MODERN MEN:
TAKING RISKS AND MAKING MASCULINITY IN THE POSTWAR YEARS

by

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M.A., Dalhousie University, 1997
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THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Department
of
History

I

Approval

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Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Title of Thesis: Modern Men: Taking Risks and Making Masculinity in the Postwar Years

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ABSTRACT

Postwar Canadian culture explained the predicament of modern men in two contradictory ways. One response suggested that men were the ideal moderns. Traits such as reason, technical ability, and self-discipline were labelled as masculine, and Canadians turned to a variety of male-dominated fields of expertise, including engineering, automobile safety, urban planning, psychiatry, and psychology, to manage modern forms of risk. The other main approach was to suggest the exact opposite, to claim that modern life sapped men of the traits that made them manly. From this perspective, such modern processes as bureaucratization, suburbanization and white-collar work threatened the very basis of masculinity. In "Modern Men" I demonstrate how these two conflicting attitudes resulted from a widespread postwar attempt to "modernize" masculinity, to establish a form of gendered modernity that I call "manly modernism."

"Modern Men" examines how those in one city, Vancouver, responded to various forms of modern risk and the ways in which they connected masculinity with risk-taking and risk-management. Vancouverites' mixed response to the question of what it meant to be a modern man reflected manly modernism's ironic effects. Even as men became the main symbols of postwar modernity, they also became the objects of new forms of discipline and regulation. Although modern expertise was gendered as masculine, many men just as often found themselves the target of discipline from these new professions that, for example, sought to discipline male aggression and restrain overly daring and risky behaviour. Manly modernism justified men's privileges in uneven ways, benefiting some men and some types of masculinity above others and creating unintended consequences by the new ways in which men's social privileges were delivered.

In "Modern Men" I suggest that the unexpected predecessors to 1960s criticisms of modernity were the men from the 1940s and 1950s who themselves found much to criticize in modern notions of masculinity and the modernist project with which it was associated. Rarely gender radicals themselves, their criticism of the manly modern ideal nonetheless helped set the stage for the more sustained criticism which followed.

for M and J

the believers

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I was little, my mother used to tell me that I could be anything when I grew up. She was wrong — I couldn't have been a nuclear physicist, and I certainly wouldn't have wanted to be an accountant. But I'm glad that I didn't realize that she was wrong until too late. I had already convinced myself that I could become a historian and, somewhere in my twenties when self-doubt began to set in, I'd been so thoroughly indoctrinated that I never quite gave up. For always believing in me, this dissertation is dedicated to my mother.

This dissertation is also dedicated to another believer, my wife Juliet. Hers is a belief of another kind — a belief that oceans and time zones don't matter, and that she and I do. For leading me to a purer and more rewarding faith, this dissertation is for her.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCAA	British Columbia Automobile Association
BCMC	British Columbia Mountaineering Club
CCVA	Canadian Combat Veterans' Association
CPC	Canada Pension Commission
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
NPA	Non-Partisan Association
VTSC	Vancouver Traffic and Safety Council
WVA	War Veterans' Allowance

Introduction

To begin, let me ask a question that is much grander than its simple wording implies: What did it mean to be a modern man? The question may seem odd at first. There is the use of "did" in reference to modernity. If a slippery word like modernity can be defined at all, that definition would surely have the words "new" or "recent" right at the beginning; and yet I use the past tense. The question may also seem odd because the phrase is out of date. We don't refer to "modern man" anymore, at least not in the 1950s sense of the term in which man stands in for all of humanity, as in "what is the fate of modern man in the nuclear age?" Even if we throw out the gender-blindness of the term and use it to refer to men in particular, it still won't do. How can we speak of men as modern in a time when public discussions of masculinity are increasingly dominated by the insights of evolutionary biologists and psychologists, those experts who tell us that men are the way they are because it is programmed in their genes?[1] According to this science, not only is masculinity not modern, it is not even historical. Its origins are almost primordial; they are certainly primitive. And yet, it is precisely because the question seems odd, because it points to a historical shift in the very meaning of manliness, that it needs to be asked. What *did* it mean to be a modern man?

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[1] At my own Simon Fraser University, a number of academics in various disciplines have followed these ideas including Neil Boyd, *The Beast Within: Why Men Are Violent* (Vancouver: Douglas McIntyre, 2000); Charles Crawford and Dennis L. Krebs, *Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology: Ideas, Issues and Applications* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998); and the new Canada Research Chair in Economics and Evolution, Arthur Robson.

My argument in this dissertation is that it meant quite a lot. Between the end of the Second World War and the late 1960s ideals of masculinity drew much of their force by their seemingly natural connection to that which was modern. The two terms were almost synonymous. In "Modern Men" I argue that the collective expression of this gendered ideology – which I call "manly modernism" – served as one of the major ways in which Canadians explained and justified their beliefs in gender difference in the postwar years. To speak of manliness often meant to speak of modernity, and vice versa. For those eager to bolster the power of masculinity in an age ostensibly devoted to democratic family life and when many of the public signposts of gender difference such as voting restrictions had been removed, this connection between the manly and the modern could not have been more propitious. The postwar years represented the high point of the modernist project in Canada, the time in which affluence, scientific development, and the emerging welfare state combined to make it seem as if Canadians could manipulate the environment for the ever greater social good. What is so striking about this period is not just this profound belief in the mythology of progress, but also the way that it was gendered. The cast of characters that made progress possible, from engineers and scientists to economists and war veterans, was almost entirely male. And the traits these characters were said to embody, the traits that were said to make progress possible – objectivity, stoicism, and instrumental reason – were also gendered as masculine. Canadians had linked the masculine and the modern before this time, but it was in the postwar years that the modernist project (and its manly modernist heroes and traits) moved from being hints and promises to being daily realities.

In "Modern Men" I explore the gendering of one main feature of postwar modernisation: risk. Modernity, as Anthony Giddens has noted, creates many new risks. Modern risks are different from pre-modern risks in that they come not from inadequate

progress but from progress itself. They are created by humans, not by nature, and they demand trust not in particular people or communities but in abstract systems and new types of expert knowledge. The postwar years saw the rise of many such modern risks from the spread of car ownership and car accidents to nuclear technology and the risk of nuclear holocausts. Such risks also expanded the importance of a host of new experts including engineers, traffic safety experts, psychiatrists, psychologists, and government planners. With new possibilities for controlling and manipulating the natural, social, and psychological environment came new ways to be hurt, killed, or to lose control. That such risks became almost unremarkable aspects of daily life depended upon a high level of trust in the technologies and experts that made progress possible. This is where masculinity entered the picture, as one of the attributes associated with successful risk-taking and risk-management expertise. Widespread trust in the modern project depended on the public face given to expertise and abstract systems. In the postwar years, modernity's public face belonged to a man.[2]

Much of this dissertation explains this argument, showing how masculinity was defined in the same terms as the rationalistic and instrumental features of modern risk management. Yet as often as postwar Canadians equated masculinity with modernity, they also, paradoxically, suggested that being modern was antithetical to being masculine. Many critics argued that various features of modern life – from bureaucratic rationality to suburban living – harmed an allegedly primal masculinity; they suggested that men *suffered* by becoming modern, that they were hard-done-by and, ergo, deserved special treatment. Popular culture represented these concerns in a variety of ways, ranging from the fascination with such anti-

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[2] On modern risk as distinct from earlier types of risk, see Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 100–111; Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (London: Sage, 1992), chapter 1; Beck, *World Risk Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

responsible figures as the playboy and the young juvenile rebel to the victimization of such stock figures as the beleaguered breadwinner, the mistreated veteran, and the potentially emasculated "Organization Man."[3] This approach represented men as modernity's victims, stretched out upon the altar of progress, baring their chests for the mechanical sacrificial knife.

My second main argument in "Modern Men" is that these two seemingly contradictory discourses need to be seen as part of one single historical process and set of cultural assumptions that we can fit under the rubric of manly modernism. The actual process of defining masculinity in line with the modernist project involved a kind of disciplining of individual men that proved both promising and frustrating. By defining masculinity's interests as analogous to those of the state, technology, and progress, manly modernism involved a regulation of individual men and groups of men who failed to match up to these standards. Manly modernism privileged rational and expert masculinity even as it sought to control other manly aggression, passion and the working-class or racial "other." Even for the male engineers, bureaucrats and other middle-class white collar workers who seemingly benefited from their status, the experience of modernity could itself be disheartening.[4] The individual and social discipline involved in achieving the manly modern ideal instilled a sense of alienation in many middle-class men. This fuelled a widespread romanticization of the allegedly more primal masculinity that the modernist project was in

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[3] On anxiety surrounding postwar manhood, see William Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956); Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 53; Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-style in Modern America* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 68–75; Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), chapter seven.

[4] The kind of discipline I have in mind here is the one discussed in Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977).

the process of regulating.[5] My argument here is that these figures should be read not as a

reflection of reality *per se*, but rather as symbols of a discourse of deservedness, as cultural

weapons used to construct entitlement to social privilege. Behind representations of modern

man either as victim or hero lay the notion that men *should* benefit from the modernist

project. That they did not always do so, that the disciplining pressures of instrumental

reason and expertise could work against men and privilege certain ideas of masculinity over

others, caused alarm.

The existence of this anti-modernist and anti-"reasonable man" sensibility running

through the 1940s and 1950s establishes a different context from which to view the social

changes which took place in the mid to late 1960s. By pitting a primal masculinity rooted in

tradition, the body, and risk-taking against a rational, management-oriented, expert

masculine ideal, the manly modernism of the immediate postwar years prefigured challenges

to gender ideals that emerged in the later 1960s. In the 1960s a number of critics began to

offer a much more sustained criticism of the modernist project and of the "reasonable man"

ideal than had been previously offered. Some of the more well-known instances of rebellion

included Farley Mowat's attack on the Canadian Wildlife Service and its "science" that called

for the killing of wolves, Ralph Nader's exposé of the bad science of automobile safety, the

youth movement's challenge to the straight and sober social mores of their parents, and the

feminist movement's challenge to sexual inequality and in particular to the subservient place

granted to women under the notion of "modern man." Collectively they represented a

growing sense that there was something wrong with the modernist project and with the male

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[5] This romanticization of the allegedly non-modern other is, on the one hand, part of a longer feature of the modern experience. See, for example, John Jervis, *Transgressing the Modern: Explorations in the Western Experience of Otherness* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 63–79. The romanticization also had features quite specific to postwar masculinity, as indicated in Ogersby, *Playboys in Paradise*, 76–78; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 249–257.

experts (and, in some instances, the system of gender relations) that went along with it.[6] In "Modern Men" I suggest that the surprising predecessors to these sixties radicals were actually the variety of men from the 1940s and 1950s who themselves found much to criticize in modern notions of masculinity and the modernist project with which it was associated. These men were rarely gender radicals themselves, and most did not challenge the ideals of masculinity out of any feminist principle, but their criticism of the manly modern ideal may indeed have helped set the stage for later more sustained criticism. And it might also suggest why some men were willing to forego the manly modern ideal after the 1960s, providing a partial explanation for the turn to more aggressive and bodily manly ideals that accompanied the rise of neoconservatism and the anti-feminist backlash of the 1980s and 1990s.[7]

So what did it mean to be a modern man? Postwar Canadians had two main answers. The first was that it was identical to being modern and, in this sense, its gendered nature remained invisible, assumed but rarely admitted. The second was that modernity made men's lives more difficult and threatened aspects of masculinity – from competitiveness to risk taking – which allegedly made them men. In "Modern Men" I argue that these two seemingly contradictory ideas actually formed the basis of a dominant discourse that we can call manly modernism. The perfect modern man was one who balanced these alternate features, who found the middle ground between risk management and risk taking. This dissertation is a series of interconnected essays which trace how residents in one city, Vancouver, constructed, responded to, and used this discourse. When

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[6] Karen Jones, "Never Cry Wolf: Science, Sentiment, and the Literary Rehabilitation of Canis Lupus," Canadian Historical Review 84 (March 2003), 65–93; Ralph Nader, Unsafe at Any Speed: The Designed-in Dangers of the American Automobile (New York: Grossman, 1965); Doug Owram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Alice Echols, Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

[7] On this turn in American ideas of masculinity, see Susan Jeffords, The Remasculinization of America: Gender an the Vietnam War (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

second-wave feminism emerged in the late 1960s, it explicitly challenged the practice of speaking of modern man and assuming that the term was not explicitly gendered, that man could stand in for all of humanity.[8] "Modern Men" goes back to this criticism and takes it as a historical starting point. The following chapters outline the ways in which ideas of masculinity were joined to notions of how one should best be a modern citizen and, conversely, of how the ideal traits of the modernist project were gendered as masculine.

Manly modernism was always tentative, contingent, and never certain. There was no necessary link between gender and modernity, nothing that inherently made men more subject to reason and self-control or, on the other hand, made the institutional features of these traits harmful to masculinity. Yet it is the contingency of this operation which makes manly modernism such a fascinating ideology to unpack, to see the ways in which inconsistencies and tensions were sealed over, covered up and denied. Indeed, this is in part what makes the term "modern man" seem so odd looking back from the perspective of the early twenty-first century. Because it is no longer (in just the same way) gender orthodoxy, its logical twists and turns are all the more obvious and strange and all the more ready for the historical interrogation which follows.

Making Sense of Modernity

Modernity is a central concept in this study and it must, in all its slick and hard to grasp glory, be defined.[9] When I refer to modernity here I am specifying an actual historical

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[8] Much of the early work in the history of masculinity drew its inspiration from this criticism, by suggesting that there was something historically specific about ideas of masculinity that had been assumed to be natural and ahistorical. See, for example, Michael Roper and John Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991); Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); and Mark Carnes and Clyde Griffen eds., *Meanings for Manhood: Construction of Masculinity in Victorian America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
[9] Given the spate of recent interest in the concept, this is an easier task than it might have been a few decades ago when discussion of modernisation often led one towards ideas of the ideal status of western societies and

process with roots in a specific geographic space, existing for a definable period of time. Although what is modern can (and has) been understood in various ways, and while there is much value in studying exactly what is meant by "modern" in any context, modernity has also been a *process* with traceable causes and effects. For the purposes of this study, modernity is the process of tumultuous and ongoing transformation that resulted from the revolutions in science, governance, and economy in seventeenth-century Europe and that has since spread to encompass the globe. It encapsulates all those features of the historical record – the development of nation states, industrialization, the spread of worldwide capitalism, massive urbanization – that are usually studied individually but which are, in fact, part of a larger process which we can refer to as modernity. There are two central dynamics to this process. The first is what John Jervis calls the "modernist project." What bound all these transformations together was a shared belief amongst modernizers in the inherent value of progress and in the general means of achieving it. The modernist project was both a desire for development as well as a faith that its means – "the rational and purposive control of the environment"[10] – were beneficent and aesthetically valuable in themselves. The modernist project reified regularity and discipline; it cherished instrumental reason for its ability to make progress possible. James Scott defines the modernist mindset as "a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and, above all, the rational design of social

economies and the need for other non-western nations to modernise in order to become, seemingly, like the United States. The dilemma in defining modernity in this way has frequently been its ethnocentric basis, the assumption that such processes had to (or should) occur in specific ways and that, on a much larger scale, such developments were inherently good, that they represented progress. On this heritage, see Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schlucter, "Introduction: Paths to Early Modernities – A Comparative View," *Daedalus* 127 (Summer 1998), 1-18; S.N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129 (Winter 2000), 1–29.
[10] John Jervis, *Exploring the Modern: Patterns in Western Culture and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws."[11] The modernist

project included figures on both the left and the right politically. In the twentieth century,

capitalist and communist came together in this one respect to walk in parallel (if tensely

arranged) lines toward the vision of progress and the ultimate possibility that nature, society

and the self could be tamed by the application of instrumental reason and sound expertise.[12]

Because the dictates of modernist planning and the desire for continual control

required constant change, their ironic effect was to create a great sense of uncertainty. The

responses to this continual process of transformation took a variety of forms, from anti-

modernist nostalgia to a hyper celebration of the immediacy of the present. Collectively,

these responses make up the second main dynamic of modernity, what John Jervis calls the

modern "experience."[13] Modernist experience was, in a sense, a continual revolt against the

one-dimensional dictates of the modernist project. As Jackson Lears has put it, by creating

such a limiting "culture of control," modernity created, in its very wake, the "allure of

accident."[14] The modern period is replete with such moments when modernist values have

turned back on themselves, from the celebration of the noble savage in the eighteenth

century to the heroism of the gambler in the mid-twentieth. Such figures came to represent

those features of life – chance, wildness, nature – most obscured by the modernist project in

any one period.[15] They were its ghosts. There was always a sense in which the very best

features of the modern, when taken to the extreme, came back as a form of haunting.

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[11] James C Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 4.

[12] On the similar practices of high modernists on the left and right, see Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

[13] On this element of modernity, see John Jervis, *Exploring the Modern* and more extensively in his *Transgressing the Modern*,; Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* and Marshall Berman, *"All That is Solid Melts Into Air": The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

[14] Jackson Lears, *Something For Nothing: Luck in America* (New York: Viking, 2003).

[15] Outram, *The Enlightenment*, chapter five; Jervis, *Transgressing the Modern*. The dark history of this is the history of the other, the extent to which being modern has often depended upon defining others – cultures, women, the diseased – as primitive, non-modern, and uncivilized. See Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993.

Modernity's ghosts did not, as good ghosts should, wait until after death to begin their haunting but rather were already a spectral presence in the here and now, a mocking shadow of the modern promise of eternal possibility.

These two features – modernist project and experience – have been the uniting dynamics of the process of modernity since the seventeenth century and both were prominent in the workings of manly modernism in mid-twentieth-century Canada. The postwar years represented a significant era in the history of modernity, the moment it reached its zenith in North America. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, something had begun to change. Whether we refer to this as post-modernity or, as the German critic Ulrich Beck would have it, a truer, less hindered reflexive modernity, it is clear that something significant happened at just this time to radicalize and alter the modernist project.[16] And so in looking at the years from 1945 to the late 1960s we are examining the moment just before the transition. We are looking at the high point of modernity and, I argue, the high point of manly modernism.

In Canada, the general economic and social trends of the postwar years were well disposed to the triumphant tones of high modernism. Despite several years of postwar uncertainty where Canadians waited for the war-induced economic bubble to burst and a recession in the late 1950s, the Canadian economy experienced its most pronounced period of economic boom between 1945 and the early 1970s. When this was combined with such developments as the democratization of car ownership, technological transformations in the workplace, and a spate of large-scale development projects, there was seemingly good reason to believe that the social and natural environment could be manipulated for Canadians' benefit. The state played a primary role in pushing forward this ideology, albeit along liberal

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[16] J. David Hoeveler, Jr, *The Postmodern Turn: American Thought and Culture in the 1970s* (New York: Twayne, 1996); Beck, *Risk Society*.

individualist lines with the goal of enhancing and not replacing capitalism. The postwar years saw the rise of a much more active welfare state to tame economic and political uncertainty. Canada took part in North American military defence systems as part of a broader program of Cold War containment culture. And the taming of nature was evident in the completion of several mega-projects, most notably the deepening of the St Lawrence Seaway and Newfoundland's Churchill Falls hydroelectric project. Although high modernism predated these years, the postwar era saw its consolidation as the nation's dominant ideology.[17]

The postwar modernist project in British Columbia mirrored national trends. Building on the strength of wartime prosperity and continuing from the same conditions after the war, the province's population grew from just over eight hundred thousand in 1941 to more than two million in 1971. Economically, governments, corporations, and unions emphasized planned and sustained growth. In a province so broken up by mountains and water as British Columbia, governments considered transportation initiatives to be the main impetus to development. Earlier governments had placed great importance on transportation but the postwar governments of John Hart (1941-1947), Byron Johnson (1947-1952) and especially WAC Bennett and the Social Credit Party (1952-1972) expanded resources devoted to such projects to unprecedented levels. A Ministry of Highways was created in 1955 and it quickly became one of the most important government portfolios. Commenting on the dominant ethic of the time, political historian Martin Robin characterizes the Social Credit Highways Minister Philip Gaglardi as "the high priest of a

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[17] Few historians deal with these developments in the context of a discussion of modernization. For a useful general overview without this discussion, see Alvin Finkel, *Our Lives: Canada after 1945* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1997) and the political history–centred Robert Bothwell et al., *Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics and Provincialism* Revised ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989). On the era's fascination with technology, see Pam Roper, "The Limits of *Laissez-Innover*: Canada's Automation Controversy, 1955–1969," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34:3 (1999): 87–105. I owe the connection between the "culture of control" and the welfare state to a reading of Lears, *Something for Nothing,* 231.

secular religion long practised in a province fragmented in to isolated regional and cultural entities ...[whose inhabitants] worshipped the highways, by-ways, and thru-ways, things of brick, mortar and asphalt, which brought them into closer communion." Aside from highways, governments took on a great many other projects including the expansion of the provincial railway, the Pacific Great Eastern, and the building of new bridges. Devotees of what Robin calls "the ideology of raw growth," the Social Credit party felt no compunction about using the state to shape the economic life of the province. As the provincial historian Jean Barman notes, "a strong verbal commitment to free enterprise cheerfully coexisted with a willingness to use the power of the state to set capitalism's direction." In 1958, the Social Credit government took over Black Ball, the private company that ran the province's ferries and created the BC Ferry Corporation. In an even more dramatic move, Bennett provincialized BC Electric in 1961 and then joined it with BC Power to create the BC Hydro and Power Authority in 1962 to develop hydroelectric energy on the Peace River. Such state initiatives went hand in hand with the continuing private development of forestry, mining, fishing, and other provincial resources. These years saw great expansion in these industries but also the consolidation of corporate ownership and the increased use of technology to manipulate the natural world in order to feed what Bennett called "the good life." The still frontier-like conditions in much of the province in 1945 gave British Columbia's version of high modernism a radical shine. It was not so much that modernization occurred differently in British Columbia as it was that there was such a short distance between the pre-modern and the modern, between the absence and the shocking presence of industry, urbanisation and technological development.[18]

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[18] Quotes from Martin Robin, *Pillars of Profit: The Company Province, 1934–1972* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 194 and Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 280.

Vancouver's history is replete with the same moments of sudden disjuncture between what used to be and what is. Although the city was not favoured by the provincial government for most of these years, it remained the centre of provincial economic and cultural life. The population of Greater Vancouver almost tripled between 1941 and 1971 going from three hundred and seventy-four thousand in the early 1940s to more than a million inhabitants in the early 1970s. And although this growth occurred in all areas, suburban growth far outpaced that of the city centre. Where the city of Vancouver had made up almost 80 per cent of the total Greater Vancouver population in 1941, this number shrank to just under 40 per cent thirty years later. North and West Vancouver on the north shore of Burrard Inlet became, along with Burnaby, Surrey, Richmond, New Westminster, Coquitlam, and Port Moody, large suburban centres of social and economic activity which changed the nature of urban life and drastically reduced the region's amount of undeveloped land. Early baby boomers who grew up in Vancouver might still remember horse-drawn cart milk delivery, iceboxes, and furnaces fed with saw dust, but these rustic aspects of Vancouver's past quickly disappeared as the city became a much more regulated, automobile-centred, and densely populated place in which to live. Growing up in Vancouver in these years meant viscerally experiencing the capacity of governments, corporations, and individuals to radically alter the environment in the hopes of creating a modern city.[19]

Indeed this may be what helped to make Vancouver such a leading light in modernist architecture in the postwar years. The University of British Columbia established a School of Architecture in 1946 and named Fred Lasserre, modernist fan of Le Corbusier, as its first

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[19] On changes in Vancouver during these years, see Bruce MacDonald, *Vancouver: A Visual History* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1992) and Norbert MacDonald, *Distant Neighbours: A Comparative History of Seattle and Vancouver* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), chapter 8. Vancouver's population statistics are drawn from MacDonald, *Distant Neighbours*, 156.

director. The Modernist architecture of Lassere and others (like the young Arthur Erikson who designed Simon Fraser University) prided itself on its totalizing vision which did away with previous traditions and histories for the sake of the architects' own authority. Although it did try to accommodate itself to the local region and landscape, such natural elements merely acted as one more ingredient through which the architect could design his total vision. Lasserre claimed that, in British Columbia, "we can build the best school of architecture in the country [because] we have no old wood to clear away."[20]

While such high modernist optimism dominated the cultural and political landscape, the rapid pace of change did generate small pockets of criticism. On the national level, a number of intellectuals made the most serious and consistent criticism of modernity's ill effects. A variety of figures including Harold Innis, Arthur Lower, and George Grant publicly voiced their fears about the increasing role of science and technology in educational institutions and public life more generally. They worried about the loss of community values, traditional forms of social organisation, the value of deference and, in the face of growing Americanization, the loss of Canada's connection to Britain.[21] The Massey Commission into the arts and cultural life of Canada (1949-1951) reflected these fears, and the creation of such institutions as the Canada Council originated, in part, from fears about encroaching Americanization and its "crass" popular culture. Antimodernism in Canada during the 1950s often doubled as anti-Americanism. Although a certain amount of snobbery undoubtedly fed this criticism, it would be wrong to see postwar antimodernism as

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[20] Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, *Modern Architecture in Vancouver, 1938–1963* (Canadian Centre for Architecture and Doublas and McIntyre, 1997), 33. James Scott offers a similar critique of Modernist architecture in *Seeing Like a State*, chapter 4.

[21] See for example, George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965; reprint ed.,Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982). On antimodernism, see Massolin, *Canadian Intellectuals*. For a critique of the snobbery implicit in the postwar Red Tory antimodernism, see Robert Wright's review of Massolin in *Canadian Historical Review* 84:1 (March 2003): 98–101.

solely an elite intellectual concern.[22] In British Columbia, Robert McDonald and Arn Keeling have shown how the popular nature writer Roderick Haig-Brown presented his own criticism of the era's dominant development ethic. Although Haig-Brown still accepted many features of the modernist project (as do most antimodernists), he nonetheless "sought to forestall the creation of an ultra-modernist social and natural order in BC in order to protect the non-material, non-capitalist values of nature and community."[23] Many Vancouverites expressed their own anxiety in a variety of ways that, while less publicized, reveal the tensions that underlay the modernist project in this Canadian city. Mothers complained to the city about the speed limit on residential streets, questioning the dominance of the car in an area used for childhood play. Vancouverites who liked to hike in the mountains formed organisations to promote wilderness leisure and to protect some forest areas from the axes of industry. Veterans complained about the excessive bureaucracy of the institutions set up to re-establish them in civilian life. They criticized the way new forms of expert knowledge and rationalized forms of governance mediated their entitlement and its fulfilment. In all of these situations and more, high modernism's unanticipated consequences caused Vancouverites to become aware of the double-edged nature of that seemingly positive phenomenon called progress.

This doubled response is, according to Marshall Berman, characteristic of modernity more generally. To be modern, Berman argues, "is to live a life of paradox and contradiction." Postwar Vancouverites lived these contradictions, castigating modernity one moment and celebrating it the next. The one-dimensionality of the modernist project, with its excessive promise of control, radicalizes this common feature of existence. High

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[22] Paul Litt, *The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), chapters four and five.
[23] Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald, "The Profligate Province: Roderick Haig-Brown and the Modernizing of British Columbia," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36:3 (Fall 2001): 7–23.

modernism's faith in systems of rationalistic knowledge and organisation created the kinds of restrictions that needed to be escaped; and yet it called upon the same faith in progress and change that led to the modernist project itself, and to the same kinds of tensions being created all over again. Antimodernism is rarely a true rejection of the modern. Indeed, Berman argues that "to be fully modern is to be anti-modern"[24] Vancouverites may have found much lacking in the changing nature of their city and country but the way they went about expressing their dissatisfaction and their suggestions for improvement usually mimicked high modernist designs. Modernity as project and experience; the modern and the antimodern: these wedded concepts and processes – and the paradox they represented – became key features of cultural life in postwar Vancouver.

This dissertation explores the gendering of this modern paradox. Just as modernity was made up of contradictory elements – both high modernist project and its attendant antimodernist experience – so too masculinity was seen to be made up of its own matching contradictions that pitted primitivism against refinement and barbarous nature against disciplined civilisation. An ideology of manly modernism colonized modernity's twin possibilities and the spaces in between. The great irony of this period was not just that of modernity more generally, it was also that the idea of the "modern man" could be so frequently invoked without attending to its gendered implications.

Gender and the Politics of Masculinity

Gender, as Joan Scott famously argues, "is the social organization of sexual difference." It is a historically changing set of concepts and relations that gives meaning to

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[24] Berman, 'All That is Solid Melts into Air', 13–14. Charles Taylor's 1991 Massey Lectures suggested some of the ways in which, for the contemporary period, we might think ourselves into a different kind of politics and morality that escapes this dichotomy. See his *The Malaise of Modernity* (Concord: Anansi, 1991).

differences between men and women. "This does not mean that gender reflects or implements fixed and natural physical differences between women and men," Scott claims; "rather gender is the knowledge that establishes meanings for bodily differences." Contrary to popular wisdom, there are no ahistorical foundations for sexual difference rooted in biological or some other solid foundation that exists prior to being understood culturally. We do not just have bodies (sex) upon which gender (culture) is set upon. Bodies are not just coat-racks upon which genders can be hung, changing colour and style but always remaining the same shape. Instead, the cultural and the bodily come into existence together in the social process of knowing and determining differences between the sexes. It is not a matter of figuring out which came first – the chicken (gender/culture) or the egg (sex/body). Such a linear conception misses the point. Our knowledge of gender is created *simultaneously* with our ideas of the body. This is why, in part, so many scholars use the term gender and not sex, because it offers a better sense of how differences between men and women are, and have been, modifiable. For historians, this is an important insight. We have the task of exploring the different ways conceptions of gender have come into being and changed historically. The task is to scrutinize the ideas we have about gender and the way they are part of larger processes of social organization, cultural values, and individual psyches. "Sexual difference is not," Scott argues, "the originary cause from which social organization ultimately can be derived. It is instead a variable social organization that itself must be explained."[25]

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[25] Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 2. The inadequacy of the coat-rack view of the body is discussed in Linda Nicholson, "Interpreting *Gender*," *Signs* 20:1 (1994): 79–105. The discussion of gender in this and the following paragraph is based on the above sources as well as Joy Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice," in Parr and Mark Rosenfeld eds., *Gender and History in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), 8–27; and Kathleen Canning, "Feminist History After the Linguistic Turn: Historicizing Discourse and Experience," *Signs* 19:2 (1994): 368–404. Scott's use of the term gender (and the general post-structuralist slant in gender history) has received a great deal of criticism. See, for example, Laura Lee Downs, "If 'Woman' is Just an Empty Category then Why am I Afraid to Walk Alone at Night? Identity

Gender is also about power. Historically, gender is one of the main categories of

identity (along with race, class, religion, age and others) through which and by which

societies organize themselves and their knowledge. The apparent solidity of gender – its

supposed naturalness – makes it a good concept upon which other differences can be

mapped. Saying that the differences between such concepts as public and private, passive

and aggressive are akin to those between masculinity and femininity serves as a way of saying

that they too are natural and comprehensible. In a similar way, these and other differences

can then be mapped back onto gender in reverse, reinforcing the notion that historically

contingent distinctions between the sexes are natural and normal. Because they are so

enmeshed in the broader network of social organization, providing support and being

supported, claims about differences between the sexes are never apolitical, they are never

mere description. To refer to two concepts in a way that codes one as masculine and the

other as feminine is to set up a hierarchy between the two and to contribute to a political

knowledge. When postwar child-rearing experts emphasized women's motherly instincts

and men's greater powers of reasoning, implying that women would be most satisfied in the

home and men at the drafting table, they did not simply make benign observations; they

made political statements.[26]

Seeing gender in this way – as a social construction and as a way of signifying

relations of power – allows us to historicize the ideas of masculinity current in the postwar

years. In many different contexts, masculinity came to be defined as that which was

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Politics Meets the Postmodern Subject," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35:2 (1993): 414–437 and the exchange between Scott and Downs in the same issue. In Canada, the debate is best represented by Joan Sangster, "Beyond Dichotomies: Re-assessing gender history and women's history in Canada." *Left History* 3:1 (1995): 109–121, and the various responses to that article in *Left History* 3:2 (1995). In hindsight, these debates seem overly divisive, as much about the way in which arguments were made as about the substantive issues themselves, and especially shaped by the need/desire of some academics to present their work as novel and others to defend the legitimacy of work that had come before and was then under critique.
[26] This discussion is also largely indebted to Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*.

powerful. In part, this can be seen in the tolerance and even celebration of certain forms of men's violence, and even more prominently, it can be seen in the matching up of manly and modern risk-management ideals. Our task is to understand why masculinity came to be defined in this way. How did this process of gender construction work? What was excluded or denied in order to make the contradictory ideas that went into the ideology of manly modernism seem coherent and stable? To historicize masculinity is both to ask traditional historical questions such as "why did it happen?" "who benefited?" "what was at stake?" and questions more attuned to gender history and post-structuralism including "how was the ideal constructed?" and "what was hidden, denied, or overlooked in the quest for the appearance of cultural permanence?" The postwar ideology of manly modernism was neither prescription nor description; instead, it was a particular conception of manliness created (and recreated) in specific contexts, for political purposes, that depended upon a historically specific logic of creation. Common sense is rarely so common or so sensible in hindsight; it is always partial, situated, and interested. Under the scrutiny of gender history in this dissertation, we will see that postwar ideals of manliness also lose their façade of false universality.

To historicize masculinity is a radical endeavour. Until recently, historians had not seriously considered men's gendered identities. The omission was not a minor one; it was not as if the profession had simply forgotten about hair colour or shoe size. The omission meant that historians had neglected one of the primary ways in which power operates and is symbolized. Some conservative historians have lamented the loss of unity brought on by the proliferation of historical topics in the turn to social and cultural history since the 1970s.[27]

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[27] Jack Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1998); Michael Bliss, "Privatising the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26:4 (1991–1992): 5–17. For a response to Granatstein's critique (though not on the lines of gender), see Bryan Palmer,

What they seem to overlook is the fact that the comforting national historical narratives that they lament were part of (and not incidental to) a broader process of making men's power seem natural by making the historical process of its creation invisible. Women had gender; they were the different sex; they were those who possessed (or were possessed by and thus diminished by) a sex. Men were politicians, union leaders, citizens and, most importantly, humans. That historical traits of good citizenship conveniently mirrored good manly characteristics and, even more conveniently, matched ideals of normal human behaviour, was not (according to this line of thinking) part of gender. It just was. To challenge this white-washing of the historical narrative, to show the contingency of ahistorical pretensions about men's non-gendered being, to show that men have had a gender and that this identity has often been constructed in a way that leads to exploitation and domination, is a worthwhile and long overdue task.[28]

The meaning of masculinity has changed over time; its meanings, while showing some similarities in different contexts, have in fact been rooted in particular times and places, in the different ways historical actors have taken up such ideas and used them to construct the precise meaning of manliness. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, ideals of manhood came to be defined in relation to (and set against) the broader process of modernization that was sweeping over Canada as a whole. The processes of "civilizing" First Nations peoples, expanding the Dominion westward, the rise of large urban centres such as Toronto, Hamilton, Winnipeg and Vancouver, and the building of an

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"Of Silences and Trenches: A Dissident's View of Granatstein's Meaning," *Canadian Historical Review* 80:4 (1999): 676–686 and A B McKillop, "Who Killed Canadian History? A View From the Trenches," *Canadian Historical Review* 80:2 (1999): 269–299. Joy Parr offers a response to Bliss in "Gender History and Historical Practice," 10.

[28] Although historians claiming the authority of "tradition" present gender history (along with other types of social and cultural history) as the irresponsible newcomer, in fact, as Joy Parr notes, this task of upsetting claims of universality is one of the historical profession's oldest tricks. See Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice," 9.

industrial nation all became reflected in (and were influenced by) ideals of manhood. The dominant masculinity of this period was rooted in a British martial heritage, connected to notions of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority and middle-class respectability. Public concern over immigration (especially during the Laurier boom and after), the women's and social reform movements, and the rise of industrial capitalism provided the impetus to – and the trouble for – defining masculinity as a concept that signified social authority. Concerned with character formation and the value of production, the main symbol of such gendered ideology was the breadwinner. Although middle-class men remained the main purveyors of the dominant ideal, working-class men used gendered ideals of men as breadwinners and producers of the nation's progress to claim their own authority. They engaged in the class struggle, in part, by taking part in gender politics. Similarly, women's and reform groups used a gendered language to call for a host of measures from temperance to women's suffrage. These groups gained some currency for their projects by employing the language of muscular Christianity and the political imperative for womanly virtue. While historians emphasise the often conservative nature of such reformers, the efforts of these groups nonetheless demonstrate the very clear connection between gender and politics, and the way in which challenging the status quo necessitated challenging (or working through) dominant ideals of masculinity and femininity.[29]

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[29] On men and modernity, see Michael Dawson, " 'That Nice Red Coat Goes Right to my Head like Champagne': Gender, Antimodernism and the Mountie Image, 1880–1960," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32:3 (1997): 119–139; Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture and Tourism in Ontario, 1790–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), chapter 5. On gender and the "civilising" of the west, see Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997). On gender and industrialisation, see Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners* and Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993). Much of the work on the gendered implications of early efforts of moral and social regulation is discussed in Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo, *Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867–1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). On martial manliness, see Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Mike O'Brien, "Manhood and the Militia Myth: Masculinity, Class and Militarism in Ontario, 1902–1914," *Labour/Le Travail* 42 (1998): 115–141. On working-class masculinity, see Christina Burr, *Spreading the Light: Work and Labour Reform in Late*

By mid-century, breadwinning continued to be one the dominant aspect of manhood. A man's position in the family and the economy depended upon his ability to earn a living in the capitalist economy and responsibly provide for his family. The ideal received support from almost every area of society including the state, the medical profession, labour unions. and religious organizations, Protestant and Catholic alike. The gender politics of depression and war reflected tensions over the threats to this ideal. What would be the effect of long-term unemployment on Canadian manhood? How should state and society deal with the need for large numbers of working women during wartime and the potential challenge this posed to men as the primary family wage-earners? In this version of twentieth-century gender history, the main story revolved around the intersections between family and the economy. Men's power lay in their ability to monopolize the privileged entry points into capitalism's trophy room and in conflating masculinity's economic well-being with that of the nation's.[30]

In the postwar Canada of the 1940s and 1950s, the breadwinner ideal continued and, some would argue, reached its apex in the growth of suburban living and the welfare state. With the breadwinner-homemaker family seemingly more possible for the growing middle class and with the notion of appropriate manliness linked to the responsibilities of Cold War

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Nineteenth Century Toronto (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); and much can also be inferred on this subject from Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture in Montreal, 1869–1889," Labour/Le Travail 8-9 (1981–1982): 9–40. On social reform, see Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877–1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) and Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885–1925 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991).

[30] On the widespread support for the breadwinner ethic, see Steven Penfold, " 'Have You No Manhood in You?' "; Ruth Roach Pierson, "Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934–1940," Labour/Le Travail 25 (1990): 77–103; 'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986); Margaret Little, 'No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit': The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920–1997 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998); Lara Campbell, " 'We Who Have Wallowed in the Mud of Flanders': First World War Veterans, Unemployment, and the Development of Social Welfare in Canada, 1929–1939," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association 11 (2000), 125–149; Nancy Christie, Engendering the State: Family, Work and Welfare in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

citizenship, heterosexuality and the return to "normalcy," the postwar version of

breadwinning masculinity was strongly positioned to last. Even as it achieved success,

however, its foundations seemed to crumble. Although many women left their jobs after the

war, the middle-class good life increasingly depended on women's contributions. Women,

especially married women, returned to work in increasing numbers beginning again in the

1950s and continuing in ever larger numbers through the 1960s. And that was only for

those who could aspire to middle-class status. A significant minority of married working-

class and immigrant women remained in the workforce throughout these years. The

prominent place of women in the waged labour force belied the normality of men's claim to

be the primary breadwinner. Other challenges emerged with the growth of a strong youth

culture. In the early 1960s, the seemingly harmless cult of the teenager that had developed in

the 1950s was radicalized into a youth culture that distanced itself from parental values and

offered a politicized (if temporary) rejection of the materialism associated with earlier gender

and social ideals. The breadwinner ideal – and masculinity more generally – seemed to be on

shaky ground. From this perspective, the trajectory led from traditional values of the 1950s

through the radicalism of the 1960s – the New Left, sexual revolution, et al. – to the

challenging of traditional ideas of manhood, the rise of feminism, fewer differences in the

life experiences of and ideas about the sexes, and to the contemporary crisis of masculinity,

of which writing the history of manhood (and this dissertation) is one manifestation.[31]

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[31] On the breadwinner ethic and the sexual division of labour in the postwar years, see Robert Rutherdale, "Fatherhood, Masculinity and the Good Life during Canada's Baby Boom, 1945–1965," *Journal of Family History* 24:3 (1999): 351–373; Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945–1960," 72:4 (1991): 471–504. On the changing nature of women's roles in the postwar years, see Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle-Class, 1945–1960," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29:3 (1994): 5–25; Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working-Women in Small Town Ontario, 1920–1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Jeff Keshen, "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 30:60 (1997): 239–266. On the challenges of the youth culture, see Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). The trajectory is more neatly laid out in the American literature on

This tale of manhood's "modernisation" has presented historians with a dilemma. The two terms do not seem to fit together well. Historians are more accustomed to discussing gender and modernity in reference to the single women in the city. A number of excellent monographs over the last twenty years have shown how such women, whether the middle-class New Woman or the working-class factory hand, became key symbols of modern fears and aspirations. Such women's apparent (though often not actual) freedom from parental regulation, sexual practices, and presence on street corners and in workplaces drew the ire of critics of modern life. The "woman adrift" came to symbolize the often contradictory nature of changes in the emergent industrial capitalist societies of North America and Europe that sought to ensure a patriarchal separation of spheres on the one hand while supporting the value of young women's cheap wage labour on the other, all the while opening up the possibility for new and unanticipated liberating cultures in the city. This important figure of the modern past has come to dominate our discussion of gender and modernity and has potentially obscured a significant way in which masculinity was tied to the modernist project.[32]

When masculinity has arisen in discussions of modernity, the two terms have frequently been presented as antagonistic. The gendered anxieties of men dominated much antimodernist thought throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While women figure in antimodernist fears because of their activity (their presence on the streets and in

masculinity, especially Kimmel, *Manhood in America* and Robert Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

[32] Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789–1860* (New York: Knopf, 1986); Joanne Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: the Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880–1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

workplaces) men have become the subject of antimodern anxieties more often because of

their passivity (because of the way institutions and organizations dampened competition and

action). Those in the postwar years who decried the effect of modern life on manhood had

many predecessors. Turn-of-the-century Ontario doctors prescribed wilderness holidays so

that men suffering from the disease of over-civilization, neurasthenia, could get in touch

with their rugged, manly sides and (presumably) get better. Canada's most famous painters,

the Group of Seven, owed much of their popularity not only to their skill with the brush but

also to the way their wilderness paintings spoke to a culture which feared the effect of over-

civilization on men. Such gendered antimodernist fears also inspired the popularity of big

game hunting in British Columbia. We can also see them at work in the beliefs of many

early twentieth-century Protestants who advocated a more muscular Christianity, notably one

of Canada's most popular writers, Ralph Connor. South of the border, Teddy Roosevelt

drew upon the same ideas to foster his own cult of popularity. All of these writers, thinkers,

politicians, hunters, ministers, and others collectively saw a disjuncture between the manly

and the modern. They looked back to a time in the past in which men were men, a time

which, according to these renditions, was ending.[33]

Many recent works on manhood continue in this formulation, presenting men (and

the ideals of masculinity which they proffer and try to emulate) as reactive to modernity.

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[33] See, on neurasthenia, Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things*; on the Group of Seven, Ross D. Cameron, "Tom Thomson, Antimodernism and the Ideal of Manhood," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 10 (1999): 185–208 and Lynda Jessup, "Prospectors, Bushwhackers, Painters: Antimodernism and the Group of Seven," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 17 (1998), 193–214; on hunting, Tina Loo, "Of Moose and Men: Hunting For Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880–1939," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32:3 (2001): 296–319; on muscular Christianity, Gail Bederman, " 'The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Long Enough': The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911–1912 and the Masculinization of Middle-Class Protestantism," *American Quarterly* 41:3 (1989), 432–465 and Ralph Connor, *Glengarry School Days* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993 [original 1902]); and on Roosevelt, Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilisation*. See also Donald A. Wright, "W.D. Lighthall and David Ross McCord: Antimodernism and English Canadian Imperialism, 1880s–1918," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32:2 (1997): 134–153; Michael Dawson, " 'That Nice Red Coat Goes To My Head Like Champagne': Gender, Antimodernism and the Mountie Image, 1880–1960," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32:3 (1997): 119–139; and Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*.

Masculinity is a defensive category, the voice of tradition, it is that which is being changed and never that which is active, new, and modern.[34] Several prominent examples should help to demonstrate my point. In *Manhood in America*, Michael Kimmel argues that an ideal which he calls "the Self-Made Man" arose in the early nineteenth century. Most of *Manhood in America* recounts how generations of middle-class white American men strove to live up to this ideal, never feeling the power it promised, and blaming various others (women, blacks, homosexuals) for men's failure to *be* this kind of man. The problem of masculinity, in this historical account, is that the ideal can never be met, power is a promise rarely fulfilled and masculinity is therefore continually challenged, threatened, and in crisis. In her recent account of the contemporary "crisis" of American manhood, *Stiffed*, Susan Faludi adopts a similar approach, although with less historical range. Oddly for a feminist, Faludi looks back fondly on the immediate postwar years, arguing that contemporary gender troubles including high rates of sexual violence and the crisis of masculinity result from the rise of an ornamental culture that destroyed socially utilitarian values of masculinity which had been so prominent during World War Two and immediately thereafter. Echoing 1950s social critics of the "Organization Man," she laments the loss of male stoicism and competitiveness and yearns for a time when being a man really mattered. Manhood had once been full of promise but recent events had led to what she refers to in her subtitle as "the betrayal of the American man." A more sophisticated version of the threatened manhood thesis is evident in British feminist Lynne Segal's *Slow Motion*. Segal shows how the popular culture of 1950s Britain celebrated a defensive masculinity in which men railed against the multiple threats of domesticity, unmanliness, and overbearing mothers. All of these developments, she argues,

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[34] Robert Rutherdale noted this theme of resistance to change in his oral histories of fathers in Canada who experienced the 1960s. Rutherdale, "Fatherhood, Life Stories, and Gendered Responses to Domesticity in Canada During the 1960s," paper presented to the *Sixties: Style and Substance* conference, November 2003.

prefigured more radical divisions to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s. Men were changing, but not quickly enough. As with Kimmel and Faludi, Segal presents masculinity as something that happens *to* men. The recent history of masculinity is one of retreat and backlash, of too much or not enough change. Masculinity, presumably, is a single entity that can be threatened. Like a tough child on the top of a hill, it keeps its place by kicking and punching those who try to get to the top even while the dirt is being dug out from beneath its feet.[35]

In "Modern Men" I want to suggest that we historicize the threatened manhood thesis. Instead of taking the threats at face value, we need to see how the notion of threatened manhood is itself a historical construction. We should not be particularly surprised that there has often been a disjuncture between the ideal and the experience of manhood. Gender is an intrinsically unstable category of personal and social existence. At the psychological level, to fully occupy a coherent and purely masculine identity is to repress many other alternatives; to be masculine is to wholly deny femininity. And if the Freudian century has taught us anything, it should be that the repressed never truly stays repressed, that it can bubble over in all kinds of troublesome and contradictory ways. The same can be said for gender on the social level. Coding certain practices, institutions, and cultural symbols as masculine and others as feminine depends upon denying alternate readings and the reality of complex experiences in which, to take but one example, women can be

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[35] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 6–9; Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: William Morrow, 1999), chapter 1; and Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Men, Changing Masculinities* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1990), chapter 1. Recent works on the history of the relationship between masculinity and consumer culture suggest that Faludi's thesis that the ornamental aspect of manhood developed only recently is deeply problematic. These works present useful alternative ways of understanding the ways in which ideas of masculinity changed over the course of the twentieth-century, more often in agreement with changes in consumer capitalism. See Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise:* Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture, 1900–1950* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000).

aggressive and men passive. Differences between ideals and realities are to be expected. To

say that masculinity is "in crisis" in any one historical era is to say very little.[36]

In the postwar years, the threatened manhood argument was part of a process of

consolidating some men's social power. Just as modernity was itself doubled, creating anxiety

as well as optimism, so too were the ideas of masculinity associated with it. Far from being a

reflection of a reality in which men and ideas of masculinity were endangered, the threatened

man discourse helped to refashion masculinity's power in new and more resilient clothes.

One of the most significant new outfits of postwar masculinity was the ideal of manly

modernism. In a variety of contexts, Canadians put men at the centre of the modernist

project. Modern life created new risks and demanded a great deal of trust in the engine of

progress. One of the ways that this trust was consolidated was by coding as masculine the

expertise needed to ensure successful risk taking and risk management. The very notion that

modernity threatened men's position was used to assert the appropriateness of men's control

over – and the essential masculinity of – the possibilities of control and power that

modernity did offer. Men's alleged primitivism provided the explanation for their alleged

natural ability in dealing with modern risks. According to this line of thinking, men needed a

release from everyday urban life. Their alleged instinctual wildness meant that they often

could not be satisfied in the most normal of jobs and situations. This in turn meant that

extraordinary features of everyday life – from negotiating the danger of driving a car to

building bridges – became coded as masculine. These became ways of connecting individual

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[36] Much of the initial research into masculinity sought to pinpoint moments of historical crisis in masculinity. The idea was that by showing its crisis moments, then we could show the historicity of masculinity, pointing to its contingency and poking holes in the notion of a universal manhood. However, the "discovery" of crises in almost every imaginable time period and circumstance suggests that we need a different tool with which to historicize masculinity. On the psychological and social instability of gender, see Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 38–39.

men with "true" or primal masculinity. Dealing with the very symbols of modern progress and the risks they entailed became an ideal act of manhood.

Manly modernism spread to many areas of postwar life in part because it provided a way to explain and justify gender difference (and men's privilege) in a society that had done away with many of the signs of inequality such as voting restrictions and patriarchal property laws. By invoking an alleged natural difference between men and women, this masculine ideal circumvented the era's superficial commitment to gender equality by situating sexual difference as just that, difference.[37] Masculinity could be expressed in great feats of engineering and daring simply because they were said to come naturally to men Women had their place in ensuring a stable future but, at least according to the dominant discourse, they did so in an auxiliary capacity, as mothers, wives and care-givers. Men were the ideal modern citizens, those who shared the same desires and instincts necessary to take and manage the risks of a modern society. If boys just naturally acquired these traits, this was not inequality, it was just difference.

The ideology of manly modernism took the same language of "difference" into the way it represented (and obscured) hierarchies of race and class. The postwar celebration of manly modernism subsumed class and racial categories within the allegedly universal white middle-class norm. By the postwar years, unions had achieved a relatively secure position in both the workplace and public life. The security, however, came at the cost of accepting certain features of the status quo and not seriously criticizing the basic features of capitalist development. Manly modernism helped to bolster this consensus in the era's labour relations by positioning working-class men as key modernizers along with their business and

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[37] Family advice literature of the period emphasised the democracy of the new companionate model of family life. See, Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, Strong-Boag, "Home-Dreams."

professional counterparts, thus diminishing the potential for a radical class politics.[38] It

played a similar role in race relations. Largely gone from public speech was the earlier

language of the greatness of the Anglo-Saxon race. In its place came a celebration of the

progress of Canadian society more generally. Manly modernism's more circumspect

expression of cultural superiority allowed white Canadians to continue to see themselves at

the helm of the modernist project while still being shocked by the racial politics of the

Holocaust and the civil rights–era United States. Every society needed to go through a

process of economic modernization; conveniently, it just happened to have first occurred in

societies led by white Anglo-Saxon men.[39]

The Essays

For the most part, Vancouverites experienced postwar modernization as they did the

weather: it could be bad or good, wet or dry, but largely it just was. Few Vancouverites

questioned the basic values that dominated their society and economy. Left and right

differed about a great many things, but the issue of progress and modernization united more

than it divided. This dissertation is about the way gender served to consolidate the postwar

consensus around the value of the modernist project and, conversely, about how this project

shaped ideas about manliness. Postwar Vancouver was not without its moments of modern

irony, moments when the great promises of the modernist project showed themselves to be

only half-truths. New technologies and forms of social organization brought with them new

risks that could not always be controlled. They could create as many problems as they

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[38] On the consensus in postwar labour relations, see Craig Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Brief History* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1996) and Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Re-thinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800–1991* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992).

[39] Kay Anderson discusses how the seemingly less racist postwar attitudes toward Chinatown and the celebration of this place as a tourist site nonetheless continued to emphasise racial difference, although under the label of the exotic other. See her *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

solved. And yet, in these years, the ironies of the modernist project raised only eyebrows not fists.

This dissertation is a series of essays, each of which explores the way the ideology of manly modernism was constructed in the spaces in between modernist promises and their sometimes ambiguous fulfilment. One of the great ironies of postwar modernity was that it sometimes brought danger and death when it promised safety and a better life. New forms of expertise not only served as sources of knowledge and guidance, they also created new hierarchies of authority. Each of the essays examines a moment when the contradictions of modernity were laid bare; they highlight the disjuncture between promises of control and the possibilities of chaos, and between the terror and the beauty of rationalization and organization. Collectively, the essays show the development of an ideology of manly modernism at just these moments of modernist crisis. In these instances, the modernist project showed itself to be ultimately about controlling and manipulating bodies and environments through the rationalistic practices of expertise and risk management. In these contexts, a range of Vancouverites defined modernist expertise and masculinity in nearly identical terms, providing a cultural foundation that backed up the fact that most such experts were in fact men. However, like the modernist project more generally, this process was paradoxical and ironic, disciplining some men and some traits of masculinity even as it upheld the manly modern ideal.

Chapter 1 begins in the most logical place to begin any study of postwar masculinity, with the experience of veterans. Veterans occupied a privileged place in the culture and politics of the postwar years. Because of their service in the war, they had earned special entitlements, represented in the federal government's swathe of legislated benefits, collectively called the Veterans Charter. In the early postwar years, a group of Vancouver

veterans of both the Great War and World War Two called for and were granted a Royal Commission into their complaints that they had not been treated properly by government officials. The ideology of manly modernism permeated the language of those on the Commission and those appearing before it. The Commission upheld the notion that male veterans had a special entitlement and that the state had a key role to play in re-establishing a certain kind of masculinity after the war. The challenge then became how to best manage and organize the rights of this manly entitlement. This is where most of the complaints arose, pitting veterans against the expertise of psychiatrists and the bureaucratic logic of the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Canadian Pension Commission. Masculinity occupied both sides of the modernist project in this interaction between men and the state; it provided the reason for the creation of a huge state apparatus to provide compensation and benefits for wartime service and, at the same time, masculinity seemed to be threatened when that bureaucracy created its own unanticipated problems. In this chapter, we find the threatened manhood thesis emerging as part of a broader discourse that situated men as those citizens entitled to assistance from the postwar state and, conversely, as the objects of the state's disciplinary apparatus.

This same doubled dynamic of masculinity continued into the postwar years, emerging in the way Vancouverites responded to a bridge collapse in 1958. On 17 June of that year the Second Narrows Bridge collapsed during construction, killing eighteen workers. The bridge was one part of a broader process of economic modernization in British Columbia and Vancouver, meant to facilitate suburban growth on the north shore and to boost shipping trade in Burrard Inlet. The response of many Vancouverites to the bridge's collapse demonstrated how they associated the risks that made this economic development possible (the building and engineering of the bridge) with idealized conceptions of

masculinity. As in war, contemporaries defined the ability to handle and manage risk as masculine traits, those which also just happened to be essential to the postwar vision of economic growth. Within this broader consensus, however, hierarchies of men and masculinities emerged. While newspapers and politicians praised working-class men's risk taking, they ultimately valued the rational, expert knowledge of middle-class engineers, using this knowledge (and these types of men) as arbiters of the collapse's official truth. In this case, the tensions within postwar ideas of masculinity, between the bodily and the rational, the risk-taking and the risk-managing, worked along class lines.

This ambiguous collaboration between expertise and definitions of masculinity also figured prominently in the treatment of murderers in postwar Vancouver. Between 1945 and the late 1960s, Vancouver courts convicted twenty-four people (all men) of capital murder, a crime punishable by hanging. Within these trials, and especially in the discussions leading up to the decision over whether to commute the death sentence, a murderer's manhood mattered a great deal in the way he was treated. As in earlier periods, Vancouverites judged the severity of murder not just by the details of the crime itself but also by the gendered identity of the murderer. In the postwar years, a variety of experts (especially psychiatrists and psychologists) entered into these discussions, acting as a main source of knowledge about men and men's violence. Contemporaries picked up the language of these mental health experts and, in the process, contributed to the medicalization of masculinity. Although convicted men often turned to these experts to help explain their actions, the experts often ended up alienating the men from their actions, and potentially their identity. The men could not define themselves on their own; instead, they, and their actions, required expert interpretation. As in the case of veterans and the

bridge collapse, it represented the growing collaboration with (and tension between) ideas of masculinity and the institutions and practices of (often middle-class) modern expertise.

Many middle-class men benefited from this privileged place as experts within the postwar modernist project, with the tendency of Vancouverites to identify middle-class masculinity with all that was progressive about postwar modernisation. Some of these men, however, found the bureaucratic, rational, and suburban world of postwar affluence to be more stifling than inspiring. For these men, the risk taking of bridge-workers and veterans served as a kind of romantic fantasy, something they could try to live out through their leisure activities. Chapter 4 looks to the history of the British Columbia Mountaineering Club and to a group of postwar Vancouverites who took to climbing mountains as a way of finding a more meaningful connection to their surroundings. While both men and women belonged to the club, mountaineering was a distinctly gendered activity in which men dominated the riskiest ventures and in which the traits of the ideal mountaineer matched the traits of the ideal man. Here too, however, the ironies of manly modernism persisted. Mountaineers took up their sport in part because it offered them an escape from the seemingly emasculating effects of the urban and suburban experience of postwar Vancouver. They went to the mountains in order to find a more primal experience. And yet their choice of mountaineering as an escape belied their claims to truly leave behind the values of postwar modernity. Mountaineering was a blend of risk taking and risk management that mimicked the modern expertise of engineers, scientists, and bureaucrats. Mountaineers ended up advocating a balancing of the twin possibilities of manly modernism, the daring risk taker and the cautious risk manager.

In the final chapter, we deal with the link between manhood and the most everyday form of risk in the postwar years: driving a car. The postwar years saw a dramatic rise in car

ownership in Vancouver and this "Golden Age" of the automobile also brought an increase in the number of traffic accidents. The safety expertise which grew up alongside the postwar car culture responded to this increased risk in a characteristically modern way. Eschewing any criticism of the technology itself, they called upon drivers to become rational calculating experts, assessing all dangers before they arose. The best way to deal with the risks created by the automobile age, they argued, was to balance the desire for speed and power against the necessity of careful risk management. In this appeal to a uniquely modernist expertise, the ideal driver looked much like the ideal mountaineer and bridge-worker; all invoked a discourse of risk management that mirrored the ideology of manly modernism. From the perspective of traffic safety discourse, the process of becoming a safe driver closely resembled the process of becoming a modern man. In the mid 1960s, however, a growing number of critics emerged to challenge the safety consensus and the idealized manly driver that they advocated. Building on the impetus provided by American critics of car culture Jane Jacobs and Ralph Nader, a group of Vancouverites argued against and defeated plans to build a freeway through and to redevelop part of the eastern end of the city's downtown. These critics found fault with many of the same features of the modernist project that earlier Vancouver men found to be troublesome – the authoritarian nature of modern expertise and the negative unanticipated consequences of unfettered rational and instrumental reason. In taking this stand, they represented a broader challenge to the modernist project and to its accompanying celebration of manly modern ideals. Ironically, these sixties radicals also, for different purposes, and to different effect, picked up on a criticism of modernity that had been a central feature of discussions of masculinity throughout the postwar years.

Collectively, each of these essays traces the tensions within postwar ideas about modernity and masculinity. From veterans appearing before a Royal Commission in the late

1940s to car safety experts discussing the ideal driver in the mid 1960s, a variety of Vancouverites (in a wide selection of contexts) assumed that there was a direct link between men and the modernist project. Whether this meant managing the risks of postwar reconstruction or the risks of the road, these Vancouverites coded the traits and institutions of risk management as masculine. But the essays also trace a tension in this broader ideology of manly modernism. The celebration of the rational risk manager coexisted uneasily with other traits previously associated with masculinity; and while contemporaries coded modern expertise as masculine in a general sense, such expertise also had the effect of disciplining men themselves, often based upon the lines of race, sexuality, and class. This tension continued throughout the postwar years, providing a persistent area of doubt about the benefits of modernity and a previously unexplored (and certainly unintended) legacy for the more sustained criticism of the modernist project which emerged in the later 1960s.

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This dissertation is an itinerary of my trip through past understandings of masculinity and, like any such document, it reflects my own particular sense of the places I wanted and needed to visit. I have been most interested in stretching the boundaries of what we think of as masculine and the ways in which we might see it as being constructed. A few absences are worth regretfully mentioning. My desire to show how masculinity and men's power has operated in all-male encounters has meant that I focus less on relations between the sexes than a fuller account of postwar gender relations warrants. And in an effort to see the main attractions of a dominant form of masculinity, I sometimes do not spend time searching out the very important places where subordinate and alternate masculinities were formed. This is also not a history of *Vancouver* modernity and masculinity so much as a history of manly modernism as it took shape *in* Vancouver; it is not a work of local history, with that genre's

emphasis upon specifically regional particularities. I hope, however, that these absences will be taken as the logical outcome of a still useful endeavour. From the very beginning the project always seemed too large and in need of restraint. To discuss either masculinity or modernity is a great deal of work. To take on both together has meant six long years of struggle, only towards the end of which have I truly been able to see and explain the connections that my instincts had told me were there from the beginning.

In an age when so many discussions of gender difference rely on biological, evolutionary, and "caveman" explanations, the category of modern man may seem a quixotic digression. And yet, in the uneven balance that postwar Canadians tried to achieve in their definitions of what made one a man, we may find the very unexpected roots of our current gender fixations. The postwar struggle between notions of man as ideal modern and man as modern victim was not just an interesting sidebar to the era's cultural history. Instead it was part of a broader ideology of manly modernism that pervaded the postwar years, providing a source of gendered power and authority in a variety of contexts from mountaineering expeditions to workplaces. Manly modernism identified as masculine the very traits that were considered normal and appropriate to being modern even as it invented a history of primitive manhood to bolster this association and to retreat into when necessary. That such an ideology mattered, that it was not simply an ideal against which men struggled, that it helped to provide men with more authority in concrete situations, and that it had important repercussions for the era which followed is what, in the following chapters, I shall endeavour to prove.

Chapter 1: The Manly Modern Comes Home

It is often said that the end of the Second World War evinced from Canadians a long collective sigh. Finally it was over. Maybe, just maybe, everything would return to normal. The historian Doug Owram goes so far as to say that the trauma of depression and war led to the conservatism so often associated with the late 1940s and 1950s. Postwar Canadians valued home life, traditional gender relations, and the idea of security because such things had been so endangered by international economic and political events in their youth. "The generation that came of age in the late 1930s and early 1940s" Owram notes, "...could scarcely remembers a time when home life had not been threatened."[1]

This evocation of a shared identity and experience, a collective seeking of security, is deceptively compelling. The desire for wholeness, for certainty, is hardly something to criticize or interrogate. And yet societies, no less than individuals, only achieve security (only achieve a stable sense of identity) by denying alternatives that may lead to uncertainty. Whether we understand this in a Freudian sense, in which a secure ego is a result of the successful disciplining of the id and the super ego, or in the social sense in which a stability comes through establishing the dominance of one form of political authority over others, creating security is a political process of excision and

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[1] Doug Owram, "Canadian Domesticity in the Postwar Era," in Peter Neary and JL Granatstein eds., *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 208.

expurgation.[2] The Depression and war had disturbed not only individual lives, they had also threatened economic and political relations and the notions of gender through which they had been sustained. The crisis years of the 1930s and 1940s challenged the ideology of male breadwinning, first by putting so many men out of work and second by drawing so many women into the workforce. As the historian Nancy Christie has argued, state planners in these years saw the re-establishment of the male breadwinner role as one of the main goals in social welfare policy.[3] The postwar emphasis on returning to normal, then, needs to be seen in this context, as an attempt to re-establish dominant notions of masculinity. As is so often the case in the history of masculinity, men's gendered identities were equated not with themselves as men but with a larger seemingly ungendered category, in this case the nation. Canadians may have suffered during the war but this universalised national subject hid specific and unequal ideas about *who* had sacrificed and what they deserved in return. The meanings of entitlement were gendered.[4]

In this chapter we are introduced to the figure of the mistreated and deserving veteran. The postwar desire to return to normal often coalesced around this figure, on his needs and wants, on what he deserved, and on the indignities he had to suffer. While the depression and war were said to have hurt everyone, the veteran occupied a special place in this discourse of deservedness. It was he who had fought and suffered,

[2] Alvin Finkel notes that by focusing on the collective psychology of the time, Owram is able to overlook the darker aspects of the era's politics. See, Alvin Finkel, "Competing Master Narratives on Postwar Canada," *Acadiensis* 29:2 (2000), 188-204.
[3] Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).
[4] On the gendered implications of the desire to return to "normal" see Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). Historians in other countries have done a better job at tracing the gendered importance of men's wartime service. See, Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion, 1996); Marilyn Lake, "Mission Impossible: How Men Gave Birth to the Australian Nation – Nationalism, Gender and other Seminal Acts," *Gender and History* 4:3 (1992): 305-322 and Daniel J. Sherman, "Monuments, Mourning and Masculinity in France after World War I," *Gender and History* 8:1

who had left his job and family to go abroad for his country. Women had served both

on the home front and, in small numbers, in the armed forces. Yet a hierarchy of

sacrifice and entitlement pervaded both popular culture and state policy which put the

male combat veteran at the very top. In returning home, the soldier became the veteran

and his relation to the state switched from one of sacrifice to one of entitlement. While

this entitlement garnered privilege, it also demanded discipline. Veterans needed to

accommodate themselves to civilian life once again and to meet the requirements of the

bureaucratic institutions and experts which their entitlements had called forth. In this

way, the figure of the deserving veteran is but one of a number of masculine figures who

came to dominate the cultural landscape of the postwar years. The deserving veteran

matched up with the broader features of manly modernism, positioning men as

simultaneously connected to the modernist project (in this case, the state's reconstruction

policies) and harmed by that project (by the arduous task of reintegration and the

disciplining policies of the state). This dialectic connected the traits of masculinity with

the modernist project, both as it was and as it should have been.[5]

In postwar Vancouver, the figure of the deserving veteran came under scrutiny in

a 1947-1948 Royal Commission. The federal government established the Commission to

deal with a group of veterans from Vancouver who had complained that the government

and its agencies had not treated them properly. These veterans argued that the state had

not offered just compensation for military service and its repercussions. In a political

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(1996): 82-107; Susan Zeiger, "She Didn't Raise Her Boy to Be a Slacker: Motherhood, Conscription and the Culture of the First World War," *Feminist Studies* 22:1 (spring 1996): 7-39.

[5] The language of the male veteran's deservedness pervades many popular accounts of the period including, Ben Wicks, *When the Boys Came Marching Home: True Stories of the Men Who Went to War and the Women and Children Who Took Them Back* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1991); Robert Collins, *You Had To Be There: An Intimate Portrait of the Generation that Survived the Depression, Won the War, and Re-Invented Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1997). Wartime psychiatrists presented the return to civilian society as an issue of changing from wartime discipline to a new kind of discipline. See, J.P.S. Cathcart, "Psychological Problems in Post-War Rehabilitation," *Bulletin of the Canadian Psychological Association*, Special Issue containing Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association, (April 1941): 31-32.

context sympathetic to such complaints, the federal Liberal government took the significant step of establishing a Royal Commission to hear the men's grievances. On its own, the Commission was not particularly momentous. It sat for only a short time, its mandate was limited, and its report modest. Yet the issues it dealt with could not have been more central to social life in postwar Canada. The Commission records offer first-hand accounts of individual Canadians struggling to interpret the physical and financial impact of war upon both the lives of veterans and political culture more broadly. The Commission offers a neat packaging of diverse viewpoints on the meanings given to masculinity and entitlement. Participants included veterans and their organisations, politicians, doctors, and officials of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and of the Canadian Pension Commission (CPC). Although all involved spoke of particular cases, they drew on a broader language of gendered entitlement. The way in which they spoke about particular grievances illustrated the ways in which the ideology of manly modernism had infiltrated and colonised the language of postwar entitlement.

The image of masculinity and entitlement that emerges from the Commission, as with manly modernism more generally, is doubled. On the one hand, the ideal of the manly modern risking his body on behalf of the state infused contemporary notions of entitlement. When veterans appeared before the Commission, they emphasised their status as male breadwinners who had given up their positions in the civilian economy and had offered to join the military. Both these aspects – their status as breadwinners and their willingness to take risks during wartime – served as the basis for the state's services to them. While men's service in the military had been associated with their privileged social position in previous eras, the state's greater willingness to develop welfare state programs to match such entitlements in 1945 gave such claims a greater visceral reality. Aside from the war itself, the problem of postwar reconstruction was the main task of

the modernist state and planners in Canada during the 1940s. The federal government created a variety of programs for veterans after the Second World War which it collectively called the Veterans Charter. This package resembled, but was more generous than, those offered to veterans of the First World War. The evidence from this Commission shows that all involved in the process intimately connected ideas of what it meant to be a man with the process of postwar reconstruction.[6]

On the other hand, this connection between masculinity and the state's reconstruction policies also led to a new series of gendered anxieties and complaints. The veterans who appeared before the Commission found their experience with the state to be anything but empowering. They complained of inefficient (or too efficient) bureaucracy, the inability of the system to see individuals as people with specific life histories, and of the methods of the experts, particularly psychiatrists and doctors, who had so much control over how a veteran's entitlement was understood. Veterans had become the main clients of the burgeoning Canadian welfare state at mid-century, with all the promises and frustrations that this entailed. These veterans were experiencing the common deficiencies in high modernist schemes for social organisation and human improvement. Postwar plans for veterans' re-establishment reflected other similar modernist plans to assist, help, and improve people in that they often sought to manipulate, alter, and control those they were ostensibly trying to help. While much of this was perhaps inevitable, simply reflecting the way schemes for social regulation typically work, they nonetheless helped to cement the other key element of manly

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[6] On plans for postwar reconstruction, see Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein, *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998); Christie, *Engendering the State*; J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975).

modernism: the notion that manhood was threatened by modernity.[7] Although it was the very strength of the veterans' gendered entitlement that made them the clients of the state in the first place, masculinity nevertheless emerged from the Commission as something that was threatened, that needed protection. The logic of veterans' entitlement rested on these two contradictory premises: that men were the ideal moderns because of their risk-taking, and that they were simultaneously the victims of modern bureaucracy and expertise.

The Commission

The 1947-1948 Royal Commission into the complaints of disabled and injured veterans resulted from twin pillars of traditional political history: personality and timing (or, as Donald Creighton might have said, character and circumstance). It is hard to imagine how such a Commission could have come about were it not for the favourable postwar political climate and the dogged efforts of one man, Walter H. Kirchner. Of the sixty-six veterans whose cases the Commission examined, almost half were veterans of the First World War. They had sought compensation before this time, but it was only in the years after the Second World War that the government agreed to set up a special forum to hear their complaints. And much of the credit for this must go to Walter H. Kirchner. In the 1930s and 1940s, as secretary of the Canadian Combat Veterans Association (CCVA) and as a representative of the Veterans Bureau, Kirchner struggled incessantly on behalf of veterans' pension entitlements. He took up individual cases before the CPC, DVA, and anyone else who would listen. His letters on behalf of veterans and pension issues appeared in newspapers in British Columbia and across the

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[7] On the dilemmas of high modernist schemes for social improvement, albeit in less democratic contexts, see James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

country.[8] When the federal government established the Royal Commission, they sought to deal with Kirchner's complaints exclusively; indeed, the official title of the Commission was the *Royal Commission to Investigate Complaints Made By Walter H. Kirchner.*

What did Kirchner want? Quite broadly, he represented a group of veterans who sought better treatment from the state for the effects of war upon their lives. The complaints stemmed from inadequate material reward and the more nebulous but still important issue of status, that because of who they were and what they had done, they deserved a better kind of treatment. Kirchner and the CCVA took a more radical stance than larger veterans' organizations such as the Legion and the Army and Navy Veterans' Association, but his argument and actions appear to differ only in tone rather than in kind. Like other officials in veterans' organizations, Kirchner regularly acted on behalf of individual veterans in their appeals for pension entitlement. Most of those he represented received treatment in Vancouver's veterans' hospital, Shaughnessy Hospital. Through this advocacy work, Kirchner became increasingly dissatisfied with the DVA's and CPC's handling of pension cases. He felt that these organizations regularly and unfairly denied pensions to veterans either in whole or in part. Throughout the early to mid 1940s, Kirchner's complaints became louder and more public.[9]

The immediate postwar context provided a favourable climate in which to argue that the government needed to do right by veterans. The experience of war had changed the relation between Canadians and the state. The heavy involvement of the state in the everyday lives of Canadians during wartime heightened expectations that governments

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[8] See, for example, "Widows' Pensions," Walter H. Kirchner, Letter to the Editor, *Vancouver Daily Province*, 27 Feb 1942, p. 24; "Pensions Act Probe Asked By Veteran," *Vancouver Sun*, 13 Dec 1944, p. 13; "Letter to the Editor", by Walter H. Kirchner, *Ottawa Citizen*, 6 Nov 1947, transcripts in National Archives of Canada (NAC), *Royal Commission to Investigate Complaints Made by Walter H. Kirchner* [RCWK], RG 33/85, vol. 1, file 3.

[9] On the language of veterans' entitlement as a basis for state action in the interwar years, see Lara Campbell, " 'We Who Have Wallowed in the Mud of Flanders': First World War Veterans, Unemployment and the Development of Social Welfare in Canada, 1929-1939," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 11 (2000): 125-149.

could and should take action to regulate social and economic problems. Key figures working within the wartime state ensured that the services offered to veterans of the Second World War would be superior to those offered to Great War veterans. Plans for reconstruction and the re-establishment of veterans began early and the number and extent of programs expanded. The Veterans Charter sough to ensure that veterans enjoyed a safe return to "civvy street." Part of the desire to implement these programs came out of fears about the economic consequences of doing too little and risking another postwar recession and labour struggle. However, the Veterans Charter also resulted from widespread beliefs that veterans deserved a better deal.[10] It is in this altered political context that Walter Kirchner finally had some success in getting the government to listen.

In the summer of 1947, after repeated appeals on behalf of Kirchner and his supporters in the House of Commons, Mackenzie King's Liberal government set up an inquiry to investigate the complaints. The Commission included four sitting Members of Parliament with medical backgrounds, Energy Minister, James J. McCann (chair), Dr. M.E. McGarry, Dr. W.G. Blair, and J.O. Probe. Part-way through the mandate, McCann became ill and R.H. Winters stepped in. F.L. Barrow, an official with the DVA, acted as Commission secretary. The group first held meetings with government DVA and CPC officials in Ottawa before taking the train across the country to Vancouver. They held sessions both on the train and at various stops along the route, but most of their time was spent in Vancouver, the site of most of Kirchner's problem cases. They reviewed the files of the sixty-six cases Kirchner had brought to their attention and met with a

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[10] On the legacy of the treatment of World War One veterans, see Desmond Morton, "The Canadian Veterans' Heritage from the Great War," in Neary and Granatstein, *The Veterans Charter*, 15-31.
The changed relation between the state and citizens created by the war is evident in Jeff Keshen, "Getting it Right the Second Time Around: The Reintegration of Canadian Veterans of World War II," in Neary and Granatstein, *The Veterans Charter*, 62-84 and in the post-war struggle for social housing as outlined in

small number of those whose cases they felt required more explanation. After a week of hearings in Vancouver, the Commission retired to Ottawa and published its report two months later.

It is difficult to know exactly why the government decided to take the official step of establishing a Royal Commission. As I noted above, many of Kirchner's complaints involved World War One veterans whose cases dated back to the 1930s and, for some, the 1920s. Yet, in 1947, the government nevertheless felt compelled to establish a Commission. Most likely, Mackenzie King's government, like other governments before and since, hoped that by establishing a Royal Commission they could silence critics through paper work and delay.[11] Whatever the precise reason, the fact that they felt the need to publicly address Kirchner's concerns demonstrated the power of veterans' claims in the mid to late 1940s. As we shall see, such claims depended upon a cultural logic that equated manliness with breadwinning, risk, and entitlement.

The Deserving Veteran

The material and cultural salience accorded veterans' entitlement drew much of its force from the connections between military service and two dominant features of mid-century masculinity, breadwinning, and risk-taking. All involved in the Commission shared a belief that men's involvement in war was a necessary, if unfortunate, part of civilized life. This connection between men and military risk was not new.[12] Part of the

Jill Wade, *Houses For All: The Struggle For Social Housing in Vancouver, 1919-1950* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994).

[11] The government's desire to use the Commission to silence criticism can be inferred from W.S.Woods to Major General H.F.G. Letson, 5 May 1949; and "Memo Re the Desirability of Appointing Dr. McCann's Committee by Order in Council," 17 Nov 1947, author unclear [initials indicate it might be James McCann], NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1, file 3.

[12] On men and allowable violence, including that of warfare, see Ingeborg Breines, Robert Connell and Ingrid Eide ed., *Male Roles, Masculinities and Violence: a Culture of Peace Perspective* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000); Angus McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago: University of

willingness of men to volunteer in both world wars came from the popular connection

between manhood and militarism. To be a man has, historically, often meant being able

and willing to be violent and to risk violence according to the strictures of social

regulation and authority. Just as the monopoly of violence by the modern state provided

its authority, so too the granting of the right to be violent only to male citizens during

wartime served as a way of defining masculinity as socially powerful. This can partly be

seen by the great desire of non-white men – aboriginal, Chinese, and African-Canadian –

to celebrate their part in the world wars. To claim that they too sacrificed and risked

their lives along with white Anglo-Saxon men has been a way of writing themselves into

a powerful rendition of modern manhood.[13] Men's service in the military also fit in with

the ideal of the male breadwinner. By joining the service, men had continued their

responsibility as family wage-earner. Postwar plans to support veterans were predicated

upon the notion that the state would do what it could to allow men to take back up this

role in civilian life. While both of these ideals – breadwinning and soldiering – had long

been equated with masculinity, the emergence of a significant set of state assistance plans

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Chicago Press, 1997), chapter five; Robert Nye *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Peter Spierenburg ed, *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor and Rituals in Modern Europe and America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998). For a very different perspective, based on evolutionary biology, see David Courtwright, *Violent Land: Single Men and Social Disorder From the Frontier to the Inner City* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[13] The connection between masculinity and war is relatively understudied in Canada. Consider, for example, the almost complete absence of this category of analysis from Jonathan Vance's otherwise very fine study of the continuity of pre-Word War One ideas about war into the inter-war years, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1997). A few good recent works on masculinity and war include Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Mike O'Brien, "Manhood and the Militia Myth: Masculinity, Class, and Militarism in Ontario, 1902-1914," *Labour/Le Travail* 42 (1998): 115-141. In *"They're Still Women After All"* Ruth Roach Pierson shows that while service in war represented a challenge to contemporary notions of femininity, the opposite was true for masculinity; war was what made one a man. On native soldiers, see Robin Brownlie, "Work Hard and Be Grateful: Native Soldier Settlers in Ontario after the First World War," in Fanca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, eds, *On the Case :Explorations in Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998):181-203.

in the Second World War meant that they were directly built into the functioning of the welfare state as never before.[14]

Combat and military risk played important roles in the celebration of veterans and in the notion that they were especially deserving. While government propaganda referred to war as a collective national effort, soldiers occupied a privileged position. Some veterans became resentful when this privilege was not immediately apparent. In their later recollections, veterans drew boundaries between those who did and did not serve. One veteran explained, "to this day I can't meet a man my age without somehow trying to find out if he was in the war, and if I find out he was, then fine, but if he wasn't, I feel contempt for him." Ruth Roach Pierson notes that "when a man donned a uniform he stood to see his masculinity enhanced" and that men who did not wear the uniform "felt threatened not only by the possible charge of cowardice but by the possible loss of girlfriends to the soldiers, sailors and airmen." Notions of veterans' deservedness pervaded postwar popular culture. Political parties fought the 1945 election over the way in which Canada would change in the postwar years to secure the wartime economic progress for its returning veterans. Mackenzie King won re-election on a platform of social change directed at guaranteeing the entitlements earned by war, most notably through Family Allowances. One of the most significant political controversies of the early postwar years centred on the housing crisis and the need to ensure sufficient housing for returning veterans and their families. Concern for veterans continued on movie screens in 1946's *The Best Years of Our Lives*, Hollywood's most celebrated version of homecoming. The film follows three veterans as they adjust to domestic life, each with their own set of problems. One issue unites them: the unjust actions of civilians

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[14] On breadwinning and social welfare at mid-century, see Christie, *Engendering the State*, chapter 7. On breadwinning as a masculine ideal more generally see Robert Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993) and Michael Kimmel., *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

who stand between veterans and a fair chance. Such civilians come in varying forms –

bankers who refuse loans, unfaithful wives, or children who show too little respect. The

film made the message clear: veterans deserved better.[15]

Those who had volunteered for service also came to occupy a more privileged

place than those who were conscripted. Although conscription has been an important

topic in military and political history, historians have largely overlooked its gendered

aspects. When Mackenzie King introduced conscription, he did so in a piecemeal

fashion. Ever the compromise maker (and with the memory of the World War One

conscription crisis firmly in his mind), he promised that conscripted troops would only

serve at home and not go overseas. The different treatment of volunteers and conscripts

led to different gendered meanings being attached to these identities. Soldiers who were

conscripted under the National Resources Mobilisation Act (NRMA) became know by

the derogatory term, "zombies." The term had become popular in the 1930s because of

a variety of Hollywood films and was generally known as a "resuscitated body without a

soul acting mechanically." NRMA conscripts wore different uniforms marked with the

letter "A." These uniforms, and the conscripts generally, took on a wider social

significance of lesser value and honour based on an unwillingness to face risk. Brigadier

W.H.S. Macklin reported on the situation in Vancouver, noting that "It is not too much

to say that the volunteer soldier in many cases literally despises the NRMA man.... The

volunteer feels himself a man quite apart .... He regards himself as a free man who had

the courage to make a decision." When Mackenzie King announced overseas service for

NRMA conscripts, the resulting riots by groups of the conscripts in British Columbia

were greeted with derision in the press. Critics cast aspersions on the soldiers by

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[15] Quotes from Barry Broadfoot, *The Veterans' Years: Coming Home From the War* (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985), 27 and Pierson, *"They're Still Women After All"*, 140-141. Almost all the veterans Broadfoot interviews express some opinion on their relative contempt or resentment for those who did not serve. On veterans and housing, see Jill Wade, *Houses For All*.

claiming that they were of disproportionately French Canadian or foreign, especially German ancestry. While it is clear that not all looked down upon conscripts, it is equally true that there was a special honour attached to the volunteer. [16]

Kirchner and the veterans he represented took up this notion that a willingness to face combat meant something special. They felt that wartime service provided entitlement. Risk and sacrifice lay at the centre of their claims. Kirchner's organization, the CCVA, made combat central to its mandate by restricting membership to those who had seen front-line service. When he first appeared before the Commission, Kirchner wanted to know if the Commissioners matched up to his ideals. "I just want to make a few inquiries here regarding the competence or otherwise of the men on this Commission who can rightfully be termed war veterans in the actual meaning of that term," he began. "I mean men who have seen service in an actual theatre of war. It seems to me that there should be on this Commission of enquiry at least one that I would term combatant officer or man … in view of the fact that the charges are based upon the sworn complaints of men who are actual war veterans … with service in a theatre of actual war."[17] Military risk underpinned Kirchner's conception of entitlement and authority. If the Commissioners had not risked their own lives, how could they judge those who had risked theirs?

Veterans believed that their part in this form of manly risk-taking had earned them entitlement. This rights-based approach was typically masculine. As a number of historians have argued, gender shapes claims to state assistance. Historically, rights-based

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[16] "Brigadier W.H.S. Macklin's Report on the Mobilization of the 13th Infantry Brigade on an Active Basis," as cited in C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Government: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), 595. The cultural dimensions of conscription, especially its gendered aspects, have hardly been studied. For a discussion of the topic through which this kind of information can be inferred, see J.L. Granatstein, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); Peter A. Russell, "British Columbia's 'Zombie' Protests Against Overseas Conscription, November 1944," (paper delivered to *BC* Studies conference, Kamloops, BC 2001); and Stacey, *Arms, Men and Government*, 434-482..

claims, such as those put forward by veterans, have been seen as masculine and deserving while claims for charity and handouts, such as those put forward by single mothers, have been seen as feminine and less deserving.[18] Veterans clearly placed themselves within the rights-based masculine stream. "I have a clear cut entitlement which I think is coming to me,"[19] is how one veteran put it. Another, John T, distinguished between entitlement and charity even more clearly. At the time of the Commission, he was in receipt of a War Veterans' Allowance (WVA). Canadians also called the WVA the "burnt-out veterans' allowance." It was based on the idea that due to their war experience, veterans aged more quickly than civilians and should therefore be entitled to a pension at an earlier age. The main difference between WVA and a pension from the CPC was that the WVA was means-tested. John T wanted to switch from the WVA to a pension from the CPC. His exchange with Commissioner R.H. Winters accentuated the charity/rights distinction:

Winters:	Are you in receipt of War Veterans' Allowance?
John T:	Yes
Winters:	And are you aware, or is it a fact, that if the amount of your pension is increased the amount of your War Veterans' Allowance will be decreased?
John T:	Certainly, I expect to be cut off altogether; I don't want it. I want 100% pension, that's what I want.....
Winters:	What difference does it make to you whether you get the money as War Veterans' Allowance or as Pension.
John T:	Because I want justice; I don't want a handout.[20]

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[17] Testimony of Walter H. Kirchner, Secretary, Canadian Combat Veterans Association, Transcript of Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 15 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 2.

[18] On this trend in the secondary literature, see James Struthers, *The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 14-16; Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 293-294; Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, "A Genealogy of *Dependency*: Tracing a Keyword of the US Welfare State," *Signs* 19:2 (1994): 309-336.

[19] Testimony of Ernest Maxwell, Transcript of Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 15 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 2.

[20] Testimony of John T, Transcript of Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 15 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 2. First name and last initial only will be used to identify veterans who appeared before the Commission. I have decided to do this because the names themselves are not essential to an understanding of the story and out of respect for the sensitivity of some of the issues brought up at the Commission and the possibility that some of the veterans and/or their immediate family may wish to have such matters kept private.

The distinction between feminine handouts and masculine justice was key. John T and other veterans demanded masculine entitlement based on masculine sacrifice.

These claims dovetailed nicely with traditional manly entitlements based on men's role as family breadwinners. The men's claims before the Commission moved quickly and softly between these similar cultural foundations. In making this argument for a rights based entitlement, these veterans were part of a larger movement away from the means-tested programs associated with Canada's (and especially the depression's) "poorhouse" past. As Nancy Christie has shown, this critique drew much of its force from the notion that such rights were derived from men's status as breadwinners. This theme emerged strongly in the Commission.[21] A man's physical condition, so important in wartime, also figured prominently in his civilian work, especially in the climate of 1940s British Columbia where primary industry reigned and light secondary industry jobs were few. After their wartime injuries, the working-class veterans who appeared before the Commission could no longer perform the same kind of tough physical labour as they had done before the war. Their injuries forced them into less physical and, consequently, less well-paying jobs. The case of John B, a Hong Kong veteran, was typical. John B emphasized his positive work ethic: "I like to work," he told the Commissioners. "I can't sit around the house. I had a few weeks holidays, Christmas and New Years, and that about drove me nuts, sitting around the house." He claimed that war injuries stifled his ability (though not his desire) to earn a living. Before the war he worked as a grain buyer and physical labourer but at the time of the Commission he worked as a driver for the DVA, a position which paid less. John B complained of not being able to do harder and more rewarding work despite wanting to. "I like this job, sure, but there's not much pay to it. I would like to be able to make a little more money. But I can't go up to a man

and do a day's work....If I was A-1, I would go out and get a job."[22] John B wanted to fulfil his breadwinning responsibilities, but the costs of his other manly responsibilities, war, prevented him from doing so.

The state accepted this broad-based masculine claim rooted in a gendered nationalism and economics. The Royal Commissioners sympathetically engaged veterans whose testimony best encapsulated these ideals. In the Commission transcripts, the exchanges between many veterans and the Commissioners provide an almost palpable feeling of shared compassion between the two groups. This is difficult to demonstrate in a line or paragraph quoted from the text. It was evident in subtle continuities: the cutting off of a line of questioning when it became too painful, appreciative silences, long pauses, delicate wording around sensitive issues, and offers of personal assistance. The Commissioners respected the sacrifices by which Kirchner and his veterans claimed entitlement even if, as agents of the state, they ultimately refused parts of such claims.

This belief in the value of military service and entitlement shaped the most significant element of the state's reconstruction policy, the Veterans Charter. This legislation created programs that gave the discourse of militaristic nationalism a material reality. It provided, among other things, grants and loans to buy a home, get an education, and start a business. Walter Woods, Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs, explained the cost of these programs as a necessity. "It is regarded," he claimed, "as a preferred charge on the country's reserve; an obligation that must be fulfilled; part of the cost of freedom." The type of service which a veteran had rendered mattered. The Veterans Charter granted greater entitlement to those who had faced actual combat overseas. The government worked this recognition of service into a number of

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[21] Christie, *Engendering the State*, 316. On the growing critique of the poorhouse, see James Snell, *The Citizen's Wage: The State and the Elderly in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).
[22] Testimony of John B, Transcript of Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 14 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1.

programs including the War Service Grants Act, the Veterans' Land Act, the War

Veterans' Allowance Act, and the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act. According

to Don Ives, "the highest value in terms of earned entitlement went to those whose

service required them to engage the enemy." Although most historians who study this

topic do not explicitly deal with gender, we can certainly read a masculine vision into

their celebration of the greater reward given to combat soldiers. [23]

Links between masculinity, entitlement, and combat filled the writing of Robert

England, secretary of the General Advisory Committee on Demobilization and

Rehabilitation and one of the key architects of the Canadian plan for postwar

reconstruction. His book *Discharged* consistently praised the fighting man. "In war, it is

the combatant who goes over the top. He it is who attacks the enemy; upon him success

rests – all military glory derives from the man … who fights." For England, the length

and intensity of a man's risk as a soldier determined his level of entitlement. "The

ultimate risk is that of endangered life…. To be enrolled or commissioned on the

understanding of the acceptance of risk is good but surely greater honour attaches to the

man who serves at a mortal risk continuously for his fellow-men whether in military or in

civil life." England came back to this distinction again and again, arguing that the term

veteran should really only apply to men who were "conditioned so thoroughly for war."[24]

This idealization of military service and its entitlement proved a significant legacy

for postwar Canada. Veterans came to the state demanding aid in their re-establishment

into civilian life. They believed that they had earned it. They set themselves apart from

other Canadians based on their service. And the state shared this vision of citizenship.

[23] Walter S Woods, *Rehabilitation A Combined Operation*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1953), 3.; Don Ives, "The Veterans Charter: The Compensation Principle and the Principle of Recognition for Service," in Neary and Granatstein, *The Veterans Charter*, 88-89. See also the essays by Jeff Keshen and Peter Neary in the same collection.
[24] Robert England, *Discharged: A Commentary on Civil Re-establishment of Veterans in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1943).

Indeed, it seemed common sense. Soldiers had suffered on behalf of their nation; some, including many of Kirchner's veterans, had been severely injured. They deserved compensation. Veterans' entitlement seemed logical because it fit so neatly with the discourses of manly heroism, stoicism, and breadwinning which already dominated Canadian culture and state policy. In the powerful salience granted to veterans' entitlements in the commission records, in other words, we can see that many Vancouverites defined citizenship in such a way as to code its prerogatives as masculine.

The Threatened Man: Veterans and the Slippery Slide to Entitlement

Although Kirchner's veterans attributed their suffering to their wartime experience, they did not criticise the military more generally. Indeed, they embraced their identity as soldiers in order to strengthen their claims. Ideals of manly modernism enabled working-class veterans to claim a privileged status next to the middle-class politicians and bureaucrats who had denied their entitlements. The language of gendered military citizenship provided a source of power, a potential equalizer in the tilted political landscape.

Yet despite the many issues on which the Royal Commissioners and veterans agreed on, the Commission was far from harmonious. For Kirchner and his veterans brought forward serious concerns that went beyond the details of actual cases. What, then, did they criticize? If veterans and the state shared a commitment to masculine military entitlement, where did this collaboration end? What were its fracture points? And what does this tell us about the way the masculine entitlement actually functioned in postwar political culture?

The answer to these questions brings us back to the threatened manhood thesis and to the definition of masculinity as that which was modern *and* as that which was

modernity's other. Again and again, the Commission came back to the notion that men were victimised by the modern processes that their entitlements had set in motion. Kirchner and his veterans targeted the institutions and experts of the modern state as the source of their troubles. In other words, the organisations created as a result of their privileged masculine citizenship became the reason to claim that veterans lacked privilege. The veterans' very closeness to the modern state, the mirroring of interests between masculinity and the modern, made veterans the objects of state action. They were simultaneously the reason for the state to act *and* those who were acted upon. It is this latter status, as those who were acted upon, that drew the ire of Kirchner and his veterans. Three features figured most prominently in this threatened man thesis: rules-based bureaucracy; the state's limited gaze which saw all veterans (regardless of class or personal circumstance) as the liberal "everyman;" and competing types of expert knowledge.

The bureaucracy of the institutions set up to facilitate veterans' entitlements – especially that of the DVA and CPC – became one of the major targets of veteran criticism. Stories of post-World War One bureaucratic entanglements were legion. Popular lore called such entanglements the "run-around," meaning the process whereby veterans went from one government office to the next in a continuous cycle as officials at each place sent the veteran off to yet another office, assuring them that the answer lay with someone else.[25] For disabled veterans the situation could be even worse as DVA and CPC officials shuffled men back and forth between different doctors and from hospital to home and back again all in the context of uncertain income and personal health. All involved in plans for postwar reconstruction wanted desperately to avoid similar problems. While there is some evidence that more generous measures for

veterans of the latter war made the situation slightly better,[26] the stories of veterans both

generally and from the Royal Commission we are examining here, show that returning

men still faced the dreaded "run-around."

The perception that veterans' legitimate entitlements were being turned aside by a

bureaucracy bent on its own concerns lay at the heart of Kirchner's veterans' initial desire

for a Royal Commission. Kirchner consistently criticized government bureaucrats. He

lamented the fact that "the administration of the department concerned with the well-

being of Canada's fighting men ... is inefficient, bureaucratic and archaic." Kirchner and

his organization believed this bureaucracy stood in the way of legitimate pension claims.

He particularly disliked the War Veterans Allowance, referring to it as a "reactionary

regulation" and noting how the "bureaucracy" had used it "to take the place of the

Canadian Pension Act, and, in numerous cases, deprived the front-line veteran with long

years of combatant service of his proper assessment and remuneration for war

disabilities." [27]

Genuine sympathy for the concept of veterans' entitlement often ran up against –

and was beaten back by – a bureaucratic mentality. The most consistent problem with

establishing the legitimacy of a veteran's pension claim lay in determining the injury's

origins. If doctors and the CPC concluded that the veteran had suffered the injury (in

whole or in part) before enlistment, they awarded a smaller pension or none at all. This

became especially complicated. The CPC stuck by a single policy. If there was any

information on record that an injury had some possible precedent, they would rule that

the disability was "pre-enlistment" in origin. For example, the Commissioners asked Dr.

[25] See Desmond Morton, *Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915–1930* (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1987).
[26] See Morton, "The Canadian Veterans' Heritage from the Great War," 28.
[27] Quotes from "Need for Enquiry," Walter H. Kirchner, Letter to the Editor, *Province* 22 Aug 1944, p. 4; and "Thousand Cases," Walter H. Kirchner, Letter to the Editor, *Province*, 31 Oct 1942, p. 32. See also

Laing, the Pension Medical Examiner at Shaughnessy Hospital, about the case of John M. This veteran claimed pension for osteoarthritis. He linked this condition back to his service in a tank during the Second World War. The tank had been fired upon, seriously jostling him and his companions. John M claimed to have been injured and he linked his later pains to this wartime incident. However, on his pre-enlistment assessment, he had admitted that a heavy weight had fallen on his hip in 1939. No concrete evidence linked the 1939 injury with his later condition, but the possibility of a connection was enough for the CPC. They ruled the injury to be partially based on the pre-enlistment incident and John M received a lesser pension amount.[28]

The rules could also work in a veteran's favour. Dr. Laing emphasized the system's consistency. He presented a hypothetical case of a World War One veteran who reported stomach symptoms in 1915 while in the service. Laing explained what would happen if "in 1930, he comes with a duodenal ulcer, and wants us to connect it up with his service. What do we do? We connect it up, because it is on the record.... the Commission is consistent. They'll connect it up because there is some proof, not duodenal ulcer, mind you, but stomach symptoms on service. They'll connect it up and say: "Yes, that's due to service." That's what they do... the system is consistent."[29]

Yet it was this very consistency that so frustrated veterans. Kirchner's veterans made their claims based on notions of character, deservedness, and merit. The system, they thought, ought to recognise and react to individual needs. And yet by linking manly entitlements to the normal functioning of the modern state, veterans were forced to live their entitlements through the dilemmas of high modernist bureaucracy. And this

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"Pensions Act Probe Asked By Veteran," *Sun* 13 Dec 1944, p. 13; "Cheating the Disabled," J.V. Thom, Letter to the Editor, *Province*, 30 Aug 1946, p. 4.
[28] Testimony of Dr. Laing, Pension Medical Examiner, Shaughnessy Hospital, Transcript of Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 14 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1.
[29] Testimony of Dr. Laing, Pension Medical Examiner, Shaughnessy Hospital, Transcript of Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 14 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1.

bureaucracy was inevitably less complex than the veteran's own diverse realities. The gap

between the rules made to manage entitlements and the entitlements themselves, then,

became the site of conflict for a modern manliness.

The state's desire to discipline as well as reward its veterans provided another

practical barrier to entitlement. When states become involved in organising their

citizenry, they do so with very specific purposes in mind. While the state in postwar

Canada sought to provide service and benefits to veterans, it also sought to instil in them

the values of liberal individualism as it related to life in a capitalist society. And these

conflicting desires of the state – its mutual support of manly modernism and liberal

capitalism – led to conflict. The federal government's ability to manage all the programs

in the Veterans Charter meant that it needed ways to collect and organize information

about all veterans. It gathered the information that it felt to be necessary and important.

That such information could not reflect the complex reality that it sought to represent is

obvious. The information about the veterans was never an accurate representation.

More significant, however, is the fact that the state's involvement in veterans' lives based

on this inaccurate representation worked to shape and manipulate the veterans. It tried

to turn them into that which was represented, trying to make a complex reality simple.

The very power of veterans' claims, that which made them the recipients of government

programs, meant that they were also the target of government manipulation.[30]

We can see the state's disciplinary desires in writings on the ideal soldier.

According to Major J.S.A. Bois, the successful soldier exhibited physical and moral

endurance above all else. "Pride in physical toughness must be cultivated..." he wrote in

1943; "taking risks must be a matter of constant challenge and competition; personal

comfort and absolute cleanliness at work must be disregarded; personal safety must

become a question of confidence in one's own abilities and not one of watching

anxiously for dangers to be avoided." A good soldier, he argued, learned "to keep his

personal troubles to himself; to take worries and disappointments as one takes physical

discomfort or bad weather conditions."[31] Undue emotionalism and complaining would

not be tolerated. Soldiers, like men generally, should be stoic.

Disciplinary desires leaked over into discussions of postwar re-establishment.

State propaganda called on soldiers to fit themselves into the mould of active citizenship

and accept rather than criticise traditional institutions. Robert England explained that the

soldier's return home was a process fraught with gendered insecurities. He linked going

to war with achieving manhood: "…the ex-Service man may have gone away a boy,

immature, willing to be ordered about a little, falling into line with family standards of

living, but he comes back a man who has had experiences about which it is awkward to

talk in the home." While at war, claimed England, the soldier "… lost touch with the

occupations and life of his community…..he may have to readjust his attitudes to the

readily available feminine society of civilian life in contrast with the masculinity of his

associations while in the Service."[32] And the answer to the feminising influence of civil

re-establishment, according to England, lay in good old masculine discipline. In the

melee of instability upon release, England claimed that the soldier may initially forget, but

must be made to realize, "…that new self-motivating disciplines of significant work, self-

respect, and reasoned social attitudes must replace military regulations and order."[33] *The*

Common-Sense of Re-establishment exhorted its soldier/veteran readers to be patient and to

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[30] On this process as characteristic of state simplification schemes more generally, see Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 76-83.

[31] Major J.S.A. Bois, "The Morale of the Fighting Soldier," Symposium on Psychology in War Work in Canada, *Bulletin of the Canadian Psychological Association* vol. III no 2 (April 1943): 17-20. See also, Major B.H. McNeel and Major T.E. Dancey, "The Personality of the Successful Soldier," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* vol. 102 no 3 (Nov 1945): 337-342.

[32] England, *Discharged*.

[33] England, *Discharged*. See also Cathcart, "Psychological Problems in Post-War Rehabilitation."

adapt to postwar civilian life. No doubt with fears of a recurrence of 1919 in their minds, the writers of the tract told their readers, "While you have been away Canada has changed and perhaps you have changed too. The changes in Canada have been brought about by the war. At first, on your return home, some things may strike you as strange. But you have proved your adaptability in war – there is no reason to believe that you will find it any harder to readapt yourself to home."[34] The ideal of masculinity that emerged from these documents focused on the need for discipline in achieving one's goals as a breadwinner, soldier, and citizen.

The state's commitment to liberal individualism underpinned its emphasis on disciplined manliness. This commitment meant that King's Liberal government provided concrete entitlements only reluctantly, often out of fear of what inaction might bring rather than out of positive social longing. Two fears dominated. First, they desperately wanted to prevent a recurrence of 1919. This meant avoiding – or at least minimizing – economic recession and labour strife. Second, they wanted to retain political power. This meant caving in to pressure from the left which had grown stronger during the war. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation victories in several federal by-elections, in the Ontario and Saskatchewan elections, and the party's strong support in public opinion polls generally, created a crisis atmosphere for traditional parties across Canada. Seen in this light, the federal government's plans for postwar reconstruction appear not so much as a bold step forward toward a new sense of citizenship entitlements for Canada's soldier citizens as they do a hesitant manoeuvre to ensure a limited welfare state based on a fear of the alternatives.[35]

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[34] Rehabilitation Information Committee, Wartime Information Board, *The Common-Sense of Re-establishment* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, King's Printer, 1945).

[35] This is certainly the conclusion of Christie, *Engendering the State.* and James Struthers, "Family Allowances, Old Age Security and the Construction of Entitlement in the Canadian Welfare State, 1943-1951," in *The Veterans Charter*, 183. For other perspectives, see Granatstein, *Canada's War*, chapter 7; Keshen, "Getting it Right the Second Time Around," in *The Veterans Charter*, 66-67.

The Veterans Charter's emphasis on individual self-sufficiency reflected this Liberal (and liberal) hesitancy. While much has been made of the influence of Keynesian economics on the state's willingness to spend its way through reconstruction, this in no way eliminated an emphasis upon traditional liberal values. The state repeated the self-sufficiency theme *ad nauseam*. Even Ian A Mackenzie, Minister of Veterans Affairs and the cabinet member most in favour of extended social welfare in the postwar years, declared "Canada's rehabilitation belief is that the answer to civil re-establishment is a job." According to *Back to Civil Life*, "the object of Canada's plan for rehabilitation of her Armed forces is that every man or woman discharged from the forces shall be in a position to earn a living." The government would not provide handouts. In bold print, the pamphlet stated, "The Canadian program of rehabilitation for ex-service personnel can succeed only to the extent that ex-service personnel are prepared to help themselves and to the extent that employers will provide opportunity. It cannot help those who have no desire to help themselves...." The same mix of economic help and self-sufficiency is evident in the Veterans Charter legislation generally and in the government publications meant to explain it in particular. *The Common Sense of Re-establishment* put it this way: "The purpose of [Canada's re-establishment policy] is to help you in your return to civil life. It is up to you to use it."[36]

The awkward overlap between the state's emphasis on the ideals of liberal self-sufficiency and manly breadwinning revealed itself most in its treatment of disabled and injured veterans. Government programs had the ultimate goal of getting the man back to working condition. If a veteran's emotional state was considered at all, it was only because of a fear that psychological problems would prevent him from returning to work and becoming a competent citizen. As in British Columbia's Workmen's Compensation

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[36] Ministry of Veterans Affairs, *Back to Civil Life*; Rehabilitation Information Committee, *The Common-Sense*

scheme, the Veterans Charter provided different amounts of money for different types of injury according to a standard chart – x amount for the loss of one arm, y amount for the loss of both arms, etc. Pension amounts depended on the loss of earning capacity. If a man suffered a serious injury that did not hamper his work ability, he was not eligible for a pension. The government publication explaining such programs, *Back to Civil Life*, defined disability as "compensation for the loss or lessening of normal abilities as a result of war service and not for length of service. Entitlement may be conceded for a gunshot wound but if there was no assessable degree of disability there would be no payment of pension."[37] The needs of the capitalist supporting state could – and did – conflict with the prerogatives of manhood.

The class-based assumptions of liberal self-sufficiency made life difficult for some working-class veterans, especially the disabled and seriously injured. The state created its idealized notion of self-sufficiency based upon the generalized liberal "everyman" who, in reality, did not exist. The experiences of many veterans who appeared before the Commission clearly exposed the notion's limitations. The economic problems these men faced did not result from a lack of individual effort – their poverty and disability could not be explained by inadequate "gumption." Instead, each veteran came forward with a case that escaped the ideal's narrow confines. In some cases, it was just a matter of timing. Long delays had kept their pension appeals from being heard while at the same time, injuries prevented the men from finding suitable employment. In the meantime, the men were left to wonder if their problems would ever be solved. For others, the structures of the British Columbia economy worked against them. With a strong resource and primary industry base and little secondary industry, British Columbia

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of Re-establishment, 3. See also, England, *Discharged*, chapter 8.

[37] Ministry of Veterans Affairs, *Back to Civil Life*, Third Edition (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1946) reprinted in Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein eds. *The Veterans Charter*. Similar sentiments can be seen in England, *Discharged*, especially chapter 7.

had a significant shortage of "light" jobs suitable for disabled veterans. This problem consistently plagued workers who fell under the jurisdiction of the Workmen's Compensation Board and it was no different for veterans. No amount of individual initiative on the part of disabled men could immediately transform the nature of the provincial economy. Veterans slipped through the cracks. The absence of a universal old-age pension system created similar problems. Veterans could appeal to a patchwork of schemes including the federal government's 1927 Old Age Security legislation, the War Veterans Allowance and veterans' pensions through the CPC. Some veterans such as Sholto M did not fit into any. At the age of seventy-two Sholto M did not qualify for military pension and so worked as a dishwasher at Vancouver's Georgia Hotel to earn enough money to supplement his other means-tested income.[38]

The state's desire to instil self-sufficiency through its postwar reconstruction schemes did not always account for the real social and economic conditions faced by those who, based on strictly military grounds, it granted entitlement. This gap between intention and action, between the limited vision of the state and the more diverse social realities, fed a sense of unease and anger (here expressed by Kircher and other veterans) that the modern state actually worked against manly prerogatives.

For a number of veterans who appeared before the Commission, the worst agent of the modern state was the psychiatrist. The Commission spent a disproportionate amount of time on the psychiatrist's role in determining veterans' treatment and pension entitlements. Injured veterans felt that they owned a clear and straight entitlement; psychiatrists had different priorities. The increasing reliance on psychiatrists within the DVA represented a more general trend (that we will see in late chapters) in which the

[38] On Sholto M's case, see Testimony of S.D. McClellan, Transcript of Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 15 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1; House of Commons Debates, Hansard, 8 Jun 1948, p4903-4906, copy in NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1, file 3. On old age pension legislation in

dictates of masculinity were medicalized. Determining just how one could or should, for

example, fulfil one's breadwinning duties or deal with risk, violence, and trauma became

not just a matter of individual or even social decision, it also became the subject of

scientific knowledge. The group of doctors responsible for this medicalization were

themselves going through an expansive period of professionalization, pushing forward

the boundaries of how and when they could speak as experts. While doctors emphasised

their desire to help (and it seems that in many cases this is exactly what they did) the

medicalization of manhood implicit in their assistance meant that masculinity was once

again being acted upon.

Canadian psychiatrists who worked for the DVA had very particular ideas about

the causes of wartime mental illness. They believed it stemmed from background

personal characteristics and not from the immediate environment (ie battle and/or

service). By the Second World War, psychiatrists had replaced the old term "shell shock"

(with its connection to battle) with the more ambiguous term, battle exhaustion. The

condition of battle exhaustion was, they thought, fairly common. However, they noted

that most soldiers could recover quickly. As Terry Copp has noted, this official belief

went against the actual experience of wartime psychiatrists who reluctantly came to

realise that the policy of treating soldiers early and sending them back into combat simply

did not work; too many cases recurred. The general trend in psychiatric and

psychological expertise, however, ran in the opposite direction in the 1940s, emphasising

the importance of behavioural explanations. Officials in the DVA's Division of

Treatment Services continued to argue after the war that the real cause of battle

exhaustion lay in the individual soldier's own troubled background.[39]

Canada, see James Snell, *The Citizen's Wage: the state and the elderly in Canada, 1900-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) and James Struthers' essay in *The Veterans Charter.*

[39] On this trend in Canadian psychiatric thought, see "Minutes," 1 Dec 1947, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1, file 4. Terry Copp, "From Neurasthenia to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Canadian Veterans and

This individualistic perspective led them to advocate treatment over

compensation. A concern with economic matters and the allegedly disturbing effect of

the dole on manly responsibility (ideas no doubt shaped by the depression of the 1930s)

clearly influenced some psychiatrists as well as government policy. In contrast to the

United States, few Canadian veterans who suffered psycho-neurotic injuries received

pensions, and those who did earned very little. The Canadian policy was based on a

belief that monetary compensation could hurt in the recovery process. Instead of

compensation, the Canadians emphasized treatment.[40] Travis Dancey, head of the

DVA's Division of Treatment Services, best summarized the Canadian policy in a 1950

article in *The American Journal of Psychiatry*. Dancey reiterated the standard Canadian line

on the importance of a soldier's/veterans' childhood in explaining battle exhaustion. He

linked this to ideas of personal responsibility, so important to notions of manhood at

mid-century.[41] Long-term sufferers of battle exhaustion often used the disorder, he

wrote, "to avoid painful experiences and to escape certain responsibilities." Awarding

these men pensions would be an "encouragement toward the acceptance of his illness as

a means of escaping his responsibilities [and] is therefore dangerous....The subject,

under such conditions, is apt to feel more and more disabled and to demand repeated

increases in his income from a state that has already assumed a certain responsibility for

the Problem of Persistent Emotional Disabilities," in Neary and Granatstein, *The Veterans Charter*, 152;
Terry Copp and Bill McAndrew. *Battle Exhaustion: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Canadian Army, 1939-1945*
(Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990). For trends in psychological thought, see
also Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*.

[40] Travis E. Dancey, "Treatment in the Absence of Pensioning for Psychoneurotic Veterans," *The American
Journal of Psychiatry* vol. 107 (Nov 1950): 347-349; "Pensions Aggravate Neurotics," Kenneth Cragg, *Globe
and Mail*, 31 Jan 1948, p. 1, copy in NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1, file 3.

[41] On manhood and responsibility in the post-war years, see Robert Rutherdale in "Fatherhood and
Masculine Domesticity During the Baby Boom: Consumption and Leisure in Advertising and Life
Stories," in Lori Chambers and Edgar André Montigny eds., *Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation
Canadian Family History* (Toronto, 1998): 309-333 and "Fatherhood and the Social Construction of
Memory: Breadwinning and Male Parenting on a Job Frontier, 1945-1966," in Joy Parr and Mark
Rosenfeld eds., *Gender and History and Canada* (Toronto, 1996), 357-375; Robert Griswold *Fatherhood in
America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Barbara Ehrenrich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams
and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Doubleday, 1983).

his illness."[42] From this perspective, psychiatrists and the CPC had the best interests of veterans at heart when they limited financial compensation.

In the mid 1940s, the psychiatric profession's ability to claim expertise was still new enough to be reasonably and seriously questioned. The use of psychiatrists and psychologists in the Second World War had contributed to the growing reputation of both professions. The Canadian Psychological Association was founded in 1941 while the Canadian Psychiatric Association was not founded until 1951. Until that time, Canadian psychiatrists belonged to the American Psychiatric Association. Within psychiatry, Freudian notions of psychoanalysis were beginning to challenge earlier medical models of mental illness. Indeed it was in the postwar years that Freudian ideas entered into Canadian psychiatry and into the popular lexicon. Government psychiatrists during and after the war, including those connected to Shaughnessy Hospital, were largely anti-Freudian, relying instead mostly on biological/medical models.[43]

Kirchner and other veterans challenged the right of this newly important profession to decide the fate of a veteran's claim. They saw a much more direct link between injury, service, and compensation. They served, they suffered, and they deserved. Much of the heat and vitriol of the Royal Commission arose in discussions over psychiatrists and their interruption of this basic equation. Veterans resented the implication that they would fake their injury or attempt to malinger in any way. They presented themselves as respectable and hard-working men who suffered loss through no fault of their own. Indeed, in their personal narratives, they presented themselves as

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[42] Travis E. Dancey, "Treatment in the Absence of Pensioning for Psychoneurotic Veterans," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* vol. 107 (Nov 1950): 347-349.

[43] Copp, "From Neurasthenia to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," and Copp and McAndrew, *Battle Exhaustion*. On the emergence of Freudian ideas in North America, see Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), chapter 5.

going above and beyond the arduous life struggles of the ordinary man.[44] Kirchner targeted "the pseudo-psychiatrists whose subversive, anti-social theories have been superimposed, in practice, over the findings of the legitimate medical profession of Canada...."[45] J.H. Blackmore, Member of Parliament for Lethbridge, also lashed out at "pestilential psychiatrists" for their role in harming veterans' pension claims.[46] Blackmore could not believe that any sane man would tell a veteran suffering physical injury that that he had made it up. He advised the House of Commons, "I would stop here to advise the veterans affairs department to clear out these people [psychiatrists] as one would clear vermin out of a house.... If we should have another war, and if any of us should have a boy going to that war, I think we should offer a silent prayer that the will never fall into the hands of a psychiatrist."[47]

The case of John B discussed earlier provides an instructive example of this conflict between veterans and psychiatrists, of the way in which the psychiatric expertise impinged upon notions of manly independence. John B, a veteran and former prisoner of war of the Japanese in Hong Kong, complained of his treatment by a psychiatrist at Shaughnessy Hospital: "He [the psychiatrist] says 'we know you were a prisoner in Hong Kong, and you had a pretty rough go of it, sure we'll admit that, but you've been back eighteen months, you look good' he says 'we have done all we could do for you, but the trouble with you fellows from Hong Kong is from here up. You sit at home and you brood, and you worry about yourself,' and he said 'that's your trouble – you sit and worry about yourself and you think you have got [sic] ailments, pains, sickness and disease.'" John B resented the implication that he had invented his injuries. The psychiatrist sent

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[44] See, for example, Testimony of Frank C, Transcript of Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 15 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 2.

[45] "Psychiatry and Moral Law," Walter H. Kirchner, Letter to the Editor, *Sun*, 8 Nov 1945, p. 4.

[46] "MP Would Banish Psychiatrists From Veterans' Dept.," *Ottawa Morning Journal*, 9 Jun 1948, copy in NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1, file 3.

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him to be examined at "South-4," the psychiatric wing of Shaughnessy Hospital. This brought on a host of worries, both material and emotional. He worried about what this would do to his pension claim. And he also worried about his self-image. "I had no visitors while I was here," he told the Commissioners, "I wouldn't tell them [his friends] where I was at. I would be liable to tell them I would be over at the Physiotherapy or something or down swimming – that's the attitude, South 4 attitude."[48] When psychiatrists diagnosed and prescribed upon veterans, they trod on the territory of manliness, secreting negative attitudes toward mental illness into this domain that the veterans considered sacrosanct.

The methods of "assisting" veterans who potentially suffered psychiatric injuries created new tensions and sources of unease. And yet the psychiatrists' expertise gave them a privileged place within the DVA and CPC bureaucracy. Even when the Commissioners found the treatment of individual veterans to be quite odd, the profession itself could close ranks and explain unorthodox techniques within a scientific language that gave it credence. This is what happened when the Commissioners questioned John B's treatment by one psychiatrist, Dr. Margetts. Margetts ordered pentothal testing. Popularly referred to as "truth-serum," psychiatrists used this to facilitate their questioning of reticent patients. To John B, this type of test challenged his character. "I heard that they give it to jail-birds – murderers," he recalled. "I'm not a jail-bird, am I?" John B also objected to the sexual nature of the questioning. "They start off with a normal conversation, and the first damn thing it ends up in sex. All they discuss is sex, nothing but sex." Even though John B's condition included sexual

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47 Footnote text

[47] House of Commons Debates, *Hansard*, 8 Jun 1948, p4903-4906, copy in NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1, file 3.

[48] Information on John B's case in this and the next paragraph taken from Testimony of John B, Transcript of Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 14 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 1.

problems, he felt awkward during the questioning, particularly considering the tone and

ordering of questions.

> John B: I was asked by Dr. Margetts how many times I pulled
> my wire in Hong Kong and Japan. A man's pretty
> bad when he gets down so low that [he] refuse[s] to
> get a woman. You don't bother with women.
> Dr. Blair: That's about the last thing you have got in your head.
> John B: Your [sic] thinking of food.
> Winters: Of course, I guess he was just trying to find out the
> start of – when the thing started over there.
> John B: Oh yes, that's it. But if they would explain for me
> what they want. Anything he asked me – I answered
> every question to my ability, you know. ... and still I
> got so I just couldn't tell about it.

The unequal relation between psychiatrist and patient and the significant effect this could

have on his pension, let alone his own personal life, made the questioning painful and

traumatic. John B wanted to give his interpretation of events but was consistently

worried that the psychiatrist's knowledge would win out. And it did. Although the

Commissioners had problems with the type of questioning that John B explained, the

medical staff rallied around Margetts and explained his questioning within the framework

of expertise.[49] Ironically, and unfortunately for John B, it was the very support for his

entitlement as a veteran that had impressed upon the state the need to call forth this

expertise in the first place.

The Veteran as Manly Modern: A Legacy for the Postwar Years

After hearing from the witnesses in Vancouver, the Commissioners retired to

Ottawa to draft their report. The Commissioners sought to balance their support for the

work of the DVA and the CPC against the desire to improve the treatment of a few

individual veterans. The Commission found no cause for complaint in the majority of

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[49] Given the sexual nature of Margetts' questioning and his junior status, it seems possible that Margetts was following Freudian psychoanalytic procedures and this perhaps explains the Commissioners willingness to dwell on this line of questioning.

cases that Kirchner had put before it. However, it did single out two groups of veterans as deserving a better deal. The Commissioners expressed sympathy for the former Hong Kong prisoners of war, and found some of the psychiatric questioning to be problematic, blaming this on the "lack of experience on the part of a junior psychiatrist and the inability of these patients to understand the reasons for psychiatric methods." In addition, a few individual veterans who had complained about poor treatment by the CPC had their criticisms upheld. The report emphasised that it believed the CPC to be a generally very good organisation but found that it had, in these cases, forgotten its mandate to give the benefit of the doubt to veterans. Overall, no major shocks or recommendations for systematic change came from this Royal Commission. It had been created to deal with the concerns of individual veterans and it had responded by doing just that. Kirchner seemed satisfied with his involvement. Despite being hostile at the very beginning, questioning the ability of the Commissioners to hear the cases, he ultimately praised them for their even-handed guidance.[50]

One of the reasons the Commission could end with less acrimony than with which it had begun lay in the shared belief in manly modernism of those who had taken part. The Commissioners, DVA and CPC officials, as well as individual veterans, employed a discourse that connected the achievement of manhood with the risk-taking of wartime, and which linked both of these concepts with the deservedness before the state. This support for manly modernism meant that all could agree that the veterans owned entitlement. They had fought and they deserved. The politics then centred on its administration.

It is in this area that we see the most conflicts within the Commission and the other main feature of postwar discussions of masculinity and veterans – that they were

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[50] "Report of the Commission Appointed Under the Provisions of Part I of the Inquiries Act by Order in

victims of modernity more generally. The great task of the modernist project in Canada during the 1940s lay in ensuring a successful transition to peace. For state planners this meant avoiding (or at least managing) a postwar recession, dampening wartime radicalism, especially among returning veterans, and ensuring the successful transition to a postwar period in which the breadwinner-homemaker family resumed its normative status. Gendered goals saturated these plans, intimately connecting this aspect of the modernist project with specific ideas about what it meant to be a man. In the process, however, both masculinity and individual men became the object of state action and discipline. The representation of veteran as victim of modernity came from the privileged place of veterans as the main objects of state plans for reconstruction. This was male responsibility writ large. In other contexts, Canadians argued that male privileges – breadwinning and political leadership most prominently – had their costs. In war, these costs were obvious: the risk of death, injury, and deprivation. This was the nature of gendered power at mid-century. Along with rights came responsibilities; along with sacrifices came entitlements. While the connection between masculinity and war was not new to mid-century Canada, the experience of depression and war, the feelings of sacrifice that these events had generated, and the prominent place of this gender ideology within state policy made the figure of the deserving/mistreated veteran that much more significant in the postwar years.

The experience of veterans has been a good place from which to begin. In the switch from soldier to veteran, Vancouverites moved from war to peace, from the sacrifices of the past to the alleged promises of the future. With the figure of the deserving/mistreated veteran we have been introduced to the gendered logic of manly modernism which predominated in the postwar years. The notion that modern progress

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Council PC 4980," NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 2; Testimony of Walter H. Kirchner, Transcript of

depended upon sacrifices and risks inherent to masculinity moved from the figure of the veteran to other figures, including as we shall see in the next chapter, the engineer and the ironworker. The public response to a bridge collapse in 1958 demonstrated that the connections between masculinity, risk, and modernity, so evident in wartime, persisted into the postwar years.

Evidence Taken at Shaughnessy Hospital, 16 Jan 1948, NAC, *RCWK*, RG 33/85, vol. 2..

Chapter 2: The Manly Modern at Work

The fearful projections of state planners about the postwar economy largely did not come to pass. The economy bounced out of the Second World War and into the late 1940s and 1950s in good shape. Indeed, the period between the end of the war and the late 1960s saw the single largest period of economic expansion in Canadian history, greater even than the era of the Laurier Boom and the opening of the Canadian west. In the global context, the historian Eric Hobsbawm refers to these years as a "Golden Age," noting that the period's economic growth, certainly in retrospect, marked it off as a unique moment in history. While such large economic measures do not always translate into improved quality of life for individuals, the relative advance over wartime and depression provided a genuine indicator of improvement for many. The promises made to returning soldiers had found a favourable climate in which to bear fruit.[1]

This chapter explores the extent to which wartime notions of manly sacrifice and manly modernism persisted in this improved postwar context. We have seen that state planners established reconstruction policies with the twin goals of re-establishing men as breadwinners and fulfilling the entitlements of veterans to the "good life." But what happened in the later 1940s and 1950s? Did these same notions of manly sacrifice and

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[1] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (New York: Pantheon, 1994), 257-259. Joy Parr has recently complicated this optimistic vision of postwar abundance, noting the extent to which depression and wartime anxieties continued and provided a legacy of consumer conservatism. See Parr,

deservedness persist in the way Vancouverites interpreted the modernist project? And if so, how and to what effect?

One way to answer these questions is to examine how Vancouverites responded when things went wrong. When all goes well, much is assumed and left unsaid. But when disaster strikes, when the unexpected happens, much is said that is usually left unspoken. This was the case in June of 1958 when the Second Narrows' Bridge collapsed killing eighteen workers. The collapse riveted public attention on the risks of modernization and the dangers of economic development. Newspaper headlines and pictures brought the disaster into Vancouver homes. Unlike other incidents of workplace danger which usually occurred in remote areas in the logging and mining industry, this accident occurred within the city, within the known space of those who assumed that such events would not (and should not) occur. It is, therefore, an ideal site through which to study Vancouverites' attitudes towards the risks of postwar economic development and their gendered nature.

The responses of a range of Vancouverites to the collapse demonstrates that idealized masculinity continued to be equated with risk-taking and risk-management in the postwar years. During the war, the masculinity of risk had been constructed through discussions of winning the war and ensuring the successful reestablishment of the postwar economy. After the war, the masculinity of risk still featured prominently in ideas about the modernist project. In these years (and in the response to the collapse specifically) it centred on men's ability to control the environment (through engineering and everyday personal feats of daring) in order to build the infrastructure of the economic boom. The building of the bridge demanded that risks be taken, that they be assessed and calculated. In the

Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral and the Economic in the Postwar Years (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

commentary upon the collapse, such basic features of the modernist project emerged as aspects not only of modernity more generally, but also of manliness. In the 1950s, infrastructure developments like the Second Narrows' Bridge and other larger mega-projects became dominant symbols of social and economic progress. They represented the ultimate possibility of scientific and technological control of the environment. The response of Vancouverites to the collapse shows that the celebration of such engineering feats was also simultaneously a celebration of the ideology of manly modernism.[2]

As elsewhere, however, manly modernism worked in a doubled fashion, privileging certain forms of masculinity and certain types of men over others. The working-class ironworkers and painters, those who were on the bridge when it went down, emerged in stories of the collapse as physically brawny risk-takers. It was upon these men's backs that the bridge, and other similar developments, were built. Their deservedness resembled that of soldiers and veterans; it rested on their willingness to accept risk, to risk themselves for the greater good.[3] However, manly modernism was a tool that limited working-class men's options even as it seemed to expand them. While men who worked in dangerous industries no doubt gained social prestige from their positions, the modernist project ultimately valued risk-management over risk-taking, brains over brawn. The authority for explaining what happened in the collapse lay with a kind of expertise rooted in quantifiable calculations and

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[2] The emergence of this link between gender and the new concept of technology in the early twentieth-century is clearly outlined in Ruth Oldenziel, *Making Technology Masculine: Men, Women, and Modern Machines in America, 1870-1945* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999). The gendered nature of men's work identities has been noted in a variety of other contexts including, notably, Ava Baron ed., *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Roger Horowitz ed., *Boys and Their Toys? Masculinity, Technology and Class in America* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001). One of the best explorations of the this in the Canadian context remains, Steven Penfold's " 'Have You No Manhood In You?': Gender and Class in the Cape Breton Coal Towns, 1920-1926," *Acadiensis* 23:2 (1994), 21-44.
[3] In a different context, and with the complicating factor of their Italian ethnicity at issue, this is what happened with Italian construction workers in Toronto as discussed by Franca Iacovetta in *Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1999). See also Nancy Quam-

disembodied reason. When the state, newspapers, and companies wanted to determine the truth about what happened in the bridge collapse, they turned not to the working-class men who survived its fall but to middle-class engineers who promised to explain it "objectively." The doubled nature of manly modernism – the sense of benefiting from and being acted upon by the modernist project – worked along class lines, favouring middle-class over working-class masculinities.

Bridges, modernity, and the discipline of safety

Accident stories typically begin just before disaster. Everything is as usual. Men concentrate on their jobs, perhaps they share a joke together. Cars pass nearby, their drivers oblivious to imminent danger. Someone might mention the weather . Then... suddenly...the unexpected happens: a machine explodes, the earth quakes, or (to take the most obvious contemporary example) a plane flies into a building. Vancouverites fell back upon this type of narrative when they told the story of the Second Narrows' Bridge collapse. A generic version of this story would begin like this:

> The morning of 17 June 1958 dawned like any other day. The sun shone brightly over this young city on the Pacific. Above the waters of Burrard Inlet, on the Second Narrows Bridge, ironworkers sweated under the early summer heat. If this had been an ordinary day, the heat might have been something to complain about; but this was no ordinary day. At 3:40 in the afternoon Vancouver's Second Narrows' Bridge collapsed. The outermost span shook, tilted, and then plunged into the water below, taking with it another span and sixty startled men.

Wickam, "Rereading Man's Conquest of Nature: Skills, Myths and the Historical Construction of Masculinity in Western Extractive Industries," in Roger Horowitz ed, *Boys and Their Toys?*, 91-108.

The *Vancouver Sun* and the *Daily Province* told the story in this way. So too have many since

that time. [4]

In the immediate aftermath of the collapse, shock was the most common response.

Witnesses responded with a mixture of incredulity and action. The surviving ironworkers

and other workers on the site that day immediately began to help their fallen co-workers.

Emergency crews and many Vancouverites nearby rushed to respond. In the political realm,

the government called for a Royal Commission. Yet disbelief backed this action. The *Sun*

remarked: "It couldn't happen. But it did." An immediate witness to the collapse, the

operator of the older Second Narrows Bridge which the new one was to replace, Alfred

Engleman, later recalled, "Well, when I actually seen it coming down I couldn't believe what

I was looking at, it was something that was – well, I never expected a thing like that to

happen, I never realized what was happening." A boater who witnessed the collapse

recalled, "It seemed to go down in slow motion. It was fantastic to watch it." In Victoria,

Premier W.A.C. Bennett and Highways Minister Gaglardi responded in similar fashion.

According to the *Sun*, Gaglardi guffawed in disbelief when a reporter first told him of the

collapse. Bennett responded simply, "It was just one of those things. It seems impossible."

This language of disbelief was both an effect of and a contribution to the era's high

modernist optimism. [5]

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[4] The selection here is of my own making which matches the tone of most reporting on the disaster. Aside from newspaper accounts, see also T.W.Paterson, *Disaster: Tales of Heroism and Hardship in the Face of Catastrophe* ([Canada]: Solitaire, 1973) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation news feature commemorating the 40th anniversary of the collapse which aired in 1998.

[5] Immediate media response was filled with these images. These examples are taken from "Crash 'Impossible' Engineers Thought" by Bill Fletcher, *Vancouver Sun*, 18 June 1958, D1; "Testimony of Alfred Engelman", July 23, 1958, BCARS, British Columbia Royal Commission: Second Narrows Bridge Inquiry [here after SNB], GR-1250, Box 1 file 4; "Span Disaster Still Mystery: Divers Hunt for Missing Workers" *Vancouver Sun*, 18 June 1958, 1.

The collapse threatened the promoters' celebration of humanity's ability to control technology and the environment. Responses to the collapse were fraught with fearful references to the smallness of man next to the massive forces unleashed. The workers jumping off the bridge were "like flies." Contrasted with the usual expanding march of the bridge outward, the *Sun* noted that after the collapse, "All that stood against the sky ... was a huge steel W shape. A couple of giant water-chutes, their steel ends curling like gnarled roots with dead and dying men tangled among them, sloped down [into] the water instead of arching above it."[6] Initial reports repeatedly focused on the bodily pain and suffering, telling of cuts, bruises, and worse. The reports counter-posed this horrifying reality to the utter inadequacy of safety equipment. For every brutalized body, a torn life jacket or safety rope lay to the side, seemingly useless.[7] In this world-turned-upside-down language, the power of man to overcome – the essence of modernity's promise – had been thwarted. Could it be that, like the Sorcerer's Apprentice, Vancouverites had lost control of the forces that their modern engineering magic had unleashed?

This narrative style with its emphasis on shock is enticing: it has immediacy and impact; one minute all is calm and the next the world is in chaos. Yet we should attend as much to the *way* this story is told as to its content. The accident story genre tells us much by the meanings it privileges and hides, by its silences as well as by its speech. This type of

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[6] The topsy-turvy language pervades much of the initial reporting; quotes here are from, "Fear 18 Dead in Bridge Tragedy," *Daily Province*, 18 June 1958, 32; "Fifty feet from the bridge as it went," *Daily Province*, 18 June 1958, 3; "Span Disaster Still Mystery: Divers Hunt for Missing Workers" *Vancouver Sun*, 18 June, 1.

[7] See, for example, "Towboat Men Harvested Grisly Sheaves of Death," *Vancouver Sun*, 18 Jun 1958, D1; "Hurtling-Span Ride 'Nightmare'" by Jerry Brown, *Vancouver Sun*, 18 Jun 1958, C1. On masculinity in Canada in the postwar years, see Robert Rutherdale, "Fatherhood and Masculine Domesticity During the Baby Boom: Consumption and Leisure in Advertising and Life Stories," in Lori Chambers and Edgar André Montigny eds., *Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History* (Toronto, 1998): 309-333; "Fatherhood and the Social Construction of Memory: Breadwinning and Male Parenting on a Job Frontier, 1945-1966," in Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld eds., *Gender and History and Canada* (Toronto, 1996), 357-375; Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto, 1996) and Chris Dummitt, "Finding a Place For

narrative assumes that the workplace is normally accident-free, that economic development is an inherently progressive activity which usually runs without violent incident. The shock comes from normality's interruption. Yet the narrative must *establish* the moment before the incident in this way. When such a narrative is not novelistic but social, existing in daily practice, then the support for this device may also be found in the social world.[8] The popularity and success of this narrative strategy in 1950s Vancouver depended upon a set of cultural beliefs and institutional practices with three intermingling features. First, infrastructure development occupied a special place in high modernist ideology in the postwar years. This meant that when the bridge went down, its violence could be seen as the result of an already inherently progressive act, as an unfortunate side-effect of progress. Second, the administrative system set up to deal with modernity's dangerous side-effects, the Workmen's Compensation Board (WCB), turned workplace violence into a matter of discipline and management rather than politics. By regularizing workplace accidents, the WCB removed the issue from the political and public realm to such an extent that the bridge collapse could appear as an exception or aberration and not, as it was, one large incident among many. Finally, the ideology of manly modernism provided a further bond of social glue holding together this system of industrial modernity. All involved in the bridge collapse, from bridge-workers and engineers to politicians and journalists, assumed that the risks involved in building the bridge were inherent features of masculinity. The aftermath to the bridge collapse, then, witnessed a public outpouring of these common assumptions

Father: Selling the Barbecue in Postwar Canada," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, New Series, vol. 9 (1998): 209-223.

[8] In using this kind of linguistic and literary-genre approach to the historical past, I have been guided by key works in cultural history including, Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Lynn Hunt ed, *The New Cultural History*

about the benefits of modernity, its terrible risks, and men's prominent role in managing them.

The decision to build the Second Narrows' Bridge was part of a larger process of turning Vancouver into a successful modern city. Bridges were essential features of transportation in a city like Vancouver.[9] Water almost surrounds its downtown core and many other areas of the city are divided by various bodies of water, including the Fraser River to the south. As the city grew, so did the number and size of its bridges. Local governments had built the Burrard Street Bridge in 1932 and private interests with government aid had built the Lions Gate Bridge in 1938. Postwar bridge-building continued in the postwar years and included the Granville Street Bridge in 1954, the Oak Street Bridge in 1957 and the Second Narrows' Bridge, the one that collapsed in 1958 and which was finally completed in 1960. Vancouver's rapid suburbanization depended upon the automobile and the automobile required the building of a whole infrastructure of roadways, including bridges. The Second Narrows' Bridge that collapsed during construction in 1958 was meant to replace an earlier bridge that spanned the same part of Burrard inlet, joining Vancouver and North Vancouver. The new bridge offered more lanes of traffic for commuters to and from the North Shore. It also opened up the waters beyond the Second Narrows to larger ships. The earlier bridge had been built just above the water with a section that raised and lowered to allow ships to pass through, but it had proved unwieldy. A number of ships had crashed into it, knocking it out entirely between 1929 and 1934, and

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(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), and in Canada by Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

[9] In his *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994) David Nye notes the importance of bridges as features of a modern notion of the technological sublime. Although Nye positions bridges in a chronological order in the late nineteenth-century, moving on to skyscrapers and other later technologies, the response to the building of the Second Narrows' Bridge in Vancouver in the late 1950s suggests that bridges' modernity remained an impressive sight for many Vancouverites until well after World War Two.

earning it the nickname "the Bridge of Sighs." When the Social Credit government

announced the building of a new bridge, it did so to help spur on these processes of

suburbanisation and industrialisation and to provide Vancouver with a small share of the

provincial public works largesse that the government felt was so important to the province's

modernization.[10]

Even beyond its utility to the city, promoters of the Second Narrows' Bridge

emphasised the aesthetics of its modernizing potential. They gave it an aura of progress that

seemed to be an end in itself. This is what the historian of technology David Nye has called

the "technological sublime," indicating the sense in which major works of industrial

modernity came to stand in for natural wonders that had previously created this sense of

dangerous wonder.[11] Promoters extolled the bridge as a symbol of the extent to which daily

life in a modern British Columbia included daring feats of engineering and other

technological advances as a matter of course. Newspapers spun stories of the bridge's

technical gizmos and industrial inventions. From the size of massive girders to the

movement of heavy cranes, few details escaped the notice of Vancouver bridge enthusiasts.

The industrial and engineering press also boasted of such "firsts": the fact that the bridge

was made of 16,600 tons of steel, that it was the largest structure in Canada to be erected by

tension bolting, and that its centre span length of 1,100 feet was second in Canada only to

[10] On the timing of bridge building in Vancouver, see Bruce MacDonald, *Vancouver: A Visual History* (Vancouver: Talon, 1992) and the politics of postwar infrastructure development in British Columbia, see, Martin Robin, *Pillars of Profit: The Company Province, 1934-1972* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), esp chapter 7; Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); David J. Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1983), esp chapter 8; Mel Rothenburger, *Friend o' Mine: The Story of Flyin' Phil Gaglardi* (Victoria: Orca, 1991); John R. Wedley, "A Development Tool: W.A.C. Bennett and the PGE Railway," *BC Studies* 117 (1998): 29-50 and Stephen G. Tomblin, "W.A.C. Bennett and Province-Building in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 85 (1990): 45-61. The moves of the British Columbia government in the area of highways followed developments south of the border in the creation of highways policy. See Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier:*

the Quebec Bridge (infamous for its own two collapses).[12] Perceiving an appetite for bridge details, these publications provided plenty of feed.

Building bridges could, however, cost lives. The Quebec Bridge that the Second Narrows' Bridge was beating in the record books had collapsed twice during construction. Bridge-building was no different than any other large scale development project or industrial operation. It harmed as well as helped. In 1958 in British Columbia, 208 workers lost their lives on the job. And that was a good year. One year later, in 1959, fifty-four more workers would be finally unlucky, bringing the total number of workplace deaths in that year up to 262. The industrial development of British Columbia that fuelled the postwar boom and kept up hopes that the modernist project was on track in this particular corner of the western world killed hundreds of workers every year. It was never clear who would be killed or when, but the fact that industrial development would take lives was a given. And the number of lives was not at all insignificant. The number of murders, for example, paled in comparison to the number of workplace deaths. The 208 workplace deaths in British Columbia in 1958 was greater than the total number of murders in all of Canada (198).[13] The persistence of a modernist appreciation for development – in both its utilitarian and

The Suburbanization of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) and and Norbert MacDonald, *Distant Neighbours: A Comparative History of Seattle and Vancouver* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987).

[11] Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, xiii-xiv, chapter 4.

[12] See, for example, "95-Ton Girders Fixed to Bridge" *Vancouver Sun* 18 Sep 1959, 27; "Bridge Completed in 4 1/2 Years," *Vancouver Sun*, 25 Aug 1960, 23; "Blast to Destroy 2nd Narrows Pier," *Vancouver Sun*, 3 Mar 1959, 2; "20 Begin Work to Salvage Span" *Daily Province*, 7 Aug 1958, 8; "Underwater TV to Aid Span Salvage" *Vancouver Sun*, 12 July 1958, 21; "Bridge Salvage Work Shifts to High Gear" *Daily Province*, 13 Aug 1958, 28; "Second Narrows Bridge," *Public Works in Canada*, vol 6 no 6, page 12-16, in British Columbia Archival Record Service [hereafter BCARS], Association of Professional Engineers of the Province of British Columbia [hereafter APEBC] MS-2832, Box 3, file 8; "Second Narrows Bridge is Biggest Yet for Vancouver," *The Span* vol 4 no 5 (Jan-Feb 1958), 1, BCARS, Dominion Bridge Company [hereafter DBC] MS-0521, Box 16 file 2.

[13] On murder rates, see *Murder Statistics, 1961-1970* (Ottawa, 1973). Murder statistics in Canada come from two sources, those collected by Health Canada from coroner's reports and those provided to Statistics Canada from police departments. I have chosen the larger number provided by Health Canada. Statistics Canada only reported 153 murders in 1958 so the discrepancy between workplace death and murder could be even more

aesthetic sense – demanded that this violence be neutered. This is what the Workmen's

Compensation Board (WCB) provided. The era's high modernist optimism depended on

the fact that the WCB depoliticised and neutralized the potentially contentious issue of

workplace danger.

The creation of the WCB is a subject that has yet to receive sufficient scholarly

attention in Canada, so a brief account will be necessary here.[14] British Columbia established

a Workmen's Compensation Board in 1917, after a series of earlier pieces of legislation

beginning in the 1890s failed to provide a lasting solution to the problem of workplace safety

in the province. The system itself – and the debate that led to its formation – resembled

that which had emerged elsewhere in North America and Britain in response to the violence

caused by the Industrial Revolution and the inadequacy of existing laws to deal with its

consequences. The legislation established the WCB as an independent body responsible for

overseeing all matters related to workplace safety, including accident prevention and, most

significantly, the compensation of workers for injuries incurred while on the job. Business

agreed to finance the system in order to ensure stability in the way awards were granted.

While the older system generally favoured companies and accepted the notion of "implied

consent" that stated workers accepted risks when taking on a new job, the law worked

erratically, providing some very large awards to the injured that businesses could find

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significant. On workplace deaths, see Workmen's Compensation Board, *Annual Report* (Victoria, 1958 and 1959).

[14] Some sense of this history can be garnered from Robert H. Babcock, "Blood on the Factory Floor: The Workers' Compensation Movement in Canada and the United States," in Raymond Blake and Jeff Keshen eds, *Social Welfare Policy in Canada: Historical Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1995): 107-121. For British Columbia, see Ian Tom Coneybeer, "The Origins of Workmen's Compensation in British Columbia: State Theory and Law," (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1990); John Thomas Keelor, "The Price of Lives and Limbs Lost at Work: The Development of No-Fault Workers' Compensation Legislation in British Columbia, 1910-1916," (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1996); Allen Specht, "Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia History Project" (introduction to program held in BCARS, Allen Specht, 1979). On the British example, see P.W.J. Bartrip, *Workmen's Compensation in Twentieth Century Britain: Law, History and Social Policy* (Aldershot:

difficult to deal with. Even more importantly, the large number of injuries fuelled working-class radicalism. Businesses and politicians both appreciated the way the WCB could dampen this potentially volatile aspect of class antagonism. For their part, unions agreed to the system because it provided regular financial rewards for workers. It also represented, as the American historians David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz argue, a recognition in principle (if not always in practice) "that workers have a right to a safe workplace, and it is the responsibility of society to guarantee that right."[15] The process of establishing a system of Workmen's Compensation did not work as smoothly as this summary suggests. The language of partnership and compromise masked significant differences over how the system should be run, how much it should provide workers, and which workers should be covered. But such disagreements lost their potency after 1917 because of the legalistic and bureaucratic context in which they were made.

While the WCB emerged from a heated context of class conflict in the early years of the twentieth-century, once established it worked to neutralize the political dimensions of workplace violence by making risk into a wholly managerial process. The WCB threw out questions of intent and blame. Instead it focused on whether certain injuries and industries fit into its administrative scheme and then determined, by referring to a series of tables and already agreed upon schedules, the level of compensation to be paid. The loss of a right arm was worth so much, the loss of a left arm so much, and the loss of both another amount again. The system closely resembled that used for disabled war veterans. Everything had its grid, its already agreed upon price. Politics was out, bureaucracy was in.

Gower, 1987) and Bartrip and S B Burman, *The Wounded Soldiers of Industry: Industrial Compensation Policy, 1833-1897* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

This is, according to Karl Figlio, a particularly modern way of dealing with calamity linked to the development of contract-based relations and capitalism. Whereas traditional societies place disaster within a providential scheme of reckoning in which everything has meaning, the modern way is to say that they are chance events that are best understood at the aggregate level. This is made possible by setting up a series of actions and events as natural and normal, in this case, the workings of industrial capitalism. "This field of natural expectation," Figlio argues, " is often invaded by (retrospectively) predictable but unforeseen events which can be treated routinely in the form of claims for compensation. No fault is assumed, in the sense of malice, yet one party is held accountable, *as if* he or she were responsible... Motive is there, but in neutralized form; accountability without culpability."[16] In this rendition, the emphasis has switched from the individual incident to the broader system. Workplaces do not have dangers for which someone is blamed, they have risks which need to be managed. And this switch to focus on risk-management involved an increased emphasis on the role of expertise and workplace discipline.

In practice, the WCB regulated industries by emphasising self-discipline on the part of management and especially of workers. Although it was empowered to legally enforce sanctions against management, the Board rarely used this option, preferring education over enforcement. Indeed, the WCB had little enforcement capability (for example, the ability to inspect work sites). Although the Act came into force in 1917, the Board did not hire safety inspectors until the 1930s, and only then, after numerous serious accidents in the logging

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[15] David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, "The Early Movement for Occupational Safety and Health, 1900-1917," in Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L Numbers eds., *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1997), 480.

[16] Karl Figlio, "What is an Accident?" in P. Weidling ed., *The Social History of Occupational Health* (London: 1986), 180-181. See also, Bill Luckin, "Accidents, Disasters and Cities," *Urban History* 20: 2 (Oct. 1993): 177-190.

industry forced their hand.[17] The chaotic years of World War Two, with the increased

industrial activity and many more accidents, demonstrated the need for safety inspection and

the Board had hired twenty-one inspectors by the early 1950s. Yet, after substantial

industrial growth in the 1950s and early 1960s, the number of inspectors had only risen by

one to twenty-two by 1965. With so few inspectors to cover so much industry, the Board

could only imprecisely ensure safe work practices. All involved – inspectors, businesses, and

workers – knew that many work sites could not be visited regularly. According to long-time

WCB inspector Jim Paton, successful inspection in these years depended more on

"intuition" than on strict surveillance.[18]

SOME SAFETY BALLET-HOO!

Figure 1: Safety campaign image from Dominion Bridge's company paper, *The Span*, Jan-Feb 1959 (Dominion Bridge Company Fonds MS 0521, Box 16, File 2.. Reprinted with permission of the British Columbia Archives)

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[17] Ulrich Beck makes this point about industrial society more broadly, noting how issues of production always take precedence over the detriments of modernization, see his *The Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* Mark Ritter trans. (London: Sage, 1992), chapter 2.

[18] Interviews with Jim Paton and Art Francis, Feb 1978, BCARS, WCBOHP, transcripts.

Instead of enforcing regulations by legal action, the WCB tried to get workers to

adopt a kind of rational self-discipline that matched the ideals of manly modernism. They

called on workers to think ahead and to put "safety first." An image reprinted in the bridge

building company Dominion Bridge's paper *The Span* nicely captured the gendered

implications of safety message (Figure 1). It showed a broad-shouldered safety man giving a

lesson in the proper way to hold a heavy object; in this case, the "object" is a female ballet

student winking at the camera. The safety man would, the caption claims, "find no hardship

in obeying this safety rule." [19]

Or would he? How did workers respond to the optimism of high modernism and

the WCB's welfare capitalism? The particular way the story of the Second Narrows' Bridge

collapse came to be told could have found its most serious critic in the workers themselves,

in those who actually suffered from the violence of industrial modernity. And yet it did not.

Workers remained relatively silent on the issue of workplace danger after the collapse and

indeed for much of the 1950s.[20] In part, we have seen how the WCB system muted such

criticism, turning it towards the amount of money to be paid in compensation rather than

the extent of danger itself. And yet there was ultimately more involved in the workers' lack

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[19] Safety campaign image from Dominion Bridge's company paper, *The Span* Jan-Feb 1959, BCARS, DBC, Box 16, file 2.

[20] WCB inspector Jim Paton recalled that it was in the 1960s that unions became much more active on the issue of workplace safety. This matches the approach of the province's main union, the International Woodworkers of America, as noted in Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada: the Life and Times of an Industrial Union* (Vancouver: New Star, 2000). The period before the collapse saw two different Royal Commission's into Workmen's Compensation and at both of these labour organizations focused almost exclusivley on the financial implications of the program and not on improving safety at the workplace. See, Brief on Workmen's Compensation Act, Vancouver and District Labor Council, British Columbia Federation of Labour, and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, 17 Sep 1957, University of British Columbia Archives (UBC), Vancouver and District Labour Council Records (VDLC), Series C, Box 4, file 12; Brief by Vancouver, New Westminster and District Trades and Lab Council, November 1949, British Columbia Archives (BCA), British Columbia Commission on Workmen's Compensation, 1949-1952, GR-0384, Box 46, file 10; Brief submitted by British Columbia Federation of Labour, 7 Nov 1949, BCA, GR-0384, Box 43, file 5; Testimony of H.E. Winch, 7 Nov 1949, BCARS, GR-0384, Proceedings, vol 1; Testimony of G.C. Home, 9 Nov 1949, BCARS, GR-0384, Proceedings, vol 1; Testimony of J.C. Bury, BCARS, GR-0384, Proceedings, vol 12.

of safety politics than the WCB alone can explain. If we are to understand the response of Vancouverites, and especially workers, to the collapse, we need to look at the way gender figured into stories of the collapse.

Manhood, sacrifice and the bridge collapse

The Second Narrows' Bridge collapse hit Vancouverites close to home.   Seventeen men died in the collapse and another died in the salvage operation. The sound of crashing steel could be heard in downtown Vancouver. The ground literally shook. If only briefly, the bridge collapse showed the advances of the modernist project to be ambiguous. What is particularly striking about Vancouverites' responses to the collapse is the way that they used gender to make sense of the calamity. Despite its unexpectedness, the collapse fitted smoothly into an already existent way of representing modernity's dark potential, through the ideology of manly modernism. One man's letter to the *Province* nicely captured this link between masculinity and modernity: "I have felt a … personal grief over the bridge itself, and all men who build bridges and the other vast edifices upon which so much of our modern life depends," he wrote. "They build bridges, and we commit our lives to those bridges every day, and we have utter faith in them, so much faith that we look upon the builders as mere ordinary men, forgetting that they work side by side with death."[21] The letter is telling for the way in which it equates the everyday benefits of the modernist project with the sacrifices and risk-taking of heroic masculinity. If these were not ordinary men then they must have been extraordinary. And they earned this special status by the risks they took on behalf of society at large. A number of postwar Vancouverites romanticized and valourized the risk-taking behaviour of the bridge-workers and the kind of masculinity which

it represented, the kinds of masculine traits which other critics feared were being lost in the postwar years. The bridge collapse, a moment of modernist crisis, served as a way of re-asserting this notion of rugged masculinity and the inherent masculinity of the modernist project.

Post-war manhood was defined, in part, as being able to manage and take risks. Reporters conveyed the magnitude of the disaster by showing how it inverted male stoicism, causing grown men to cry. The *Province* columnist Jean Howarth recounted how one survivor "laughed a silly little laugh and then passed his hand over his face, and when the hand came away he was crying." Another "big burly man," Howarth told readers, "kept digging tears out of his eyes with the heels of his hands." If men's tears unnerved reporters, so too did the bodies of the dead. While the workers may have been large and active in life, death emasculated their bodies. The bodies lay silent in lines on the rescue boats. Another, not yet recovered, hung "limp, suspended on a safety line on the collapsed span."[22] The power of such accounts depended on the notion that to be masculine was to be actively in control of one's emotions and of one's part in the modernist project.

This language of gendered crisis extended to men's position in the family as breadwinners. The American historian of fatherhood, Robert Griswold, argues that breadwinning has been the dominant masculine ideal throughout the twentieth-century. "Supported by law, affirmed by history, sanctioned by every element in society," he notes, "male breadwinning has been synonymous with maturity, respectability, and masculinity."[23] This argument holds true for postwar Vancouver. In the wake of the collapse Vancouverites

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[21] Quoted in "Families Fund Grows Steadily" by Jean Howarth, *Vancouver Province*, 23 Jun 1958, 1.
[22] " 'Sight of boots was what hurt' " by Jean Howarth, *Daily Province* 18 June 1958, 3; " 'Men didn't have a chance' " by Jack McCaugherty, *Daily Province*, 18 June 1958, 3.
[23] Robert Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 2.

saw the fallen workers as men and breadwinners interchangeably. The public directed the

major thrust of its response toward ameliorating the economic plight of the widows. The

Province and the Vancouver and District Labour Council established a charity entitled the

"Families Fund" to raise money for the families of the fallen workers. Their appeals played

upon an image of feminine dependency and masculine breadwinning. The *Province* deemed

one widow, Mrs. Crusch, especially needy and included her story in many of their articles

calling for donations.[24] With dependent children in need of medical treatment, poor health

and an elderly father under her care, Crusch fit well into images of appropriate feminine

need. The plight of Crusch and other widows spurred the protective breadwinning instincts

of one young man to offer his breadwinning services to the "Families Fund." "This may

sound funny to you," he said, "but I think instead of making a donation to the fund, I ought

to get the name of one of the families that's in the worst need and send them a cheque for

$25 every month. You see, I'm not married, and I haven't any responsibilities, and it

wouldn't hurt me to help a family like that."[25] In total, the Families Fund raised fifty

thousand dollars for the families of the fallen bridge workers, demonstrating that

Vancouverites supported the manly ideal of breadwinning with their pocketbooks as well as

their hearts.

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[24] For articles on Crusch and other widows see, " 'Bridge of Hope' Road to Despair" by William McCarthy, *Vancouver Sun*, 18 June 1958, C1; "Widows Rebuilding Lives" by Denny Boyd, *Vancouver Sun*, 19 Dec. 1958, 29; "These Are Dead in Bridge Tragedy" *Daily Province*, 18 June 1958, 6; "It's looking...and not seeing him," by Jean Howarth, *Daily Province*, 19 June 1958, 1; "Province opens fund for bereaved families," by Jean Howarth, *Daily Province*, 20 June 1958, 1; "Her World Ended When Bridge Fell" by Jean Howarth, *Daily Province*, 25 June 1958, 1; "Donations sought for "Bridge" Families," *Labor Statesman*, 28 June 1958, 6; Regular Minutes of VDLC, 15 Jul 1958, UBC, *Vancouver and District Labour Council* [hereafter *VDLC*, Series A, Box 16. On the gendering of "need", see Linda Gordon, *Pities But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); Struthers, *The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) and Margaret Jane Little, *No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: the Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[25] Cited in "City Rallies to aid of stricken families" by Jean Howarth, *Daily Province*, 21 June 1958, 1.

These fears of the threat posed by the bridge collapse, whether to men's emotional state or breadwinning capabilities, coexisted with assertions of some men's appropriately masculine response. The collapse challenged men to respond with vigour. When they did, the papers celebrated these valiant efforts and reasserted the link between masculinity and the control of modern risks. For example, when the bridge collapsed, twenty-two year old ironworker George Schmidt fell into the water amidst the mangled steel. One of his legs had been sheared off just above the knee. According to the *Sun*, "He took off his belt and he made a tourniquet with it around his thigh. Then he lit a cigarette. He smoked it and waited and finally two men came along and lifted him out of the mangled steel into the rowboat. 'Thanks fellas,' is all he said." [26]

The workers' status as direct manly descendants of veterans emerged clearly in the public funeral held on their behalf. The funeral service had two parts, one of which took place in Empire Stadium and the other part at the waters of Burrard Inlet in sight of the downed span. At the water's edge, Reverend George Turpin conducted a memorial service. Turpin also happened to be the reverend of Vancouver's veterans' hospital, the site of most of Walter Kirchner's cases. "Remember their courage," Turpin admonished. "It was the daily courage of men whose tasks take them to dangerous places. When the span is completed, it will be a giant memorial to loved ones who are gone." [27] As in war, men's sacrifices on behalf of the modernist project meant that they deserved respect and authority. Ultimately, it came back to doing a job, something men were supposed to do implicitly.

[26] " 'It happened like this...' Blood, Tears, People" by Tom Ardies, *Vancouver Sun* 18 June 1958, 1
[27] On the memorial service, see, "Nineteen Red Roses Cast on Water at Bridge Tragedy Memorial Service," *Daily Province*,7 July 1958, 3; "Memorial Service for Span Victims," *Vancouver Sun*, 3 July 1958, 9; "Long Roll-Call of the Dead Sounded as the Roses Fall" by Jack Lee, *Vancouver Sun*, 7 July 1958, 37.

"They died doing their job," one Vancouverite wrote to the *Province*. "Building a bridge so that we could cross from one side to another. They have died for us."[28]

This celebration in the public sphere and in the press of men's stoic risk-taking mirrored the men's own sense of themselves as skilled craftsmen. Many workers presented safety regulations as a hindrance, as something which interfered with their own ability to manage the risks of the workplace. From this perspective the regulations of the WCB amounted to workplace discipline. The class inequalities of the workplace belied the language of partnership in the company's and the WCB's appeal to industrious and safety conscious manly behaviour. The ironic effect of these disciplinary strategies, however, was to make workers sometimes less, not more, keen on adhering to safety standards. At the Second Narrows' Bridge worksite, safety became an area of contention between some workers and the employer, with the workers, not management, demanding fewer and less stringent safety rules. Workers presented safety regulations as an inconvenience and as a threat to their competence and skill. WCB safety inspectors encountered problems enforcing rules that required workers to wear hard-hats and life-jackets. These two safety features directly related to two leading areas of injury and death in bridge-building: being hit by falling objects and drowning.[29] In general, workers believed safety to be important, but their vision of themselves as exceptionally competent removed the need for such precautions in their own case. When Dominion Bridge asked for its employees' opinions on the utility of educational games promoting workplace safety, the workers agreed that such policies were helpful. However, they distanced themselves from the need for education by saying that

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[28] Letter to the editor, *Vancouver Province*, 25 June 1958.
[29] Interview with Art Francis, Feb 1978, BCARS, WCBOHP. See also, Safety Committee Reports, Nov. 1957-June 1958, BCARS, SNB, GR-1250, Box 5, file 12; WCB Inspection Report, 7 Feb 1958, BCARS, SNB, GR-1250, Box 5, file 13.

such measures would likely help younger workers and those who were less careful or skilled.[30] For workers, safety came through individual competence and skill not just following expert guidelines.

The conflict between the bureaucratic rationality of the WCB experts and company managers on the one side and the workers on the other, reflected the broader tension between masculinity and modernity that we saw with veterans. It pitted regulations and rules against individual merit and character, working-class men against middle-class "experts." And yet, as with veterans, the situation is more complex than it might first appear. Workers and management may have disagreed over how safety could be achieved but they both supported the broader modernist project within which the danger was created. Workplace safety did not emerge as a major issue in labour politics in the 1950s. Just as the veterans embraced their role as risk-takers, so too the workers on the Second Narrows' Bridge took up their own daring role. It is this final element, the shared belief in manly modernism, that allowed the story of the Second Narrows' Bridge collapse to be told in the way that it was, as an aberration. The broad public support for the modernist project and the success of the WCB's welfare capitalism depended on the dominance of manly modernism as a gender ideal for working-class men.

Reasserting the rational

In the aftermath of the collapse, Vancouverites searched for its meaning, they wanted to know *why* it had happened. They searched for answers from the engineering profession and its technical know-how. This quest for truth in technical knowledge and

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[30] "This Month's Question," *The Span* vol 4 no 1 (May-June 1957), 2; "This Month's Question", *The Span* vol 5 no 3 (Sep-Oct 1958), 2, BCARS, MS-0521, Box 16 file 2.

quantitative systems was distinctly modern. It treated accidents as preventable and subject to control. The basic questions became: Was it preventable? Who was to blame? What could be learned from this tragedy? These are the questions of risk-management. In the high modern context of the 1950s these kinds of questions dominated public debate of the collapse. What is striking is the way postwar notions of masculinity interacted with this line of questioning. The workers' masculinity, with its connection to bodily risk-taking, awkwardly fit into the modernist emphasis on reason and objectivity. The two joined at the point where stoicism and reason met, in their reticent and emotionless demeanour. Yet working-class masculinity became attached to the modernist project only to be colonized, to be seen as other, as a fascinating difference from the middle-class norm. Just as moderns found the accoutrements of the exotic other to be fascinating and valuable (think here of the celebration of the noble savage), so too postwar modernizers embraced working-class risk-taking as a valuable but ultimately "othered" type of knowledge that had its own inferior place in the modern pantheon.[31]

Commentators rushed to prove that they exhibited the proper modern reasoned approach and that others showed too much emotion. According to the logic of manly modernism, such sacrifice demanded a restrained emotional response that was as equally stoic and rational as that given by those who had suffered. Reporting of the collapse mirrored an emotional style that the American historian Peter Stearns has called "American Cool." Stearns argues that the first half of the twentieth-century saw a switch from a more expressive emotional style to one that was restrained. Building on this work, Michael Barton has found that disaster reporting showed a similar transformation from one that focused on the intense emotional content of catastrophe to one that emphasised cool professionalism in

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[31] On the western fascination with the "other" more generally, see Jervis, *Transgressing the Modern*, chapter 3.

its wake. [32] This hierarchy that located reason over emotion showed up repeatedly in the political discussions of the collapse. Critics claimed the government had strayed too far from a reasonable approach to infrastructure development. CCF leader Robert Strachan called for the resignation of Highways Minister Phil Gaglardi. "It's now said his ideas are triumphs of imagination over engineering," Strachan said of the minister. "Is this collapse a result of his imagination?"[33] The *Sun* editorial page echoed Strachan's concerns: "... there is an urgent demand that public uneasiness about the safety of major public works be allayed.... Too much talk has been attributed to the flamboyant highways minister about the 'triumph of imagination over the cold hard facts of engineering.' Too much has been heard about 'testing the curves' of new highways by ministerial car. In all the rush and bustle and the flying from place to place, some things may have been forgotten or gone astray."[34]

The government responded by appealing to the same cultural dichotomy. Bennett called Strachan's criticisms "wild" and "irresponsible" and alleged the CCF leader was acting inappropriately in trying to make "political capital out of a tragedy." The *Province* labeled those who criticized the government as emotional. "The collapse at the Second Narrows ... was an appalling tragedy," the editors claimed. "But its causes will not be uncovered, and a repetition of it elsewhere perhaps thus averted, by emotionalism or political hay-making. It will be done only by a cold, dispassionate and microscopically thorough investigation by

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[32]Peter Stearns, *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Michael Barton, "Journalistic Gore: Disaster Reporting and Emotional Discourse in the *New York Times*, 1852-1956," in Stearns, Peter N. and Jan Lewis eds. *An Emotional History of the United States* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 155-172. Stearns slightly deviates from an older literature on the history of emotions that I have also found useful in interpreting modern responses to violence resulting from ostensibly rational processes. See, Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* trans by Edmund Jephcott. (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), especially 156-168. For a critique of this approach to the history of emotions, see Barbara H Rosenswein, "Worrying About Emotions in History," *American Historical Review* 107:3 (2002), 821-845.
[33] "Span Disaster Still Mystery: Divers Hunt for Missing Workers" *Vancouver Sun*, 18 June 1958, 1.
[34] "Investigate all crossings," editorial, *Vancouver Sun*, 18 June 1958, 1.

engineers." The defenders of Dominion Bridge, the company charged with the construction

of the bridge, drew the same emotional boundaries. They emphasized the need to honour

the workers and grieve over the loss of life but they equally emphasized that emotion had no

place in explaining the cause of the collapse. The *Province* praised ironworkers as a "tough

and gallant lot" and argued that "The newly dead among them would spit with contempt if

they could know that their deaths were being used in the meantime as the fuel for political

emotionalism."[35]   Both Dominion Bridge and the editors of the *Province* were likely

concerned with very precise issues: defending profits, reputations, and political allegiances.

However, it is significant that they chose to make these arguments by claiming that their

own reason trumped their opponent's emotionalism. They invoked the risk-taking of the

workers to silence critics. Then they turned to another type of masculinity and another type

of knowledge, that of the reasoned, dispassionate engineer.

These different types of manly modernism showed up in the establishment of the

Royal Commission. The government appointed Sherwood Lett, Chief Justice of the British

Columbia Supreme Court, to head the enquiry. Lett then called upon John Farris Jr. (son of

the prominent Liberal, Senator Farris) to act as Commission legal representative, and J.B.

Pratley as Commission engineering consultant.[36] Later, after realising that the companies

involved in the disaster were taking on experts of their own, Lett also appointed two teams

of engineers, one British (Ralph Freeman and JRH Otter) and one American (FM Masters

and JR Giese). The Commission called on representatives from the Dominion Bridge

Company, the construction company contracted to erect the span, and from Swan, Wooster

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[35] "Probe Opens into Disaster," *Daily Province*, 19 June 1958, 1; "Facts, Not Emotionalism" Editorial, *Vancouver Province*, 19 June 1958, 4.
[36] Pratley later had to withdraw for medical reasons. Lett called on the advice of two Canadian engineers, A.B. Sanderson and Professor Alexander Hrennikof of the University of British Columbia.

and Partners, the engineering firm who had drawn up the bridge plans. Where did the workers fit into this rendering?

Local unions had a different kind of Commission in mind. They wanted a board of inquiry made up of three members, one of whom, they argued, needed to be a representative of labour. The three labour organisations directly involved in the collapse – Local 97 of the Ironworkers, Local 98 of the Painters, and the Vancouver-New Westminster Building Trades Council – argued that workers should be involved at the very top of the investigation into the bridge collapse.[37] They based this claim on two interrelated arguments. According to Ironworkers business agent Norm Eddison, workers spoke in a distinct language and had a special knowledge that was unlike that offered by engineers. The Commission needed a union representative in order to translate this special knowledge into the technical jargon of engineering. Moreover, the ironworkers had earned their knowledge by their close proximity to danger. Accidents and disasters like a bridge collapse were hard to predict. Often only a fine line distinguished an "engineering triumph" from tragedy. According to Eddison, ironworkers had a special voice because they were the men who walked this line between "triumph and life[,] and disaster and death." These men, Eddison argued, had "paid a price in death, injury and bereavement" for the privilege of representation.[38] Bennett saw things differently and refused to give in to labour's demands; the Commission went ahead with Lett as the sole Commissioner. Determined to have their say even without an official labour

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[37] The actual names of the unions are longer but I am using these two popular shortened forms for ease of reading. The ironworkers union represented most of those who were actually killed in the collapse (fourteen because they were those who were on the outermost spans) while one painter was killed and two company engineers. The eighteenth death to come out of the collapse was of a "frogman" (underwater diver) who drowned in the rescue operation.

[38] N.S. Edison to Sherwood Lett, 30 June 1958, BCARS, GR-1250, Box 10 file 1; Taft [of the BTC] to W.A.C. Bennett, 23 June 1958, BCARS, SNB, GR-1250, Box 10 file 1; Regular Minutes of VDLC, 15 Jul 1958, UBC, VDLC, Series A, Box 16.

commissioner, the Ironworkers hired an engineering consultant, Harold Minshall, to act on their behalf.

The Commission got underway in mid-July, a month after the collapse. From the beginning, it was clear that the different participants had contrasting notions of who could speak and about which issues. Lett divided the Commission into two sessions. At the earliest session, he heard evidence from eye-witnesses. These included workers, company officials, and some local residents. The first meeting served as a fact-factory from which the engineers could draw information in order to make their judgements. Just as in the media response to the collapse, workers' role in the investigation was related to their stoic, risk-taking. Aside from their comments on the collapse itself, the Commission also asked them about safety on the work site. And workers uniformly noted that the bridge had been safe. They had no problem with Dominion Bridge's adherence to Workmen's Compensation Board safety measures. In linking their identity with the dangerous work they did every day, the workers could not easily turn around and use the collapse as an opportunity to attack the company. Worker after worker came before the Commission to agree with WCB officials who reported that all the designated safety precautions had been followed. The company held weekly safety meetings. Safety inspectors did not find any problems at the site.[39]

The Royal Commission gave credence to workers' sacrifices but only in a limited way. The workers appeared mostly in the first Commission's first sitting as eye-witnesses. They were closest to the collapse. They saw it happen. They could speak about the facts. They could not, however, speak as experts. Sherwood Lett conferred this status only upon engineers, company executives, and Workmen's Compensation Board officials. One obvious

way to see the distinction between workers and those the Commission deemed to be experts came at the beginning of their respective testimonies when Farris asked witnesses to state their background and reason for appearing. For workers, the whole introduction lasted a few moments, taking up a couple of lines in the transcripts. When the engineers appeared before the Commission, Farris questioned them much more extensively on their background, asking for an extended listing of previous experience that went on for quite some time, and covered pages of the transcripts. Lett and his wife entertained the engineers when they arrived, some of whom brought wives and took the visit as an opportunity to combine vacation with work. The pleasantries and social mixing seemed to match the respect Lett accorded their opinions and approach. [40]

While some ironworkers claimed expert knowledge, Lett (and Commission counsel Farris) did not allow them to speak in this capacity.[41] Ironworker W. J. Stroud found the distinction confusing and pointed out the inadequacy of drawing such a clear boundary over what was a much more messy reality. When Farris asked Stroud the place of origin of a noise that immediately followed the collapse, the ironworker questioned whether his answer would be fact or opinion. Only experts could give opinions. Their conversation offers a telling pointer on the constructed legal basis of expertise:

>Farris: You are not here to give opinions, you know, you are here to give facts ...
>Stroud: It seemed like my whole testimony here would be based on my opinions, my knowledge.
>Farris: Certainly not.

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[39] On safety at the Second Narrows' Bridge work-site, see "Testimony of Walter Miller", WCB safety inspector, 23 Jul 1958; "Testimony of Arthur Francis," WCB director of Accident Prevention, 23 Jul 1958, BCARS, SNB, GR-1250 Box 1 file 4; GR-1250 Box 1 file 4.
[40] See entries in "Commissioner's Diary," various dates, City of Vancouver Archives [hereafter CVA], Sherwood Lett Fonds, Add Ms 361, vol. 6 file 6.
[41] See the Proceedings of the Commission, various dates, BCARS, SNB, GR-1250 Box 1 File 2.

To Stroud this seemed an odd distinction given that many witnesses had given conflicting testimony. "Well, I can answer that if you will clarify one point for me," he said:

> Stroud: When I say the bridge went down five or six inches here, not far enough for me to grab hold of, is that a fact … or is that an opinion?
>
> Farris: That is a fact. You say that as a matter of fact.
>
> Stroud: Somebody is wrong because we are all on oath here and some say four feet , some say six inches. Apparently we have established no facts here.[42]

Farris dismissed these reservations, seeing them as mere distractions. Yet Stroud had arrived at an important insight into the socially constructed nature of expertise in the Commission. It is not clear if Stroud would have offered a radically different interpretation of the collapse than that offered by the engineers but it is clear that even if he wanted to argue it, his opinion would not have been heard.

After hearing from the workers and other eye-witnesses, Lett recessed the Commission to allow time for the engineers to conduct their inspections. They presented their reports when the Commission reconvened in late September 1958. From this point onward, issues of engineering and corporate responsibility dominated the Commission hearings. The two official teams of engineers, executives from Dominion Bridge and Swan, Wooster and Partners, and two local engineering consultants all came up with the same essential explanation for the collapse. They blamed it on a fault in the design of False Bent N4, a temporary support structure which had been holding up the outermost bridge section as it moved outward and before it was supposed to be attached to the permanent pier. A mistake had been made in the design of the outermost support. This design fault caused the collapse.

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[42] "Testimony of W.J. Stroud, 21 Jul 1958, BCARS, SNB, GR-1250 Box 1 File 2.

Having decided the mathematical problem, the Commission then moved on to the question of responsibility. The support had been designed by a junior worker at Dominion Bridge and then checked over by a more senior manager. Neither of these two engineers caught the fault. Both died in the collapse. The question of responsibility, however, did not die with them. What else could have been done? The consulting engineers claimed that a problem in the corporate structure of Dominion Bridge had also worsened the situation. The company placed the building of the Second Narrows' Bridge outside its normal corporate structure, a move which meant that fewer engineers had a chance to check designs such as those for False Bent N4. This organisational decision had terrible consequences. Moreover, the engineers believed that the consulting engineers, Swan, Wooster and Partners, should have checked over the design of temporary support structures. Although this check was not required by law, the Commission's engineers noted that it was standard practice elsewhere and, if it had been done in this instance, it might have prevented the collapse. So from discussions of worker sacrifice and stoicism, the Commission moved on to issues of organisation and technicality.[43]

The presentation of the Ironworker union's engineering representative before the Commission, Harold Minshall, demonstrated both the power and the limitations of working-class manly modernism. Minshall began by boasting of the particular character of the average ironworker, particularly in the way they dealt with danger. These were special men, he argued, whose temperament prompted "them to follow this hazardous ... endeavour. The temperament ...of the structural man is that ... he finds a zip in life by building things

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[43] These matters were the subject of much discussion amongst Lett and the consulting engineers. See, Pratley to Lett, 18 July 1958, BCARS, Second Narrows Bridge Inquiry Records, GR-1250, Box 10 file 1; .Lett to Freeman, 7 Nov 1958; Farris to Masters, 10 Nov 195, .BCARS, Second Narrows Bridge Inquiry Records, GR-1250, Box 10 file 2.

and following that occupation, perhaps, where he could not work in a store or on a farm."[44] Like the letter-writer to the *Province*, Minshall wanted the Commission to know that these were not ordinary men. They were committed by their very nature to the dangerous occupation of bridge building. When he dealt with the engineering details, Minshall did not substantially differ from the other engineers. He agreed that the collapse was caused by the improper design of False Bent N4. Yet he emphasised what he called the "human element" in the collapse. He noted that all scientific endeavours ultimately depend on human endeavour. Here, the physicality of the ironworkers mattered. No matter how complex or certain are the techniques, ultimately someone must put this into practice and there is always a chance of disaster. This is the nature of "calculated risk." "It is in this bracket," Minshall argued, "that the competency of fellowman plays such an important role in our achievement." And this provided the crux of Minshall's and the Ironworkers' argument. They did not criticize the practice of bridge-building or the danger inherent in their jobs. Instead, they claimed that they had done a better job. They had proved themselves fit for the task. They were true manly moderns. "In the pursuit of surgery and aeronautics, as in engineering and many other scientific fields," he argued, "judgement, the antithesis of man's formal knowledge, prevails and proves the adage, 'The only world a man truly knows is the world created by his senses.' It is from this understanding that humility becomes of singular importance in life, ever remembering that it is by the Grace of God that we are saved from disaster and that disaster is never an Act of God." This is what Minshall meant by the "human element." With the bridge destroyed and men dead, Minshall wanted everyone to know that the workers had done a good job.

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[44] Information for this paragraph taken from Testimony of H. Minshall, Oct 2, 1958, BCARS, *SNB*, GR-1250 Box 1 file 9.

When Sherwood Lett published his report in December 1958, six months after the collapse, his conclusions demonstrated how workers' risks could be subsumed within the larger narrative of postwar modernisation. Lett agreed with the Commission's engineers and found that the collapse had been caused by a design error in False Bent N4. He noted the problems in the organisation of Dominion Bridge as well as the inadequate communication between the construction company and the consulting engineers. He recommended that, in future, all plans for temporary supports be reviewed by the consulting engineers. In his concluding remarks, Lett reiterated his epistemological basis, the need for rational investigation. "The precise cause of a tragedy of this nature must be determined," he argued, "not by conjecture or surmise, but by the accurate, scientific investigation of skilled and experienced experts."[45] The engineering profession greeted Lett's report as a positive step in this education. They particularly appreciated his neutral, objective stance. A.H. Finlay of the University of British Columbia wrote to Lett, congratulating him on the report, noting that "the tone in which it is pitched lends a special dignity to the inescapable conclusions which you reached." Engineering publications and organisations published articles on what exactly went wrong. The problem was a technical one. This mistake, if the case was studied appropriately, would not be made again. Progress would be made. [46]

Sherwood Lett later recounted how difficult it was for him to find fault with his friend, the consulting engineer Bill Swan, and Dominion Bridge, his client for thirty years. No doubt, on a personal level, this was a difficult action for Lett to take. However, in a

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[45] Sherwood Lett, *Report of the BC Royal Commission, Second Narrows Bridge Inquiry, vol I* (Queen's Printer's: Victoria, 1958), 9.

[46] A.H. Finlay to Lett, 9 Mar 1959B, CARS, *SNB*, GR-1250, Box 10 file 3. See also, Ralph Freeman and Joseph Otter, "The Collapse of the SNB, Van, June 1958", *Civil Engineering*, Feb 1959, transcripts; Freeman to Lett, 6 May 1959; Excerpt from Proceedings - The Institution of Civil Engineers, vol 14, Sessions 1958-9, N8; J.A. Merchant [Association of Professional Engineers of British Columbia] to Lett, 29 Dec 1959 BCARS, *SNB*, GR-1250, Box 10 file 3.

more general way, Lett did nothing to upset the boat. His report set the appropriate cool

and rational tone. It also positioned workers in what was perceived to be their appropriate

place. Lett wrote to the widows of the two dead engineers whose errors had been found to

have been pivotal in causing the collapse. He reminded them of their husbands' bravery.

"Those acquainted with bridge building and such projects, know that every engineer and

steelworker on the job must take risks daily if the job is to be done," Lett told them. "I am

sure it will always be a matter of pride for you to know that your husbands were the kind of

men who asked no man to take risks which they were not prepared to accept themselves."

This emotive private correspondence that praised stoic daring provided the perfect

accompaniment to Lett's publicly legalistic report. In the postwar ideology of manly

modernism, both stoicism and reason had their proper place.[47]

In the summer of 1959, one year after the collapse and with the bridge not yet

completed, the Ironworkers union went out on strike in British Columbia. While the strike

involved many building sites across the province, the fact that the Ironworkers had struck

the Second Narrows' Bridge played a prominent role in the labour dispute. Dominion

Bridge claimed that the bridge was in a dangerous state and that, if left for some time, that

situation could be disastrous, perhaps even leading to another collapse. The company took

the union to court and ordered them back to work on the bridge. The next day, however,

workers did not show up. When the union ended up back in court, Justice Manson

demanded to know why the leaders had defied his order. The union representatives replied

that they had done no such thing. If individual workers decided on their own not to go to

work because the site was unsafe, then this was not the union's fault. How could the

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[47] Lett to Mrs. McDonald, 29 Dec 1958, BCARS, Second Narrows Bridge Inquiry Records, GR-1250, Box 10 file 2. And see also Mary McDonald and Barbara McKibb[i]n to Lett, 15 Dec 1958, BCARS, Second Narrows

company and the courts force men to work on an unsafe site? If it was too unsafe to be left

for the duration of the strike, then surely it was too unsafe for the Ironworkers. Such

arguments made good headlines but Manson found little use in them. The judge found the

union leaders to be in contempt of court and the Ironworkers returned to work on the

Second Narrows' Bridge.[48]

The debate over workplace safety fitted nicely into the union's strike strategy. The

idea that working-class men took risks that others would not was a source of power,

especially following so closely upon the collapse the year before. The union used the

acceptance of danger as a negotiating tactic. A 1959 contract brief listed the types of

dangerous practices that workers regularly accepted including a lack of safety scaffolding,

working under suspended loads, working at great heights without a platform, being exempt

from many WCB safety regulations, and the constant danger of falling objects.[49] The

Ironworkers' union went so far as to note that fourteen of their workers had died at one

worksite (the Second Narrows Bridge).[50] Then, instead of calling for better safety and less

dangerous conditions, they demanded higher pay. In 1959, the tactic succeeded. When the

companies and union finally settled, the workers received a much better deal. The same

tactic showed up in a 1962 contract brief. The union argued that "No amount of wages can

compensate a man for the loss of his life...." But the brief continued, "it is obvious that the

wage rate must reflect the fact that the members are constantly faced with risk of death. No

other building trade, and few occupations in any industry face a comparable degree of risk.

Bridge Inquiry Records, GR-1250, Box 10 file 2..

[48] "Steel Men Halt $90 Million Jobs" *Vancouver Sun*, 1; " 'Prove Bridge Safe' Demand of Strikers," *Vancouver Sun*,1; "Ironworkers Going Back on Bridge" *Vancouver Sun*, 1; "Bridge Crew Defies Second Court Order," *Vancouver Sun*, 1. On the fallout of these tactics for the union leadership, see "Proceedings of Trial of Thomas E. McGrath," 30 Nov, 1959, UBC, Tom McGrath Fonds, Box 2, file 16.

[49] Brief on ironworkers wages, circa 1959, UBC, *Trade Union Research Bureau* [hereafter *TURB*], Box 41, file 2.

It is appropriate therefore, that ironworkers should be the highest paid of the skilled building trades."[51] Local 97 directly stated that there was no comparison between wages and life but then immediately went on to make such a comparison. The brief did not call for improvements in workplace safety.

The Second Narrows' Bridge was finally completed in the summer of 1960 and the opening ceremonies displayed the same contradictory confluence of ideas about manly sacrifice and progress which had been a part of the entire response to the collapse. The ceremony was oddly discordant. With marching bands and the press in tow, Premier Bennett waxed optimistic. Linking the new bridge with the health of British Columbia generally, he boasted, "I have never seen our people so optimistic, so forward-looking." When a West Vancouver councillor asked for another bridge crossing between Vancouver and the North Shore, Gaglardi replied, "When you need 'em, we'll build 'em." Gaglardi's reply revealed a matter-of-fact approach to progress even though his government never built a third crossing of the Inlet. With the bridge complete, anything seemed possible; or at least this was the impression the government wanted to leave. Such optimism went together with a ceremony honouring those who suffered during the bridge's construction. Mrs. John Wright, widow of one of the fallen workers, unveiled a plaque in honour of the dead. One of the surviving ironworkers who had been injured, William Wright (no relation), cut the ribbon for the official opening. The *Sun* claimed that Wright did not quite fit into the festivities, noting how he "looked uncomfortable in his best brown suit, slightly crumpled

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[50] Seventeen men died in the collapse proper and one in the cleanup but the union seems only to have focused on the number of dead ironworkers in its appeal.

[51] Brief in support of Ironworkers L-97contract demands, 1962, UBC, *TURB*, Box 18, file 17. Even when other labour groups criticized the special treatment afforded the collapse victims, they still emphasized the financial as opposed to the safety aspects of workplace danger, arguing for more money for all widows and injured workers and not calling for improved safety measures. See, Rae Eddie (IWA 1-357) to E.A. Jamieson (VDLC), 20 Jul 1958, UBC, *VDLC*, Series C, Box 2, file 31.

and damp."[52] For once, the boosterish paper got it right; working-class sacrifice and high modernist optimism did indeed make odd bedfellows.

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The postwar economic boom granted mixed rewards. The Canadian economy experienced its single largest period of expansion between the end of World War Two and the early 1970s. The real income of working-class Canadians, just like the Ironworkers here, rose considerably. In British Columbia, this boom was in many ways associated with the kinds of infrastructure projects that the Second Narrows' Bridge represented: government-led projects contracted out to private companies that were meant to foster capitalist growth. This grand vision did not, however, alter the basic inequalities of social life that had existed during depression and war. Despite the overall rise in Canadians' incomes, differences between income groups and classes remained constant. In 1951, the top fifth of Canadian families controlled approximately forty per cent of the national income while the bottom fifth of families controlled only six per cent. The same proportions held constant in 1971. As John Porter argued in *The Vertical Mosaic*, Canadian society was sharply divided along the lines of class and ethnicity even if debates in the political sphere did not reflect these economic realities.[53]

Labour historians frequently refer to the postwar years as an era of Fordist compromise. After the heightened militancy of wartime, employers and governments

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[52] "New Bridge Open amid subdued air," *Daily Province*, 26 Aug 1960, 1; "Bennett's $2 Riding on Border Highway," *Vancouver Sun*, 26 Aug 1960, 1; "Everyone Straight Man in Phil's Show," *Vancouver Sun*, 26 Aug 1960, 1.

[53] Income differences from table in *The Canadian Encyclpedia*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1988), 1051. See also John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) and Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience:. The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980* (Toronto: Butterworth, 1983),. 229-231

provided a certain amount of union security in exchange for maintaining capitalist control

over the workplace. Unions focused on wages and benefits while corporations benefited

from a more passive, bureaucratic, and legalistic unionism, constrained by continued

employer resistance to reform and the unanticipated consequences of the new industrial

relations system.[54] The political timidity of the postwar consensus also had much to do with

the Cold War political climate and the purging of Communists from most Canadian unions.

By taking gender into account, however, we can add a new dynamic to this account of the

postwar compromise.

The lack of a radical working-class response to the Second Narrows' Bridge collapse

(and to workplace danger in the postwar years more generally, we might hypothesise) came

not just because of the structure of unionism, employer resistance, or the restrictive Cold

War political climate, but also because workers and employers shared common cause in their

support for the modernist project and the ideology of manly modernism. Workers tried to

stake out their own place as the responsible risk-takers who facilitated economic

development. They appealed to the same production-oriented mythology as the newspapers,

politicians, and employers but repositioned the actors so that working-class men came out as

the heroes and experts. This tactic closely resembles what other historians have noted about

the way nineteenth- and early twentieth-century unions appealed to their role as male

breadwinners.[55] The dilemma of such a tactic is that it positioned workers alongside

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[54] On the postwar compromise, see Craig Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Brief History* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1996), 75-84; Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), chapter 6. On the American example, see Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the US Working Class* (London: Verso, 1986).
[55] On the importance of breadwinning to nineteenth and early twentieth-century unionism, see Steven Penfold, " 'Have You No Manhood in You?': Gender and Class in the Cape Breton Coal Towns, 1920-1926," in Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld eds., *Gender and History in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), 270-293; Christina Burr, *Spreading the Light: Work and Labour Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Toronto* (Toronto: University of

employers as breadwinners and as men, uniting employers and employees in their gendered identities. The same process occurred in the wake of the Second Narrows' Bridge collapse and it dampened the potential for a radical labour critique of workplace violence. The bridge-workers celebration of their role as manly modernizers meant that they shared in the broader ideology of the modernist project alongside their employers and middle-class politicians and engineers.

The risky endeavours of modern development served as sites not only for the construction of bridges and mega-projects but also of class and masculinity. The divisions within the modernist project, between expert risk-management and bodily risk-taking, followed along class lines, positioning middle-class engineers above working-class ironworkers. Vancouverites' response to the collapse demonstrated that they associated working-class masculinity with fantasies of control and authority. Manly modernism defined as masculine the traits needed to control one's body and the environment in dangerous circumstances. It also defined as masculine the power and authority of the modernist project that such risks served. High atop the steel girders over Burrard Inlet, individual men performed acts that mattered. They put their own bodies on the line, taking risks that others feared to take. When the bridge collapsed, however, the hierarchies within this gendered discourse became apparent. Manly modernism had a place for the working-class ironworkers but it tended to be as romanticized risk-takers. Modernist institutions like the WCB and Royal Commission looked to engineers for the "real" truth of the collapse. And this truth centred not on risk-taking but rather on rational knowledge, technical procedure, and the quest for the perfect system of risk-management.

Toronto Press, 1999); Ava Baron ed., *Work Engendered: Towards a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

This uneasy relation between expert and bodily masculinities represented a key tension of postwar gender relations. In the Royal Commission to investigate Walter Kirchner's complaints, a number of veterans pitted themselves against psychiatrists and the DVA and CPC bureaucracy. With the Second Narrows' Bridge collapse, ironworkers uneasily accommodated themselves to the regulations of WCB officials and the expertise of the Inquiry's and Dominion Bridge's engineers. This mediation of masculinity by modernist experts also extended to the interpretation of men's violence. When twenty- four Vancouver men committed capital murder in the postwar years, a number of experts stepped up to help interpret their actions and their masculinity demonstrating that the creation of a thoroughly modern masculinity (mediated by middle-class experts) also extended to definitions of men's deviance.

Chapter 3: Medicalizing the Manly Modern

There is a moment in Robertson Davies' 1954 novel *Leaven of Malice* that amply

conveys the mixture of scepticism and confusion with which some Canadians treated

psychological knowledge in the postwar years. Norm Yarrow, a psychologist on the student

guidance staff at the local university approaches Professor Vambrace of the Department of

Classics with the aim of giving him some parenting advice. Conversation begins at that most

popular of psychological issues in the postwar years, the Oedipus Complex:

> "... I take it that you've heard of the Oedipus Complex?"
> "I am familiar with all forms of the Oedipus legend."
> "Yes, but have you understood it? I mean, as we moderns understand it? Have
> you got the psychological slant on it?"
> "Mr. Yarrow, I should hardly be head of the Department of Classics at this
> University if I were not thoroughly acquainted with all that concerns Oedipus."
> "But the Complex? You know the Complex?"
> "What Complex are you talking about? All art is complex."[1]

Robertson Davies is having fun here. He is satirizing both the professor and the

psychologist, playing up the crotchety snobbishness of the old-guard professor even

as he mocks the naive eagerness of the psychologist. This disjointed conversation,

however, is more than just one funny section from the early career of a Can Lit star;

it also speaks to the growing power of psychology and psychiatry in postwar Canada

and the sometimes ambivalent responses which this expertise elicited. It is

noteworthy that the psychologist in *Leaven of Malice* seeks to interfere with paternal

authority, that he tries to give Professor Vambrace some advice on how to be a

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[1] Robertson Davies, *Leaven of Malice* (New York: Penguin, 1981 [original 1954]), 195.

better father. In these years, a growing number of psychiatrists and psychologists played increasingly prominent roles in discussions about what it meant to be manly. They repackaged the meanings of masculinity, medicalising its language and positioning themselves as the ones best able to explain anything from fatherhood to a Greek myth.

Capital murder cases provided one of the most significant and effective venues for these experts to position themselves as those who could speak about masculinity in a scientific fashion. Between 1945 and the late 1960s, Vancouver courts sentenced twenty-four men to hang for murder. Capital cases were the most serious form of crime, calling forth the harshest penalty from the criminal justice system. The horrific nature of these killings stretched the credulity of many contemporaries, making them wonder how one could commit such violence. They sought explanations and solutions and, increasingly in the postwar years, psychiatrists and psychologists provided the kinds of answers that many involved in such cases, from judges and lawyers to relatives of the killers and the general public alike, adopted as official explanations. The fictional professor Vambrace may have been sceptical about the young psychologist but when it came to dealing with murder, many postwar Canadians turned to just such expertise to make sense of the murderers in their midst.[2]

In this chapter, we move from the celebrated cases of men's violence and risk-taking (during war and on the job) to those instances where society condemned

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[2] On the history of murder in Canada, see Neil Boyd, *The Last Dance: Murder in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1988). Psychiatrists and psychologists also involved themselves in many areas of Vancouver life including the school system as shown in Gerald E Thomson, "'Not an Attempt to Coddle Children': Dr. Charles Hegler Gundry and the Mental Hygiene Division of the Vancouver School Board, 1939-1969," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 14:2 (2002), 247-278.

some men's violent acts. The continuity lies in the similar relation between masculinity and modern expertise that all of these scenarios brought to the fore. In the earlier chapters, a masculinity rooted in notions of bodily competence and daring came up against, and only imperfectly blended with, the ideas and practices of the modernist project that valorized reason, objectivity, and abstract knowledge. In this chapter, a similar process is at work. All of those convicted of capital murder in postwar Vancouver were men. Much of the discussion in capital cases, especially about commutation, centred on the murderer's manhood, on whether he had been or could become a good man.[3] Vancouverites considered some types of men's violence to be, if not acceptable, then certainly understandable. Discussions about which murderers should have their death penalties commuted to life imprisonment hinged on gendered beliefs that certain kinds of men, under the right (or wrong) conditions, could quite naturally (and more reasonably) be violent.[4] Just as with veterans and ironworkers, however, a number of experts entered into the decision over when this was the case. Psychiatrists and psychologists came to define much of the language through which Vancouverites discussed the norms of, and the deviations from, manhood.

To speak of the medicalization of masculinity may at first seem odd. Beginning in the late nineteenth and moving into the twentieth-century, a growing number of doctors and

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[3] The more common gendered approach to capital cases involves the study of women sentenced to death. See F. Murray Greenwood and Beverley Boissery, *Uncertain Justice: Canadian Women and Capital Punishment, 1754-1953* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, [2000]); Franca Iacovetta and Karen Dubinsky, "Murder, Womanly Virtue and Motherhood: The Case of Angelina Napolitano, 1911-1922," *Canadian Historical Review* 72:4 (1991): 505-531.
[4] This fits in with a long history of men's allowed violence. See, for example, see Ingeborg Breines, Robert Connell and Ingrid Eide eds., *Male Roles, Masculinities and Violence: a Culture of Peace Perspective* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000); Angus McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), chapter five; Robert Nye *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Peter Spierenburg ed., *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor and Rituals in Modern Europe and America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998).

other health professionals engaged in a process of medicalising womanhood. This process included early public health campaigns around maternal and infant mortality, efforts to improve the health of women workers in industry and the growth of a network of professional advice-givers on the best methods of motherhood. With success in many public health measures in the early twentieth-century, doctors, psychologists and social workers increasingly came to focus on the emotional and psychological aspects of mothering at mid-century. While many of these campaigns were led by those who sought to improve women's lives and health, they also had the effect of setting up a new kind of expertise (often dominated by men) about how to best fulfill and define a woman's duty.[5] This chapter suggests that it might be useful to think about whether (and to what effect) a similar process of medicalization of manhood occurred. Throughout the twentieth century, a number of professions, from doctors and social workers to psychiatrists and psychologists, came to define how to best be masculine. And while most of these professions were dominated by men, they often did not share the same notions and practices of masculinity as those whom they treated. The professional development of some men often went hand in hand with the disciplining of others.[6]

I make two interrelated arguments in this chapter. The first is the more conventional in that I look to capital murder cases as social texts in which to read the meanings that postwar Vancouverites gave to masculinity. The image of the good man which comes out of these cases shows strong continuities with what came before and after. Murderers could be construed as masculine to the extent to which they presented themselves as good

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[5] Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

[6] On the involvement of psychiatrists in defining manhood in the postwar years, see Elise Chenier, "The Criminal Sexual Psychopath in Canada: Sex, Psychiatry and the Law at Mid-Century," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 20:1 (2003), 75-101. This medicalization of manhood in these years is also noted in Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of Asylum to the Age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley, 1997), 289-290.

breadwinners, heterosexual, white, responsible, and civilized. All of these men had great difficulty making this case. Many were long-time criminals who had rarely kept regular work; a large number were recent immigrants or of an ethnic lineage (African-American, Chinese, eastern or southern European) which made them suspect to the narrowly defined white majority; and others had "mixed" sexual pasts in which they had engaged in such things as homosexual acts or adulterous liaisons. And of course, as killers, they began the race to respectability a good deal behind the starting line. Nonetheless, their defence lawyers, relatives, and the murderers themselves tried to show that they had acted in masculine ways. The extent to which postwar killers successfully presented themselves within the normative bounds of postwar manhood mattered a great deal in the outcome of their trial and in the cabinet's commutation decision. [7]

The second feature to this argument is that postwar psychiatrists and psychologists inserted themselves in between the men and the decision makers, re-describing the norms of manliness in the language of mental science. Capital murder cases served as sites of professionalisation, as venues through which these experts spread their authority. And this professionalisation was quite successful. Those seeking to explain a murderer's actions – including judges, lawyers, newspapers and many in the public – frequently invoked the language of psychiatry and psychology. This meant that, in practice, a group of experts with their abstract language became significant mediators of manliness in capital murder cases. So while in earlier periods a man's failure to live up to his breadwinning obligations might have been seen as a social, economic, or moral problem, the turn to psychiatric knowledge in capital murder cases also made this a *psychological* failure, perhaps even evidence of an individual's pathology. The decision over where the boundary lay between reasonable

[7] On the importance of a murderer's masculinity to his murder trial in early twentieth-century British Columbia, see McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity*, 111.

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violence (that which was understandable if unwanted) and outright deviance came to be made through the language (and with the involvement) of psychiatric and psychological experts.

Many of the men convicted of murder embraced these experts and their diagnoses. Giving themselves up to scientific explanations of deviance offered them the chance to escape the noose. But as with the other postwar men who found their masculinity caught up with the decisions of experts (whether it was DVA bureaucrats or WCB safety officials), capital murderers sometimes found the blend of the manly and the modern to be a mixed blessing. As with discussion of manly modernism more generally, certain kinds of men and different versions of manliness assumed hierarchical positions. In the larger sense, the real beneficiaries of discussions of capital murderers' manliness were not just those lucky few who had their sentences commuted, they were the experts themselves.

Setting the Scene: Crime and Mental Health in the Postwar Years

In the postwar years, the criminal justice system as a whole moved slowly but steadily towards a greater emphasis upon the rehabilitation and "correction" of offenders. This was based on a sense of optimism that criminals, especially the very young, could be remade into good citizens. While such beliefs had always made up one part of the criminal justice system in Canada, they were increasingly backed up by actual resources in these years. The federal government's 1938 Royal Commission on the Penal System of Canada marked a point of transition that, after the interlude of war, governments at all levels took their direction from. Governments constructed new prisons of varying security levels, developed rehabilitative programs, established more lenient parole schemes and began to provide better resources for

prisoners including libraries and sporting and leisure facilities.[8] One of the most noteworthy features of these initiatives is the extent to which they empowered a new group of experts to take on the task of correction.

In the postwar years, the criminal justice system increasingly relied upon experts in the field of psychiatry, psychology, and other related professions such as social work. In 1950, the British Columbia Gaol Commission called for a number of rehabilitation measures including the expansion of parole and probation, the establishment of training programs for all inmates and, significant for our purposes here, the hiring of a full-time physician and psychiatrist. In the early 1950s, the province's main penitentiary, Oakalla Prison Farm (where all those convicted of capital murder in Vancouver stayed until their sentence was either carried-out or commuted) took on Dr. Ernest Campbell as a consulting psychiatrist. Moreover, the gaol's physician, Dr. R.G.E. Richmond was also a psychiatrist and regularly gave reports on the psychological state of convicted killers. The fact that 1,248 psychological tests were administered on Oakalla inmates in one year, between the beginning of April 1958 and the end of March 1959, gives some evidence of the extent of psychological and psychiatric influence in British Columbia main prison.[9]

The trend towards rehabilitation within the criminal justice system matched similar trends within the mental health professions to emphasise the possibility of improvement and the desire of these professions to take active roles in shaping public policy. Postwar psychology, as Mona Gleason has shown, increasingly turned toward behavioural explanations of mental illness, emphasising the events within individual life-cycles which caused mental problems and which could, at least theoretically, be treated. Since the late

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[8] D. Owen Carrigan, *Crime and Punishment in Canada: A History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 398-399.
[9] Diana Doherty and John W Ekstedt, *Conflict, Control and Supervision: The History of the Corrections Branch in British Columbia* (Burnaby: Simon Fraser University Institute for Studies in Criminal Justice Policy, 1990), 69-80.

1930s, the umbrella organisation of many of these professions, the Canadian National

Committee on Mental Hygiene, had been moving slowly but steadily away from its earlier

emphasis on eugenics. After the war, with the public revulsion at the "discovery" of the

Holocaust, the impetus away from such genetic explanations became all the more

pronounced. Psychologists' involvement in the war effort, providing and administering

psychological tests to volunteers and recruits, boosted the status of their profession and

fostered organisation growth. In 1939, Canadian psychologists separated from their

American counterparts and formed the Canadian Psychological Association. Interwar

efforts to work through schools and the establishment of Child Guidance Clinics continued

and expanded in the postwar years. Indeed, a number of those convicted of capital murder

in these years were already known to officials not only through their previous criminal

records but also through the Vancouver Child Guidance Clinic.[10]

Psychiatrists had different but equally compelling reasons to pair up with the

rehabilitation efforts of the criminal justice system. Eager to present themselves as

professionals with scientific credibility, psychiatrists in late nineteenth and early twentieth

century Canada focused their efforts on classifying the mentally ill. They saw a rigorous

system of classification, in which individuals were matched and labelled according to

symptoms, as the key to professional credibility. Beyond this ability to classify, however,

early twentieth-century psychiatrists struggled to prove that they could actually do anything

to improve mental illness, that it could be cured. Beginning in the 1920s and 1930s,

psychiatrists increasingly turned to interventionist somatic treatments including insulin shock

therapy, artificial fever therapy, and lobotomies. The psychiatrist at British Columbia's

Oakalla Prison Farm, Dr. Campbell, began performing electric shock therapy on inmates in

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[10] On psychology at mid-century, see Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), chapter 1.

the 1950s. The emergence of neuroleptic drugs in the mid-1950s continued the trend in

physical therapies, but in a whole new direction. More broadly, the psychiatric profession

increasingly moved to a more community-oriented model of medicine in the postwar years.

Although the transition was never wholly complete or without contrary arguments by some

psychiatrists, the trend nevertheless moved away from the asylum and towards strategies that

prevented and treated mental illness within the community. Throughout this period, in

other words, psychiatrists sought ways to show that their profession could do more than

simply keep the mentally ill locked up in asylums. Involvement in the criminal justice system

provided them with just such an opportunity.[11]

When Vancouver murderers were arrested for their crimes, then, they came into

contact with a system that sought to find out a great deal about the kind of people they were.

This individual concern was strengthened even more because of the seriousness of the

sentence imposed in cases of capital murder. The rehabilitation decision found its most

profound crisis in the case of capital murderers: either commute the sentence and hope that

the prisoner could be made into a successful citizen or allow the law to take its course, which

meant revoking for all time the possibility of correction. Before deciding to go ahead with a

death sentence, officials in Ottawa collected information on the offender and presented it to

the cabinet for a final decision on whether or not to commute. This information included

transcripts of the court proceedings, a letter from the presiding judge, information from

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[11] For trends in the history of Canadian psychiatry in the early and mid twentieth-century, see Geoffrey Reaume, *Remembrance of Patients Past: Patient Life at the Toronto Hospital for the Insane, 1870-1940* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000), 15-20; Harley D. Dickinson, *The Two Psychiatries: The Transformation of Psychiatric Work in Saskatchewan, 1905-1984* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1989); and on the use of electric shock therapy at Oakalla, see Doherty and Edstedt, *Conflict, Care and Control*, 80. Earlier twentieth-century psychiatry had been more inclined, like psychologists, to align itself with eugenics. See, Ian Dowbiggin, "'Keeping This Young Country Sane': C.K. Clarke, Immigration Restriction, and Canadian Psychiatry, 1890-1925," *Canadian Historical Review* 76:4 (1995): 598-627. Useful American books include, Gerald Grob, *From Asylum to Community: Mental Health Policy in Modern America* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991); Robert Castel, Françoise Castel, and Anne Lovell, *The Psychiatric Society*, Arthur Goldhammer trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

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various agencies including the police and anyone else who would have relevant information on the offender's background. Anyone could write to the government and this information was collected to be used in the final decision. This often included letters from friends, neighbours, and relatives calling for commutation. It also increasingly included information from experts such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers.[12]

Medicalising Manhood

Mental health professionals entered into capital cases in a variety of ways. The most direct intervention came when they appeared as witnesses in murder trials. One or more psychiatrist appeared in seven of the twenty-four cases. This typically happened when the Defence put forward a case of insanity, provocation, or lack of intent due to intoxication (usually mixed with the fact that alcohol exacerbated the accused man's mental illness). The Crown then often responded by calling psychiatrists of its own. Even in other cases, psychiatrists entered the fray before the trial by determining if the accused was fit to stand trial. In several cases, letters from these doctors made their way into the capital case file. The government also frequently had psychiatrists see those who were sentenced to death if there was any suggestion of mental instability, and their letters too made it into the case files. Making the final commutation decision also involved gathering as much information as possible about the personal history of the convicted man. The Remission's Office in Ottawa often retrieved this information from social workers and psychologists who had worked with the convicted men in various institutions including Child Guidance Clinics and Mental Hospitals or through organisations such as the Catholic Children's Aid Society and the

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[12] On the promises and perils of this kind of case file research, see the essays in Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson eds., *On the Case: Explorations in Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), especially the introduction by the editors and Karen Dubinsky, "Telling Stories About Dead People," 359-366.

Provincial Probation Branch. At many stages throughout the capital case, in other words, various experts were called upon to give their assessment and knowledge of the convicted man.[13]

Some sense of the respect granted mental health professionals in capital cases comes from the way that other officials picked up their language. In providing their history of the convicted man, Remission's Office officials invoked the language of psychological testing, especially intelligence tests. One man was noted to be "in the average age group, in general intelligence" while another was of "better than average intelligence and has no record of any previous mental illness." [14] In a 1945 case, the Remission's Officer quoted the gaol surgeon to note that the prisoner's "mentality is normal, if not good."[15] In 1953, Justice A.M. Manson took it upon himself to instruct the jury on the defence of insanity even though the Defence had never mentioned such a possibility during the trial. Manson decided to do this after reading a letter that had been found on the accused when he was arrested. "It [was] a strange letter," Manson noted, "indicating from beginning to end that the man was labouring under a persecutory complex." The judge suggested that the defence seek out "one of the leading psychiatrists in our City" and although he thought this was done and the Defence still did not make that case in trial, he instructed the jury on that defence nonetheless, "out of an abundance of caution."[16] And while one psychiatrist earned Manson's opprobrium, for the most part Manson and other judges treated psychiatrists and their knowledge with a good deal of respect. In his regular letter to Ottawa after a 1958 case, Manson reported

[13] The seven cases in which psychiatrists appeared were those of Hainen, Ducharme, Matthews, Hoodley, McKenna, Casagrande, and Fulton.
[14] "Condensed Summary," R v Henderson, National Archives of Canada [hereafter NAC], Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 630, part 2; "Condensed Summary," R v Lifton, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1837, CC 901, vol. 3.
[15] "Condensed Summary," R v Hainen, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1650, CC 583, part I.
[16] A.M.Manson to Gordon F. Bradley, Secretary of State, 4 April 1953, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1715, CC 764, part 1.

about a psychiatrist who appeared in the trial: "One of the medical witnesses, Dr. Tyhurst, was, if I may say so, an outstanding witness."[17]

One of the reasons Manson and others found mental health professionals to be "outstanding" or just plain useful, was because such experts helped explain the causes of illegal killing. The American historian, Karen Halttunen, notes that when modern explanations of murder – those emphasising secular concerns such as an individual's poor upbringing or the neglect of self-government due to an excess of passion – emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, they frequently failed to offer satisfactory explanation. "Again and again," she argues, "such liberal explanations of the crime failed: some men and women murdered despite their good religious and moral upbringings; some murdered without any discernible motive; and some killed coolly and dispassionately." While Halttunen is concerned with how this failure led to the rise of other ways of talking about murder, those focusing on horror and mystery, this same failure also helps to explain the increasing turn to science and psychological explanations. Some may have despaired of rationally explaining murder, but others turned to more credentialed sources. Contemporaries looked for explanations that would help explain how someone could kill, and in the postwar years, they increasingly turned to medical explanations.[18]

The best proof of some kind of medical explanation was an actual physical problem. A number of cases included debates over whether the killer had a somatic problem, some physical malady that was traceable and measurable, which explained his actions. The Defence obviously had much to gain from such a finding and so they frequently brought in

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[17] A.M. Manson to Hon. E. Davie Fulton, Minister of Justice, 29 Sep 1958, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1771, CC 850, vol. 1, part 1.
[18] Halttunen also notes this tendency towards the medicalisation of murder and the construction of the murderer as a "mental alien." Karen Halttunen, *Murder Most Foul: The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 4, 210.

experts to suggest as much. The most common suggestion was some form of bump on the head. When Joseph McKenna stood accused of shooting another man with almost no provocation at the Mayling Supper Club in 1957, the defence called his mother and other family friends to help explain his history of strange and erratic behaviour. They claimed that it began after he was knocked down by a car when he was a small boy. From then on, he had "difficulty sleeping and was a very unsettled boy."[19] Another mother used the same tactic but claimed that the "bump" had been delivered by the police when they arrested her son for drinking on a fire escape with a girl. "When I saw him at the jail the next day he was swollen up like a football. An esray [sic] was taken at the General Hospital, no bones were broken but Bob suffered a nervous trouble ever since...."[20] While most of these men were unable to use such somatic defences effectively (ie they were still found guilty), one Italian man, Gino Casagrande, used his own "brain damage" to successfully argue for more lenient treatment. If Casagrande was to be believed, he had had some very tough luck. When he was young, his brother hit him on the head with a rock, knocking him unconscious for two hours. When he was fifteen, he fell while ski jumping, breaking his back and remaining unconscious for some time again. To top it off, he fell fifty feet while serving in the Italian army and was knocked unconscious for thirteen hours and spent four months in hospital during 1950 and 1951.[21] A psychiatrist, Dr. Tyhurst, ordered a number of tests including neurological exams and psychological testing and reported to the court that Casagrande had suffered "brain trauma" and "post-traumatic constitution." Tyhurst claimed that such an individual had "a predisposition to react explosively to situations, characterized by a very

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[19] "Condensed Summary," R v McKenna, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1762, CC 833, vol. 1, part 2.
[20] W.J. Graham to [Prime Minister], n.d. [early Apr 1956], NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1750, CC 812, vol. 1, part 1.
[21] Testimony of G. Casagrande, R v Casagrande, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1771, CC 850, vol. 2, part 1.

great irritability after alcohol sometimes leading to acts of violence."[22] The judge later

recommended commuting Casagrande's sentence, citing a number of reasons, including the

history of brain damage.[23]

More commonly, psychiatrists turned to behavioural explanations for a murderer's

action. These experts sought to explain why murderers had failed to meet the ideal of the

disciplined modern man who kept his cool, reigned in his passions, and acted responsibly.

We have seen how this ideal of the rational, stoic, and competent man pervaded many

aspects of postwar culture including claims of veterans, postwar reconstruction efforts, and

notions of the kind of men responsible for postwar economic development. This ideal

entered into capital cases as a question-mark, as a presumed norm whose absence needed

explanation. Experts, lay witnesses, and court officials medicalized this ideal in a variety of

ways, one of which was through the language of maturity. This approach suggested that

there was a step-by-step way to adulthood with a variety of different levels and stages at

which individuals could go astray. Officials could explain, or at least label, a murderer's

actions by categorizing him as "immature." The most common diagnosis of the out-of-

balance male character was the psychopathic personality. Many of the men sentenced to

death in the postwar years were said to be "aggressive psychopaths." Dr. Richmond, the

surgeon at Oakalla Prison Farm, described an aggressive psychopath as "one who is

aggressive, impulsive, requires immediate gratification of his whims; he is unable to form

lasting relationships; he is anti-social, not deterred by punishment and not profiting by

experience; they are inclined to be grossly egocentric, that is, self-centred; emotionally they

are immature, undependable, with impaired sensibility to the feelings of other people, and

22 "Condensed Summary," R v Casagrande, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1771, CC 850, vol. 1, part 2.
23 A.M. Manson to Hon. E. Davie Fulton, Minister of Justice, 29 Sep 1958, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1771, CC 850, vol. 1, part 1.

subject to alcohol or drugs."[24] Such a figure contrasted with almost all the postwar ideals of middle-class masculinity. While men could be impulsive and aggressive, middle-class manhood was defined at this time by one's ability to restrain such primal attributes. Manhood was achieved by following through the steps to maturity. While, in this sense, all men had the possibility to become psychopaths in that much of this definition fit in with the dark possibilities that were said to lie within men, they actually became modern men by disciplining these alternate life paths. In the capital cases, psychiatrists stepped into the limelight to explain and diagnose this manly failure in the language of science. Notably, experts maintained that psychopaths were not mentally ill (they did not suffer from a disease), rather, their problems were behavioural.

The turn to environmental explanations for murder marked the real coming together of the legal system and mental health expertise. Almost all those involved in murder cases, with the exception of the police who were more prone to focus on plain wrongdoing, drew upon environmental explanations for murder. They borrowed the language of mental health expertise to try to make sense of murder. In the postwar years, psychologists and psychiatrists identified the spectre lurking in the background of abnormal personalities as an unhealthy family. In theory, psychiatrists focused on the pathological and deviant characters who came from such families while psychologists focused on creating "normal" families. In these cases, however, such disciplinary boundaries blurred as all experts invoked the same notions of healthy and unhealthy family life.[25] Justice Coady's comments about a young man convicted of murder in 1952 were typical: "The accused is a young man and while his past record extending over a period of some years is not good, there may however be something in the background – a lack of family training and such like, which would explain to some

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[24] "Condensed Summary," R v McKenna, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1762, CC 833, vol. 1, part 2.
[25] On the behaviourist turn in postwar psychology, see Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*.

extent at least his past criminal record."[26] In another case, Coady noted "It does not appear

that this boy had any of the advantages of a proper bringing up." Justice Manson projected

similar sentiments about a murder in 1947. According to Manson, the young man was

"...just one of those unfortunate products of a society which does not care for its youth as it

ought to."[27]

The figure of the bad mother loomed large in references to unhealthy family

backgrounds both in trials and in psychological discourse. Philip Wylie's *Generation of Vipers*

(1942) popularized a form of mother-bashing that many other family experts took up in the

postwar years. Wylie and others suggested that great dangers stemmed from the possibility

of over-mothering, from woman's too strong attachment to their children and especially

from young boys' inability to form proper masculine attachments in such situations.[28] These

experts presented mothers as the most important figure in a child's development; if she did

not fulfill her duties (following the guidelines of psychological expertise) terrible

consequences could result. Not surprisingly, many looked to the role of mothers in setting

the unfortunate paths which their sons followed that took them to that most terrible of

delinquencies, murder. In 1945 one killer's brother-in-law drew attention to the man's over-

mothering after his father died at the age of seven. "Brought up by his mother, he was the

apple of her eye, too much so," he claimed, "... I am afraid Bill was showered with too much

attention and so grew up without the responsibility a young man should have."[29] In 1947

the barrister for a convicted bank robber and murderer wrote to Ottawa to let officials know

of his client's family background. The mother had "been an inmate of Essondale Mental

[26] J.M. Coady to Secretary of State, 20 Dec 1952, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1709, CC 750, part 1.
[27] A.M Manson to Hon. Colin Gibson, Secretary of State, 20 June 1947, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 629, part 1.
[28] On over-mothering, see Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 64; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 229; Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).
[29] Joseph Carlin to Minister of Justice, 15 Oct 1945, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1650, CC583, part I.

Hospital for over six years" and, given this fact, he recommended that his client "be examined immediately by a psychiatrist."[30] When Roger Graham's defence lawyer informed officials of his client's "sordid" background that included a homosexual father who had also prostituted out his mother to friends while their children sometimes watched, the lawyer noted that the mother was obviously "inferior in intelligence or in morals" for not restraining these practices or herself.[31]

Fathers did not escape unscathed in this search for scapegoats. In the postwar years, psychologists argued that fathers played important roles in shaping the mental and emotional development of children. While a father was not to take on the role of primary care-giver, he was expected to set an example as disciplinarian, wise advice-giver, and masculine role model. Officials pointedly noted that the fathers of many of the men convicted of murder had not been present during their youth either because of death or family breakdown. Roger Graham's father came in for as much blame as his mother. His lawyer reported that the father was a "complete homosexual" and a "complete sadist." Graham claimed that "his father at all times displayed towards him complete animosity and subjected him to such tortures as holding his head under water to see what length of time would elapse before he might drown." After his son was arrested for murder, Graham's sister reported that the father said "I hope they hang the 'S-OF-A-B'"[32] This background was enough to explain Graham's behaviour to the Oakalla psychiatrist, Dr. Richmond. After receiving the information about Graham's family background, he explicitly linked the problems of the father and mother with psychological issues and murder. "I note from your enclosures the

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[30] B.M. Isman to Minister of Justice, 11Sep 1947, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 629, part 1. Justice Manson also brought up this possibility of the negative effect of the mother's mental illness in his letter to Ottawa, A.M Manson to Hon. Colin Gibson, Secretary of State, 20 June 1947, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 629, part 1.
[31] John S. Burton to J.O. Wilson, 7 Dec 1955, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1750, CC 812, vol. 1, part 1.
[32] Burton to Wilson.

bestial background of the home," he wrote. "I think your suggestion of psychopathic

tendencies is apt – Graham must have an immense amount of hostility towards his father,

and no doubt this is released in many explosive incidents, culminating in murder.... He

appears to be a case of violent hatred engendered from an early age, so understandable in the

light of the psychopathic father and inadequate mother."[33] When men like Graham failed to

act in a self-disciplined fashion, Richmond and other mental health experts had explanations

ready to hand which many drew upon. Bad families made for murderers.

Although family problems were the primary explanation that mental health officials

gave for a murderer's wrong turn, they also emphasised the importance of other institutions

and organisations of character formation. The late nineteenth and twentieth century saw the

origins of a number of organisations meant to strengthen the character of young boys, to

make sure that they could be built into strong men in a modernizing context that was seen to

be threatening to traditional virtues of self-discipline, hardiness and resourcefulness.

Reformers responded to what they saw as a threat to gender by creating such organisations

as the Boy Scouts, Fresh Air Camps, and organized sporting leagues.[34] Contemporaries

often looked to a murderer's background to see if he had participated in such activities. A

probation officer reported on Harry Medos' lacklustre involvement in the Kivan Boys Club

in 1941. The officer claimed that "Medos used to lean against the walls watching activities,

but rarely participating. The subject was persuaded to take lessons in the art of self-defence

– but he quit after being struck once." Such actions showed a lack of willingness to engage

in the strong character building activities of mid-century masculinity. After noting a number

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[33] R.G.E. Richmond to MacLeod, 5 May 1956, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1750, CC 812, vol. 1, part 1.
[34] Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001); Colin Howell, *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

of other problems, the officer suggested that Medos might have "psychopathic traits."[35] The

stepmother of another murderer explained his childhood problems in part by noting that he

"did not attend Scout or church activities."[36]

In other cases, the previous involvement of a convicted man in these kinds of

activities served as an indicator of his good background and potential for correction. When

twenty-year old William Gash killed a man on the Langara Golf Course, a number of

officials spoke up about his strong character. Gash had been volunteering as a boxing

instructor at the Sunset Memorial Centre. The director and assistant-director of the centre

wrote letters on his behalf and noted his good character. The director claimed that problems

in Gash's family background, "the lack of his parents' understanding of his life," helped to

explain his actions and that "he was partly insane when he took the action he did."[37] Other

letter writers on Gash's behalf mentioned his community involvement as an example of his

potential for rehabilitation.[38] In 1957, Calvin Klingbell's hockey coach from his home town

of Kelowna wrote in to speak for his good character. The coach claimed that Klingbell had

always showed respect in his appearance, equipment and treatment of other players. And

"while he no doubt received minor penalties," the coach concluded, "nothing comes to

mind where he showed that he could be difficult."[39] Another letter-writer claimed that "he

isn't a criminal of nature; [he] must of [sic] lost his mind."[40]

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[35] "Report of the Provincial Probation Officer re: Harry Medos," NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 629, part 1.

[36] "Condensed Summary," R v Fulton, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1821, CC 941, vol. 2, part 3.

[37] C.F. Stephens to Minister of Justice, 8 Apr 1954, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1726, CC 783, vol 1, part 1.

[38] S. Jenkins, Pastor, Pender Christian Mission to Hon. Stuart S. Garson, Minister of Justice, 23 Mar 1954; Reverend Donald D. Macqueen, Vicar of St. Peter's Anglican Church to Minister of Justice, 15 Apr 1954, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1726, CC 783, vol 1, part 1.

[39] Jack O'Reilly to Hon. E. Davie Fulton, Minister of Justice, 20 Nov 1957, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1763, CC 834, vol. 1, part 1.

[40] W. Braden to Director of Remissions, 8 Oct 1957, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1763, CC 834, vol. 1, part 1.

This interplay between the norms of manliness and mental illness spread throughout the trials. Quite often, the kind of man a murderer could claim to be – or could be presented as – mattered a great deal in decisions over guilt and commutation. A murderer's breadwinning capabilities and work-ethic provided the most common test of manhood. Being a man meant being a good worker.[41] Perhaps the most commonplace form of this assumption came in the insistence of newspapers to refer to murderers by occupation. Most of the men convicted of capital murder had very spotty work records, holding few jobs for any length of time. In 1962 the *Vancouver Sun* insisted on calling Eric Lifton "a former cook."[42] This was despite the fact that Lifton came to be in trouble in Vancouver after stealing another man's credit card and travelling to various locations in Europe and North America, not working at all. He had also been an intermittent university student in the United States and had served a brief stint in the US army. To say Lifton was a cook was to say very little, yet local papers insisted on the convention in this and all cases. Stating a man's job mattered.

Some prosecutors emphasised a man's spotty work record as a way of making the murderer look bad during the trial, linking his manly failure to illegal and horrific violence. This worked especially well in murders that resulted from a robbery, where the crown could make a direct connection with the unwillingness to work and the decision to kill. In a 1947 case involving two bank robbers/murderers, the prosecutor cross-examined the common-law wife of one of the accused (itself a contentious issue in this period) lingering over the

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[41] On post-war manhood and breadwinning, see Robert Rutherdale, "Fatherhood and the Social Construction of Memory: Breadwinning and Male Parenting on a Job Frontier, 1945-1966," in Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld eds., *Gender and History in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), 357-375; "Fatherhood and Masculine Domesticity During the Baby Boom: Consumption and Leisure in Advertising and Life Stories," in Lori Chambers and Edgar André Montigny eds., *Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History* (Toronto, 1998): 309-333. Useful counterpoints in the American literature include, Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York, 1988); Robert Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York, 1993); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York, 1996).
[42] "Gunman Bargained for Freedom," *Vancouver Sun*, 10 Feb 1962, p. 1, 2C.

men's unwillingness to work. He asked the woman, M. Peterson, in what context the plans

for the robbery had been discussed and then played dumb to get her to elaborate her

position:

Peterson:	Well, I think the whole thing led up the fact that Douglas Carter was working nights and I guess he didn't fancy the idea and they were talking about holding up a bank, that's all.
Prosecutor:	What connection would that have with Carter working at night? I didn't follow what you mean. What is the connection between Carter working at night and holding up a bank?
Peterson:	I guess possibly he thought that wasn't a very nice position to have, or something like that; working nights didn't appeal to him.
Prosecutor	What did you mean – the bank would be held up at night?
Peterson:	No.
Prosecutor:	I must say I don't follow you. If you will explain what you mean by that?
Peterson:	I gathered they meant it would be an easier living than working.[43]

The prosecutor had not just stumbled upon this tactic. Two men were accused of the

murder and the prosecutor asked the same questions in both trials.[44] In both of these cases,

officials explained this failure to achieve the breadwinner norm within the parameters of

postwar psychological discourse that emphasised environmental and behavioural problems.

Medos, it should be remembered, had a mother who had been in a mental hospital and his

lawyer and the judge brought up this issue to officials in Ottawa. A large campaign to save

the life of the other convicted man, Henderson, who was only seventeen, centred not just on

his age but also on his poor family background. Many organisations and individual

Vancouverites wrote in to call for commutation, including the United Church Women's

Social Service Council, the painter Lawren Harris, the former provincial Cooperative

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[43] Testimony of M.M. Peterson, R v Medos, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 629, part 3.
[44] Testimony of M.M. Peterson, R v. Henderson, 2 June 1947, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 630, part 3.

Commonwealth Federation leader, E.E. Winch, and the local Council of Women.[45] They

drew upon the behavioural explanations of mental health expertise to explain Henderson's

violence and as a way of saving his life. In the end, the cabinet ordered a new trial in

Henderson's case and for the law to take its course with Medos.

Aside from breadwinning, contemporaries presented balance and discipline as main

features of masculinity and, in doing so, mirrored the psychological discourse of the day

which emphasised the many ways in which one could go astray on the path to maturity. The

notion of the "teenager" first appeared in the postwar years, partly as a result of social

changes, including changes in the education and work patterns of youth, and also as a result

of the work of mental health professionals who argued that adolescence was a distinct and

troublesome biological period in one's life. These experts, and the society at large, projected

their gendered fears of the future onto discussions of adolescent development. They saw the

potential downfall for girls in issues of sexual impropriety, while for boys they feared the

improper taming of aggression. The path to proper manhood meant steering clear of being

either too feminine or too masculine. [46]

Discussions of murderers frequently invoked these ideas about relative manliness.

Manliness needed to be tamed and controlled. Murderers who conveyed the least amount of

threatening masculine aggressiveness generated sympathy. Often this was the case with

young murderers. In 1954, Mr. S. Jenkins, Pastor of the Pender Christian Mission, wrote to

the Minister of Justice on behalf of one young man: "He never had an easy road in life as he

was slight and almost feminine looking in appearance, with the mind of a boy and the

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[45] See the large number of letters in NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 630, part 1.
[46] Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Franca Iacovetta, "Gossip, Contest, and Power in the Making of Suburban Bad Girls: Toronto 1945-1960," *Canadian Historical Review* 80:4 (1999), 585-623.

responsibility of a man...."[47] In the case of another nineteen year-old, a judge used similar

logic: "It is impossible to understand why [Henderson] got mixed up in an attempt to rob a

bank with arms. The boy does not look like a killer and he doesn't even look like a boy of

courage. If anything, he has rather a weak face."[48] When another man killed a bank

manager, his defence counsel emphasised his status as a "weakling" in an attempt to explain

away his responsibility for violence.[49] These kinds of statements made a direct link between

masculinity and violence that the authors considered threatening and then distanced the

particular murderer from this type of masculinity. As such, they represented a back-handed

compliment, absolving inherent evil in the enactment of violence but also taking away the

murderer's manhood. The other side was also problematic. Being too manly was just as bad

as being unmanly. When James Carey and Joseph Gordon faced murder charges for the

death of a Vancouver police constable, the two men's relative strength of character played a

role in the way the judge interpreted their murder. Justice Manson claimed "Gordon is

rather proud of his criminal record, seemingly. He is a strong character. Carey, on the other

hand, I would regard as a somewhat weak character, a follower rather than a leader."[50] A

local woman wrote to Carey's lawyer to offer her assistance in fighting for commutation.

"James Carey has a decent face," she wrote, "a good face and one can judge a great deal by a

man's face. Joe Gordon, in my humble opinion, judging as justly as I can, is another kind of

man altogether than Carey. He has always been a bad one. He will always BE a bad one."[51]

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[47] S. Jenkins, Pastor, Pender Christian Mission to Hon. Stuart S. Garson, Minister of Justice, 23 Mar 1954, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1726, CC 783, vol 1, part 1.
[48] A.M. Manson to Colin Gibson, 20 June 1947, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 630, part 1..
[49] Condensed Summary, R v Fulton, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1821, CC 941, vol. 2, part 3; Testimony of G.H. Fulton, R v Fulton, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1821, CC 941, vol. 1, part 2; "Jury against clemency as killer found guilty," *Province* 21 Oct 1965, p. 1-2.
[50] A.M Manson to Hon. Senator W. Ross Macdonald, Solicitor General, 27 Apr 1956, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1753, CC 820, vol. 2, part 1.
[51] (Mrs.) Iris E. Lorntzsen to Norman D. Mullins, 22 Feb 1957, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1753, CC 820, vol. 7, part 2.

Other commentators found more sympathy for aggressive male youths. They accepted a basic notion that men were naturally aggressive and in certain circumstances would lash out in violence. Written pleas to spare the lives of young murderers appealed to the government's understanding of "the natural animal spirits of young boys"[52] and the "thousands of fine hardworking men in Canada …who look back on the days of their wild oats with a smile."[53] Defence counsels often appealed to assumptions of a natural and allegedly harmless masculine aggressiveness. In 1955, when death resulted from a fight between two young men amidst a gathering of Vancouver youth, the defence lawyer argued for the normalcy of this behaviour. "Thousands of incidents of this kind probably occur every night throughout Canada," he argued, "but this one ended in a fatality."[54]

These kinds of arguments assumed that men were prone to violence and that this merely needed to be appropriately directed. A woman calling herself "Another Grandma" suggested work and the military as possible outlets. She wrote to the Minister of Justice to ask that he spare one young murderer. He "could work and learn the Golden Rule and become a good man," she suggested, "maybe with the next war he would be useful."[55] Another plea for the same young man's life noted the link between the army and the need to tame youthful masculine aggression: "I can see my brother at seventeen just before I left England wanting to be called into the Army," wrote Doris Boynes. "All I can hear him saying is, 'Wait until I get into the Army I'll show you how to kill em!' You and I know what

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[52] Arnold Wennberg to Minister of Justice, 11 Nov 1947, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 630, part 1.
[53] Ellen Watson to Minister of Justice, 11 Nov 1947, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 630, part 1.
[54] John S. Burton to Hon. Stuart Garson, Minister of Justice, 18 Apr 1956, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1750, CC 812, vol. 1, part 1.
[55] "Another Grandma" to Minister of Justice, 11 Nov 1947, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 630, part 1.

DET. ALAN HOARE
. . . wounded

Figure 2: *Vancouver Daily Province*, 26 February 1947 (Reprinted with permission of the *Vancouver Province*)

killing means but to the minds at that age it's all adventure."[56] In these cases, age served as a

defence. They had not yet learned to discipline themselves, to redirect their impulses to

socially useful ends.

The distinction between disciplined and unruly violence pervaded newspaper

coverage of murder trials. In the wake of a violent 1947 bank robbery, newspapers printed

alarmist stories about young men and guns. "Raiders, even the youngest of them, handle

guns with complete confidence and familiarity," the *Province* told its readers. It warned that a

criminal leader — akin to the character Fagin in Dickens's *Oliver Twist* — was training

[56] Doris Boynes to Minister of Justice, 10 Nov 1947, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1664, CC 630, part 1.

impressionable Vancouver youngsters. The problem was not violence with guns in general. The paper celebrated one of the police officers in the same case. It recounted how, in the gunfight with the three robbers, Detective Hoare had used his wrong hand to "kill one of the trio and to wound another at a distance of 100 yards." In a parallel to its fearful stories about trained criminals, the paper claimed that "Detective Hoare's excellent marksmanship, right hand shots even though left handed, were definitely not just lucky breaks. The officer is one of a small group of police who started the Vancouver Police Shooters Club.... and Detective Hoare is one of the most enthusiastic members.... If it had not been for Detective Hoare's constant practice, there might have well been three dead officers and three escaped suspects."[57] A picture accompanying the story showed Hoare pointing his gun directly at the camera (Figure 1).[58] The ideal of postwar manhood lay in finding the middle route between the weakling and the brute.

The sexuality of a murderer also mattered a great deal to Vancouverites, and here too psychiatrists played a major role in setting the language of public discourse. In 1948, the federal government added a special amendment to the Criminal Code regarding "criminal sexual psychopaths." A few years later, in 1954, the Royal Commission on the Law Relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths took up the same controversial subject yet again. It does not appear as though there was an actual increase in this type of crime. Rather, as Estelle Freedman has argued, North Americans concern over sexual psychopaths at mid-century was part of an attempt to define proper heterosexual relations by casting out people and actions deemed abhorrent and, in the process, normalizing those actions not deemed so. The castigation of sexual psychopaths played a role in establishing the norms of masculinity

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[57] "Deliberate Act of Innocence Hid Intention of Murder, Says Hoare," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 27 Feb 1947, p. 1, 9.
[58] "Two Policemen Die in Gun Fight," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 26 Feb 1947, p. 1.

as heterosexual within certain prescribed limits. It was also, as Elise Chenier has argued

about the Canadian experience, a successful effort on the part of psychiatrists to medicalize

the language of sexuality and to promote their role as its monitors.[59]

This was especially evident in possibly the most sensational murder trial of post-war

Vancouver, the killing of Ferne Blanche Fisher by Frederick Roger Ducharme, a tragedy that

the coroner and police quickly identified as the work of a "sex maniac."[60] In early

November 1949, workers found Fisher's body on the shores of False Creek. As in most

cases involving a female victim, questions immediately went to her own sexuality but friends

and relatives described the forty-five year-old spinster as a religious, happy, good worker

who had regular habits and was not suicidal.[61] The evidence of sexual assault and the fact

that part of her body hair had been shaven off drew speculation and the press made

comparisons to a similar case in which a another woman's "nude and hairless body [had

washed] up on the rocks of a lonely beach at West Vancouver."[62] Police Chief Walter

Mulligan warned of a possible sex maniac at loose in Vancouver.

Even before he became a suspect, concerns over Ducharme's sexuality played a

significant role in the way police treated him. In early December, almost a month after the

as yet unsolved murder, two police officers patrolling an area not far from the waterfront

spotted what they later referred to as "a person ahead of them who at the moment may have

been male or female." The police report described the capture: "the object [Ducharme]

dashed across the street behind the Coca Cola plant followed closely by the officers who

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[59] Estelle B. Freedman, "*Uncontrolled Desires:* The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960," in Peiss and Simmons, eds., *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 199-225.On the cultural history of concern over criminal sexual psychopaths in Canada see Chenier, "The Criminal Sexual Psychopath in Canada;" Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 122-123.

[60] "$250 Reward Posted in Woman's Mystery Death," *Vancouver Sun,* 10 Nov 1949, p. 1-2.

[61] "Body of Woman in False Creek," *Vancouver Sun,* 9 Nov 1949, p. 1-2.

[62] "$250 Reward Posted in Woman's Mystery Death," *Vancouver Sun,* 10 Nov 1949, p. 1-2.

were firing revolver shots to stop it. Two employees of the plant who saw the fleeing object, jumped it when the police shouted to them to do so. It was then found that [the] accused was wearing only short underware [sic], a shirt, long rain coat, a pair of rubber boots and a silk scarf draped over his head like a girl.... they found [the] accused had a shoe lace wrapped round his penis which he told them he had to wear to keep his penis down as he got delirious when it got up."[63] Police initially had no evidence linking Ducharme with the Fisher murder but kept him in custody for mental examination. In a subsequent search of his home, they found key physical evidence linking Ducharme to Fisher and only then charged him with the murder.

All involved in the trial, including Ducharme himself, invoked the language of mental illness to explain his odd sexual behaviour. Dr. J.P.S. Cathcart, the chief neuropsychiatrist with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (and the doctor repeatedly called upon to perform psychiatric examinations of all convicted capital murderers for the Remissions Office) visited Ducharme in his Oakalla cell in June 1951. Cathcart noted a number of features about Ducharme that he thought could indicate a certain kind of unmanly personality. Cathcart wrote, "I noticed that his finger nails were rather long, particularly the thumb nails ... I have an idea that the nail picture fits in with a lot of other things about this man, including the significant female trophies that were found in his float house."[64] In an earlier letter, Cathcart took up this same theme after reading one of Ducharme's diaries. He wrote to Ottawa claiming "Ducharme reveals an unusual interest in some intimate female details which, while it doesn't prove anything in connection with this particular crime, nevertheless it does suggest that he fits into a group or type that would be

[63] British Columbia Police Crime Report on Rex - Ducharme, M.T. Phipps, Vancouver Detachment, 23 Mar 1950, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1688, CC 701, vol. 1, part 1.
[64] J.P.S. Cathcart to M.F. Gallagher, 21 June 1950, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1688, CC 701, vol. 1, part 1.

perversely interested in that direction."[65] Justice Manson picked up the language of the psychiatrists who frequently appeared in his court when he claimed, "My own view is that this man is definitely a psychopath of some description, with an inclination to sexual misbehaviour."[66] Ducharme himself attempted to play up his troubles to earn sympathy and respite from conviction and later execution. In diaries and letters later released to the press and the courts, Ducharme took up popularly known themes of medical deviance, describing himself as a man "very much alone in [his] own world" and a "lone wolf" (perhaps a reference to Freud's "wolf man" case study).[67] His defence attorney made a similar plea in his closing address to the jury, admitting to the jury that Ducharme and his friends were ""a group of exhibitionists, who live in floathouses and to whom I will refer as a nest of perverts." But he went on to argue, "Even if you believe Ducharme did this murder knowingly, he is a type of man whose background and personality is timidity, a fool who hasn't got the courage to go around asking for what he wants. Psychiatrists tell us he should not be in an insane asylum. Did you think he is mentally right? Is he normal?"[68] The correct answer here was that he was not. The jury disagreed with this reasoning, finding Ducharme guilty of murder, but the references to medicalized sexual oddity no doubt lingered.

Vancouverites could (and did) racialize these notions of appropriate manly conduct, seeing some races as more or less likely to fall astray in different directions. When a black

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[65] J.P.S. Cathcart to F.W. Thompson, 11 July 1950, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1688, CC 701, vol. 1, part 1.
[66] A.M. Manson to Secretary of State, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1688, CC 701, vol. 1, part 1.
[67] "Ducharme Letter Court Sensation," by Jack Webster, *Vancouver Sun*, 14 Mar 1950, p. 1-2; Frederick Rodger Ducharme to Stuart Garson, Minister of Justice, 22 June 1950, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1688, CC 701, vol. 1, part 1; "The Ducharme Murder case. The Evidence of the Death of Miss Blanche Verne Fisher," by Frederick Rodger Ducharme, Frederick Graham Farnsworth, 30 March 1950, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1688, CC 701, vol. 1, part 1.
[68] "Fred Ducharme 'Just Fool' His Lawyer Pleads in Court," by Jack Webster, *Vancouver Sun*, 21 March 1950, p. 1-2.

man killed one woman and mutilated another with a hammer in 1953, his race served as a way of explaining the violence and marking him as unmanly. Charles Matthews, an African-American boxer who had been living in Vancouver, had fallen in love with Peggy Bowen, a young women from Vancouver's African-Canadian community. Some members of the community disapproved of Matthews and Bowen called off their relationship. Matthews blamed the break-up on Los Angeles Smith, the sister of his boxing trainer and the woman whose home he had boarded in. Early on a weekday morning in March 1953, he went to her home. He first went to an upstairs apartment where Jocelyn Wallberg lived with her husband. Wallberg was preparing to leave for work but she recognised Matthews from his time at the Smith home and let him in to borrow a pen. Matthews beat this woman with his fists and a hammer and left her for dead. He searched for a trap-door that he believed led into the Smith home below. Not finding it, he eventually entered the downstairs home from the front door. Once inside, he also beat and killed Smith with a hammer. The woman in the upstairs apartment, Wallberg, survived and acted as the star witness at Matthews' trial.[69]

The sheer brutality of the murder as well as the issues of home invasion and a love affair would have been sufficient to make this a sensational case. But the element of race trumped the others. Commentators on the case picked up on the trope of the too-manly black male that pervaded North American culture in the early years of the twentieth-

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[69] The fact that the woman Matthews beat but did not kill Wallberg, who was white, drew attention too. In fact, the popular link between aggressive black sexuality and vulnerable white womanhood tainted memories of the trial. A year later, the director of the federal government's Remissions Office, A.J. MacLeod, referred back to the Matthews' case as an example where a twenty year-old murderer had been executed. But MacLeod misremembered the racial details of the case. He claimed it had been a "very bad case" in which the African American Matthews had killed a black woman for getting in the way of his relationship with a white girlfriend. But Matthew's girlfriend had been black and the women he had beaten but not killed had been the white neighbour. Nevertheless, the racial anxiety around black men's sexuality and especially the threat of black men's relations with white women seems to have distorted McLeod's recollections. See "Memorandum to the Solicitor General," 5 April 1955, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1740, CC 800, vol 2, part 1.

century.[70] This was the idea that black men were overly sexualised and masculine because of their allegedly primitive state. While such overly race-based claims were becoming less popular in the post-war years, they nevertheless dominated public and institutional discussions of this case. Newspapers wrote of the love affair between this "Negro" and his "Negress."[71] Justice J.V. Clyne neatly summarized the general racialized language of black primitivism in his comments on Matthews' general character. "He is obviously an emotional, undisciplined youth of twenty years of age," Clyne wrote, "and in my opinion is not very far removed from the jungle.... I think that he is a primitive who became so furious by being deprived of what he wanted that he committed a very brutal murder and was careless of consequences."[72] These sentiments reflected not only one judge's candour, but also the general tone of expert opinion. The psychiatrist sent to examine Matthews, J.P.S. Cathcart, quoted Clyne's comments on Matthews' "primitivism" in his report to the Remissions' Office. He noted that "His Lordship has supplied the simplest and most accurate summary of the case" and then went on to quote Clyne's characterization of Matthews as primitive.[73] In no other cases did judges or psychiatrists refer to a murderer as a "primitive"; they instead opted for the language of immaturity. Medicalization seems to have offered a way for older ideas about racialised manhood to continue by giving them a scientific shine appropriate to the postwar years.

Matthews' response to his medical explainers is worth dwelling on for what it suggests about the power relation between psychiatrists and the convicted and the effect of medicalization on notions of masculinity. Most of the men convicted of capital murder

[70] See Gail Bederman's comments on the image of the "Negro rapist" in chapter two of her *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[71] See, for example, "'I Love You' Says Slayer From Dock," *Vancouver Sun*, 16 Jun 1953, p. 1-2.
[72] J.V. Clyne to Secretary of State, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1717, CC 768, vol 1, part 1.
[73] J.P.S. Cathcart to A.J. McLeod, Director of Justice, 19 Sept 1953NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1717, CC 768, vol 1, part 1.

turned to psychiatry and other professionals for assistance, either directly pleading insanity

or indirectly by invoking medicalized language and expertise to earn a commutation of their

death sentence. They, or others on their behalf sought the language of mental health

expertise. Unable to make the case on their own, they gave themselves up to the power of a

growing expert class that promised to make the case on their behalf. Matthews did not go

along on this ride willingly. In the trial itself he shouted at one of the psychiatrists, E.A.

Campbell who appeared as a witness. After the trial, the government sent Campbell to

inspect Matthews before the commutation decision but the prisoner refused to see him,

claiming he did not want to see any more doctors. In reports on Matthews' behaviour in jail,

Oakalla medical officer, R.G.E. Richmond described watching Matthews as he would watch

a wild animal in a cage. "Tonight," Richmond wrote to one of Matthews psychiatrists, "I

was able to observe an attack by him on a guard who had found him in a corner of his cell,

hidden from adequate watch. He felt provoked at being disturbed and in a rage reacted

violently.... He resents constant vigilance...."[74] We get this report in the language of the

watchers, those looking in. Yet we can also get hints of the perspective of the one who was

watched – striking back, resenting the psychological gaze that so neatly labelled him

throughout his trial and afterwards. As Matthews' response to his doctors suggests, some

men found the medicalization of masculinity to be uncomfortable.

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The context in which Matthews and others were punished changed over the postwar

years. Beginning in the 1940s and 1950s, a small but significant minority of Canadians –

religious leaders, intellectuals, and humanitarians – called for the abolition of the death

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[74] R.G.E. Richmond to Dr. E.A. Campbell, 15 Oct 1953, NAC, Capital Case Files, RG 13, 1717, CC 768, vol 1, part 1.

penalty. In Vancouver, prominent citizens such as the writer Eric Nicol and even the

warden of Oakalla Prison Farm, Hugh Christie, advocated an end to the noose. This

movement gained force in the late 1950s under Conservative Prime Minister John

Diefenbaker's government; the former defence lawyer commuted the sentences of fifty-two

of the sixty-six cases which came before the federal cabinet. Lester Pearson's Liberal

government continued with a similar policy until 1967 when it legislated a five year trial

abolition of the death penalty for all cases except those involving the murder of law

enforcement officers. Despite rising murder rates and a majority of the population who still

favoured hanging, Trudeau's government extended the ban in 1973 and finally abolished the

category altogether in 1976. The last executions in Vancouver took place in Oakalla Prison

Farm in 1958 and the final Canadian hangings took place in Toronto's Don Gaol in 1962.[75]

In reviewing capital case files, it is difficult to know why the Remission's Officer in

Ottawa recommended that one man should be hanged and another spared. This became

impossible after 1957 when all Vancouverites convicted of capital murder had their

sentences commuted. What is clear is that the files themselves (the evidence used to make

these decisions) contain a number of assumptions rooted in historically particular ways of

thinking about what it meant to be both masculine and violent. More often than not, those

who died before 1957 were those who least matched contemporary standards of appropriate

manly behaviour. After 1957 officials made the same kinds of judgements but to different

effect. The post-war movement to abolish the death penalty criticized this type of

"discretionary justice." While politicians and the courts emphasised the rationality and even-

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[75] On the post-war history of capital punishment, see D. Owen Carrigan, *Crime and Punishment in Canada*, 379-380; C.H.S. Jayewardene, "The Canadian Movement Against the Death Penalty," *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Corrections*, 14-15 (1972-1973): 367-82; Carolyn Strange, "The Politics of Punishment: The Death Penalty in Canada, 1867-1976," *Manitoba Law Journal* 23:3 (1996): 594-619; "The Undercurrents of Penal Culture: Punishment of the Body in Mid-Twentieth-Century Canada," *Law and History Review* 19:2 (2001): 343-385.

handedness of capital punishment in line with a long history of the rationalisation of punishment, the all too human prejudices that actually effected who the state executed provided plenty of targets for criticism.[76] Ultimately, the state was found lacking in that aspect of modernity that it found so important in the men it judged: unbiased reason.

Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and other mental health experts entered into this debate as those who could ostensibly speak in a rational and objective fashion. Both supporters and critics of capital punishment drew on the language of psychology and psychiatry to give their claims scientific legitimacy. In doing so, these experts became key spokespersons on the men they dealt with, and on masculinity and manly deviance more generally. The main features of postwar psychological discourse, the emphasis on behavioural, environmental and family problems, infiltrated all aspects of capital murder cases. As with veterans and ironworkers, murderers found that their manhood was being defined by a group of experts.

The similarities with these other postwar men were not just thematic; at least in the case of one man, the personalities also overlapped. Working for the federal government's Remission's Office, the psychiatrist, Dr J.P.S. Cathcart, interviewed a number of the convicted men to determine their mental state before the cabinet made its commutation decision. It was Cathcart who wrote of Charles Matthews' primitivism and who diagnosed the sexually odd features of Frederick Ducharme's personality. Cathcart also happened to be Chief Psychiatrist, first for the federal Department of Pensions and National Health in the

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[76] Carolyn Strange, "Discretionary Justice: Political Culture and the Death Penalty in New South Wales and Ontario, 1890-1920," in Strange ed., *Qualities of Mercy: Justice, Punishment, and Discretion*, 130-165. On the rationalisation of punishment in the modern era more generally, see Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression, from a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Garland, *Punishment and Modern Society* and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* 2nd ed. (New York: Vantage, 1995); Greg Smith, "Civilized People Don't Want to See That Sort of Thing: The Decline of Capital Punishment in London, 1760-1840," in Strange ed., *Qualities of Mercy*.

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1930s and 1940s and then for the new Department of Veterans Affairs in the late 1940s and

early 1950s. In this capacity, Cathcart helped to set DVA and CPC policy toward psychiatric

casualties of war. He argued that the main cause of mental illness in war was not the actual

battle experience; rather it was caused by the background characteristics of individual

soldiers. He used the same kind of environmentalist explanations that dominated psychiatric

evaluation of capital murders to make sense of mental illness in soldiers and to minimize the

entitlements of veterans to state aid.[77] He represented just the kind of interfering expertise

that Kirchner and other veterans criticized in their 1947-1948 Royal Commission. Cathcart's

work in both instances represented a growing tendency for the norms of masculinity –

whether in its celebrated or castigated forms – to be mediated through the language of

expertise.

This privileged place accorded to expertise and reasoned masculinity in the postwar

years did not function as smoothly as it might so far appear. Some sense of this came in the

romanticization of the ironworkers after the bridge collapse, in the public appreciation of

their daring and stoic bravery. Although the engineers' knowledge won out in the end, many

Vancouverites accorded the ironworkers much value. The same kind of process, though to a

lesser extent, occurred with the capital murderers. Although modified and medicalized, a

number of Vancouverites still normalised male aggression and a seemingly more primal

notion of manhood. For a number of middle-class men this style of masculinity could seem

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[77] Dr. J.P.S. Cathcart, "Every Physician A Psychiatrist," National Health Review vol 7, no 4 (Jan 1939): 1-11;
J.P.S. Cathcart, "Mental Illness and War," National Health Review (July 1940): 149-151; J.P.S. Cathcart,
"Psychological Problems in Post-War Rehabilitation," Bulletin of the Canadian Psychological Association,
Special Issue containing Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association,
(April 1941): 31-32; Dr. J.P.S. Cathcart, "Every Physician A Psychiatrist," National Health Review vol 7, no 4
(Jan 1939): 1-11. See also, Terry Copp, "From Neurasthenia to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Canadian
Veterans and the Problem of Persistent Emotional Disabilities," in Peter Neary and J.L.Granatstein, The
Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998),
149- 159. An interesting coincidence: Cathcart shares a name with the character Colonel Cathcart in Joseph
Heller's Catch-22, the officer who continually devises new means to get his air men to fly more and more
missions.

attractive. The very men who benefited from the risk-management ideals of manly modernism also wanted to be associated with the risk-taking traits of modernity's other masculinity. A number of middle-class men presented the experience of postwar suburban living and the forms of masculinity associated with it as alienating. Some of these men turned to the mountains and to the sport of mountaineering, taking up in their leisure the kinds of masculine traits that other middle-class men regulated while at work.

Chapter 4: The Manly Modern at Leisure

In *Into Thin Air*, an account of his 1996 expedition to Mount Everest, journalist Jon Krakauer describes a situation which, despite taking place at the highest point on earth, is nonetheless familiar. Upon reaching the mountain's summit and spending the usual few minutes taking photos and admiring the view (rarely as spectacular as it ought to be), Krakauer, wary of his rapidly decreasing supply of bottled oxygen, hurries to descend to the South Summit two hundred and fifty feet below where a full oxygen tank waits. Without the extra oxygen, he fears that he might not make it back alive. However, just as he is about to attach himself to a fixed line by which he will rappel down Hillary's Step, he is forced to stop. A large group of climbers at the bottom of the ridge are preparing to ascend the same rope. He is stuck. He cannot get down. In one of the most remote places on earth, with only a tiny amount of supplemental oxygen left, physically and mentally exhausted from reaching the summit, and with storm clouds gathering above, Krakauer waits in line.[1]

This dangerous return to such basic problems of human interaction just at the moment when one feels most removed from them is characteristic of mountaineering. Like many mountaineers, Krakauer climbs the mountain as a form of escape from the drudgery of daily run-of-the-mill existence. He seeks the isolation of the highest point on earth to find something intangible and to achieve something unique. To do this he must rely on technology (bottled oxygen) and forms of rational organisation (teams of paid guides) that

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[1] Jon Krakauer, *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster* (London: Macmillan, 1997).

ultimately frustrate his initial desires. He may have travelled to the highest point on earth

but he may as well have gone to the mall because he still has to wait in line like everyone

else.[2] In this case, however, the consequences are not just being late for dinner; they are

deadly. Of the five other climbers in his party to reach the summit, four will die. In

radicalising these tensions – between the desire to escape certainty and the simultaneous

insistence on forms of rational planning which frustrate this desire – mountaineering is an

icon of modernity, setting into clear relief its promises and perils. [3]

These contradictory tendencies of the modern experience were matched by

contradictory tensions within notions of manly modernism in the postwar years.

Masculinities rooted in bodily risk-taking, danger, and aggression came up against and were

refracted through the rationalistic ideals of the modernist project. Middle-class male experts

acted as agents of modernisation, disciplining a variety of figures including veterans, bridge-

workers and men convicted of murder. The relation between these two groups of men –

and the two types of masculinity they represented – was sometimes fractious and sometimes

harmonious. This mixed relationship reflected the fact that the alignment of ideals of

masculinity and modernity in these years privileged men as a whole even as it benefited some

more than others, subjecting some men, often based on class, race, and sexuality, to

modernist discipline. However, even those men who apparently benefited from their

connection to the modernist project – the growing middle class of the postwar years – still

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[2] The main reason Krakauer is on the mountain, as a journalist to tell the story of these commercial
expeditions up Everest, is also implicated in this sense of premature denouement.
[3] Mountaineering is an iconic modern activity. Although its historians like to begin their books by citing pre-
modern climbers, these are exceptions; its actual history begins in the latter half of the eighteenth-century.
Along with developments such as the expansion of mercantile capitalism and overseas exploration,
mountaineering was one of the activities which helped create a positive connotation, as something dynamic
and stimulating, to the word "risk" in the English language. See Anthony Giddens and Christopher Pierson,
Conversations With Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998).
Mountaineering historians who cite pre-modern examples include Walt Unsworth, *Hold the Heights: The*

found this experience to be as frustrating as it was promising. A chorus of voices presented middle-class men's postwar experience as one of potential emasculation, feminization, and alienation.

This chapter looks to the sport of mountaineering in post-war British Columbia to see how the contradictions of this iconic modern sport spoke to this contemporary sense of angst among some middle-class men. In a sense, we are moving from the risk-takers to the risk-managers, from the veterans, bridge-workers, and murderers to the engineers, experts, and bureaucrats. But we are not looking at these men while they are at work. Instead, we move with them to their weekends and holidays, to their leisure time when they too sought risky endeavours as a way to define their masculinity. One individual, Harold Minshall, nicely encapsulates this move. In his professional capacity, Minshall represented the ironworkers' union at the inquiry into the Second Narrows' Bridge collapse. He applauded the workers' skilled daring, backing up his praise with (and being allowed to speak because of) his engineering expertise. In his private life, Minshall was a member of the British Columbia Mountaineering Club (BCMC), a group of Vancouverites who regularly sought meaningful leisure on the peaks of nearby mountains. Minshall was both engineer and mountaineer, a man who praised the risk-taking of ironworkers on the job even while he took risks of his own during his leisure time. By tracing the history of this mountaineering organisation, we can begin to explain how the apparent contradictions of modernity and manly modernism were actually part of a larger whole.

In this chapter, I make two main arguments, one relating to mountaineering's connections with post-war modernity and the other about its relation to middle-class masculinity. My first argument is that Vancouver's mountaineers exemplified the

Foundations of Mountaineering (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1993) and Chris Jones, *Climbing in North America*

contradictory and transgressive nature of the modernist project at mid-century. They sought

to escape from, and yet were inherently part of, a modernist ethos of risk-management,

rationality, and "newness." In the post-war years, this contradictory tendency revealed itself

around their discussions of the intrinsic difference of wilderness and its relation to that

newly dominant feature of Canadian life, the suburb. The BCMC represented

mountaineering as an escape from what was becoming an increasingly suburban existence in

British Columbia's Lower Mainland. As much as Canadians embraced suburban life as never

before in these years, they did not do so without worrying about the consequences. Suburbs,

critics warned, brought isolation, a loss of community, and an enervating existence in the in-

between land that was neither city nor country.[4] These problems all seemed to find their

solution in mountaineering: against the loss of community came the creation of a new

community of mountaineers; instead of isolation, climbers found camaraderie and

meaningful friendships; the semi-naturalness of lawns and parks was replaced with the real

rugged wilderness of mountains; and the enervating nothingness of white-collar work paled

in comparison with life and death decisions on the way to the summit.

In rushing to escape some of its problems, however, mountaineers did not really turn

their back on modern life. BCMC members may have believed that wilderness leisure

offered a more authentic experience but they also insisted on modifying and controlling this

experience in ways that showed they shared much in common with other post-war

modernizers. As much as they celebrated the wholeness of the wilderness experience, they

also established modern system of regulating nature, other mountaineers, and themselves.

The BCMC set itself up as the arbiter of appropriate conduct in the bush, establishing rules

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(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

of etiquette to better police the barrier between wilderness and civilisation. As with

Krakauer on Everest, they sought contradictory goals with predictably mixed results. In

seeking an alternative to the artificiality which they saw in modern life, mountaineers were

part of a process of modernisation which brought the same tension between authenticity and

artifice with them into the mountains. The mountaineer's desire to set nature apart as

something unique and unspoilt went hand in hand with their desire to then regulate and

mediate the (socially constructed) authenticity of their environment.[5] They set up the

boundary between wilderness and civilization only to take pleasure in its penetration.

   This emphasis on escaping and embracing modernist values is a hallmark of ideas

about modern manhood. Wilderness has often been the preferred source of solace for those

– from nineteenth-century doctors treating neurasthenia to the young Teddy Roosevelt –

trying to maintain assumptions of a primal and powerful masculinity.[6] At the very moment

when men seem to be most at the centre of modern life, their power is often explained as a

throw-back to an earlier time, as rooted in a tradition which blends past and present power.

The initial popularity of mountaineering in Victorian England and Canada resulted from this

notion that masculinity was threatened by modernity and needed to be retrieved in natural

and imperial endeavours, preferably ones which fostered competitiveness.[7] In the post-war

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[4] On criticism of suburbanisation, see Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), chapter three; and Veronica Strong Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960," *Canadian Historical Review* 72:4 (1991): 471-504.
[5] On a similar process at work in early twentieth-century conservation efforts, see Tina Loo, "Making a Modern Wilderness: Conserving Wildlife in Twentieth-Century Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 82:1 (2001): 92-121. On this process as related to modernity more generally, see John Jervis, *Transgressing the Modern: Explorations in the Western Experience of Otherness* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 134-156.
[6] See Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 105-132 and Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 170-215.
[7] On the role of gender and national identity in creating an interest in mountaineering, see Peter H. Hansen, "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 34 (July 1995): 300-324; Hansen, "Confetti of Empire: The Conquest of Everest in Nepal, India, Britain and New Zealand," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42:2 (2000): 207-332; and Raymond Huel,

years, the threatened manhood thesis focused on the alleged plight of the middle-class

suburban white collar father. Critics warned that suburban existence, which in other

instances might have been seen as the pinnacle of success for the male breadwinner, actually

represented a threat to masculinity. Magazines and books fretted over the hen-pecked man

in these feminine spaces, with their lives dominated by concerns over children and

neighbourliness.[8] My second argument in this chapter is that the threatened manhood thesis

expressed itself and found its antidote in the language of mountaineers. In the 1950s and

1960s, the BCMC was less likely to link mountaineering with the notions of national, military

and racial greatness that had so marked earlier periods. Mountaineering continued, however,

to offer middle-class men a version of masculinity connected with possibilities of control

and power. On the peaks, mountaineers still maintained control but this came through the

regulation of one's body and environment. This was a personalized power of discipline and

desire tied to the creation of individual expertise. Much like masculinity more generally

(which as historians Michael Roper and John Tosh point out, always needs to be proven),

mountaineering was a test.[9] Succeeding on this test meant not only becoming a good

mountaineer, it also meant becoming a modern man.

Mountaineering in post-war Vancouver

The first Canadian mountaineering organisations were established in the early years

of the twentieth century. They came fifty years after the so-called "Golden Age" of

(English) mountaineering between 1854 and the disaster on the Matterhorn in 1865. And

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"The Creation of the Alpine Club of Canada: An Early Manifestation of Canadian Nationalism," *Prairie Forum* 15:1 (1990): 25-43.

[8] Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 53.

they came more than a decade after British and American climbers had, with the help of the Canadian Pacific Railway's Swiss guides, claimed a number of first ascents on Canadian mountains. In 1906 the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) was formed by A.O. Wheeler (at the instigation of Elizabeth Parker) in order to ensure that Canadians could claim their fair share of first ascents on Canadian mountains. In the era of empire building, mountaineering served as one more way of expounding identity, conquering new territory and, as historian Peter Hansen argues, bolstering ideas of national and imperial masculinities.[10] It was in the context of these concerns over exploration and national "firsts" that the BCMC was established in 1907. Although it went by a provincial name, the BCMC was made up largely of Vancouver area climbers.[11]

The early nationalism of climbing had faded by the post-World War Two era. While some still spoke of conquering mountains, especially when the BCMC organised a special expedition to mark British Columbia's centennial in 1958, post-war BCMC climbers only occasionally explained their actions in terms of national or civic pride. As we will see, however, mountaineers still connected their sport with masculinity, but this was a masculinity that sought escape in the experiential advantages of wilderness leisure. Along with other clubs including the Vancouver section of the ACC, the Varsity Outdoor Club (based out of the University of British Columbia), the Vancouver Natural History Society, and (in the late 1960s) the Simon Fraser University's Mountaineering Club, the BCMC promoted outdoor leisure as the perfect salve for the scars of modern life.

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[9] Michael Roper and John Tosh, "Introduction: Historians and the Politics of Masculinity," in Roper and Tosh eds., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991), 18.
[10] Huel, "The Creation of the Alpine Club of Canada,"; Susan Leslie, "In the Western Mountains: Early Mountaineering in British Columbia," *Sound Heritage*, vol. VIII, no 4 (1980); Hansen, "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club," and Hansen, "Vertical Boundaries, National Identities: British Mountaineering on the Frontiers of Europe and the Empire, 1868-1914," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24:1 (January 1996): 48-71.
[11] The BCMC first went by this name in 1909 after initially being called the Vancouver Mountaineering Club.

Clubs like the BCMC played an important role in shaping the experience of mountaineering. The BCMC brought people and experience together to meet, socialise, and most importantly, climb mountains. It served as a gathering body of local climbers. Before the advent of guidebooks and a large system of marked trails, clubs provided prospective climbers with much needed information.[12] The club almost doubled in size in the post-war years, going from one hundred and fifty members in 1945 to almost three hundred in 1970. As well, the number of official club trips expanded each year between 1945 and 1970. In the 1940s, the club organised trips approximately every other weekend, although members often went on non-club trips as well. By the late 1960s, the number of club trips had more than doubled and a club member could attend one or more organised activity every weekend. Members visited a photo shop in downtown Vancouver that was owned by another BCMC climber and signed up for club trips on a register. While there they could also sign up for the regular training sessions in ice- and rock-climbing or the annual summer camp. A monthly newsletter, *The BC Mountaineer*, brought everyone up to date with all the club's activities. It published lists of upcoming climbs and social events, reports of previous trips, club business, and miscellaneous articles and anecdotes. The newsletter also kept members up to date on who had married whom, a relatively common occurrence in the 1940s and 1950s especially. Overall, BCMC represented a tightly knit community of climbers that grew considerably in these years.[13]

Part of the group's cohesiveness came from the relatively similar class positions of its members; the BCMC was a middle-class organisation. While historians of British Columbia mountaineering and BCMC members themselves refer to the club as being more casual and

[12] "Interview with Esther and Martin Kafer," Oral History Project (hereafter OHP), 1997, in *British Columbia Mountaineering Club Archives* (hereafter *BCMC*), Box 9, vol. 10.
[13] Statistics are culled from information published regularly in the post-war years in *The BC Mountaineer*.

open than the ACC, the difference was one of tone rather than kind.[14] Statistics on the class

position of members from three different decades (1949, 1959, and 1969) show that a

majority of members always belonged to the middle class. The BCMC was made up of

professionals such as university professors, doctors, and engineers as well as small business

people and white and blue collar managers. Working class members usually occupied skilled

and semi-professional positions such as lithographers, technicians, and teachers. Certainly

the club was not exclusive. A few members had unskilled jobs, working as labourers or

drivers. But these climbers always made up only a small minority of the overall number of

climbers. Perhaps most telling is who was absent from the club. Very few climbers worked

in forestry or on the waterfront, two of Vancouver's major industries. And those who did

work in such industries tended to do so in skilled or management positions.[15]

The location of climbers' homes followed the trends of Vancouver's middle class.

Those members who did live within the city of Vancouver disproportionately lived on the

affluent west side. Increasingly in the 1950s and 1960s, BCMC members moved away from

the city altogether and into the suburbs. In 1949 less than one in six BCMC members lived

in the suburbs compared to one out of two or three in 1969. Adding to this general trend of

suburbanisation was the large number of climbers who lived in areas of Vancouver which,

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[14] Susan Leslie ed., "In the Western Mountains."

[15] The statistics on BCMC members' class positions are based on the divisions outlined in Michael Zweig, *The Working-Class Majority: America's Best Kept Secret* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000). Zweig assesses class position based on power over production rather than income. Checking BCMC members names against city directories for three different years (1949, 1959, and 1969, respectively), the following class positions emerge: 1949 = thirty-five middle-class and twenty-two working-class positions (of which eleven involved skilled workers); 1959 = forty-two middle-class and twenty-one working-class positions (of which seventeen involved skilled workers); and 1969 = fifty-eight middle-class and thirty-eight working-class positions (of which thirty-one involved skilled workers). In each of these years, the number of members for whom I could determine class position is less than the overall membership. Other historians of mountaineering note the upper- and middle-class status of its participants; see Sherry B. Ortner, *Life and Death on Mount Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Hansen, "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club"; and Unsworth, *Hold the Heights.*

although inside the city limits, nonetheless closely resembled suburban communities.[16] With their majority middle-class membership and their increasingly suburban lifestyles, BCMC members were those in the post-war years most able to benefit from post-war affluence. They were also, as well shall see, those most keen to escape its environmental and gendered ambiguities.

Civilisation and wilderness

The natural environment sought by Vancouver mountaineers underwent dramatic changes in the post-war years. In 1945 British Columbia was still a collection of regions mostly isolated from each other by geographical barriers, united in name only. While transportation links such as railways, ferries, and roads had been breaking down these provincial barriers for quite some time, the process was slow. "For many British Columbians of mid century," notes historian Jean Barman, "the province as a geographic entity simply did not exist."[17] Yet this isolation quickly came under attack in the 1950s and 1960s, especially with the election of the Social Credit party under W.A.C. Bennett. Seeing as his mandate the economic development of the province, particularly its interior regions, Bennett promoted infrastructure as the main tool of development. Picking up from where earlier governments had left off, Social Credit embarked on a massive program of infrastructure development which included highway expansion, the extension of the provincial railway, the Pacific Great Eastern, and bridge building. The government emphasized breaking down barriers between the economically underprivileged regions of the

[16] BCMC members' residence information is based on comparisons between membership lists published in *The BC Mountaineer* and city directories.
[17] Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 271. On earlier processes of transportation development which broke down barriers of time and space

interior and the better-off areas of Vancouver and southern Vancouver Island.[18] All of these

developments tended to diminish the barrier between civilisation and wilderness and reduce

the distance between mountains and streets.

This infrastructure development led not only to industrial growth, it also facilitated

an expansion in the numbers of tourists visiting the province's wilderness areas for

recreation. The post-war "good life," so popular with Bennett and many British

Columbians, included more leisure time spent in the wild. The era saw the emergence of the

forty-hour work week as the standard in many industries. This meant that more workers had

more time in which to pursue their leisure out of doors.[19] Increased ability fitted in nicely

with increased desire. A range of family experts, both academic and popular, encouraged

post-war families to spend more time together on "fun" outings. In the era of

"togetherness," fathers were expected to spend more time with their families. They were

not, however, to break down expectations of gender difference between men and women.

Spending time outdoors, whether camping, fishing, picnicking, or even in the backyard

having a barbecue, became an acceptable way for men to spend more time with their families

while still asserting that, because such activities occurred out of doors in the "wilderness,"

they were acceptably masculine.[20]

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in the region, see Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: essays on colonialism and geographical change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 161-193.

[18] See Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, chapter 12; John R. Wedley, "A Development Tool: W.A.C. Bennett and the PGE Railway," *BC Studies* 117 (1998): 29-50; Stephen G. Tomblin, "W.A.C. Bennett and Province-Building in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 85 (1990): 45-61.

[19] On the general acceptance of the forty-hour work week as standard, see *Hours of Work in Canada: An Historical Series* (Ottawa: Economics and Research Branch, Canada Department of Labour, 1971).

[20] Robert Rutherdale, "Fatherhood and Masculine Domesticity During the Baby Boom: Consumption and Leisure in Advertising and Life Stories," in Lori Chambers and Edgar André Montigny eds., *Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1998): 309-333; "Fatherhood and the Social Construction of Memory: Breadwinning and Male Parenting on a Job Frontier, 1945-1966," in Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld eds., *Gender and History and Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), 357-375; Chris Dummitt, "Finding a Place for Father: Selling the Barbecue in Post-war Canada," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 8 (1998): 209-223.

Throughout the post-war years, the BCMC expressed contradictory views on the shifting relation between city and mountain life that was accelerated by these changes. Should they welcome the new highway up to Mount Seymour or should they see it as something which would destroy their privacy? Would it open up the hills to new mountaineers and to a more respectful attitude toward the wild or would it bring in the wrong kind of nature lovers, those whose only use for trees was as scenery to be viewed from the car window? On the one hand, the club wanted to control this crossing. Trips needed rational planning and care. From this perspective, building roads and expanding facilities made sense; it made getting to the mountain easier and encouraged more wildlife recreation. On the other hand, mountaineers wanted to cross over into wilderness to get away from civilisation. To truly experience the climb meant going beyond the certainty of regulations and roads. It meant completely losing oneself in nature's difference. The club was pulled from both sides. They wanted to explore, to achieve, to go further. Opening up the mountains meant they could go further more easily. Yet they also wanted isolation. They wanted to maintain the exclusivity of the peaks, where being alone in nature provided the meaning that seemed to be missing from life in the city. Mountaineers wanted to both erect and penetrate the barrier between civilisation and wilderness. Perhaps not surprisingly, they invested great importance in this boundary, seeing in its crossing the nature of mountaineering and (we should add) modernity.[21]

In 1973 the BCMC helped publish a pamphlet called *Get Back Alive! Safety in the BC Coast Mountains*. The pamphlet was indicative of much of the club's post-war thinking about the wildness of the mountains. *Get Back Alive!* told local hikers that the mountains were not

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[21] On modernity's contradictions in this regard, see John Jervis, *Exploring the Modern: Patterns of Western Culture and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998)and Marshall Berman, *"All That is Solid Melts Into Air": the Experience of Modernity* 2nd edition (New York: Penguin, 1988).

just an extension of the city or a play-field of steep hills. On the way up a mountain near Vancouver, civilisation seemed so close. It was almost there – around a bend in the road, hiding behind that big patch of cedars. Yet the boundaries between city and mountain life could not be measured by the nearness of road or city. A few thousand feet (a few hundred feet) could transform a rocky outcrop from a scenic view into a place to die. After leaving the highway or getting off the ski-lift, the mountaineers warned, it is only a short distance before "you cross, probably without noticing the change, the line between civilization and wilderness. Easy access breeds a false sense of security and, for the unwary, the crossing of this invisible line often means going from safety into danger." The differences between home and away needed to be acknowledged and respected: "Mountains are rough and violent places, where humans are mere specks of potential fertilizer on their flanks."

A good mountaineer was humble before this great divide, that between the routines of human comfort and the whims of unpredictable nature. "Humans are soft and vulnerable animals," they warned. "A falling pebble or a slight stumble can kill the strongest man." And those who needed warning were often not the strongest men. Post-war life, with its family cars and roadside picnics, had opened up the forests and hills to many people who did not recognise their own softness. The North Shore mountains, the peaks overlooking Vancouver and within just a short drive of downtown, killed more than a few who trundled up their slopes, especially in the fall and spring when sunny days turned into cold, rainy nights. It was so easy to get lost, to go down the wrong path, to slip on a rock and slide down to a part of the mountain you did not know and from which you could not escape. Not that you would think this when you headed out. It would only be a short jaunt – a little healthy exercise in the city's steep backyard. So many others managed to climb and hike without incident. More and more trails traversed the mountain sides. The highway up

to Seymour had just been paved. The local ski slopes were installing lifts. The mountains were so accessible, so civilised, so safe. [22]

Some in the BCMC fretted over the consequences of opening up the wild areas too much, and to the wrong sorts of people. Long-time BCMC member R.A. Pilkington lamented the extension of the highway to Seymour in 1951. "I cannot help feeling that in giving the mountain to the public the government is taking it away from the mountaineers," he wrote in the *BC Mountaineer*, the club's monthly bulletin. "Part of the joy of mountain climbing is to be in the unspoiled high places away from… the presence of people. That is why it is worth while to struggle up a mountain instead of strolling in Stanley Park…. Let no one think for a moment that I am opposed to progress. The general public has as much right to be dirty in the mountains as upon the beaches…. But to some of us who knew the mountain twenty years ago it seems rather a pity."[23]

As more and more Vancouverites came to the North Shore mountains in the post-war years, the club's mountaineers increasingly sought their leisure elsewhere. The BCMC may have been among those pushing for greater local wilderness protection and promotion, but when the newcomers arrived, the BCMC left.[24] The club owned two cabins on the north shore mountains directly by Vancouver, one on Grouse and the other on Seymour. Many social activities, including the annual turkey dinner, took place at the cabins which served as gathering places and starting points for local climbs. As road access to the mountains improved, allowing club members to go up for a day and return the same night, and as more locals came to the mountains, increasing the number of break-ins and hiking

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[22] Quotes from Tim Kendrick ed.., *Get Back Alive! Safety in the BC Coast Mountains*, (Vancouver: Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia, 1973), 4.

[23] "A Personal Opinion," R.A.M. [Pilkington] *The BC Mountaineer*, (May 1951).

[24] As promoters of wildlife conservation, the BCMC seem typical of other mountaineering organisations. See, PearlAnn Reichwein, " 'Hands Off Our National Parks': The Alpine Club of Canada and Hydro-development

and skiing traffic, the cabins declined in importance. Members stayed there less and eventually the club decided to sell the Seymour cabin in 1962 and the Grouse cabin in 1965. Contemporaneous with this abandonment, the club began to build new smaller huts in more remote locations. Instead of being social gathering points, these new huts served as bases from which to launch further exploratory trips. And they were, at least initially, much more isolated.[25]

BCMC climbers thirsted for isolation and novelty. They fetishized "firsts" – the first ascent of a peak, the first trip up a new route. In their desire for virgin climbs, post-war mountaineers blended older imperial ambitions of conquest and exploration with modernist desires for ongoing advancement and progress. British Columbia was one of the few places left that offered many new climbs. Most peaks in other parts of the climbing world, especially Europe, had already been climbed. The opportunity to be the first (or even the second) to the top was lost. In their later lives, BCMC climbers recalled this as one of the best aspects of local climbing – the ability to be the first person to ascend a peak. The mountains were not always high or very difficult but they had not yet been climbed. And a first ascent also meant the opportunity to name a peak. Names had be cleared through the government, but the possibility of naming provided a thrill. Ralph Hutchinson's recollections serve as appropriate for most serious BCMC climbers: "I could see all these mountains, you know, stretching all the way down Pitt Lake, and I was asking the knowledgeable ones, 'What's that one called?' and they said, 'It's not got a name.' 'Has it been climbed?' 'Probably

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Controversies in the Canadian Rockies, 1922-1930," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 6 (1995): 129-155.
[25] On the cabins and huts, see Minutes of the British Columbia Mountaineering Club for appropriate years in *BCMC*, Box 8, file 1 - 3; interviews with Dick Chambers, Esther Kafer and Martin Kafer, and Irene Apps and Jack Apps in OHP, *BCMC*, Box 9.

not.' And so this was the major interest from then on, was on the unclimbed peaks."[26] The possibility that such mountains had already been named by British Columbia's First Nations did not seem to occur to Hutchinson. This was a colonialism of silence, not so much devaluing First Nations' peoples outright as simply not considering their presence at all.

Some mountaineers from other places looked down upon what they believed to be the amateurism of British Columbia alpinists. Post-war climbing in the United States had turned to the open face of the mountain, seeking more and more difficult routes to the top, no longer satisfied with the easiest or most direct. The same process is central to mountaineering writ large. With fewer unclimbed peaks, mountaineers turned to improved technique and new routes to satisfy their need for firsts.[27] In this context, the British Columbia climbers appeared to be out of date. Yet really they were just climbing to the local context, taking their firsts as others had done before. The desire for novelty was the same in both places. By the later 1950s and early 1960s, BCMC climbers also sought the more difficult ascents. They spoke derisively about "tourist routes," frowning upon the less challenging approaches, referring to them as mere "slogs."[28]

By desiring the isolated mountain and valorising that which had not yet been tried, however, mountaineers created a dilemma for themselves. They sought the isolated place only to end its isolation. Their desire to get to new places gave them a sometimes ambivalent attitude toward the mechanisms – roads, planes, industry – which eventually ended that cherished newness. Pilkington may have lamented the building of the highway to Seymour but others in the club had lobbied hard for it. They wanted the easier access to the

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[26] Interview with Ralph Hutchinson, OHP in *BCMC*, Box 9, vol. 9, and interview Esther Kafer and Martin Kafer, OHP, *BCMC*, Box 9, vol. 10.

[27] For some American climbers' thoughts about British Columbia climbers, see Chris Jones, *Climbing in North America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

[28] "Interview with Ralph Hutchinson," BCMC OHP in *BCMC*, Box 9, vol. 9.

cabin that a good road provided. Without the modern encroachment on wild areas, through

aerial survey maps and photographs and logging and mining roads, many BCMC trips would

not have been possible. The *Climber's Guide to the Coastal Ranges of British Columbia* (for which

BCMC members had given much information) provided information on the reliability of

government maps and the usefulness of logging roads.[29] The technology of transportation

significantly helped mountaineering exploration in British Columbia. One BCMC climber

saw the coming of the bush plane after World War Two as a major impetus for the sport.[30]

At the club's 1970 Turkey Dinner, members watched a film on the provision of a drill site in

the Yukon. The *BC Mountaineer* ignored the impact that such a development would have on

the natural environment and instead noted that the film gave members some good ideas

about potential snow climbing trips.[31] Of course, the club did not always ignore the

potential environmental consequences of industrial development. They lobbied for

wilderness protection and against the logging of many wilderness areas. Their desire to

access the bush, to always go where no one had gone before, however, created potential

tensions. The best a mountaineer could hope for was to always be at the front of the

exploration machine, enjoying the fresh unspoilt view before giving it up to the reaping

mechanism which came behind.

The BCMC presented itself as an ideal organisation to help police human incursions

into the mountains. This desire to regulate and to impose systems of order marked the

modernity of mountaineering, the point where the desire to get away showed itself also to be

a civilizing mission. When the climbers went to the hills, the modernist project went with

them. After setting up wilderness as something distinct from humanity, they went about to

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[29] Dick Culbert, *A Climber's Guide to the Coastal Ranges of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Alpine Club of Canada, 2nd ed. 1969 [first ed. 1965]).

[30] "Interview with Esther and Martin Kafer," OHP in *BCMC*, Box 9, vol. 10.

protect and reinforce this distinction. Dangers came in a variety of forms including the possibility of stranded and injured hikers and despoiled, litter-ridden mountain sides. To combat this problem, the BCMC worked to create a system of trails that would mediate the spaces where humans and wilderness met. A lack of public trails, they argued, caused many of the hiking accidents that Vancouverites read about in their papers each year. The growing popularity of hiking, and the Lower Mainland's growing population, meant that more inexperienced climbers were heading to the hills and some were ending up in well publicized mishaps. And BCMC members became directly involved in such accidents in their work with the Mountain Rescue Group, a volunteer organisation of local climbers meant to help the police and military with accidents in the mountains.

The new hikers did not always treat the wilderness in the way the BCMC might have preferred. They left garbage, destroyed sensitive vegetation, and presented a danger to others. After a death on Seymour in 1970, BCMC executive member, Dr. Joyce Davies, wrote to British Columbia's Minister for Recreation and Conservation to impugn his government for its lack of funding for trail construction: "Similar tragedies have occurred in the past and most certainly will occur in the future unless action is taken to remedy the deplorable conditions which prevail."[32] The club did not wait for provincial government funding. By the time of Davies' letter, the BCMC had already been seriously building trails for more than a decade. They hosted trail building weekends where members volunteered their time to clear and mark trails. In 1963, the BCMC and other local outdoor groups came together to form an organisation which became the Mountain Access Committee. Many of the trails in British Columbia, and especially the Lower Mainland, owe their existence to the

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[31] "Turkey Dinner" *The BC Mountaineer* ([month unknown] 1970).
[32] E. Joyce Davies [secretary to BCMC] to Hon. W.K. Kiernan, Minister of Recreation and Conservation, 27 Nov 1970, *BCMC*, Box 1, file 30.

work of this committee. The club also helped to create a guidebook to mountaineering in the coastal ranges of British Columbia and a guidebook to local trails. Both books served, and continue to serve, as important tools for local amateur hikers.[33] While most mountaineers wanted to escape the regularity of trails, they also believed that trail construction would ensure that the wild areas would remain relatively unspoilt.

The existence of an extensive system of mountaineering etiquette demonstrated that the policing concerns of the BCMC also extended to the community of climbers. The BCMC, older members especially, often emphasised the importance of mountaineering etiquette. They published lists of rules and commandments, some of which were humorous, but all of which demonstrated a belief in a set of rules for the bush. One of the worst, and most common, infractions involved climbers who dislodged rocks and debris onto others below them. A club trip to Mount Shuksan in 1956 was cut short by another group of climbers who "seemed not to be hindered by any considerations for the ones who were there already." The *BC Mountaineer* reported how the disrespectful climbers overtook the BCMC group who were soon "busy dodging rocks of all sizes which were coming down in increasing numbers. Helga got hit and let go one of those blood curdling screams which knocked the leader almost off his feet and which would have put to shame any Hollywood stuntman. Fred and Arnold had barricaded themselves behind an enormous wall of ice and refused to leave their fortress, so after a hurried long-distance (3 ropes) consultation with the leader they decided turn back to camp from that point. They had of course to wait another

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[33] For the club's involvement in trail construction, see various entries in "Hut and Trail Construction," *BCMC* Box 9 vol. 45.

2 hours before the air was clear."[34] This may have been a remote location, but the danger came from its occupation not its isolation.

Leadership provided one of the main ways to foster appropriate mountaineering behaviour, at least amongst one's own group if not amongst others. When the BCMC went on a climbing trips the leader always went first and the endman, the second in command, came last. The leader was in charge. He – almost invariably a he – decided the route, the timing, and when the club would turn back. In practice, this was not a rigid hierarchy. Poking fun at the leader's troubles was one of the enjoyable things to do on a trip, and especially in writing the report of the trip later. When Jim Addie followed his lecture on snowcraft techniques at the Grouse Mountain cabin with some practical demonstration, the *BC Mountaineer* felt duty-bound to report that "the leader's insistence that his followers follow in his exact footsteps in true mountaineering style seemed a little unreasonable when some of his footsteps took him up to his neck into rotten snow." Another report sarcastically suggested ways to endear yourself to the leader: "Every few minutes ask the leader if he knows where he is going. Try to elbow past him and reach the peak first. When he has the rope wrapped around twice and tied in four knots about the stoutest tree on the mountainside, be sure to ask him if it is safe." The joking put a human face on the hierarchy – mountaineering was, after all, supposed to be fun. Behind the joking, however, lay a belief that a mountaineer's experience of the wilderness should be mediated by clear organisation and lines of authority.[35]

The BCMC often turned back to people and civilisation at the very moment when something went wrong in the wilderness. This is a key theme in modern acts and stories of

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[34] "Mt. Shuksan, Sept 1,2,3 1956," *BCMC*, Box 3, file 27. See also, "Editorial," *The BC Mountaineer* (Aug 1956); "The Mountaineer's Ten Commandments," *The BC Mountaineer* (March 1960).

exploration – whether these be mountaineering tales or episodes of *Star Trek*. They are as much about what is left behind as what is sought. And the BCMC's discussion of mountaineering risk was no different. Mountaineers sought to go to places where others had not gone and to get there by routes that others had not taken. Yet the risks they faced – and the reasons they were willing to face them – tended to diminish the distance between themselves and others. They wanted to escape the petty restrictions of everyday life, yet if trouble came they suggested rules, organisation, and more knowledge (less mystery) as the solution. Despite, or more accurately because of, the uncertainty of the distinction between wilderness and civilisation, the club emphasised it all the more.

Expertise and excitement

This process of turning away from civilisation and then, almost surreptitiously, turning back towards it again, matched post-war ideas about the state of modern manhood. Men were presented as occupying both a threatened and a powerful position. In one sense, post-war affluence allowed middle-class men to feel more secure in their role as family breadwinner. And yet security had its drawbacks: suburban domesticity and white collar work was not the stuff of rugged, active men. Even if sociologist William Whyte's criticisms of the "Organization Man" were addressed to Americans (especially the concerns about competitiveness and the frontier), he could still find a receptive audience among Canadians who were also concerned that suburban life robbed men of their natural vigour. Sociologist Michael Kimmel argues that post-war men were caught in what he calls the "Goldilocks dilemma." They could not be too conformist, nor could they be too rebellious or wild. Caught in the middle, they increasingly sought "fantasy thrills" through leisure and

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[35] When commenting on BCMC trips in recent years, both Martin and Esther Kafer cited the lack of

entertainment. "The more boring and dull the routine of men's work became," Kimmel

claims, "the more exciting and glamorous were their fantasies of escape."[36]

BCMC discussions of their sport – especially its risky nature – mirrored these

doubled-edged concerns over manhood. Mountaineers constructed the nature of their sport

in a quite similar way to that presented in Kimmel's "Goldilocks dilemma." Mountaineers

had to achieve a balance between reason, control and safety on the one hand and emotion,

experience, and risk-taking on the other. The BCMC's discussion of their sport vacillated

between these paired concerns: between the thrill of pushing forward against the

recklessness of pushing too far; and between the responsibility of knowing one's limits

against the boredom of knowing them too well. The difference here lay in the fact that

mountaineers did not just watch movies about this kind of masculinity, they enacted it upon

themselves. In mountaineering as in bridge-building, men could make consequential

decisions which mattered. Masculinity could continue, in a very potent if fabricated way, to

be connected with the power to control bodies, in this case, the mountaineer's own. The

possibility of manly and mountaineering control came in finding the right balance between

expertise and excitement.

Although the club was open to both men and women and there were no formal

barriers restricting activities of either sex, mountaineering was definitely a gendered sport.

Men dominated the club by sheer numbers alone. They always made up a much larger

number of climbers. More significantly, a climber's sex could often be an indicator of skill

and experience. Women were much more likely to be "graduating" members, those who

had not yet completed the required number of specified club trips in order to qualify for full

leadership as a serious problem.

membership. In 1949, one in three female climbers was a graduating member compared to only one in seven male climbers. Although the relative number of female full members increased over the 1950s and 1960s, the same process occurred with the men as well.[37] Such differences in membership details had practical consequences on climbing trips. On a number of club trips, the group divided upon reaching the approach to the summit with one party taking the most difficult route to the top while another stayed behind or tried an easier ascent. Often, the groups divided by sex with most women staying behind. The same gendering worked in the planning of longer, more ambitious trips. A small group of advanced male climbers tended to dominate these exploratory trips. In this way, the division in the club between climbers and hikers, seemingly one based on skill and willingness to embark upon difficult climbs, also became gendered.[38]

The same process influenced the operation of the club's executive. Women were much more likely than men to organise the club's social activities while men planned the climbing activities. The club's Climbing and Ski Committee, responsible for determining when and where the BCMC would climb, did not have a female member until 1967. And it was not until 1971 that a woman, Esther Kafer, became the committee's chair. Kafer's case is illustrative for it shows that even when female climbers were very advanced, the gendering of skill continued. She later recounted how club members referred to her by the diminutive tag of "girl." When she went along on difficult trips, she was often the only woman. This gendered division between the serious and the casual was not completely rigid, nor did it

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[36] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 236, 251-252. William Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956). This dilemma is also addressed in Barbara Ehrenrich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Doubleday, 1983).
[37] Statistics on sex ratios in the BCMC is culled from membership lists published in *The BC Mountaineer*.
[38] On trips breaking up see, for example, "Mount Arrowsmith Trip, May 22-24 1954," *BCMC*, Box 3, file 27 and "Interview with Jim Woodfield," OHP in *BCMC*, Box 9, vol. 12. On the experience of a woman climber in the ACC at a slightly earlier period which also provides evidence of the gendering of skill, see PearlAnn

only divide based on sex. Some women like Kafer went on the ambitious trips, earning a special reputation; some men did not engage in serious climbing, or not to the same extent as the most prolific climbers. But this did not stop the gendering of mountaineering expertise. Exceptions proved the rule.[39]

Beyond numbers, the very notion of skill itself was constructed in a way that matched contemporary ideas of what it meant to be masculine. Cool rationality infused the BCMC's idea of mountaineering expertise. Nothing was more important in a crisis than unemotional and unfettered assessment. Eric Brooks told new climbers that good mountaineering required the proper mindset as much as technique. The "true mountaineer" needed refined judgement and experience. In dangerous situations, he "become[s] cooler and more full of resource when bad weather sets in." He is able to "estimate bearing power of snow with a single thrust of the axe." [40] To such a man, "panic is the enemy."[41] Ian Kay argued that mountaineering was similar to that other risky modern activity, driving an automobile. In other contexts the BCMC might have eschewed comparisons to such an urban pursuit, but Kay saw through to their mutual demand for rules-based self-discipline. "To drive a car safely we must know the rules of the road, so it is with climbing, we must know the rules of the mountain. A driver that can anticipate conditions is a safer driver than one with a quick reaction, this fact also applies to mountaineering."[42] This appeal to

Reichwein and Karen Fox, "Margaret Fleming and the Alpine Club of Canada: A Woman's Place in Mountain Leisure and Literature, 1932-1952," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36:3 (Fall 2001): 35-60.

[39] Women's role as social organisers is apparent in the minutes of the Executive for most years and is commented upon in, "Interview with Joan Ford," OHP, *BCMC*, Box 9, vol.8. Information on Committee members and chairs was published annually in *The BC Mountaineer*. On Kafer see, "Interview with Esther Kafer and Martin Kafer," OHP, *BCMC*, box 9, vol. 10.

[40] "Snowcraft and Icecraft in Mountaineering" by Eric C. Brooks, Lecture Course in Mountaincraft, 22 Mar to 26 Apr 1956, [lecture transcripts] in *BCMC* box 8 file 7.

[41] *Get Back Alive! Safety in the BC Coast Mountains*, ed. by Tim Kendrick (Vancouver: Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia, 1973).

[42] "Safety in the Mountains" by Ian Kay, Lecture Course in Mountaincraft, 22 Mar to 26 Apr 1956, [lecture transcripts] in *BCMC* box 8 file 7.

responsibility and preparedness fit nicely with many elements in the post-war era's political culture, from ideas of containment in the Cold War to the breadwinning duties of fathers. Men, the family experts (and, in this case, mountaineering experts) claimed, needed to be responsible. The language of disciplined mountaineering matched the language of disciplined masculine citizenship.[43]

Discipline called for planning and preparation. Accidents happened when you failed to prepare. In 1958 when the BCMC joined with the Vancouver Section of the Alpine Club of Canada to climb Mount Fairweather to mark the British Columbia centennial, they employed the language of national and martial masculinity. Paddy Sherman, one of the organisers (and later editor of the *Vancouver Province* and biographer of W.A.C. Bennett), compared mountaineering preparation to that of a military undertaking. The expedition, he noted, had devised their "plans of attack" and had held a "council of war."[44] More often in the post-war years, however, preparation was more about individual expertise, competence and responsibility. The *BC Mountaineer* hearkened to this point in the aftermath of a hiking death on the North Shore mountains in 1956. "Rather than acquire knowledge the hard way," it argued, "it is as effective to listen to others and prepare and act accordingly....Simple uncomplicated preparations that everybody knows about, but so few act upon."[45] This same outlook inspired the club's involvement in the Mountain Rescue Group. This was a volunteer organisation set up by local climbers to assist the police and military in saving stranded climbers. Preparedness was the Mountain Rescue Group's mantra. They extolled its virtues for the amateur climbers the group often had to save.

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[43] On manly responsibility and ethics of citizenship in the Cold War, see Elaine Tyler May *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 1988) and Robert Griswold *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

[44] "The First Canadian Ascent of Mount McKinley," *The BC Mountaineer* (July 1961). See also, [press release from Paddy Sherman], 4 May 1944[incorrectly dated; real date appears to be 1958], in *BCMC*, Box 4, file 11.

They also believed in its usefulness for themselves; the group's organisers continually tried to maintain an up-to-date list of all those available for rescue operations, emphasising the need to be prepared.

The BCMC often criticised recklessness. When they spoke to young climbers or the public, they advocated safe and responsible climbing. "The idea," according to the *BC Mountaineer*, "is not so much to get to the top, as to get back."[46] Mountaineering was an exercise in rational risk management. "To every climber comes the moment when he must decide, is this mountain, today, worth my life? If your answer is NO, we will... be full of respect for the immense powers of destruction attending our every step. If your answer is YES, stop a bit and think of the rescue party that must come if you are injured, spending their time, money and equipment, taking risks for your benefit they would not take for their own pleasure. If your answer is yes, think further: are you worth the lives, time and strength of your friends, your rescuers?"[47] Here is the reasoned, cautious approach to risk, evaluating options, choosing carefully. In the post-war years, when a range of public figures from psychologists to politicians advocated responsibility as the hallmark of manhood, this aspect of the club's approach to risk would likely have found fertile ground. While club members rarely publicly challenged other experienced climbers' decisions, if they did, they did so on these grounds. When a 1960 ascent of Mount McKinley ended in tragedy, Paul Binkert claimed that the "accident serves as another reminder to climb always with a feeling of responsibility." He quoted a line from a *Life* magazine article on the incident: "They

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[45] "Lost on Seymour," *The BC Mountaineer* (Oct 1956).
[46] "The Mountaineer's Ten Commandments," *The BC Mountaineer* (March 1960).
[47] "The Climbing Code," partially reprinted from the Seattle Mountaineers monthly paper *The Mountaineer*, in *The BC Mountaineer* (Aug 1953)[capitalisation in original].

suffered the penalties which the mountain inflicts on the weak or the rash."[48] The climbers

certainly were not weak, so that left rash.

Mountaineers knew of what they spoke; no doubt these attributes did lead to greater

safety. Their very instrumentality and the context in which they were made nonetheless

reinforced connections between masculinity and expertise. Calls for an unemotional and

unornamented approach to risk carried gendered implications. Many scholars have noted

the way the language of modernity has been gendered. Masculinity has, for much of the

modern period, been connected with reason and essence while femininity has been

connected with emotion and ornament. To focus on anything but the instrumentality of a

situation has often meant to lose sight of its essence, to give in not only to danger but also to

emasculation and femininity. The BCMC's description of mountaineering danger picked up

on this longer history and, in emphasising the divisions between recklessness and

responsibility, gave it meanings particular to their sport in the post-war years.[49]

Club members and the press both used and reinforced these notions of masculine

expertise when they evaluated the cause of accidents. In late June 1952, the twenty-nine

year-old BCMC climber Vera Taylor suffered a near disastrous fall on a club trip to Holy

Cross Mountain. According to the BC Mountaineer Taylor and some other "girls" were being

shepherded down the mountain on a rope between "experienced climbers." "Part way

down, Vera Taylor, apparently growing tired of this slow method of progress, left the rope

and attempted to glissade," a technique whereby a climber slides on her bottom to cover

long distances at greater speeds, using her ice axe as both a brake and a steering mechanism.

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[48] "Mount McKinley," *The BC Mountaineer* (July 1960).
[49] Dorothy Hodgson ed., *Gendered Modernities: Ethnographic* Perspectives (New York: Palgrove, 2001); Jervis, *Exploring the Modern*. The gendering of the instrumental/ornamental divide is also something that appeared frequently in the late 1960s reporting on the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. See Barbara Freeman, "Framing Feminine/Feminist: English-Language Press Coverage of the Royal Commission on the

Taylor lost her axe and lost control, bowling over someone else who tried to break her fall, before finally coming to a rather violent stop against an outcrop of boulders. She was still unconscious when the report was being written twelve days after the incident. Like many who suffered serious injury, Taylor later returned to climbing. In the interim, the club and the press referred to her youth and femininity in explaining the incident. At the next BCMC executive meeting, the club claimed that the Taylor accident should serve as a warning for young and old alike. The young needed to respect and obey trip leaders and the older, experienced climbers needed to take the mantle of leadership seriously. The local papers contrasted Taylor's femininity (articles in both the *Sun* and *Province* began with almost identical sentences, reporting that she was young and attractive) with the skill and experience of the male rescue workers who brought her out of the bush. Taylor was not alone in being unfavourably compared to the male rescue workers. Many of the young men who found themselves stranded on local mountains each year suffered the same fate. The papers emphasised the Mountain Rescue Group climbers' experience, skill, and determination at the same time as they told of how the climber in trouble had failed to take the necessary precautions. The expert mountaineer served as an ideal against which those involved in accidents could be compared.[50]

In practice, however, whether on a weekend club trip up the Lions or on an expeditionary venture into the far reaches of the province, BCMC climbers often treated danger a little more light-heartedly than they suggested when talking to the press or giving instruction to young climbers. So long as everything turned out all right in the end, so long

Status of Women in Canada, 1968," *Women in Canadian Society – les femmes de la société Canadienne* (International Council of Canadian Studies, 1995), 11-31.

[50] On the Taylor accident, see Minutes of the British Columbia Mountaineering Club for 1952 in *BCMC*, Box 8, file 1 - 3; "Holy Cross, June 28-29th," *The BC Mountaineer* (July 1952); "City Woman Injured in Mountain Plunge," *Vancouver Province*, 2 July 1952, 17; "Mountaineers Rescue Girl," *Vancouver Sun*, 2 July 1952, 1.

as no one ended up in hospital, they laughed at rocks falling from above or at a slip on the cliff face. Enduring these tribulations made mountaineers special. R.A. Pilkington's short mountaineering poems provide a typical flavour:

> A boulder bounding off an alp
> Landed on poor Willie's scalp
> Rotten luck! But anyhow
> Willie is broad-minded now

or

> George fell down a deep crevasse
> He's in cold storage now, alas
> His mother's ailing, sad to tell
> But George is keeping rather well.[51]

A little fall was good ammunition for campfire jokes or reports to the bulletin. Jim Teevan's friends seemed to enjoy ribbing him after an eventful trip up the Tomyhoi in 1948. "It will be a trip that one of our party will long remember," they reported to the *BC Mountaineer*. "Someone knocked loose a rock from above a small bluff. The rock hit Jim Teevan on the side of the face and he received a cut which required four stitches from the First Aid man. Five minutes later Jim started to sit down on a ledge and his feet went out from under him. A slide over rock and snow for about fifty feet resulted and back we went to the First Aid man to have Jim's scraped arm bandaged. If he intends to use up our First Aid Kit this fast we shall have to charge him double rates."[52] Mountaineers often faced minor incidents like the ones faced by Teevan. They dealt with the recurrences by poking fun at them, minimising their significance.

Club members did not want to be injured, but they wanted to climb and they knew that climbing involved danger. They went ahead with it anyway. They took risks. By 1961, a Canadian team had yet to climb Mount McKinley, North America's highest peak. A British

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[51] "Mountain Literature," by R.A.P. *The BC Mountaineer* (Sep 1951).

Columbia team, including climbers from the BCMC, decided to make an attempt. The 1961

expedition to Mount McKinley had all the elements of a classic mountaineering story: a

remote mountain, an attempt to achieve the first Canadian ascent, risks taken, hardships

endured, and in the end, success. To achieve this success, the climbers suffered severe

hardships. Two climbers lost a number of toes to frostbite. They had to be emergency

airlifted off the mountain. Serious hospital treatment and physical therapy followed. The

press wanted to know if they would climb again to which BCMC member Jim Woodfield

replied: "Climb again? I jolly well hope to." And he did. So did Ralph Hutchinson, another

BCMC climber who lost toes on the McKinley expedition. With a new, adjusted boot, he

was back climbing the next year.[53]

The BCMC's ambivalence towards danger – cautious one moment, carefree the next

– came from the way it sought to play with the contradictions of risk and modernity.

Experience of risk is risk's ultimate arbiter. One can only judge the risk-taker by engaging in

risk oneself. In its emphasis on doing and experiencing, mountaineering bridged the divide

between the 1950s fears of excessive rationality and bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the

more radical 1960s critics of the dehumanizing effects of the "system," on the other.

Mountaineers were not necessarily radicals, but, especially for men, their interest in climbing

came, in part, out of the way it spoke to these concerns.[54] It offered a powerful and

meaningful (if artificially constructed) life and death experience that postwar critics claimed

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[52] "April 18th – Rock Slide," *The BC Mountaineer* (May 1948).
[53] On the McKinley expedition, see "McKinley climb worth the pain of frostbite," *Vancouver Sun* 8 Jun 1961 in *BCMC*, Box 4 file 29; "The First Canadian Ascent of Mount McKinley," *The BC Mountaineer* (July 1961); and interviews with Ralph Hutchinson and Jim Woodfield," OHP, *BCMC*, Box 9, vol. 9 and 12.
[54] See Owram, *Born at the Right Time Time*, 204-10. Although Owram notes the romanticist and experiential critiques of the 1960s, he too readily downplays its connection to earlier movements (such as the beat movement and existentialism); he fails to see how such criticisms are structured into the very process of modernity itself.

was absent from most middle-class men's lives.[55] In an article entitled "So you climb, do you?" Jim Woodfield tried to answer the question of why a mountaineer climbs. It is a question that climbers often faced and claimed to be frustrated by. To ask why one would climb implied that you could not possibly understand.[56] Woodfield went through – and rejected – several stock responses: "Because I enjoy it – open to question: because it is good for me – priggish: because I want to – avoids the question: because of the pride in achievement – sounds a bit pompous: because struggle is good for man – sounds Marxist." External concerns did not define the mountaineer. Rather, the true importance of mountaineering lay beyond ego and risk, in the realm of meaning. Woodfield offered an existential answer to why he climbed. In a modern world so fast-paced and open to change, mountaineers found meaning in the simplicity of mountaineering. Climbing offered a primal experience. It frees "the fettered soul of civilized man so that he can rejoice in the primeval silence of a great forest, and hear the joyful lullaby of a spilling stream, or know tranquillity atop a mountain as he absorbs the breadth of valley, ridge and peak unfolding in disappearing array to the mysterious horizon." Woodfield pitied those who had never climbed and who therefore had never known "the deeper satisfaction which so outweighs the strain of a pack-in, that reduces all rigours of element or nature to insignificance, that teaches a person to value the permanent truths of life."[57]

This embrace of primary experience, and the stoicism it engendered, originated not only in mountaineering experience but also in post-war gender relations. In the context of contemporary fears about the emasculating effects of urban and suburban life on

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[55] See Owram, *Born at the Right*, 204-210. Although Owram notes the romanticist and experiential critiques of the 1960s, he too readily downplays its connection to earlier movements like the beats and existentialists; he fails to see how such criticisms are structured into the very process of modernity itself.
[56] On the frustration of mountaineers having to face questions about why they climb, see Leslie, "In the Western Mountains," and Ortner, *Life and Death on Mount Everest*.

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contemporary manhood, mountaineering provided a meaningful salve to notions of modern manhood. Mountaineers endured danger, they left the city, they went out into the wilds just as many in the post-war period believed that men always had done. Norman McKenzie, UBC president and member of the Massey Commission, highlighted the sport's enriching potential in modern life, arguing that mountaineering "gave its followers a chance to get away from the undesirable influences of city life."[58] The club itself offered the same arguments, suggesting that climbing, like hunting and fishing, offered a healthy outlet for youthful energy and thus acted as a deterrent on juvenile delinquency.[59] BCMC members often jokingly questioned why they kept up with climbing. Early mornings and rainy days seemed to inspire such doubts. "On being roused from the down warmth of his sleeping bag at 1:30 a.m. and sent forth into the darkness with a half-cooked and hastily eaten breakfast lying soggily on his stomach," one climber reported to the BC Mountaineer, "the most ardent mountaineer may perhaps be excused for wondering if he shouldn't take up golf."[60] Yet it was just this version of manhood, the golf-playing, suburban father, against which mountaineers defined themselves.. Paul Binkert used the stereotype of suburban man to jokingly chastise those who did not climb. In a mock biblical/prophetic tone, he wrote of those who made excuses not to go climbing, "to cut their lawn, to paint their houses, to wash their windows." Such people should repent, Binkert wrote: "Ye are no longer worthy to call yourselves mountaineers for whilst you are squatting here, gaining weight and losing agility the mountains are still out there waiting in their eternal beauty for the worthy ones."[61] By accepting the risks of their sport, by venturing out of the city, mountaineers adopted an

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[57] "So You Climb, Do You?" The BC Mountaineer (Mar 1959).
[58] [Report of Speech by Dr. Norman McKenzie] The BC Mountaineer, (May 1951).
[59] "Brief to the Royal Commission on Forests For the Province of British Columbia, 1955," BCMC, Box 1, file 8.
[60] "Mount Shuksan, Aug. 31, Sept. 1-2," The BC Mountaineer, (Dec 1946).

alternate version of masculinity to the "Organization Man," that stereotype of post-war manhood that so many pilloried.

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British Columbia mountaineering changed in the late 1960s and 1970s. In 1967 the BCMC began to grade the difficulty of club trips using a system of numbers and letters. The system first assessed the strenuousness of the climb from A to C and then combined this with an assessment of the grade's steepness and difficulty from 1 to 4.[62] This marked a greater interaction between local climbers and the systems of organisation and classification more widely used in the North American and European mountaineering world. It represented a movement away from making first ascents of unclimbed peaks and towards calculating more difficult treks up those mountains that had already been climbed. It increasingly called on climbers to head to the open face of the rock itself. When commenting on the changes in mountaineering, BCMC members later spoke of specialisation and the decline of the wilderness mountaineer. According to the individual mountaineer such a process could either be seen as an important step in the professionalisation of their sport or as a slip-up which led to the loss of some intangible wholeness.[63]

Although BCMC members understood these changes within their local context, such a transformation is endemic to mountaineering's history. From the sport's earliest origins, we can trace a change from wilderness mountaineering in which half the battle is simply in

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[61] "Paul Binkert" in *BCMC*, Box 4 file 36-37.

[62] Minutes of the British Columbia Mountaineering Club, 1967, *BCMC*, Box 8, files 1 - 3.

[63] This conflict – between specialisation and totality – is one that Freud put at the beginning of his discussion of the effect of civilisation on the individual. See Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, transl by James Strachey (New York: WW Norton, [1961]).

getting to the base of the mountain to more specialised mountaineering, better serviced by

transportation routes and technology and with a focus on specific aspects such as rock or ice

climbing. In her introduction to accounts of early British Columbia mountaineering, Susan

Leslie's perspective is typical of that of many post-war mountaineers. She celebrates the

progress made in the past, the many first ascents. At the same time, she also mourns the loss

of novelty and the environmental costs of growing human leisure in the wild. This

contradictory celebration and mourning of progress is not tied to any one historical period.

Already in the late nineteenth century, a group of German climbers called for a more pure

mountaineering separate from the large military-like expeditions so popular amongst the

English.[64] The conflict between authenticity and artifice, between purity and corruption, has

been endemic to mountaineering. Whether we are discussing post-war British Columbia,

Victorian England or the late twentieth-century Everest expeditions, mountaineering, like

the larger process of modernity of which it is apart, pushes forward both destroying and

mourning that which it leaves behind.

In each particular era, however, mountaineers have given historically specific

meanings to this conflict. In post-war British Columbia, mountaineering found meaning as a

solution to the dilemmas of suburbanised middle class masculinity. In mountaineering, men

found a way to blend the rugged and the respectable, to solve what Kimmel calls the

"Goldilocks dilemma."[65] It called on men to be daring risk-takers, to engage in a dangerous

activity where their decisions mattered. At the same time, they were also expected to

responsible risk-managers, carefully planning and preparing for every eventuality, developing

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[64] Leslie, "In the Western Mountains." On the German search for a more authentic climbing experience, see
Unsworth, *Hold the Heights*, chapter seven.
[65] Although this debate between rough and respectable is usually discussed in terms of class – see Roger
Horowitz ed., *Boys and Their Toys: Masculinity, Technology and Class in America* (London and New York: Routledge,

a sophisticated expertise about how to survive in the mountain wilderness. The BCMC defined manhood and the ideal mountaineer in a doubled way: as that which was at the heart of rational, rules-based modernity – the engineers, scientists, and in this case, expert mountaineers– and as that which served as modernity's opposite – the primal and experiential traditional man. The solution lay in finding the proper balance.

The manifestation of this balance – the ideology of modern manliness – was inextricably linked to the mythology of progress that reigned supreme in the post-war years. Gendered notions of manly risk-taking and risk-management emerged in tandem with widespread support for the modernist project. Many in the BCMC wanted to protect wildlife and the natural environment; they wanted to conserve wilderness. They also, however, shared a gendered belief that put manhood at the centre of modernity, both in the need to escape its hollowness and in the ability to control its risks. In their understanding of risk, mountaineers showed themselves to be true modernists. They offered the creation of expertise as the solution to the danger that they faced. Like other modernists, from nuclear scientists to car safety experts, this was a limited form of expertise which never questioned the belief in progress, or in achieving more "firsts." What was need was just refinement, a better tuning of the machine. The risks mountaineers faced on the rocks may have seemed at some remove from industrial modernisation, but the shared language of modern manliness meant that the mountaineers had much more in common with the boosters of the province's post-war modernisation than they might have cared to admit.

The doubled nature of mountaineering's modernity and of postwar ideas of masculinity is nicely symbolised in one man, Fred Lasserre. As the first director of the University of British Columbia's school of architecture, Lasserre was a key figure in

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2001) – the presence of this debate in a relatively homogenous middle-class organisation suggests that we need

promoting architectural Modernism in the province. This architectural style emphasised visual aesthetics and the bird's eye view over practical usefulness; it sought a clear separation in physical space between buildings meant for living, working, and learning. With the almost authoritarian role it gave to the architect's original vision and the dogmatic insistence on the perfectibility of that vision, it later became subject to the same kinds of criticisms that were levelled at the modernist project more generally. While at work, Lasserre was one of the modernizers. Aside from this architecture, Lasserre also enjoyed mountaineering. He too took up a sport as a form of solace, as a way to "get away to the mountains to free himself from the over-bearing details of administrative work." In his leisure, he took up the sport that promised an escape from the negative aspects of modern life and a different kind of masculine identity. Lasserre died on a climbing expedition while in England in 1961 to research public housing architecture.[66] Lasserre was not alone in incorporating this ironic connection between the risk-taking of mountaineering and the management ethos of high modernism into his own life. This irony infused the very project of mountaineers in the postwar years, just as it represented one of the key tension points in notions of masculinity.

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to look beyond the material relations of production for an adequate explanation.
[66] Wolfgang Gerson, *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* 38:4 (April 1961), 71 as cited in Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, *The New Spirit: Modern Architecture in Vancouver, 1938-1963* (Montreal and Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Architecture and Douglas & McIntyre, 1997), 19-20.

Chapter 5: The Manly Modern on the Road

At their 1960 annual meeting, members of the Vancouver Traffic and Safety Council listened to an impassioned key-note speech by W.A. Bryce, executive director of the Canadian Highway Safety Council. Bryce told the audience of local business leaders, labour organizers, school board notables, and civic officials something they often told themselves: that the world was a dangerous place and that the danger they faced was new. "Life in the world today is not the casual easygoing existence that our grandfathers knew one hundred years ago or even fifty years ago," he claimed. "Yes, life today – on the streets or in the skies – does not guarantee that we shall all die in our beds." Although Bryce spoke primarily of those who died on the streets in car accidents he also put the problem into a larger context, comparing it to the risks of the nuclear age. The modern age gave birth to the threat of the traffic crash and the nuclear war; such dangers were the progeny of modern technological life. In both cases, he warned, one could easily become "baffled and frustrated" by the apparent dearth of solutions. Yet Bryce decried such fatalism. Although modern technologies created many problems, they also offered solutions. He admitted to having no immediate solution to the atomic threat but claimed that "highway accidents ... are a different matter. They are within our experience – we do know their cause and we can provide their cure."[1]

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[1] W.A. Bryce, "Luck or Calculated Risk?" *Vancouver Traffic and Safety Council Annual Report*, [hereafter VTSC Annual Report] 1960, Vancouver City Archives [hereafter VCA], Mayor's Office fond, 36-E-2, file 129.

What was Bryce's cure? How did he hope to eradicate the harm caused by the automobile age? If attendees at the annual meeting wanted a novel approach, they were surely disappointed. For Bryce's solutions mirrored what local traffic safety advocates had been arguing since the early years of the automobile. He called for a smattering of different programs, from more education to better enforcement, all of which fitted neatly into the range of accepted traffic safety discourse. Safety experts, Bryce included, held that individual drivers caused accidents and that the best way to stop accidents was to find better ways to encourage self-discipline. This approach reflected a technologically deterministic view of modern life, a view that saw technology's power to shape society as inevitable and unstoppable; its logic appealed to almost all who discussed risk in the post-war years, including not only traffic experts but also, as we have seen, mountaineers, engineers, murderers, and bridge-builders. There were four "noble truths" to this safety consensus which, in the case of the automobile, ran something like this: First, safety experts like Bryce called on others to admit that modernity created dilemmas and to acknowledge the harm that lurked within modern technology. Automobiles were directly responsible for the death of fathers and mothers; cars could maim people as well as move them. Second, the reason for such destruction could be found not in the new technology itself (not in the modernist project), but rather in the improper attitude towards it, in the personality defaults of individual drivers whether due to such things as recklessness, intoxication, or mental defect. The third element in the safety program was optimism in the possibility of a solution. The experts knew the way forward. Modernity created new ills but moderns did not need to suffer indefinitely; there was a solution. Finally, safety advocates argued that this solution lay in the adoption en masse of a whole new subjectivity, a disciplining of mind and body in line with the demands of the modern age. To truly quell the threat posed by modern technology,

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drivers needed to become thoroughly modern, to reorient their own personalities to allow

for the unobstructed guidance of reason, foresight, and control. The best way to deal with

the risks created by modern technologies, Bryce and others maintained, was to adopt the

proper modernist subjectivity.[2]

Bryce's speech to the VTSC's 1960 annual meeting traversed this well-trod path.

What made Bryce's speech memorable (and the reason we are dwelling on it here) was the

way he grasped for the profound in his final words. Wrapping up his speech, he quoted

(selectively) from Rudyard Kipling's poem of paternal advice "If":

> If you can keep your head when all about you
> Are losing theirs and blaming it on you
> If you can wait and not be tired by waiting
> If you can fill the unforgiving minute
> with sixty seconds worth of run
> Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it
> And what is more, you'll be a man, my son.

At the end of the poem, Bryce added a line of his own, rewording the message of manhood

achieved so that it matched the requirements of the automobile age. "And what is more," he

claimed, "you'll be a good driver, a good insurance risk, with a low insurance premium and a

long life expectation."[3] Overlooking the line's merit as poetry, Bryce's addition is a telling

pronouncement on the connections between traffic accidents, risk, and masculinity in the

post-war years. Bryce called on traffic experts to create safe drivers as the best way to

eliminate traffic accidents. And how did one make good drivers? The answer was simple:

you turned them into good men.

By ending his speech in this way – by linking the manly and the modern – Bryce

made a move characteristic of those who discussed risk and safety issues in the post-war

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[2] Most notably, this same approach to risk showed up in the work of the British Columbia Mountaineering Club and in the Workmen's Compensation Board.
[3] Bryce, "Luck or Calculated Risk?"

years. As we have seen with bridge-workers, veterans, murderers, and mountaineers, post-war Vancouverites associated the taming of danger and risk and the rational practices of risk-management with the norms of manliness. The ideal driver that Bryce and other safety experts tried to sell as the solution to the traffic safety problem mirrored a kind of masculinity that presented reason, self-control, and responsibility as the hallmarks of the good man. Like the safe driver, men were said to be more rational, to have a greater fascination with technical matters and to fully become themselves when they exercised self-control. Although safety experts explicitly targeted drivers regardless of sex, gender ideology pervaded the way in which they set about to change drivers' behaviour and the language in which they expressed their recommendations. This association between masculinity and reason has long been a part of gender relations; indeed, it was part of a growing trend in the modern era to emphasise the opposite natures of men and women whether this related to their bodies or, as in this case, their minds. Men's alleged greater reasoning faculties helped to sanctify their social and legal privilege. So, in this sense, the manly rational driver that the post-war safety experts trumpeted as the solution to the traffic accident problem represented yet one more manifestation of a long-standing strategy of gender inequality.[4] Yet in celebrating the manly modern driver, the safety experts rewrote this older language of gender hierarchy into the great symbol of post-war modernity, the automobile. To the extent that knowing how to handle a car was an important and privileged type of knowledge (which it was), masculinity and the attributes associated with it became important and privileged too.

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[4] Although some scholars claim that this is a very recent concept, dating to the late nineteenth-century [as in Charlotte Hooper, *Manly States: Masculinities, International Relations and Gender Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 151] the relative rationality of masculinity has been part of a much longer term modern strategy of gender difference. See, for example, Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). On the move to emphasize the opposite natures of men and women in the modern period, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: The Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990).

By simultaneously invoking the masculine and the modern, Bryce's speech seems to fit well with what we have seen so far. Yet Bryce's speech came at a turning point. As the 1960s progressed, a growing number of critics began to find fault with the automobile and high modernist planning more generally. With its close association to this technology and the modernist project, the manly modern ideal that Bryce extolled also came under scrutiny. On the international stage, Ralph Nader criticized the traffic safety approach which blamed drivers for accidents; instead he suggested that the technology itself, and the Organization Men who brought it to the public, were largely to blame in causing many accidents. In a similar way, Jane Jacobs became the spokesperson for a large movement against automobile-centred urban planning in the United States and Canada, a movement which in its emphasis on the local directly challenged the basic principles of high modernism which had dominated urban planning for most of the post-war years and earlier. Vancouverites took up the ideas of both Nader and Jacobs to challenge the place of the automobile in their own community. They did so most prominently in the late 1960s when a diverse group of citizens challenged and defeated plans to build a freeway through Chinatown. All of this criticism in the mid to late 1960s represented a significant challenge to (though certainly not a total rejection of) the ideological dominance of high modernism.[5] What is significant in the critics' rhetoric is the way they simultaneously targeted the manly modern ideal *and* high modernist planning. Ironically, they drew from a critique that was already at the heart of thinking about the gendered experience of modernity, the kinds of criticisms that had been expressed by veterans, bridge-workers, murderers, and mountaineers. The similarities between these earlier 1950s criticism of modernity and 1960s radicalism suggests closer links between these two decades than is usually allowed. And they also show a much more direct (and

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[5] Ralph Nader, *Unsafe at Any Speed: The Designed-in Dangers of the American Automobile* (New York: Grossman, 1965); Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

unexpected) connection between challenges to 1960s gender relations (usually associated

with feminism and radicalism) and the anxieties of men themselves who lived through these

post-war decades.[6]

Automophilia

Safety experts could not have chosen a more important symbol of post-war

modernity with which to associate idealized masculinity. The car symbolized the central

features of post-war modernity: suburbanisation, consumption, nuclear family

"togetherness," and, mostly importantly, technological progress. Almost as a whole, post-

war society embraced a technologically deterministic set of values that historian Pam Roper

has called *laissez-innover*. Postwar Canadians' reactions to technological controversies such as

the unemployment caused by automation, she argues, "were guided by their beliefs in the

widely held precept that societies could not, and indeed should not attempt to control the

pace of technological change as it might impede progress."[7] In this era, mechanization and

technology went hand in hand with what was modern and therefore good. This even

extended into the realm of culinary arts, where "processed" became synonymous with good

taste. (This was, after all, the era when jellied salads could be considered fine food!)[8]

Although some critics of technical society existed, their criticisms largely called for better

machines, for a tune-up but certainly not an overhaul of the modernist project itself.

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[6] For similar arguments linked to the effects of consumer culture, see Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-style in Modern America* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); and linked to changing family practices, see Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Doubleday, 1983).

[7] Pam Roper, "The Limits of *Laissez-innover*: Canada's Automation Controversy, 1955-1969," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34:3 (Autumn 1999): 88.

[8] On the way this distinction between processed and natural, modern and traditional effected immigrant families, see Franca Iacovetta, "Recipes for Democracy? Gender, Family and Making Female Citizens in Cold War Canada," in Veronica Strong Boag et al eds., *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*, 4th ed (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2002), 299-312.

Perhaps no other object better symbolized the technological optimism of the postwar years better than the automobile.

It is hard to over-exaggerate the extent to which North Americans and Vancouverites embraced the automobile in the post-war years. Although the automobile was invented in the previous century and mass ownership developed after the Great War, widespread car ownership truly took-off after the Second World War.[9] The number of car registrations increased dramatically immediately following the war and continued to increase for much of the post-war years. This increase resulted, in part, from the city's growing population as more and more migrants (especially from the Prairie provinces) came to British Columbia. It also resulted from the increased ability of Vancouverites to buy vehicles as wartime plants converted back to civilian production. Joy Parr's cautious note about Canadians' more hesitant entrance into post-war consumer culture of domestic goods did not seem to hold true for the car. With the removal of wartime restrictions on production and consumption, Vancouverites seemed eager to take to the roads in their cars. In 1946, General Motors placed advertisements in the *Vancouver Sun* apologizing to customers for the slow delivery of ordered vehicles. Claiming that the conversion of plants was still slowing up production, they promised their customers that the company would soon be able to match the high demand.[10]

[9] American historians frequently refer to the period after World War Two and before the late 1960s as the "golden age" of the automobile. See David Thoms, Len Holden, and Tim Claydon eds., *The Motor Car and Popular Culture in the 20th Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); James J. Flink, *The Automobile age* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988); John Jerome, *The Death of the Automobile: The Fatal Effect of the Golden Era, 1955-1970* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972); James E. Vance, Jr. *Capturing the Horizon: The Historical Geography of Transportation Since the Sixteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkinds University Press, 1986).
[10] For statistics on car registrations, see *Annual Report of the Department of Motor Vehicles* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1945-1949), and *Annual Report of the Motor Vehicle Branch* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1950-1970). On Vancouver's growing population in the post-war years, see Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 273. Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

Beyond just the rise in the number of cars (which was significant) other developments suggest a social transformation. Organisations and institutions focused on the automobile grew in importance in the post-war years. Provincially, the Social Credit government of W.A.C. Bennett considered highways to be such a priority that it split that section off from Public Works to create the first Ministry of Highways in 1955. The organisation which represented British Columbia drivers, the British Columbia Automobile Association (BCAA), achieved full independence in these years in 1952, splitting off from its sister tourist organisation. A spokesperson for the organisation explained the move by arguing that "motoring has long been a necessity for thousands, not a luxury… When roads and automobiles become so vital for such a large proportion of the population it is important that there be an organization big enough and strong enough to protect the interests of those who operate motor cars."[11] Drivers were prepared to flex their muscles.

Automobiles changed the very basis of Vancouver's urban life. Many of these changes had been well under way before the war but the period's widespread adoption of the automobile meant that the changes became fully realised in the post-war years. The car fed the process of suburbanisation that was so characteristic of the era. Earlier Vancouver suburbs had depended on the streetcar; not so the post-war suburbs. Along with new developments in housing construction and home financing, the car was an essential catalyst to the development of a number of suburban areas, including Burnaby, Coquitlam, Richmond, and the North Shore. Transportation to and from these communities occurred by car. Within the city itself, suburban-type communities expanded, filling-in the sparsely populated urban hinterlands. The car, in other words, led to the filling-in and expanding-out of Vancouver. The city adopted the car so wholeheartedly that it decided to get rid of its

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[11] "Protecting the Motorist," *Vancouver Province*, 17 Jan 1952, 4.

earlier system of streetcars. A whole grid of street car lines once joined different Vancouver neighbourhoods but the city ripped these up between the late 1940s and early 1950s and replaced them with a trolley bus service. In taking on this kind of auto-centred growth, Vancouver was much like other large Canadian cities. It largely avoided the American problem of inner-city slums caused by white middle-class flight to the suburbs even while the area's population shifted to represent the relative growth of the suburban areas over the centre.[12]

The automobile played a large role in the era's orientation toward family life and leisure. These were the Baby Boom years when the sheer growth in numbers of new couples and young children meant that family life took on a renewed importance. Family experts extolled the virtues of "togetherness." All of these new families, the experts encouraged, should spend time together in enjoyable activities. This could include backyard barbecues and new hobbies. It could also include outings in the family car. Car companies advertised the size and roominess of their vehicles to ensure families that there was plenty of space. The Standard Motor Company of Canada was typical when it told potential buyers in capital letters that its 1950 Vanguard was "NOT TOO SMALL." Small cars were the exception. In the family focused post-war years, size mattered, especially seating size.[13]

Aside from its usefulness to the family, the car also symbolized the democratization of the promises of power and progress inherent to the modernist project. Advertisers tried

[12] The filling in of Vancouver is nicely visualised in see Bruce MacDonald, *Vancouver: A Visual History* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1992). On suburbanisation, see Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham eds., *Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form, and Function* (New York: Routledge, 1999). On the gender dynamics of this suburbanization, see Veronica Strong-Boag, , "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960," *Canadian Historical Review* 72:4 (1991): 471-504. On the relation between automobiles and suburbanisation, see Kenneth T Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*(New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). On urban transportation changes in Vancouver, see Henry Ewert, *The Story of the B.C. Electric Railway Company* (North Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1986)

[13] On the family-orientation of the era, see Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Standard Motor Company advertisement in *Vancouver Sun* 6 May 1950, 50.

to sell cars by appealing to their status as modern consumer products that provided prestige. Partly this came by emphasising the elegance, beauty and styling of a car. Companies brought out new models every year, encouraging purchases by emphasising newness even when not much had changed. A car's power was also important. Post-war cars came with large engines: V8 and V6 were standard. Companies made sure to tell prospective buyers just how much horse-power their engine could work at. In 1952, Oldsmobile celebrated its "Rocket" engine. Coining phrases that only a dedicated car enthusiast would have been familiar with, the company told readers that "The 'drive' is Oldsmobile's Hydra-Matic Super Drive, with the new 'Super' Range to bring out the 'Rocket's' surging power!" And yet, despite all this power, the driver would be able to have "effortless command of the car." Advertisers played up on the idea that driving was an empowering activity. It was both incredibly powerful and easy to do. The Monarch, for example, had an easy task of getting this across because of its name; the company claimed that the car was "every inch a king" and it allowed drivers to "ride like a king." The Monarch was not alone in emphasising the great freedom and power of the automobile. Partly this was just hyperbole, but it also reflected deeply held cultural values. The car put an incredible amount of power at the flex of a toe. It was, as the German critic Wolfgang Sachs has argued, "a material reproduction of a culture" that set up the individual as sovereign and presented other social ties as subordinate.[14]

The individual behind the wheel of a car, however, was largely understood to be a man. As Virginia Schaff has argued about an earlier period, the automobile's promises of power and speed were gendered masculine. Women entered car advertisements largely as

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[14] Advertisements cited here are from *Vancouver Sun* 5 May 1948, 13; 2 Oct 1952, 9; and 4 Oct 1954, 17. On the link between modernity and the automobile, see Wolfgang Sachs, *For Love of the Automobile: Looking Back into the History of Our Desires* Don Reneau trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

objects or symbols of style and elegance. Although families may have used the cars on outings and although women may have driven cars, advertisers clearly imagined the typical buyer as a male. Pictures of cars in the advertisements usually showed men driving the vehicle. When women were pictured behind the wheel, the vehicle was less likely to be in an action or movement-like pose. The woman, like the car, was the object to be viewed. Some advertisements emphasised recognizably masculine themes including a western cowboy theme for the Ford Falcon in 1960 and a shooting range theme for the Mercury Comet in 1962. Advertisements frequently described the car's features in a masculine technical jargon-laden language meant to convey the automobile's modernity.[15]

Clay McShane argues that the car served as a kind of masculine getaway from the troubles of the modern world. It offered opportunities for action, adventure and escape from a bureaucratic and industrialised world.[16] What McShane has picked up on is the connection between the automobile and the threatened manhood thesis. We have seen this before, in the way masculinity has been said to be harmed by modernity just at the moment when it is also being connected to it. While it is true that cars could be seen as a form of manly escape from modern hassles, McShane is only half right in seeing it as an escape mechanism. Those who gendered the automobile as masculine in the postwar years were also connecting masculinity with the modernist project, creating a cultural bond between technological mastery, progress, and masculinity. To the extent that men became acted upon by modernist expertise and organizers, they no doubt would have wanted to escape in their cars. But as we shall see below, many in the postwar years defined the rational risk-

[15] Virginia Scharff, "Gender, Electricity, and Automobility," in Martin Wachs and Margaret Crawford eds., *The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment, and Daily Urban Life* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 75-85

[16] Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: The Automobile and the American City*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994),152-153.

management expertise of automotive technology, especially its risks, in alignment with the ideals of manly modernism.

Managing Modern Risk

Postwar Canadians' faith in the progressive nature of automobiles had to overcome a number of doubt-inducing obstacles, one of the most significant of which was the traffic accident. The number of car accidents in Vancouver doubled between 1945 and 1950, rising from 3,500 to just over 7,000. Although these numbers levelled-off over the following years, they still tended to rise, reaching a high of more than 17,000 in 1968. The number of vehicles involved in accidents showed an even greater increase, going from 6,020 in 1945 to 15,007 in 1949. Many more Vancouverites crashed their cars with each passing year. While many of these were minor incidents, some could be fatal. The number of traffic deaths varied from year to year, ranging from a low of twenty six in 1955 to a high of fifty one in 1966. Cars may have allowed for the "good life," but they also ended life. Such incidents generated a great deal of attention. Local papers regularly followed the ups and downs of traffic accident and injury numbers, linking small increases and decreases to the success or failure of traffic safety initiatives. On at least one day each week, Vancouverites could pick up their morning paper and see on the front page stories that detailed the car culture's travesties in their own community.[17]

How did Vancouverites respond to automobile accidents? How did they interpret this continual reminder that the shiny modernist project had a very rusty underside? Perhaps not surprisingly, Vancouverites, like other North Americans, treated car accidents in a very

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[17] The number of car accidents in Vancouver during this period are drawn from *Annual Report of the Department of Motor Vehicles* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1945-1949), and *Annual Report of the Motor Vehicle Branch* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1950-1970).

modern way. A safety expertise emerged along with the automobile to help explain and deal with its dangers. These safety experts treated car accidents as events that needed to be *managed*. Just as the automobile itself was a great example of modern control over the environment, its downside came to be seen as something that called for an equally modern system of control. Almost uniformly, mid-century safety experts did not want to control the technological environment; instead they called for a greater system of personal control. As a solution to the traffic accident problem, they held that Canadians needed to adopt a whole new modernist mindset based on risk-management principles. In essence, they wanted to make all drivers into mountaineers, bridge-workers, and engineers, taking on the same kind of approach to risk as we saw with these other modern risk-handlers. And just as in these other cases, the ideal traits of the automotive risk-manager matched the traits of ideal modern manliness. Safety experts saw their job as breaking down a lack of knowledge about the causes of accidents so that they could be thoroughly known, studied, and ultimately controlled. In this reckoning, car accidents were not *dangers* which had to be faced but were rather *risks* which could be managed. Given the car's status as a symbol of the modern in this technologically determinist age, the danger which emerged from it was interpreted not as a sign that the technology itself was problematic but rather that drivers had not yet learned to become thoroughly modern themselves. When they did this, when Canadians adopted the right kind of risk-management behaviour in their cars, that would be the day when the traffic accident problem was fixed.

The acceptance of automobile accidents as an unfortunate by-product of an otherwise useful technology has a long history. The automobile took its first victim in New York in 1899. In its early years, critics attacked the car for the danger it brought to the roads; they argued that it was too fast, too unreliable, and altogether too dangerous.

Criticism subsided, however, with the growth in car ownership, especially by the upper middle class, and with its transformation from an object of opulence to one of affluence. A rising group of traffic safety experts arose to claim that the solution to the accident problem lay in the application of scientific rules and research. While the reasons for the decline in outright criticism are hard to pin down precisely, it was clearly the result of contingent historical circumstance and not just the inevitable effect of new technology. The British historian, Sean O'Connell, claims that the risk-management approach to car safety overtook more radical criticism because of the broad social usefulness of the automobile. "With motoring offering new freedoms to many in the middle classes, large numbers of jobs for working people and increasing financial revenue for the government," he points out, "it became convenient for all concerned to place their hope in the claims being made by the emerging 'science' of road safety. So, a belief that education and propaganda, better roads and safer technology were better alternatives than legislation made mass car ownership a palatable option, salving anxieties about the deaths and injuries that continued unabated on the roads." From its earliest days, the economics of the car industry created strong incentives to dampen criticism.[18]

Safety expertise in post-war Vancouver inherited this economically-related risk-management legacy. It is not that there was no criticism of car accidents. Quite the opposite; many people felt that car accidents were a grave problem. A slew of local safety advocates suggested all kinds of ways to prevent accidents. But the kinds of people who became interested in the problem and the way in which they spoke about it meant that they tended to blame individuals rather than technology. No one seriously suggested reducing the number of cars as a way of reducing the number of accidents. Safety work was always

[18] Sean O'Connell *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 143-144. See also, McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path*, chapter 9.

about making the car more palatable, about easing its place into everyday life. Safety

advocates were car advocates.[19]

Industries and individuals with a vested interest in boosting the car's public image

dominated the main local safety organisation, the Vancouver Traffic and Safety Council

(VTSC). Although it later included domestic safety under its mandate, the VTSC largely

concerned itself with the problem of traffic accidents. The VTSC's directors and members

included representatives from such organisations as BC Motor Transportation Ltd., the BC

Motor Dealers Association, BC Electric, the Vancouver Board of Trade, the Downtown

Business Association, the BCAA, the Taxicab Owners' Association, and McKinley's Driving

School. In this way, the VTSC was similar to the national safety organisation, the Canadian

Highway Safety Conference (CHSC), founded in 1954 and also controlled by automobile-

related business interests. In Vancouver, a VTSC representative sat on the city's Official

Traffic Commission (OTC), a municipal board set up to deal with all local traffic issues.

Other safety officials who sat on this board included the city engineer, the chief constable,

city solicitor, aldermen, and representatives from the BCAA and the Downtown Business

Association. The organisations that typically appeared before the OTC to speak on traffic

matters included the Board of Trade, the Junior Board of Trade, the local Council of

Women, and Parent-Teacher organisations. More broadly, the British Columbia Medical

Association (BCMA), political parties, and the federal and provincial governments all, in

greater and lesser capacities, spoke on the place of car accidents in Vancouver.

What is striking is not only that corporations and government boosters dominated

car safety expertise, a subject already neatly outlined by Ralph Nader, but also the *way* in

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[19] My assessment of Vancouver's safety advocates in these paragraphs is based on a reading of the minutes of
the city's Official Traffic Commission and the Annual reports, select records of the Vancouver Traffic and
Safety Council and the articles published in local, provincial, and national publications by traffic safety
advocates all of which are quoted from directly to prove more specific points below.

which they did so, their claim that the solution lay in the achievement of a new kind of

human mastery over technology. The safety experts turned to the individual, demanding a

disciplined modern technological expertise. Experts used a variety of devices to make this

point hit home, to convince drivers to take control of the automobile. One of the more

popular tactics was to compare the automobile to a wild animal that needed taming. "A lion

in the streets knows nothing of the rules of civilized behaviour," claimed Ethel McClellen,

"….But when a human being takes his place behind the wheel it becomes the most

dangerous killer at large in our modern world." Mixing his metaphors, J.C. Furnas made the

same point in his much cited *Readers' Digest* article: "The automobile is treacherous, just as a

cat is. It is tragically difficult to realize that it can become the deadliest missile. As

enthusiasts tell you, it makes 65 feel like nothing at all. But 65 an hour is 100 feet a second, a

speed which puts a viciously unjustified responsibility on brakes and human reflexes, and can

instantly turn this docile luxury into a mad bull elephant." Here Furnas presented the car as

a cat, a missile, and an elephant. All these threats, he claimed, needed to be tamed, to be put

to good use by the car experts' vision of the ideal modern citizen cum circus ringmaster.[20]

Although they may have used animal metaphors, safety advocates went to great

lengths to convince drivers that the problem they faced was modern. They worried that

modernity created a sense of ease which minimized vigilance. The *Canadian Motorist* warned

that this "push-button attitude" could make drivers "act like a machine – unthinkingly."

British Columbia's Superintendent of Motor Vehicles, George Hood, blamed the rise in car

accidents after World War Two not on the increased number of cars on the road but on the

problems of individual drivers. "Until such time as every motor-vehicle driver and pedestrian

accepts his personal responsibility to obey the rules and regulations made for the purpose of

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[20] Ethel McLellan, "A Lion in the Streets," *Canadian Motorist*, Nov 1958, 5-6; J.C. Furnas, "And Sudden Death," *Readers' Digest* reprinted in *Trades and Labor Congress Journal*, vol. XXV, no 9 (Sept 1946): 42-44.

protecting life and property," he argued, "we shall continue to have this wanton loss."

Almost twenty years later, Sam Kershaw, executive director of the BC Safety Council,

expressed the same sentiments. "The problem," he argued, "is man's behaviour in the

mechanical age…The realization that an automobile even at its best is a fast, powerful,

inanimate machine, guided only by the judgment and control of the man behind the wheel, is

proof enough that traffic accidents are thus as preventable as the individual driver wants or

knows how to make them."[21]

The problem called for a particularly modern subjectivity that closely followed the

ideology of manly modernism. Drivers needed to be excessively rational and aware to keep

their attention tuned to all the latest gadgets and instruments. The automobile was a delicate

instrument that called for a delicate touch. "In this very delicacy of touch," one safety

advocate warned, "lies the danger of wavering of attention. We have definitely arrived at the

era of finger-tip control in cars, but a keener mentality is required if safety is the end

product." As a solution, he argued that drivers needed to become thoroughly engaged with

their car. They needed to blend the technological and the psychological, the car and the

mind. Safe driving meant monitoring the many gauges and buttons so that you not only

drove safely but also so that you could enjoy what he called the "thrill of performance."[22]

This blend of modernist subjectivity and technological performance came across

clearly in the key mantra of traffic safety experts, the "Three Es." If enough steps were

taken on each of these Es – engineering, education, and enforcement – safety experts argued

that traffic accidents could be eliminated. Although ostensibly about three different

methods of achieving the same goal, the three Es shared a common ideology which blamed

[21] *Annual Report of the Department of Motor Vehicles,* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1945), 19; S.C. Kershaw, "Driver Education - Essence of Road Safety," *BC Motorist,* 3:5 (Sept – Oct 1964).
[22] "Automation and the Human Approach," *Canadian Motorist,* Oct-Nov 1959, 3; George R. Jackson, "Don't Overdrive Your Car," *Canadian Motorist,* Nov 1958, 8.

accidents on the individual (on what they called the "human factor") and attempted to

inculcate the proper modernist subjectivity to overcome these human faults.

Writing on the first of the three Es – engineering – demonstrated the broad faith in

automotive technology in the postwar years. In the "Three E" approach, engineering safety

meant attending to the design of cities and cars in creating and preventing accidents,

including such things as the role of street signs, parking metres, one way streets, and steering

systems. The engineering of car safety was largely the realm of engineers and the technically

minded, especially Kenneth Vaughan-Birch, Vancouver's city engineer. He advised

Vancouver's Official Traffic Commission (OTC) on a steady course of incremental changes

including the provision of parking metres in 1946, the development of more one-way streets,

and a slow increase in the number of traffic lights, stop signs, and pedestrian cross-walks.

Like other municipal engineers, Vaughan-Birch tried to balance the desire for free-flowing

and speedy movement against safety concerns and local interests. The OTC managed the

car accident problem at the micro-level: parents complained of unsafe intersections for their

children; businesses wanted special parking measures that would interrupt traffic flow;

residents near dangerous intersections wanted traffic lights. Against these calls for more

regulation, the OTC sought to achieve its main goal, maximum traffic flow.[23]

When Vancouver officials looked at the car itself, they tended to do so only as

another way to get at drivers. Before cars could be licensed in Vancouver, they needed to

pass a safety inspection. Vancouver's safety officials prided themselves on the city's

inspection station, a rare institution in these years and one which became province-wide in

1964. Such an emphasis on the role of the vehicle itself in the accident problem was

uncommon in Canada and seemed to be a significant innovation. Yet, the station was not as

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[23] See Minutes of the Vancouver OTC for this period. For more on the role of traffic engineers in automobile safety, see McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path*, chapter 10.

radical as some claimed. It only tested individual upkeep of the car, not the safety of the

technology itself. It assumed that cars were safe when they came out of the factory.

Whenever safety officials debated the cause of car accidents, they could – and did – argue

that cars themselves did not cause accidents in Vancouver. After all, they claimed, the cars

had passed inspection.[24]

Engineering features that made cars safer – such as seat-belts or collapsible steering

columns – were the realm of science fiction and idealistic futurism, a hoped-for possibility

that might sometime make life better but could not be expected right away. Seat belts for

cars were almost unheard of until well into the 1950s and companies did not begin to put

them regularly in cars until the early 1960s. A 1952 *Maclean's* article quotes an executive of

the Automobile Dealer Associations of Canada on the idea of putting safety belts in all cars:

"Never heard of such an idea. People would get the idea that automobiles are as dangerous

as planes. They'd be afraid to buy cars."[25] And they did not need to be afraid because cars

were safe. In 1957 an official with the Canadian Highway Safety Council claimed that

"today's motor car is about as safe as it can be made."[26] Even those who hoped that

engineering could reduce the number or severity of car accidents still believed that

individuals ultimately caused accidents. Articles on possible new safety features inevitably

ended by claiming that they would be for naught unless individual drivers changed their

attitude. Companies were benevolent overseers who wanted to make cars safer but who were

constrained by costs, technology, and the ever important consumer who simply did not want

the new features which looked funny, made for awkward driving, or were simply too

[24] "Drivers Blamed for 99 Pct. of Crashes," *Vancouver Sun*, 5 Jan 1949; Bill Fletcher, *Vancouver Sun*, 28 Oct 1958. This is the irony in discussions of engineering car safety during the period: the car companies created the very standards against which they could be judged. So long as cars matched up with how safe the company said cars could be, then the technology was deemed to be safe. See, Jerry L Mashaw and David L Harfst, *The Struggle for Auto Safety* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990), chapter 2.
[25] Fred Bodsworth, "How to Live Through a Crash," *Maclean's*, 1 Oct 1952, 10-11, 55, 57-59.
[26] Marcus Van Steen, "Slogans won't stop the highway slaughter," *Canadian Business*, Sept 1957, 138-148.

expensive. Even worse were car owners who failed to take car of their car properly, creating

the very kinds of design and engineering problems which would never arise under the care

of a responsible driver.[27] A 1959 *Maclean's* article on eight ways to reduce traffic accidents

did not mention engineering at all.[28] So little criticism was directed at the car that, in 1964,

one year before Ralph Nader showed the dangers of the Chevrolet Corvair, *Canadian Motorist*

gave the car a glowing review, mentioning safety not at all. The Corvair was, according to

the magazine's reviewer, "a car to delight the hearts of those motorists (bless them) who still

believe that motoring can be fun."[29]

The other two Es, education and enforcement, picked up where engineering left off,

moving right to the individual and trying to inculcate the proper modernist approach to

technological risk. Education was the number one weapon in the battle against car

accidents. The fronts included exhibits by the VTSC at annual events like the Pacific

International Motor Show and the Pacific National Exhibition, traffic safety drives

sponsored by the police and advertised in local newspapers, safe driver pledges, and leaflets

handed out by the Junior Board of Trade. The BCAA, VTSC, and the provincial

Department of Motor Vehicles showed safety films and gave talks to schools and

community groups. Many officials wrote articles in local papers and national magazines

explaining that the "human factor" caused almost all accidents. Children came in for special

attention with school safety patrol programs and traffic education for tykes held in local

parks on miniature streets. Local groups called for the re-testing of all drivers and for

pedestrian education especially for the very old and young. But it was high school driver

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[27] *VTSC Annual Report, 1962*, VCA, Office of the City Clerk, Series 40, 120-C-2, file 148; Robert Johnston, "Temperature Plays Tricks on Your Car," *Canadian Motorist*, Jun 1958, 4; George R. Jackson, "Don't Overdrive Your Car," *Canadian Motorist*, Nov 1958, 8.
[28] Sidney Katz, "8 Ways to Cut Traffic Deaths," *Maclean's*, 28 Feb 1959, 13-14, 53-55.
[29] "Corvair Monza" *Canadian Motorist*, Jun 1964, 20.

education, the one program that never came into being, that safety advocates truly wanted. Whenever the accident toll took a turn for the worse, this was the default solution. Private companies including the local McKinley Driving School, long-time supporters of the VTSC, offered courses to all Vancouverites. This was not sufficient. If only there were universal driver education courses in the schools, they believed, accident numbers would really drop.[30]

Educational boosters saw their work as a kind of civilising process. In his speech to the 1956 VTSC annual meeting Vancouver Alderman, H.D. Wilson, asked "What happens to us when we get into our cars and take over the job of driving? It would appear that many of us lose our powers of reasoning completely. How many of us become ill-mannered, boorish, impatient, irritable – almost all of those characteristics which we dislike in others and, under ordinary circumstances, control within ourselves? Why can't we be drivers and normal people at one and the same time?"[31] The VTSC's used education as a way of teaching self-control and responsibility. And while both men and women could be responsible, the concept held special importance for postwar men. Psychologists linked the achievement of responsibility with the achievement of manhood. According to such advice givers, men were to accept the responsibilities of breadwinning, give up the wayward days of bachelorhood and youth and become a man in the process.[32]

This emphasis on responsibility translated well into public policy over car accidents. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s the government sought ways to ensure that drivers were financially responsible, that they either had insurance or sufficient money to pay for any

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[30] On the safety advocates' education plans, see, for example, VTSC, various documents, VCA, City Clerk's Dept, Series 20, 19-D-4, file 6; comments by each Superintendent of Motor Vehicles for British Columbia in BC Motor Vehicle Branch and Department of Motor Vehicle annual reports for the period; *British Columbia Automobile Association Annual Report*, 1958, BCAA Archives, Box A-19 file 1.

[31] *VTSC Annual Report*, 1956, VCA, Mayor's Office fonds, 35-F-3, file 16.

[32] On advice to men, see Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 66-71; Robert Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), chapter 9.

damages caused by their accidents. This goal spurred on the British Columbia Department

of Motor Vehicles to establish its first Drivers' Education Division in 1953.[33] This was not

driver education as it might be conceived conventionally; it was more retributive then

preventive. It targeted "habitual offenders" and "accident prone" drivers. The department

formally reviewed their records and either sent warning letters or suspended licences

altogether. By instituting this system of targeted driver education, provincial authorities

wanted to reduce the number of accidents by either re-educating problem drivers or

removing them from the road altogether. They put administrative force and a regulatory

apparatus behind the need to be responsible.

The last of the "Three Es," enforcement, picked up on this retributive element.

Law enforcement was the partner of education in the post-war safety debate; it worked with

the same goal in mind but through different means. Legal measures were, as one VTSC

member called them, "education by enforcement."[34] Pamphlets and newspaper campaigns

were the carrot, and tickets and criminal sanctions the stick, of accident prevention. Of

course, other motives guided some enforcement enthusiasts. It is hard not to see the

institutional will of the police (a desire for more resources and more power) behind the

almost continual call for more traffic officers. Police forces used the automobile to get

resources and they were, in turn, transformed by the need to police the automobile.[35] Yet

these bureaucratic desires co-existed with a belief in the individualistic nature of the problem

and the desire to regulate behaviour to fit with the demands of modern technology. Those

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[33] *Annual Report of the Motor Vehicle Branch, 1953*, Victoria: King's Printer, 1954.
[34] *VTSC Annual Report, 1956*, VCA, Mayor's Office fond, 35-F-3, file 16.
[35] On the transformation of one Canadian police forces as a result of the automobile, see John Weaver, *Crimes, Constables and Courts: Order and Transgression in a Canadian City, 1816-1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 1995).

who advocated enforcement believed that if only the bad drivers could be stopped, if only the bad human spark plugs could be replaced, the engine of progress would run smoothly.

The main villain in the safety debate was the drunk driver. The post-war years saw a consistent campaign on the part of many safety advocates to smear drunk drivers, those considered to play the largest role in creating accidents. Safety advocates had a tough job. Drinking and driving, at least in moderation, was not seen as a significant problem. Even early attempts to stop drinking and driving still allowed for consumption, the amount depending on the type of alcohol. The law also made distinctions based on the amount consumed. There were two offences, one for driving while intoxicated, the most serious offence, and another for driving while impaired. Law-makers debated the need for two offences but maintained the distinction throughout this period because they believed juries would let too many drunk drivers free if a guilty verdict meant jail time. Then there was the question of how to measure drunkenness. In the early post-war years, the law relied upon the judgement of police and other witnesses. Did they believe the driver was drunk? If so, how seriously? Because of this method's unreliability there were very few convictions for either category of drunk driving, especially when compared to how much of a role safety advocates believed it played. Contemporary estimates linked alcohol to anywhere from thirty and ninety per cent of all accidents. Something had to be done. The police wanted to use scientific tests, machines that could measure drunkenness at the site of an accident. Vancouver police began using a tool called the drunkometer in 1953 and the breathalyzer was first introduced into Canada in 1956. But the law treated this evidence sceptically.

Courts did not accept test results as definite proof; they could only corroborate other evidence. Even still, drivers could refuse to take the tests.[36]

Drinking and driving became such a problem because of the extent to which drinking made rational, risk-management behaviour harder to achieve. Since at least the mid-nineteenth century, drink had been a significant symbol in discussions of civilized behaviour, especially modern manly behaviour. Being able to handle one's liquor appropriately was linked to the achievement of manhood. Earlier temperance and women's activists had based their appeals on the fact that many men could not meet these ideals and that women suffered as a result. The drunk driver discourse served as a modern way of continuing these discussions. Advocates did not call for outright abstinence but they did demand personal control and fretted over the consequences of its absence. Drinking's effect on one's ability to be modern was significant here. The British Columbia Medical Association warned that alcohol made a particularly bad mix with driving because drinking robbed people of their most civilised skills. The BCMA claimed that there was a drinking cycle in which social skills were lost one by one, with those learned most recently (such as driving) going first. "In this progression of events," the group argued, "the effects on the functions concerned with safe driving, such as co-ordination, judgement, self discipline, and control" would be taken away by only a few drinks.[37] Drinking could steal a driver's modernity.

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[36] "City Police Begin Drunkometer Use," *Vancouver Sun*, 28 Oct 1953; "The Cup That Kills," *Canadian Motorist*, Jan-Feb 1967, 12-14; the debates on 22 April 1947 and at various points in February and April of 1954, Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *House of Commons Debates : Official Report (Hansard)* (Ottawa : Queen's Printers, 1947, 1954). See also Joseph R. Gusfield, *The Culture of Public Problems: Drinking-Driving and the Symbolic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

[37] "Alcohol and Driving -- A Renewed Appeal For Action," *British Columbia Medical Journal* 6:3 (Mar 1964). On gender and drinking in other contexts, see Robert Campbell, *"Sit Down and Drink Your Beer":Regulating Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925-1954* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Jan Noel, *Canada Dry: Temperance Crusades Before Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991).

What is striking is the way that the drunk driver and other "problem drivers" matched the usual bogeymen in the closet of post-war manhood. Although they frequently claimed that anyone could be in an accident, safety experts nonetheless tarred bad drivers with characteristics considered to be unmanly. Most significantly, safety advocates claimed that bad drivers failed to be responsible. The "Hit and Run driver" was a good case in point. In 1962, Hal Tennant warned Canadians about the dangers of identifying too closely with this figure, in thinking that any one could be in the situation of needing or wanting to escape from the scene of an accident. He seemed to think that philandering was the common excuse and expected that his readers would sympathize with the driver who rushed off for fear of being caught at infidelity. But he said that this kind of thinking could not be sustained. In the "automobile age," Tennant warned, "....Nice Guys never run away."[38] The *Vancouver Province* agreed with Tennant's assessment. It reported 1,508 accidents in 1959 and claimed that the most common reasons for leaving included impairment, driving without a license or insurance, having someone else's wife in the car or driving a stolen vehicle. The paper also noted that it could be just plain panic, a sure sign that one had not maintained self-control.[39]

This controlled and disciplined citizenship could not just be assumed, it had to be achieved. In the 1940s and 1950s the figure of the juvenile delinquent served as a lightening rod for Canadians' fears that this discipline was endangered. While the female delinquent garnered concern for her sexual behaviour, the male came under scrutiny for his inability to contain his aggression and be responsible.[40] This made the male juvenile delinquent a central

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[38] Hal Tennant, "The Public Crime," *Maclean's*, 10 Feb 1962, 16-17.

[39] "1,508 hit-run accidents in 1959," *Vancouver Province*, 4 Jun 1960, 1.

[40] On juvenile delinquency, see Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) and Franca Iacovetta, "Gossip, Contest, and Power in the Making of Suburban Bad Girls: Toronto 1945-1960," *Canadian Historical Review* 80:4 (1999), 585-623.

figure in concerns over traffic safety. D.G. Dainton blamed accidents on poor young drivers who drove recklessly and did not care if they got into an accident because they had a cheap car. This kind of driver, Dainton argued, "has no position of responsibility, either in a job or in the community... He drives recklessly, devil-may-care, flouting the highway code, and expecting everyone, motorists and pedestrians, to give him right of way at all times. Everything he does when driving leads to accidents."[41] Dainton directly connected social responsibility with driving responsibility, the process of becoming a man with the task of good driving.

The gendered nature of traffic safety discourse becomes clear when we compare it to postwar ideas of masculinity and femininity. In giving his account of the differences between the sexes, Benjamin Spock, the most popular child-rearing expert of the post-war years, described young boys in a way that matched the ideals of the safety experts. He claimed that boys instinctively expressed a "love of machines and gadgets for their own sake," and that, robbed of the ability to have children, they express creativity in such things as building model planes and scooters and "designing futuristic automobiles and planes." The "urge to play at being fierce and intrusive comes more naturally to most boys" because they were more aggressive. He then linked these traits to risk taking: "Most men and boys seem to be courting danger a lot of the time... It's boys who go out too far on thin ice and climb cliffs and it's men who take risks in boats and cars.... For a man a car is a symbol of his ambition to be a powerful person: in reaching his goals, in competing with other men, in impressing women."[42] Another Canadian psychologist suggested that it was fathers who taught

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[41] D.G. Dainton, "Concerning Automobile Accidents," *Saturday Night*, 18 Mar 1961, 54.
[42] Elsewhere in the article, Spock railed against feminists who were "resentful of men's advantages." See Benjamin Spock, "Some Differences Between the Sexes," in Spock, *Problems of Parents* (Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 121-128. On the advice of Canadian parenting experts for the same period, see Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

"rational judgment" and "logical thinking."[43] Their natural proclivity for rational action, creative engineering and for taking risks, when properly controlled, Spock and other experts claimed, helped boys to become men. This same development, this achievement of balance between risk-taking and risk-management also just happened to be what the safety experts held to be the solution to the traffic safety problem.

The VTSC, *Canadian Motorist*, and others presented technological problems such as car accidents as a failure to be fully modern. From this perspective, the rise in the number of car crashes represented not a problem with the technology but rather a sign that drivers had not yet fully adopted a sufficiently modernist mindset. And so their work in the 1940s and 1950s consisted of engineering, educating, and enforcing this type of driver. Even during the 1950s, however, alternative currents of thought suggested different ways of understanding traffic accidents, technology, and the modernist project more generally. In the mid-1960s, such alternatives coalesced into a radical challenge to high modernist thinking about technology and to the gender ideals that went along with it.

Ralph Nader, Radicalism, and the Critique of Manly Modernism

Although postwar Canadians remained optimistic about technologies such as the automobile (and the modernist project generally) throughout the 1950s, it is also possible to read some signs of anxiety that foretold future troubles. This uncertainty galvanized itself most forcefully around the issue of the atomic bomb. With the explosion of the two atomic bombs over Japan in 1945 and the subsequent importance of that technology in the Cold War, nuclear power became a great, if troubled, symbol of North American modernity, of humanity's power to radically control the environment like never before. The historian

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[43] M. Prados, "On Promoting Mental Health," *Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal* 2 (January 1957), 36-51 as cited in Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 69.

Margot Henrickson argues that nuclear anxiety overflowed in the era's popular culture products including teenage science fiction films, pulp fiction, and rock 'n' roll.[44] Canadians imbibed this American popular culture in significant levels during this era and there is also some sense that anxiety, both about the nuclear threat in particular and about technology more generally, was also prominent in 1950s Canada. The popular British Columbia nature writer Roderick Haig-Brown raised his voice against the untrammelled industrialisation of the province's wildlife. European immigrants in these years created the beginnings of a health food movement that would later take off in the counterculture of the 1960s. And other critics fretted over the fluoridation of the water supply in many municipalities including Vancouver.[45]

Similar anxieties surrounded the hyper-rational manly figure that was to guide this technological modernity. Such unease expressed itself most clearly in several aspects of the era's (male centred) youth culture. The popularity of hot rod culture, for example, showed how youths took up the concerns of their parents (the celebration of the automobile) and then twisted the ideals around until they became a form of rebellion. With their emphasis on showmanship and aggression, hot-rodders represented the antithesis of the responsible man ideal. In the popular culture representations of this culture, hot-rodders came across as those who celebrated not safety and certainty but danger and risk-taking. Most Vancouverites would have known about this culture only through films and books but its popularity nevertheless suggests a sense of reluctance about the youth culture's willingness to embrace the gender ideals of their parents. This reluctance further showed up in popular

[44] Margot A Henrickson, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997). See also Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American narratives, Postmodernism and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

[45] Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald, "The Profligate Province: Roderick Haig-Brown and the Modernizing of British Columbia," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36:3 (Fall 2001): 7-23; Catherine Cartstairs, "The Natural High?: Health Food and the 1960s," paper presented at the conference *Sixties – Style and Substance*, McCord Museum, Montreal, November 2003.

coming-of-age books of the period, from J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) to Mordecai

Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1959). Such works criticized the hypocrisy of

adults and instead made heroes of anti-responsible male youths.[46] Like the critique of

technology in the 1950s, this gendered dissent rarely expressed itself outright in politics. Yet

it nevertheless revealed a shared sense that not all was well with the modernist project and its

gendered ideals.

Although differently expressed, this culture of anxiety matched up with the worries

about dominant gender ideals that we saw in earlier chapters. The rebellious sentiments of

youth culture mirrored mountaineers' desire to escape suburban certainties, bridge-workers'

distrust of safety regulations, and veterans' animosity towards bureaucracy and psychiatric

expertise. They all suggested that the modernist project could hurt as well as help and that

the manly modern ideal was as much trouble as it was good. In the mid 1960s, a number of

critics of car culture took up these anxieties about modernity and turned them into a much

more radical and systematic critique than had previously been offered. Where earlier critics

still accepted the basic premise of the modernist project (and the overall benefit of expertise,

technology, and its gendered links) a growing number of radicals in the 1960s came to

criticize the modernist project writ large. They noted the negative attributes of modern

expertise, its often one-sided inability to see the fullness of life, its disciplinary chafing and

the effect this had on communities and individuals. In essence, the 1960s critics of

modernization picked up on the concerns of earlier manly moderns that the system was out

of whack and shifted the balance, opting for less certainty and reason, more risk-taking and

less risk-management.

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[46] Stephen S Conroy, "Popular Technology and Youth Rebellion in America," *Journal of Popular Culture* 16:4 (Spring 1983): 123-133; Leerom Medovoi, "Democracy, Capitalism and American Literature: The Cold War Construction of J. D. Salinger's Paperback Hero," in Joel Foreman ed., *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Mid-century American Icons* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 255-287.

The publication of *Unsafe at Any Speed* in November of 1965 cracked open the

fissures in the debate over car accidents. It is often unwise to accord any one person or

event too much significance, yet Nader seems to deserve it. After 1965, you could hardly

talk about car safety or car accidents without discussing – or at least refusing to discuss –

Ralph Nader.[47] In *Unsafe at Any Speed*, Nader reversed the logic of what he called the "safety

establishment," the claim that drivers caused most accidents. Automobile makers wanted

the public to blame drivers for accidents when, in fact, Nader argued, the car was really to

blame. Cars were designed to be dangerous. At the very least, they were not designed to be

safe. Nader began his journalistic indictment with the story of a woman who lost her arm

when her Chevrolet Corvair flipped over after its rear tire popped off going around a bend –

a quirky, dangerous trick which Corvair tires were prone to performing under the most

ordinary conditions. In a suit brought against General Motors, the company settled out of

court when a mechanic testified against the Corvair, arguing that the car and not the woman

was to blame. Yet, at a number of cases in the following years, the company continued to

argue that similar accidents were caused by driver fault and not by improper design. The

company sold optional kits to fix the problems with the car's rear suspension but did not

warn potential buyers of the car's danger and, most importantly, did not permanently fix the

flaw until 1965, six years after the accident.[48]

According to Nader, the Corvair was not an exception. In *Unsafe at Any Speed*, he

showed repeated examples of automobile makers covering up mistakes to which risked

drivers' lives. Moreover, he argued that the companies dominated the safety establishment,

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[47] The 1965 United States Senate sub-committee hearings into traffic accidents under the leadership of Senators Ribicoff and Robert Kennedy provided a friendly context for Nader and no doubt contributed to the media's willingness to listen to him. See Jerry L. Mashaw and David L. Harfst, *The Struggle For Auto Safety* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990).
[48] Ralph Nader, *Unsafe at Any Speed: The Designed-in Dangers of the American Automobile* (New York: Grossman, 1965).

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turning its critique away from car design, that the companies also dominated the engineering and standard setting professions, that very little science on the safety of cars was done and that, when it was done, stylistic details overrode concerns about safety. In essence, Nader claimed that the automobile makers managed a cover-up of phenomenal proportions, one that turned the public's eye away from the real cause of traffic injuries, car design.

Nader not only criticized what he called the "safety establishment," he also found fault with the kind of men who promoted the driver-focused safety consensus. He criticized the safety advocates' technologically focused, bureaucratic form of modern manliness. He populated *Unsafe at Any Speed* with men who fail to act because they subsumed their knowledge of what is right within their company's interests. Their loyalty to company, technology, and the higher cause of automobile-centred modernity meant that they refused to acknowledge the dangers of the automobile that Nader exposed. He quoted a Chrysler executive who told the 1965 graduating class of Lawrence Institute of Technology that "a prime requisite for getting ahead in industry is identification of your personal objectives with the objectives of the company."[49] This picked up directly from the 1950s fears over the "Organization Man" and the consequences of bureaucratic suburban life on modern manhood. If one was going to criticize the main symbol of post-war modernity, Nader's tactics showed that it was necessary to criticize the ideal of masculinity with which it was associated, modern manliness.

Nader's critique of automotive technology and its makers spread to Canada and Vancouver. The British Columbia Medical Association (BCMA) drew directly from Nader to express their own frustration with automobile companies. "One has only to read the recent book 'Unsafe at Any Speed' by Ralph Nader," the committee reported in 1966, "to

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[49] Nader, *Unsafe at Any Speed.*. See also, William Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

realize the 'designed-in-dangers' of the North American car. One simply cannot buy a relatively safe car made in North America....The car manufacturers seem only to be interested in sales and in designing eye catching ornamental, super speed missiles."[50] The BCMA's Traffic and Safety Committee had initially been created to determine guidelines for medically unfit drivers, a task which had them focusing exclusively on the individual role in car accidents. Yet the committee had gradually expanded its focus throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s to the point where they advocated the mandatory introduction of seat belts, child restraints, and the use of helmets for motorcyclists.[51] Canadian politicians had occasionally taken up the case of car accidents as a cause in the House of Commons before this time (most notably T.L. Church in the 1930s and 1940s), but they did so with greater aplomb after 1965. In 1966 the Member of Parliament for Brome-Missisquoi called on the federal government to create a national research centre to investigate automobile safety and to create a prototype safety car (both solutions offered by Nader and already at work in New York State). The Minister of Transport Paul Hellyer announced a Highway Safety Program in 1967. Over the next few years, the details of this program came to include a Motor Vehicle Traffic Safety Office which established standards for automobiles and a Motor Vehicle Safety Act which put these standards into force.

Those who still held to the older safety consensus now presented themselves as embattled by the forces of unreason. If others attacked the benevolence of modern technology, these experts found shelter behind the ideal traits of manly modernism, reasoned objectivity. In 1965 *Canadian Motorist* complained that a great deal of "criticism,

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[50] "Traffic and Safety Committee Annual Report to the BCMA," reprinted in *British Columbia Medical Journal*, 8:5 (May 1966): 199-202.
[51] Annual Report of the Traffic and Safety Committee, 1961-1962 of the BC Division, Canadian Medical Association, printed in *British Columbia Medical Journal*, 4:9 (Sep 1962); Annual Report of the Traffic and Safety Committee, 1962-1963 of the BC Division, Canadian Medical Association, printed in *British Columbia Medical Journal*, 5:9 (Sept 1963).

some of it unmercifully vitriolic, is being hurled at the automobile manufacturers these days." They particularly disliked the tone of the criticism and called for "a reasoned approach to the problem, no brickbats of blame, no self-conscious sloganeering."[52] This was the modernist return to rationality against the emotionalism of its critics. Phil Gaglardi, British Columbia Minister of Highways, was characteristically even more direct. "When Nader tries to tell the United States of America that automobiles are more unsafe than anything else," he told a meeting of police chiefs, "I say he's a nut." Returning to the individualistic theme that so dominated post-war safety expertise, Gaglardi claimed, "It takes 10,000 nuts to hold an automobile together but just one behind the wheel to disintegrate it."[53] Here Gaglardi brought it back to sanity and reason. To criticize the car, so this line of thinking went, was itself a crazy act.

And yet it was an increasingly popular form of madness. While Nader and others questioned the car, a number of Vancouverites went further and began to challenge automobile-centred and expert-led urban planning. In the postwar years, the growth of many cities in North American had been shaped by modernist urban planning that called for the removal of urban "blight," the redevelopment of such areas with the extension of large-scale social housing, and the building of freeways to facilitate traffic flow into and out of the city to expanding suburban areas. The United States led the way in this type of development but similar schemes garnered the support officials in Vancouver by the late 1950s. In many respects Vancouver was a logical match for these urban planners. In the 1930s, centrist and right wing political forces had come together at the municipal level to block the left from taking control of city council. The resulting party, the Non Partisan Association (NPA), governed the city for the next thirty years. The NPA established a bureaucratic form of

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[52] "A Word With You," Editorial, *Canadian Motorist*, Aug-Sep 1965.
[53] "Nader's a Nut, says Gaglardi," *Vancouver Sun* 8 Jun 1966, 13.

expert government which gave free reign to administrators and their plans. Kim Livingston notes that the city council was "dominated by members of the development, business and planning communities" and that "its essence was technocratic, corporate and paternalistic, where decisions were made by 'experts' in an undemocratic but 'objective' manner."[54] Two different schemes of these planners came together in the 1960s to force a re-evaluation of this kind of modernist planning. The first was an urban renewal scheme that sought to remove urban blight from the area just to the east of the downtown core, an area that included Chinatown. The second was a plan to build a freeway through the centre of the city and directly through Chinatown. Both plans would have dislocated thousands of residents, many of them Chinese, and led to the destruction of a huge section of one of Vancouver's oldest areas. While two phases of the urban renewal scheme had gone ahead in the early 1960s, a collection of different Vancouverites banded together in 1967 to defeat the freeway plan.

The anti-urban renewal movement of the 1960s represented a significant challenge to modernist planning and to the notion that development worked best when led by experts alone. The way in which activists voiced their discontent was significant. They drew upon the anti-"organization man" rhetoric of those men who had been frustrated by their experiences with the modernist project in the 1950s. The anti-freeway activists included in their critical repertoire an attack on the kind of men who were behind urban-planning in Vancouver. They especially disliked the "bureaucrats" and "authoritarians" at city hall and in the city engineering department. One of the prominent activists, Setty Pendakur, used the

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[54] Kim Linvingston, "Urban Social Movements: Urban Renewal and Neighbourhood Mobilization in Vancouver During the 1960s and '70s," (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1999), 56. On the freeway debates, see Norbert MacDonald, *Distant Neighbours: A Comparative History of Seattle and Vancouver* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 160-162; Ken McKenzie, "Freeway Planning and Protests in Vancouver, 1954-1972," (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1984).

term bureaucrat as an epithet in his chronicle of Vancouver's freeway debates, *Cities, Citizens, and Freeways*. Pendakur and other activists urged a more participatory democratic decision making process in urban planning. They presented the agents of manly modernism – bureaucrats, engineers, and planners – as the villains thwarting their quest for a more involved democracy. The manly modern ideals of the automobile planners worked well so long as the modernist project and the automobile remained the main determinant of urban planning. Freeways allowed for maximum penetration of the city by the car and the free-flowing movement of traffic, unimpeded by other social and physical obstacles. However, when other social determinants came into focus, as the Vancouver activists insisted they must, then the pure simplicity of freeway design became an authoritarian imposition of 1960s high modernism.[55] And the manly modern, the expert who put forward these plans, became not the hero but the enemy.

Vancouverites and other North Americans who fought similar urban redevelopment schemes could look to Jane Jacobs, whose *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) offered an alternative vision of urban planning. Jacobs eloquently outlined the inadequacies of modernist design that sought to impose automobile inspired order. She argued that cities were being made unliveable by an expertise that privileged visual and aesthetic order over the actual messy orderliness of real-life. She also challenged the idea that cities and citizens should continuously make way for more roads and cars, arguing that building more roads would only lead to them being filled by more cars. Commentators have noted the gendered nature of Jacobs' ideas. James Scott argues that the bird's eye view style of planning came from mostly male planners without roots in the actual communities and lives of those who

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[55] V. Setty Pendakur, *Cities, Citizens, and Freeways* (Vancouver, 1972). Walter Hardwick, another of the critics of the freeway plan made the same kind of critique. See, for example, his assessment of Vancouver's municipal governance in *Vancouver* (Don Mills: Collier-Macmillan, 1974).

lived there. But as a woman, Jacobs spent more time at home, watching the neighbourhood.

She could see its development first-hand, learn its rules and practices and then base her

critique on this lived experience. While it may be true that a man could have (and others

did) come up with a similar type of critique, her analysis was certainly gendered. Given the

strong link between modernist planning, automobiles and masculinity in the post-war years,

her challenge had gendered repercussion; like Nader and the Vancouver anti-freeway

activists, Jacobs' work challenged the common-sense status of modernist knowledge and the

gendered hierarchies that went along with it.[56]

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In 1943 Leonard Marsh released his famous *Report on Social Security* which has been

heralded as the cornerstone of the postwar Canadian welfare state. Although most of its

suggestions did not immediately come out in government policy, the report nevertheless

captured public attention as the Canadian version of the Beveridge Report, the British plan

to postwar reconstruction. Marsh offered a gendered reconstruction vision aimed at getting

men back into their place as breadwinners and ensuring a successful economic transition in

which the wartime hopes and demands for greater social justice received just reward in

government policy. He also represented a vision of expert led governance in which a

number of social planners in Ottawa and other centres would guide social policy and

bureaucratic practice. Less well known, but equally important for Vancouverites, is another

report that Marsh published six years later. Having moved to the University of British

Columbia, Marsh conducted a study of urban blight in Vancouver. In 1949 he published his

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[56] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961). For an insightful discussion of Jacobs' challenge to modernist urban planning, see James C Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 132-146.

study, *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood*, in which he called for an urban renewal scheme for the city, especially focusing on the eastern side of the downtown core, the area including Chinatown. Marsh's plans did not see immediate action but they were later taken up in 1957 in the city's plans for urban renewal. In that year the planning department for the city's Housing Research Committee published its *Vancouver Redevelopment Study*. The committee called for a wide-scale urban renewal scheme, the same scheme that many Vancouverites organized against, and defeated the final stages of, in the late 1960s.

The two reports could serve as bookends for this dissertation. The first represents the origins of postwar planning and optimistic expert-led development. It shows the coming together of the gendered prerogatives of soldiers' risk-taking with the equally gendered notions of the planners' modernist risk-management. In the Royal Commission to investigate Walter Kirchner's complaints we saw that that the coming together of these two visions created dilemmas for the veterans. As much as they benefited from postwar planning, they also experienced their benefits through a bureaucratic system that chafed. Along with other men (like bridge-workers, murderers, and mountaineers) in the 1940s and 1950s, however, the veterans still supported their place within the modernist project. Accepting the gendered benefits of manly modernism, they criticized the disciplinary scratches but still embraced the thorny system itself, the modernist project, and their place within it. When Marsh's second report finally came into force in the 1960s, however, something had begun to change. A new range of critics had emerged who were more eager to challenge modernist planning and the style of manhood it celebrated. A variety of individuals and groups from the famous – Ralph Nader and Jane Jacobs – to the local – Setty Pendakur and the Chinese Benevolent Association – argued that the experts did not actually have the best interests of all in mind. Couching their arguments in a language of

participatory democracy and anti-authoritarianism, the car critics and anti-freeway activists challenged the universality of manly modern expertise.

This transition from 1950s unease to 1960s anger, from the first Marsh report to the second, represented not so much a break with the past as it did one logical progression of an idea already present in the first period. Safety advocates presented the automobile as a safe technology and blamed its dangers on the failure of Vancouverites to adopt the proper modernist mindset. Yet this ideal of the hyper-rational individual, disciplined by expert systems (in this case the technological apparatus of the car) created problems even as it offered solutions. A range of men in the postwar years fretted over the consequences of modernist discipline, over the downside of being a modern man. As the logic of this modernist discipline spread itself throughout postwar society, others began to fret about the same kinds of dilemmas. They too questioned the value of modernist expertise and of the kinds of men who offered it. Using the same kinds of arguments as the men we read about earlier, they suggested that there was something wrong with universalized notion of the reasonable man. The similarity in the argument, indeed the progression from one to the next, is striking. In challenging the logic of the modernist project and manly modernism, these 1960s activists drew upon and radicalized a critique first expressed by the men in the 1940s and 1950s who had benefited from the unchallenged normality of being called a modern man.

Afterwards: Manly Modernism in Hindsight

There is a voice from the postwar years that is instantly recognizable. It is a man's voice and it is perfectly calm. This is the voice of early television and radio, the voiceover that tells us where we are at the beginnings of movies, the talking head which explains matters of science and truth, the speaker who tells us that, while all seems well in this country, town, or city, there is in fact something more sinister at work, which could be anything from mental illness to communism. We might identify the voice with a person. For many Canadians in the 1940s, Lorne Green, "The Voice of Canada" during the Second World War, took on this role. But regardless of the actual person behind the voice, its character remained the same: steady, calm, authoritative, and male.

I first became aware of the voice as a distinct entity, as something worth thinking about in and of itself, while listening to parenting instruction programs at the National Archives in Ottawa. Sitting in the back room, away from the view of the Gatineau forests that greets you in the main reading room, I huddled in a cubicle listening to recordings of radio programs from the 1950s giving expert advice on how to raise children. I can still remember the specific program. It was part of *The Way of a Parent* series put on by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Home and School and Parent Teacher Federation in 1954. In "The Father Who Wouldn't Listen," the voice takes us to the suburbs, to warn us about the possible hidden dangers in family life, the kinds of dangers for which you needed expert advice to diagnose:

At the Linden place in the suburbs of the city, the lawn was smooth, the hedge was trim, the rooms were bright and charming. Mrs Linden would never tolerate a speck of dust... but a kind of dust was collecting in the corners; a dust of bad feeling.... Robert Linden's daughter was sixteen and unhappy. It wasn't an obvious unhappiness... It was a submerged unhappiness, for in a model household, Amy was a model daughter.[1]

The narrator's voice crept and crawled with the hint of looming danger, its tone telling the listeners that they had best listen to the advice which followed, or else risk serious danger. Almost fifty years later, removed from postwar anxieties and social values, the voice seemed funny. And that is the response which this kind of voice now usually elicits: laughter. MTV and Much Music splice similar kinds of scenes between videos, putting laugh tracks behind the now humorous voice of former masculine authority. But I sat there that day trying to dispel this response, trying to make sense of the fears and concerns of a time only recently passed, the era of my parent's childhood. Throughout this and other recordings, the voice resonated with authority. How, I wondered, could this voice be so certain? And why did it not have its intended effect upon me?

In this dissertation, I have come up with one important answer to these questions. The expert voice spoke with such certainty because it acted as a symbol of a type of male and modern authority that reached its apex in the postwar years. A variety of figures tried to modernize ideas of masculinity in these years, linking the main features of modernity with basic ideals of masculinity and vice versa. In this allegedly more democratic age, men were no longer supposed to be patriarchs in the family, ruling by status and sheer force of will alone. Instead, psychological experts claimed that families were small democracies in which all members had their own roles; a belief in the basic differences between men and women persisted but in slightly altered form. Men maintained their role as final arbiter and

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[1] *The Way of a Parent: The Father Who Wouldn't Listen*, Radio Program, written by George Salverson, produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Home and School and Parent Teacher Federation, 17 Jan 1954, National Archives of Canada, 1989-0415, ISN 137469.

disciplinarian, but they were supposed to express this authority in a more reasoned, balanced, and democratic way.[2] In this kind of family, and at this time, men's authority came in large measure from the way contemporaries linked masculinity with reasoned expertise. And the overall support for the modernist project and its experts at this time bolstered the ideal of masculinity with which it was associated. The voice could have belonged to a family expert and psychologist, but it could equally have belonged to any of a number of other experts including engineers, traffic safety experts, psychiatrists, government bureaucrats, judges or lawyers. Many Vancouverites coded these types of expertise and the modernist project more generally as masculine. The "voice" on the recording of *The Father Who Wouldn't Listen* represented the gendered authority of manly modernism.

The logic of manly modernism spread far beyond radio and television; it seeped through the fabric of social relations in postwar Vancouver, colouring everything from Vancouverites' responses to the Second Narrows' Bridge collapse to their discussions of driver safety. At its most basic level, the modernist project was about control – control of the physical, social and psychological environment. Optimism about the modernist project was strong in postwar Vancouver. This optimism revealed itself most clearly at moments when it appeared to be challenged, when the engine of progress stuttered and stalled, eliciting startled cries of disbelief. When the Second Narrows' Bridge collapsed, Vancouverites celebrated the risk taking of ironworkers and turned to the expert knowledge of engineers to explain the tragedy; when cars crashed, the consensus was that the technology was not to blame; psychiatrists provided a modern explanation for how

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[2] On changing ideals of fatherhood and family relations, see Cynthia Comacchio, " 'A Postscript for Father: Defining a New Fatherhood in Interwar Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 78:3 (1997): 385–408; Robert Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Mona Gleason, "Disciplining Children, Disciplining Parents: The Nature and Meaning of Advice to Canadian Parents, 1945–1955," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 29:57 (1996): 187–209.

seemingly rational men could commit horrible crimes; when the transition from war to peace threatened to bring chaos, the state initiated a host of welfare programs as mechanisms of economic and social control; and even as mountaineers tried to escape suburban existence, they took up their own forms of modernist risk management in the mountains. Even in these situations, when doubts about modernity's benefits or the inherent value of rationality could have been expected, many different Vancouverites instead renewed their faith in the promises, mechanisms and expertise of the modern.

The connection between masculinity and modernity in postwar Vancouver is especially significant given this strong support for the modernist project. At each of these moments of doubt and uncertainty, Vancouverites coded expertise and modernist schemes of control as inherently masculine. Support for the modernist project was a gendered process: modern women were said to be one thing and modern men another. Yet the relation between the two was hierarchical, not complementary.[3] In these circumstances Vancouverites connected modern masculinity with the establishment of control, with the very basic feature of being modern. This could be control of the physical environment as exhibited by the engineers of the Second Narrows' Bridge, of the social environment as demonstrated by the planners of the Veterans Charter, or of the mind and body as in the self-control of the mountaineer and bridge-worker. Achieving this kind of control was what made these men masculine; it was also what made them modern. This was the great power of manly modernism at mid-century. In many ways, the social environment had opened up to women; they had gained the vote, a growing number of married women were working, and women were even increasingly invading the previously male sphere of public drinking

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[3] The development of sex role theory in this period, although allowing for significant insights into the social construction of gender, nevertheless tended to overlook the hierarchical nature of what were allegedly complementary relations between the sexes. See Robert Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 21–27.

establishments.[4] But beliefs in the differences between men and women not only persisted, they also expressed themselves in new ways. And the ideology of manly modernism acted as one of the main ways through which some Vancouverites reinscribed men's privilege into the basic social language of postwar life.

This strategy of masculine hegemony acted, however, in a dialectical fashion. Even as manly modernism privileged certain men and particular types of masculine characteristics, it also regulated and disciplined other men and different masculine characteristics. Manly modernism benefited the experts of the modernist project and a rational style of behaviour and social organization. As we saw, a number of postwar men were ambivalent about its legacy. Although veterans benefited from their place at the centre of the state's plans for postwar reconstruction, they simultaneously found themselves the object of the state's and other experts' disciplining strategies. Similarly, Vancouverites may have celebrated the daily risk taking which made the building of bridges possible, but the state and press eventually turned to middle-class experts and rational risk management – and not the stoic working-class bridge-builders – as the ultimate source of authority. As this last example indicates, the inequalities of manly modernism worked along class lines, privileging middle-class rationality over working-class brawn. All types of marginalized men, whether for reasons of class, race or sexuality, found themselves the objects of expert discipline in capital murder cases. In these cases, psychiatrists and psychologists stepped in to redefine masculinity and to outline

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[4] On the changing attitudes towards women, especially working women, in this period see Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle-Class, 1945–1960," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29:3 (1994): 5–25; Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working-Women in Small Town Ontario, 1920–1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Valerie Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); and on women's "invasion" of public drinking establishments, see Robert Campbell, *"Sit Down and Drink Your Beer": Regulating Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925–1954*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); and Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003).

the parameters of a potential form of men's power: the definition of when and how men could legitimately be violent.

But manly modernism did not only discipline those considered marginal or the working class. Although undoubtedly privileged next to their working-class counterparts, even the middle-class mountaineers experienced a sense of alienation in their relation to the postwar suburban environment and white-collar work, which in turn fuelled their desire to climb. When they themselves embraced a modernist approach to climbing, in their continual emphasis on new peaks and trails and in their approach to risk, they further contributed to the ambiguities of their predicament, reinforcing the very values they sought to escape. The ironies of manly modernism also expressed themselves clearly in discussions of gender and traffic safety. On the one hand, safety experts presented the ideal driver in a language of rational self-discipline that matched what men were supposed to be more generally. But here, as elsewhere, there were signs of discontent, that danger was more attractive than safety, that risk taking was more appealing than risk management. Throughout all these cases, there was a sense that the alliance of the modern and the manly delivered less than it promised, that its effects were contradictory.

Partly based on this sensibility, many contemporaries, and even some historians since that time, suggested that the position of modern men was diminishing in the postwar years. They drew upon a long tradition of criticism which has suggested that modernity hurts men, that masculinity is always about tradition and that, to the extent that the modern breaks with tradition, it disrupts men's privileges.[5] These anxieties were not simply the stuff of sociological critique. In a variety of very real contexts, Vancouver men felt that key parts of their masculine identity, whether competence on the job or meaningful outlets for primal

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[5] The most obvious case is William Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

experience, were threatened. Some veterans argued that experts and bureaucrats interfered with the entitlements of military service. Bridge-workers saw safety requirements and management regulations as interfering with their own "real" knowledge about how a job should be done. Mountaineers sought to escape all these kinds of restrictions by going to the mountains and escaping civilization altogether. In each of these cases, the culprit was different: expertise, bureaucracy, capitalism, and suburban life. They were, however, united in the way in which they tended to negate a dominated ideal of masculinity equated with effectiveness, action, and authority. Modernity, it seemed, made it harder to be a man.

And yet, postwar men were so affected by modernity because masculinity was itself so bound up in the ideas and process of modernization. At exactly the moments when promises of control and authority came into being – building bridges, giving expertise, and taking risks – Vancouverites defined as masculine the traits and situations that made such promises possible. If men suffered at the hands of modernization, it was because they were so much a part of its powerful whirlwind of forces, because modernity and masculinity were closely entwined and not because they were far apart. Modernity is, as most of its commentators point out, radically contradictory. As Marshall Berman has famously argued, "to be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are."[6] Modern systems of order, authority and discipline quite often lead to chaos, rebellion and transgression. Similarly, schemes to uplift and empower men have often, in practice, involved suppressing certain individuals and groups and created feelings of alienation and

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[6] Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin, 1982), 15.

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discontent.[7] This is what occurred in postwar Vancouver. By putting masculinity at the centre of the modernist project, many men felt the highs and lows of this tumultuous and transformative process. For men, there seemed to be so many negative consequences of modernity because the logic of manly modernism suggested that the reverse should have been true, that there should have been so many benefits.

Those who reflected on the downside of modern manhood, then, did not just describe a reality, they also *created* it. They sought to redefine masculinity for the modern age, to find new ways of expressing beliefs about men's authority and privilege. Manly modernism defined masculinity as that which should be powerful, as that which should be in control. From this perspective the ideal driver should have been able to completely control the technology just as the ideal mountaineer should have been able to take and manage the risks of his sport. Negotiating these situations became hallmarks of personal success as well as social symbols of masculine competence. That such features of modern life did not always work as smoothly as they should became problems of masculinity. The very basic fact of modernity, its double-edged nature, became the great dilemma of the modern man.

The men we have studied in this dissertation were not alone in finding fault with the modernist project. Beginning in the 1960s and continuing into the 1970s, a growing number of Vancouverites (and others in North America and the western world more generally) began to radically question the values of the modernist project. We examined one instance of this historical sea change: Ralph Nader, Jane Jacobs, and the anti-freeway activists in Vancouver challenged the idea that vehicles, the people who made them, and those who designed cities around them, were inherently beneficial. They argued that modern

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[7] The doubled nature of the modern experience is nicely outlined in Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), especially the chapters on order and confidence, and their attendant problems of disorder and uncertainty.

technology and expertise could harm as well as help and that, sometimes, the harm

outweighed the benefit. Building on the tensions already present in postwar discussions of

modernity, they radicalized modernity's contradictions, arguing for a switch in priorities.

They were, of course, but a few of the many who made these kinds of arguments in the

1960s. Most prominently, the youth movement flouted the respectable conventions of their

parents by growing their hair long, expanding sexual practices well outside marriage and

denouncing the quest for responsibility which had been the hallmark of the previous

generation. A growing environmental consciousness emerged to champion the natural

world over scientific and industrial development. Second-wave feminists organized

themselves to challenge women's restricted place within the home and workplace and to call

for a reordering of social values along different, less patriarchal, principles. In the traditional

political sphere and union halls, the New Left called for a new, more democratic, style of

politics and for radical action on the issue of economic inequality in the country.

Collectively, 1960s radicalism represented a break with the style and substance of the social,

economic, and political authority of the past.[8]

Where does masculinity fit into all of this? Manly modernism would seem to be the

target of much of this radical activity. This is obvious in the case of feminism but it could

also be true in the case of such things as environmentalism, anti-authoritarianism, and

antimodernism more generally. Manly modernism's connection to the modernist project, to

its style of authority, its technological determinism and its emphasis on progress, made the

reasonable man ideal a significant target for critics of the period. Sixties radicals turned

against the authority of the responsible male figure – the bureaucrat, the expert, the

patriarch. The popularization of the epithet "The Man" aptly conveys the way a certain kind

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[8] For a general survey of these trends, see Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

of masculinity was the object of this rebellion. If modernity itself was the problem, then so too was the calm and authoritative voice that spoke its expertise.

What is striking about discussions of masculinity before the late 1960s, however, is the extent to which a variety of postwar men had already been speaking these same kinds of anxieties. The popular culture of the postwar years, especially burgeoning gender ideas connected with consumerism, was moving away from the disciplined self-made man ideal. First published in 1953, *Playboy* magazine suggested a very different manly ideal than the respectable, suburban fatherhood trumpeted by family experts. Hefner's creation was matched by trends in youth culture, especially the rise of rock 'n' roll.[9] But if these popular culture trends were at some remove from the everyday life of most grown men, fantasies more than lived possibilities, this dissertation has shown that the same kinds of anxieties and doubts pervaded other areas of postwar life. They were not only connected to consumerism and a growing culture of leisure. Instead these anxieties stemmed from the different ways in which men interacted with the ideas and institutions of postwar modernism. Kirchner and his veterans complained of the way excessive bureaucracy and modern expertise chafed. Bridge-workers found the regulations of the workplace to go against their own notions of competence and skill. Psychiatrists and psychologists reigned in the language of male deviance, subjecting it to new forms of expertise. Mountaineers struggled to find a balance between expertise and excitement, civilization and wilderness. And driver safety experts sought to instil the reasonable man ideal and a wholly modernist subjectivity into the minds of postwar Vancouverites, even as some began to criticize the limited range of this expert vision. The major debate over modern manhood from the 1940s through to the 1960s

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[9] See Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Doubleday, 1983) and Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-style in Modern America* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

prefigured the more general criticism of modernity and male authority that emerged in that later decade. It pitted systems against individuals, reason against passion, and expert artifice against lay authenticity. These were the same kinds of concerns that feminists, environmentalists and other critics of "the system" took up in more radical ways later on. The irony is that even as the approach and tone shifted dramatically, the issues and concerns remained the same.

The main difference between the men of the 1940s and 1950s and those who came later lay in the fact that the earlier men did not turn their concerns into an all-out critique of manly modernism or the modernist project more generally. Postwar men, even those who felt undermined by manly modernism's contradictory effects, still had much to gain by supporting its ideal of gendered authority. The mountaineers still embraced a type of risk-management expertise even as they sought to escape the downside of what this kind of expertise had done for contemporary urban and suburban existence. The bridge-workers played up their role as economic modernizers even as postwar capitalist development took its toll on their bodies. Capital murderers sought out the expert advice of psychiatrists even as this profession rewrote their behaviour in ways that only experts could then interpret. The differences between men were great; manly modernism in no way eliminated inequalities, whether based on class, race or otherwise. But manly modernism provided a source of gendered authority that could reach beyond these categories; it positioned men and masculinity alongside the most dominant social force of these years, the modernist project. This was a privileged position that few were willing to turn their backs on completely.

What happened, then, when the character of the modern experience, the very thing to which dominant ideals of masculinity were associated, changed dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s? The exact nature of these changes, as well as what we might call them, are in dispute;

but whether we call this a turn to postmodernity, a post-traditional society or to a fuller, more reflexive modernity, the fact that something did change at this time seems certain.[10] The tensions within the modernist project were radicalized. Running alongside the certainty and optimism of the modernist project came an equally powerful focus on doubt, uncertainty and pessimism. It did not represent a complete rejection of the modernist impulse but it did mean a growing critique of notions of progress, of technology and overarching explanations of truth and meaning. The modernist project emphasised "positivistic, technocentric, and rationalistic" order and was "identified with the belief in linear progress, absolute truths, the rational planning of ideal social orders, and the standardization of knowledge and production." In contrast, the postmodern stance undermined these notions by claiming that the function of such "metanarratives... was to ground and legitimate the illusion of a 'universal' human history" – and, we might add, a "universal" notion of male authority. Against this backdrop of such overarching explanations, the postmodern privileged diversity, heterogeneity, fragmentation and uncertainty. In this changed context, the voice of male expert authority – the manly modern – could increasingly appear not as knowledgeable and objective but as authoritarian and domineering.[11]

What, then, happened to masculinity in the process? It would be easy to say that this represented a challenge to the very idea of masculinity and male power, that the challenge to modernity represented a challenge to manly modernism. And this is how the story is

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[10] While commonly referred to as postmodernity, both Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens see key continuities with the past and therefore argue for the notion of a fuller, more reflexive modernity. See Giddens, *Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) and Beck, Giddens and Scott Lasch, *Reflexive modernization : Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambride: Polity Press, 1994).
[11] Quotes here are from PRECIS 6, *The Culture of Fragments* (Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, 1987) and Terry Eagleton, "Awakening From Modernity," *Times Literary Supplement* 20 February 1987 as cited in David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 9. See also, J. David Hoeveller, *The Postmodern Turn: American Thought and Culture in the 1970s* (New York: Twayne, 1996).

typically told if it is told at all. This is the common-sense version of contemporary gender

history which posits a general, if slow, movement towards gender equality.[12] The argument

goes that as old systems of male authority came under attack, they eventually fell by the

wayside. Since the 1960s, the concern over modern man (although usually not using this

term) has become even more pronounced than in the past. In the 1970s a men's movement

grew up alongside the much larger women's movement. Initially pro-feminist, many

elements of the men's movement later splintered off, some continuing in a feminist tradition

while others lamented the decline of primitive manhood and blamed much of this on

women or modern society. The men's movement sought to stem a growing uncertainty

about what it meant to be masculine, about how to be a man. In the 1990s, concern

switched to the problem of young boys and how best to train them. Some sociologists and

psychologists warned that boys were falling behind girls in education and in the manner of

morals and civilized behaviour more generally. Robbed of father figures and proper outlets

for aggression, society, experts claimed, faced a real and serious problem because boys were

trapped in the past and could not, in essence, adapt to the conditions of modern life. A

desire to define masculinity, to achieve a kind of stable masculine identity and role, united all

these (and other) disparate concerns over the problem of men in contemporary society.[13]

The content of these concerns suggested that something was uncertain, that masculinity

was threatened, that it was endangered. Some saw great potential to reshape masculinity in

this situation while others feared the consequences of a society without strong ideas of

manliness and male authority. And yet what is striking about this debate is the way that it

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[12] This is the story almost universally told to me by undergraduate students who take my course on gender and history.

[13] On the men's movement, see Michael Kimmel ed., *The Politics of Manhood: Profeminist Men Respond to the Mythopoetic Men's Movement (and the Mythopoetic Leaders Answer)* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995). Concern over young boys and the absence of an appropriate male role has been discussed in many areas, but see, for example, the best-selling work by James Garbarino, *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them* (New York: Free Press, 1999).

too matches debates about modernity (or postmodernity) in contemporary society. The current language of masculinity calls for a more primal manhood, alternately rooted in caveman genetics, pseudo-Jungian claims to a wild-man tradition, or the risk-taking excitement of the corporate world. This matches the current concerns of the modern – the critique of staid, bureaucratic expertise, the quest for primal experience and the heavily advertised possibility of having all desires met through the consumption of new technologies, products and entertainments. This (at times superficial) commitment to ideals of freedom from restraint, whether sexual, economic or, more usually, governmental, is the modernist orthodoxy of the day. The voice of authority, that singular voice of expertise, is in this context something to be ridiculed. That there could be this one perspective, this one source of rational authority, is presented as humorous. And yet this turn away from the manly modernism of the earlier era has been mirrored, not by an abandonment of gendered authority altogether, but by a redefining of the gendered nature of modernity. This turn to a freer, less restricted, less certain postmodernist present also included a similar change in ideals of masculinity to go along with it. The current ideas of masculinity, with their emphasis upon primal experience, risk taking, and the wild-man within, once again define masculinity in line with what we might call the postmodernist project. The difference is that the vision of the modern, or postmodern, has changed too. Even as women enjoy more political and economic equality, the very meanings of masculinity and femininity continue to be defined in ways that privilege men over women.

These speculations on the current situation of modern manhood must remain just that, speculations. They do, however, logically flow out of the concerns about the unexpected consequences of manly modernism expressed by many men in the postwar years. Just as the postwar modernist project was itself doubled, so too was its effect on the men who were so

closely associated with it. Manly modernism provided a significant source of social authority

for many men in the postwar years. It represented a move to remake men's authority in line

with the requirements of the current day, to respond to social change in a way that continued

and did not diminish men's power. As a cultural project, its results were mixed. Many

postwar Vancouverites continued to believe in the naturalness of sexual differences; ideas of

masculinity were tightly interwoven with then current ideas of what it meant to be modern.

This did not always positively affect some men, although it certainly positioned the idea of

masculinity alongside ideas and practices of social authority. When critics in the 1960s took

aim at the figure of the manly modern, they could expect support from surprising quarters:

from the very men who had previously been associated with the gender ideals and style of

modern life which they critiqued.

What, then, did it mean to be a modern man? The question should seem less odd now

than it did at the beginning. Both parts of the term – both the modern and the masculine –

were essential features of a broader notion of gendered authority in postwar Canada. And

yet, if at the beginning I emphasised the historical meaning of the term, its position in the

past, I want to end by noting its current relevance. The modern man of the 1950s seems

old-fashioned now because his style of gendered identity is no longer current. Different

notions of gender have come to prominence in the intervening years based on any number

of factors, from transformations in the economy to the political battles of men and women

searching alternative ways of defining what it means to be masculine and feminine. The

transformation in these gender ideals, however, seems to have continued along in tandem

with the fate of the modernist project. Many who today seek out adventure on the

mountains in extreme sports or in the stock markets of the global economy still continue to

define masculinity in relation to risk.[14] What has changed is the tone of contemporary modernity. Risk taking and risk management are even more prominent features of our current state of modernity. To the extent that masculinity continues to be defined in these areas and men continue to be the main actors in public fantasies of postmodernist control and self-creation, manly modernism still persists.

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[14] The changed tone of contemporary capitalism is nicely captured in Thomas Frank, *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism and the End of Economic Democracy* (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

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Abbreviations

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BCAA   British Columbia Automobile Association Archives
BCMC   British Columbia Mountaineering Club Archives
NAC   National Archives of Canada
VCA   Vancouver City Archives

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