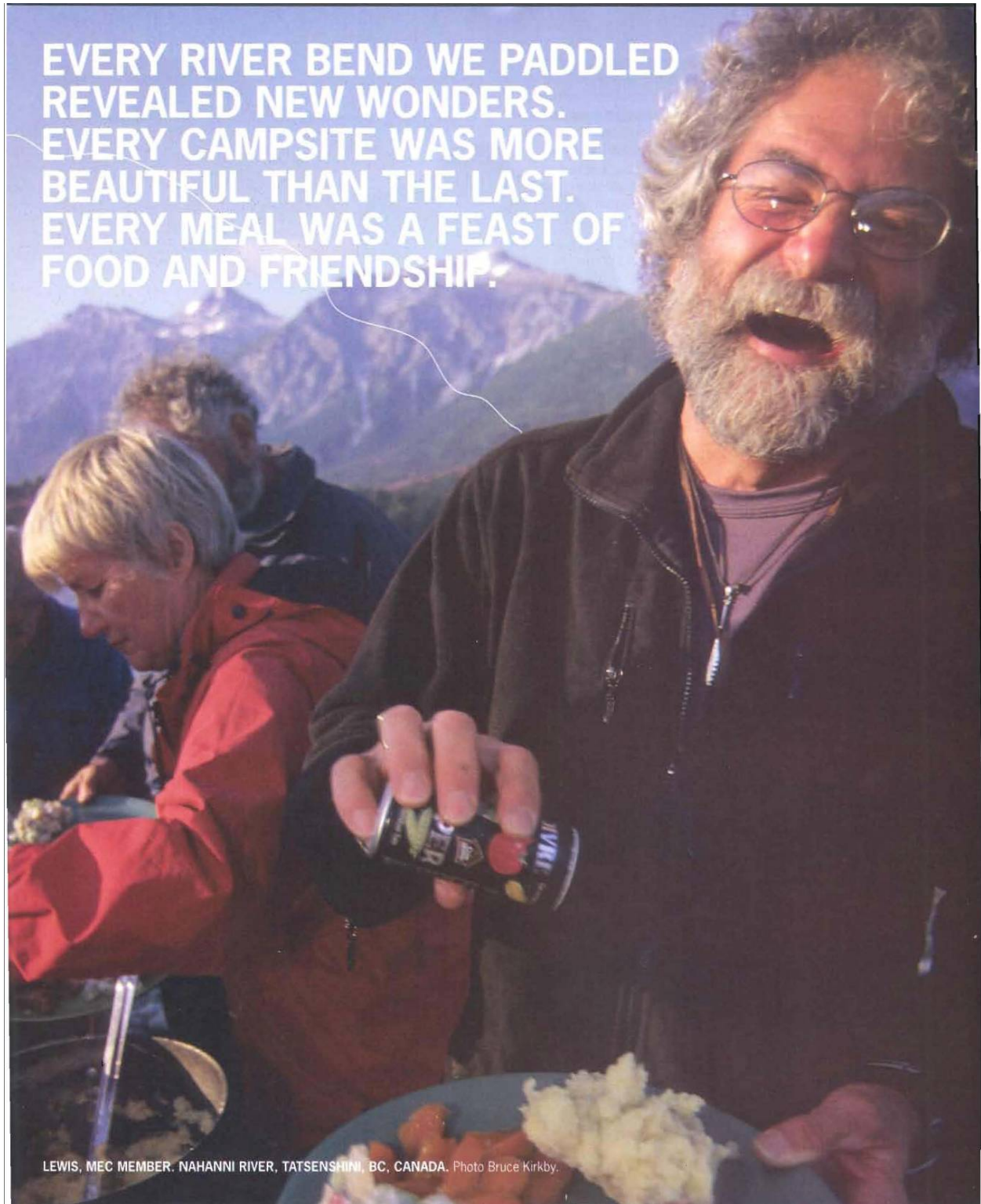
We know this matters to you because you've told us. And you've asked us to go beyond our long-standing financial support for conservation in Canada. To take a leadership role.

So together with CPAWS, The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, we'll soon be launching The Big Wild, Canada's wilderness protection movement. With you and MEC's two and a half million other members, we're big enough to matter.

Connect with your natural allies at [mec.ca/thebigwild](http://mec.ca/thebigwild).

**thebigwild**  
canada's wilderness protection movement

Image 7





Appendix H:

Bruce Trail Conservancy: Bruce Trail Magazine examples

Image 1

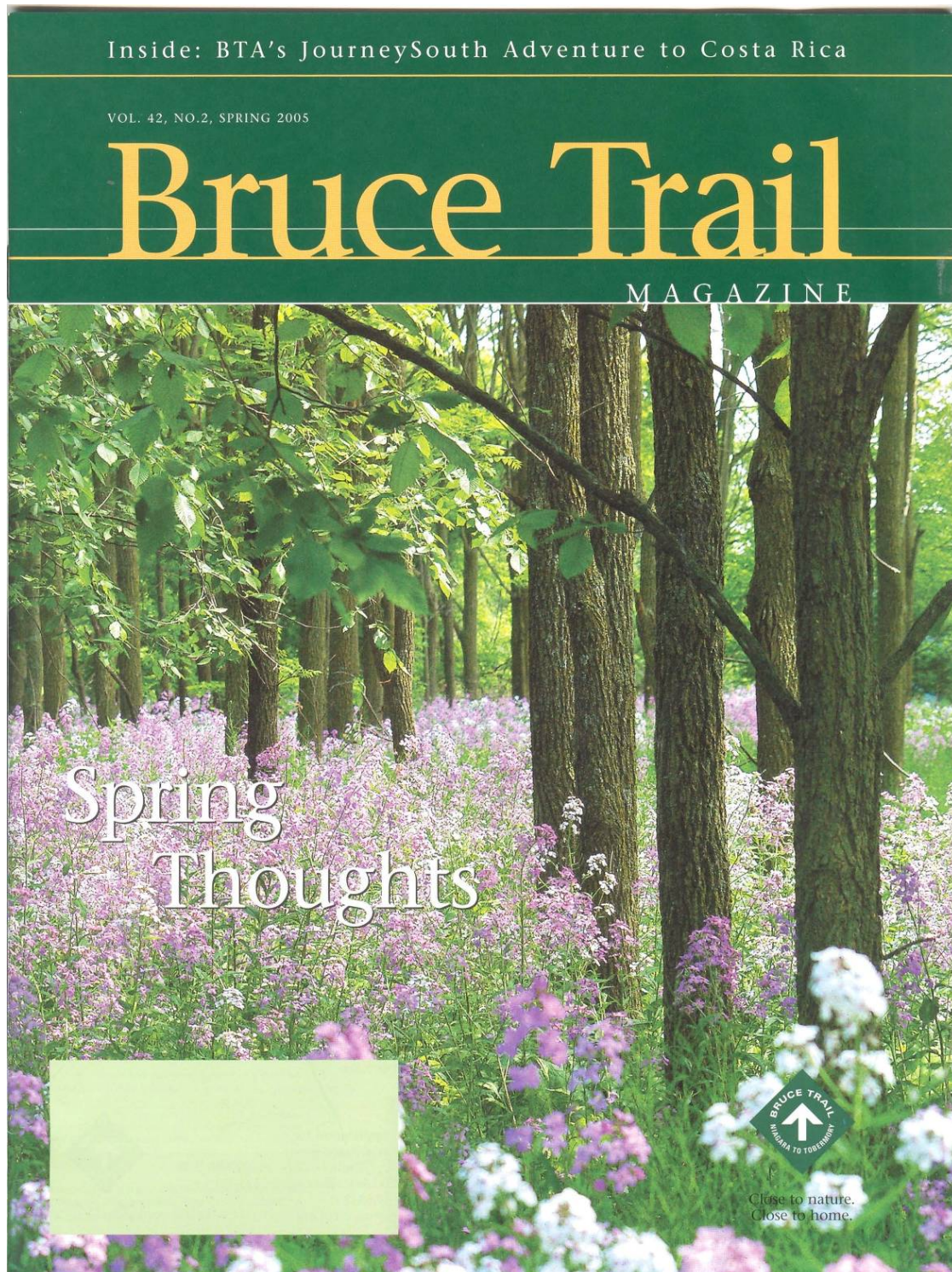




Image 2

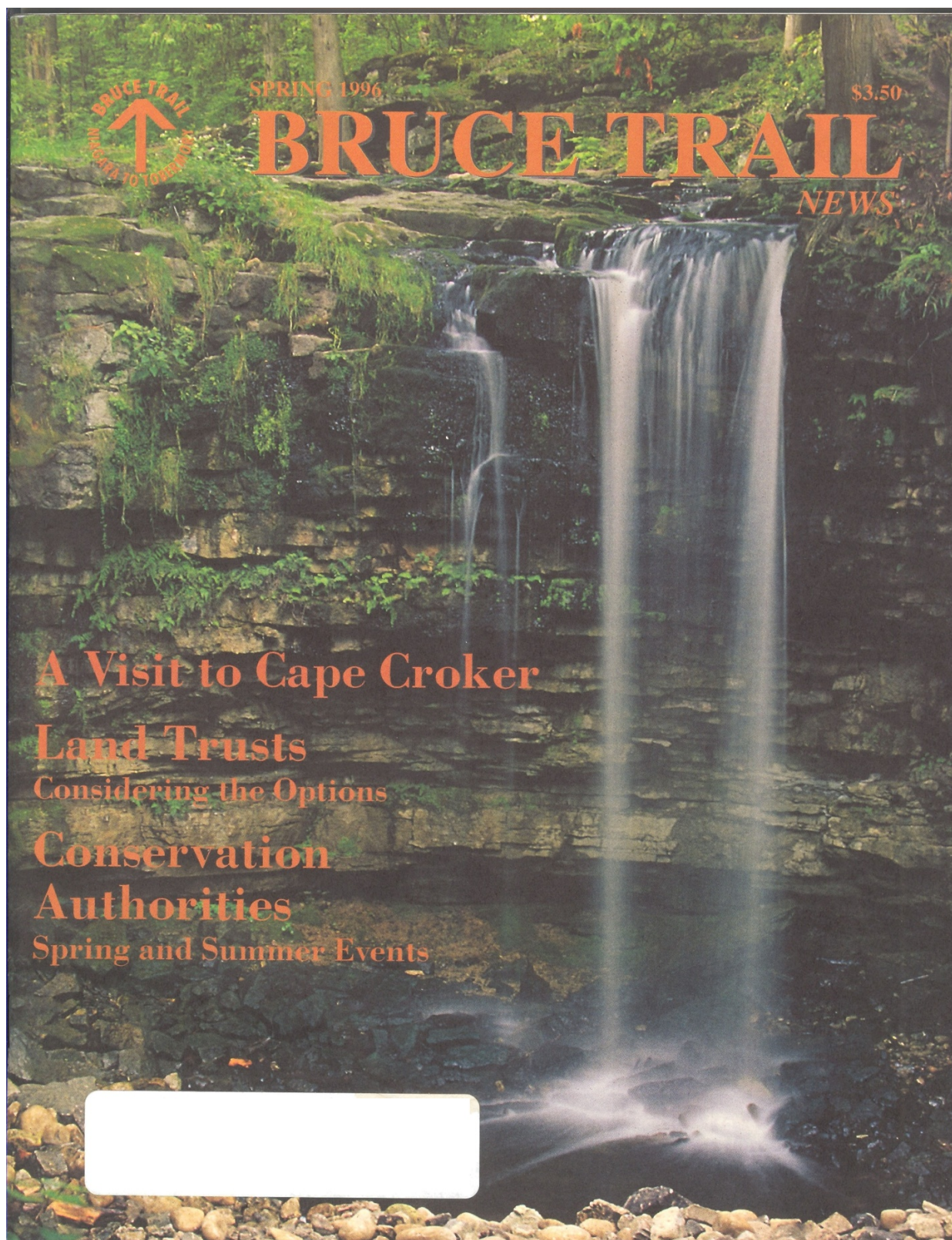




Image 3

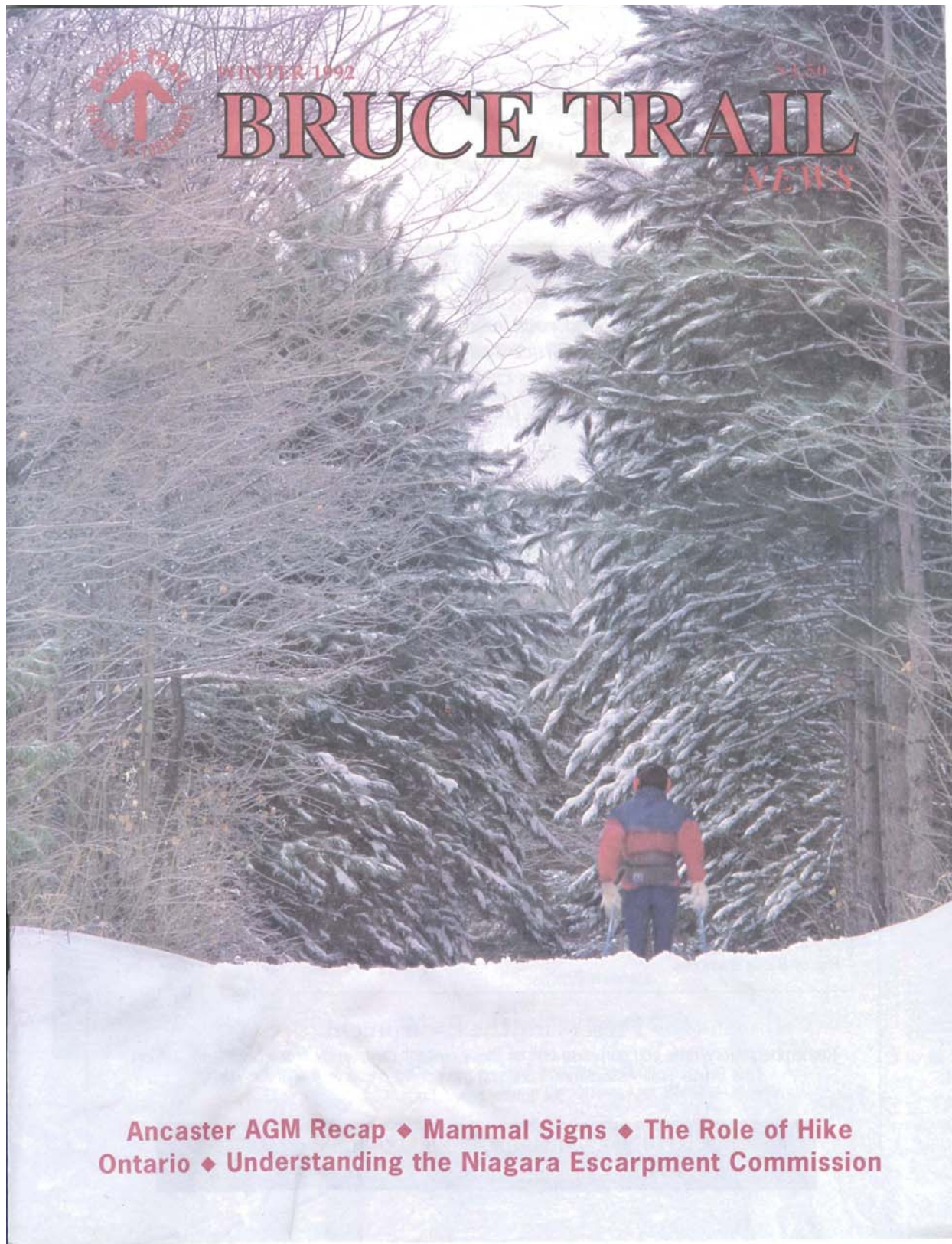




Image 4





Appendix I:

Bruce Pensinsula National Park photos (all photos taken by author)

Image 1



Image 2







Image 5





Image 6





Image 7

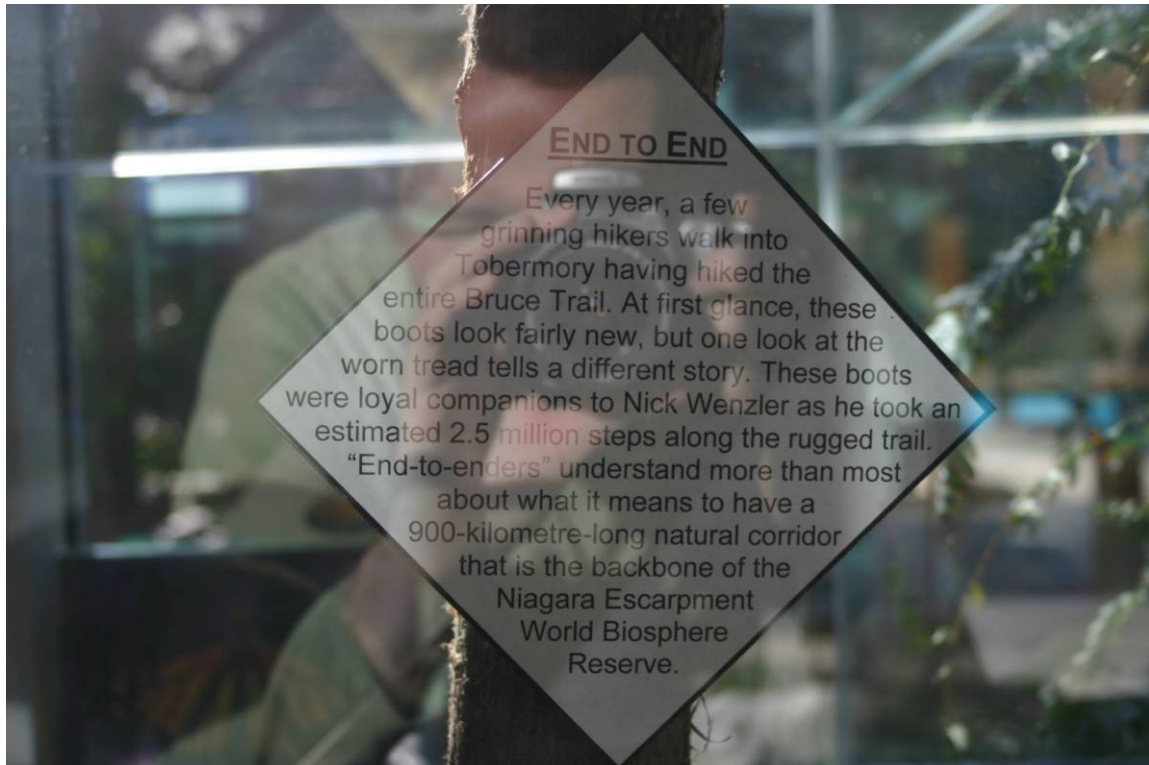


Image 8





Image 9



Image 10





Image 11

**"Bare-proof your site!"**

Never leave ANY of these items unattended:

- Coolers
- Food – open/closed
- Garbage/Wrappings
- Dishes/Pots
- Pet Food/Bowls
- Bottles/Cans
- ANY item associated with the preparation of food

Anything that has odour or could be considered food may attract wildlife to your picnic site.



*Tout ce qui possède une odeur ou peut être considéré comme une source de nourriture peut attirer des animaux sauvages à votre emplacement.*

**Ne laissez jamais L'UN OU L'AUTRE des objets suivants sans surveillance à votre emplacement**

- glacières;
- nourriture – dans des contenants ouverts ou fermés;
- déchets ou emballages;
- vaisselle ou ustensiles de cuisson;
- nourriture ou bols pour animaux de compagnie;
- bouteilles et conserves;
- TOUT objet ayant servi à préparer des aliments.

**Pour un emplacement à l'épreuve des ours**

## Attention Campers:

Store ALL FOOD and FOOD-RELATED ITEMS in a hard-sided vehicle/trailer/motor home (not in a tent or tent-trailer) when not in use, at night while you are sleeping, or when your site is unattended for any length of time.

*Campers who fail to comply may be charged under the Canada National Parks Act and Regulations.*

Please report all bear, cougar, wolf, and coyote sightings to park staff immediately.

**A "bare" campsite**



**Un emplacement « propre »**

**A "wildlife at risk" site**



**Un emplacement qui met la faune est en péril**

## Avis aux campeurs :

TOUS LES ALIMENTS et autres OBJETS CONNEXES dont vous ne vous servez pas doivent être rangés dans un véhicule, une remorque ou une autocaravane à parois rigides, ou dans les casiers d'entreposage des aliments du terrain de camping (une tente ou une tente-caravane ne constitue pas un lieu de rangement acceptable).

*Les visiteurs qui ne se conforment pas à cette politique courent le risque d'être accusés en vertu de la Loi sur les parcs nationaux du Canada et de ses règlements d'application.*

**Avertissez immédiatement les employés du parc si vous apercevez un ours, un cougar, un loup ou un coyote.**

Once an animal gets used to human food, it becomes a risk to public safety, and may have to be destroyed. For further wildlife safety information, contact park staff.



Les animaux qui s'habituent à la nourriture humaine représentent un danger pour la sécurité du public et doivent parfois être abattus. Pour en savoir davantage sur la sécurité de la faune, communiquez avec les employés du parc.



Parcs Canada

Parks Canada



Image 12



Image 13





Image 14



Image 15





Image 16



Image 17



## Appendix J

### Additional photos

Image 1



Image 2

