HOW YOU GET THERE MATTERS: MOBILITY AND MEANING AMONG U.S. MOTORCYCLISTS

By

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ABSTRACT

Motorcycling has been a mode of mobility in the United States since the early twentieth century. U.S. motorcyclists throughout the twentieth century tell stories of mobility and what it has to do with culture and capital, as well as what riding a motorcycle means to riders personally. In order to look at mobility, as opposed to place, culture, or community, as a part of wider structures of capital that affect personal mobility, such as health and health care, work, and family, I discuss social science work about and by riders, stories told by riders from 1909 to 1912, and the stories told by two contemporary U.S. riders. To make sense of riders' mobility, and of motorcycling as a leisure pastime for men and women of different classes, I have used a historical materialist perspective. Several questions flesh out this central theme of a historical materialist perspective of motorcycling: How does mobility shape the context of who rides and why? How does capital influence mobility? What are classed and gendered notions of riding? Attending to local, regional, and global spatial scales as interconnected fields where capital limits or facilitates mobility through space-time compression allows a picture of culture to emerge that is not based on identity or "lifestyle," but material connections.

Mobility; Political Economy; United States; Motorcyclists; Anthropology

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Preface

I wish that I could say with any honesty that I had gone into 'the field' for the first time with a well thought out problem to tackle. I have read in some of the anthropological methods literature that problems are a malleable process of fieldwork that will change throughout one's research (Davies 1999:27; cf. Lesser 1985:62-70) or that happily and unexpectedly, information, an event, or somebody who knows what the anthropologist wanted to know will appear for the anthropologist's analysis (Fetterman 1998:2, 11, 39). In spite of the discipline's seeming reliance on serendipitous meaningfulness, I was and remain deeply suspicious of serendipity. I have had the good fortune to be the ongoing project of Margo Matwychuk. She has endeavoured to teach me about kindness, prioritizing, and how to see the world from a different perspective than it is usually presented. She also stresses the necessity of contributing to the resolution of problems in a world that seems to have too many of them.

When I began this work I did not have a firm grasp of the problems that motorcycling represented or embodied. For the most part, I struggled to discern the exact reasons I thought writing about motorcycling was worthy of an MA in anthropology when having the inevitable "what is your thesis topic" discussion with other graduate students. In October 1999, after a summer of riding around the United States and Canada with my husband, the problem crystallized in a completely unanticipated way. I wrote the following outpouring as an introduction to Chapter Four. Somehow it works better as an explanation of the affective power of mobility and how painful clarity can be:

I had intended, after five years of riding my own motorcycle and a childhood spent around riders of various classes, riding styles and social networks, and people who differently defined or negotiated gender roles, class, and ability because of their riding, to write a thesis about motorcyclists' identities throughout the one hundred or so[1] years of the history of the technology. I began my proposed research with the hypothesis (Oh, the assumptions!) that class, sex, ethnicity, and the rest of anthropology's treasured tropes informed riders' statuses, resulting in the power of some to define who among the rest were 'truly' mobile and who was merely interested in aesthetics or a popular culture 'lifestyle.' This issued from my own difficulties as a new rider among those more experienced, more entrenched in social hierarchies, more capable and desirous of harnessing geographic mobility to social (upward) mobility as well as the reverse. In other words, I could too easily position myself "as a" motorcyclist doing work with "my people" while constructing categories into which I might position other riders (cf. Moss and Matwychuk 2000). In addition, I could far too easily valorize the issues that contributed to my own status with a commentary on the validity of these categories.

But that was before. Before my sister Lynn's husband, diagnosed with acute myelitic leukemia at the age of 29, spent six weeks dying in a hospital in Ohio far from the spaces of Arizona and Oregon that he loved so well. After he was rushed to the hospital, my first thought was a selfish one: 'I'm so glad that I ride.' When my flight arrived in the rustbelt of south eastern Michigan hours too late to say goodbye to him, I told my father, Wayne, that I thought everything would be okay if we could all jump on our motorcycles and *go*. Not an airplane or a bus or a car, only a motorcycle would do, and only traveling in a pack of familial solidarity. I don't know if I expected to outrun death and disease, or merely to focus on miles of open and unending roads that offered infinite possibilities now seemingly absent from the lives of my family. My father told me that we all want to run some time, implying that we must stand and face adversity. That was before; before his own diagnosis of cancer was revealed three days later as he lay recuperating from the removal of a good chunk of his small intestine containing a tumor and lymph nodes overrun with mutation. How is that for a border crossing? At that moment Wayne formulated plans to head to Arizona and ride until his body was no longer capable of it or cured.

From that moment I have become better at puzzling out Margo's lessons: that kindness is not optional; that as anthropologists, the problem of power and how we confront it is *the* priority; and that seeing the world from a different perspective *is* the work of anthropology. For this knowledge and for Margo's support I am forever grateful.

My committee is made up of other caring, deeply committed people whose standards for excellence have taught me so much. Pamela Moss suggested I explore riding/writing (Chapter 2) at our first meeting as I sat in her office, too frightened to ask her to be a member of my thesis committee or to leave without asking. Thankfully, she asked if I wanted her to come onboard. N. Ross Crumrine stands out in his decency. He exemplifies the power and rightness of being respectful of people's dignity.

So many kindnesses have gone into this project. Christina Holmes has extended a warm friendship and a challenging mind while demonstrating how to get things done. Cathy Leahy and Gary Hartwig stood by me when I fell apart and when I was putting myself back together. Alexis Everendon, Alicia Parker, and Sheila Beauchemin have been stalwart friends, reminding me that 'production' and 'reproduction' aren't just Marxist jargon, but flesh and blood. The JoBoys Motorcycle Club ("We Drink Coffee - And Ride Too"), Chris Beauchemin, Scott McWilliams and Wes Everendon have all shared with me the ways in which motorcycling is their passion, and provided gentle and insightful corrections when I was in danger of making the facts fit whatever theory I had just read. The JoKids, Cole, Georgia, Ivy, Paige, Rowan, and Zoe are just simply wonderful to be around.

Many other motorcyclists, some whose names I can't include because they were lost in the brevity of our encounter, have also made this work better for their contributions. Duane Ausherman generously gave me leave to use his copies of *Sparks: A Motorcycle Monthly* for my research. To the best of my knowledge, it is the only complete set in existence. Linda Ausherman patiently allowed me to return to their home in California and digitally photograph hundreds of pages of these almost century-old

publications in her workroom. Jeff Brody and David Wells, both very fine riders, have also been fine friends to me and to my family. Sally Harvey taught me that curves have a language of their own, in which she is completely fluent. She, along with numerous other Victoria riders, also taught me about the tremendous power of The Group's internal dynamic and aspirations. Melanie Boyce and Richard Ducett invited us to their Newfoundland biker wedding, an experience I was honoured to share and will never forget. As for the West Coast Crew, Carol made repeated (and to her dismay unrequited) offers to transcribe for me using her incredible skills. Karen provided a witty and intelligent feminist presence at rallies. Liz gave freely of her stories over my parents' kitchen counter as we explored how motorcycling and work life is connected. Otto gave me my first taste of speed and will always have a place in my heart. Ron and Sue continue to be two of the nicest people on the face of the earth.

My sister Lynn's indomitable spirit and lusty pursuit of life have been my inspiration. Some things never change. She continues to teach me about the importance of mobility in our lives and in our abilities to do the things we think will make a difference in the world. My mother and father are my thoughtful teachers, the first ones to demand that I think critically and carefully. They opened themselves to my questions and arguments, even when it meant submitting to my then-clumsy interviewing skills. Eventually, we had some really fine talks.

The honing provided by my peers and professors in the University of Victoria anthropology department has helped me to understand some of Wayne and Marina's lessons. In "Group" I got reacquainted with the people with whom I shared the political and emotional work of getting an MA in anthropology. Melissa Curry's sharp

observations and loving nature remind me that people are important. Elliott Reynolds has never let me get away with a fuzzy thought or self-delusion. Leta Hill showed me how to challenge the political structure without compromising myself. Stephen MacKenzie lives his beliefs assiduously and challenged me to do the same. I have benefited tremendously from the "four field" approach offered by Dr. William Alkire, Dr. Kathleen Berthiume, Dr. Leland Donald, Dr. Quentin Mackie, Dr. Lisa Mitchell, Dr. David Moyer, Dr. Nicholas Roland, Dr. Eric Roth, Dr. Peter Stephenson, Dr. Margot Wilson, and of course my committee members, Dr. Margo Matwychuk, Dr. N. Ross Crumrine. I am grateful to Dr. Susan Boyd for stepping in so enthusiastically and to Dr. Brian Harvey for his wonderful advice.

Finally, Derek Hamlet has unstintingly supported me through every rage at injustice and triumph of enlightenment. Without his constant devotion to my well-being and sanity this work would never have been possible. His love of all things motorcycle gave me entry into online gatherings of riders, contacts I would have been hard-pressed to make on my own, and a better understanding of the nature of "gearheads[2]." He has been my riding partner when I could only imagine going around sweepers[3] at over 30 mph and when my geographic dyslexia resulted in going off each other's radar. Thanks, babe.

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[1] Due to the evolutionary framework in which motorcycle innovation is couched, historians disagree on when motorcycles actually came about. Some count the first set of two wheels to harness a steam engine as the apical ancestor of motorcycles. Others see Harley-Davidson's incarnation as the 'true' beginning. As Chapter 3 illustrates, historical origins do matter. However, I do not wish to quibble about technological inception.

[2] People, not necessarily riders, whose primary interest is in the inner workings and development of motorcycles.

[3] Corners with large radii that can be "taken" at high speeds. Also called "high speed corners."

To my Family,
In memory of Aaron Macy.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: How You Get There Matters

The stories I present and tell here are about U.S. motorcyclists throughout the twentieth century who write and talk about motorcyclists and motorcycling. They are stories of what mobility has to do with culture and capital, as well as stories of what riding a motorcycle means to riders personally. Wider structures of capital that affect personal mobility form the context for riders' stories, in addition to those institutions and organizations that more directly relate to riding a motorcycle. To make sense of riders' mobility, and of motorcycling as a leisure pastime for men and women of different classes, I have used a historical materialist perspective. Several questions flesh out this central theme of a historical materialist perspective of motorcycling: How does mobility shape the context of who rides and why? How does capital influence mobility? What are classed and gendered notions of riding? Understanding who motorcyclists are and why they ride does not right fundamental inequalities that operate through different spatial scales. I can, however, address some of the processes of mobility that produce inequalities. Mobility harbors possibilities for encouraging change (Harvey 2001:158-187), or at least viewing inequalities from a previously unconsidered perspective (Wolf 1982 q.v. Hanson and Pratt 1995:1-26; Mintz 1985; Tsing 1993).

By *mobility* I mean the spatial, social, cultural, and economic practices involved in individuals' movement in local, regional, and global spaces, and also the impact of movement in and on riders' work, health, and families through production and consumption. As it relates to motorcycling, mobility involves contested meanings of time, space, and power. Motorcycles and cars, both tools for bourgeoisie leisure mobility

at their inception, are also vehicles for ideologies of class and gender. Motorcycling is a *mode of mobility*; it is the technology that enables motorcycle riders to move about, including, motive power, highways, signage, drainage ditches, and pavement. More importantly, motorcycling as a mode of mobility is also a technological, and therefore cultural, process. Beyond motors and roads, it includes production systems such as Taylorism, healthcare benefits, and beliefs concerning risk, freedom, and exoticism. *Leisure* in capitalism denotes the quantity and quality of time, and through mobility the space, that people consume (Wearing 1998:23).

Aside from practices such as nomadism (q.v. Counts 1996:1-13) and pilgrimage (e.g. Crumrine 1991), which are usually discussed as subsistence strategies and ritual elements of a larger, 'localized' culture, the study of mobility has been mainly implicit. When anthropologists write explicitly of people's mobility, they tend to do so topically rather than theoretically. Hastrup and Olwig (1997:6) remark:

> The difficulty of seeing movement as an aspect of social life in general is related to the fact that mobility, in so far as it involved settled people, has been regarded as a special and temporary phenomenon which has been examined under headings such as migration, refugee studies, and tourism.

Methodological and theoretical approaches to mobility involve rethinking anthropology's subjects. For example, the interconnected concepts of 'dwelling' and 'culture' have made 'seeing mobility' difficult from an anthropological perspective. I take the critique of 'dwelling' from Clifford (1997:1-46) who also finds the concept problematic when 'mobile' or 'worldly' are given as its antithesis. To the extent that anthropology has much to benefit from thoroughly subjecting static cultural epistemology so embedded in an unproblematic notion of 'dwelling' to historical examination, I agree

with his statement that anthropologists have: "privilege[d] value, hierarchy, and historical continuity in notions of 'common life.'" For many people, including motorcyclists, mobility and worldliness are aspects of dwelling.

Some anthropologists have taken up mobility as a theoretical framework for understanding identity and power. In her ethnography *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen*, Tsing (1993:123) challenges the idea of "'cultures'...as essentially immobile or as possessing a mobility that is cyclical or repetitive:"

> In describing the "travel sciences" of Indonesian officials, Banjar trading, and Meratus shamans, I find myself deploying a familiar anthropological style: a generalizing, homogenizing style that seeks out cultural principles underlying particular instances and events. Yet, rather than using this style to develop the classic anthropological contrast between the West and its Other, I highlight those perspectives that are most obscured by the classic contrast – the perspectives of the locally relevant nation state and a cosmopolitan regional majority (Tsing 1993:125).

Challenges to the assumptions of 'dwelling' should note continuities as well as discontinuities in mobility, and some anthropologists, like Tsing, are exploring how power works through and in mobility.

My own understanding of mobility relies on connections. The connections I address are between riders and their work and health, which shape and are shaped by race, class, and gender. Although I do not address it in this work, race is most certainly an aspect of the development of differential personal mobility throughout the North American experience. Most U.S. motorcyclists, including all of the motorcyclists I read (about) and worked with for this research are "white." The effect of assuming that riding is simply a "white" activity is to "unrace" such scholarship (Bond and Gilliam 1997:18). I did not intend to ignore race as Mukhopadhyay and Moses (1997: 520-21) suggest

anthropological "self-study" encourages. Nevertheless, I began this research primarily concerned with 'class' and 'gender.' These are the most intimate concerns of the riders and their stories that I have assembled here and they are the connections related to mobility that I have explored.

One of the central tenets for a holistic approach in anthropology is that of a shared world. Wolf (1982:3) explains that in spite of its (mistaken) reliance on bounded models, anthropology has and continues to embrace the mobility of people, capital, ideologies and chaos:

> On one level it has become a commonplace to say that we all inhabit "one world." There are ecological connections: New York suffers from the Hong Kong flu; the grapevines of Europe are destroyed by American plant lice. There are demographic connections: Jamaicans migrate to London; Chinese migrate to Singapore. There are economic connections: a shutdown of oil wells on the Persian Gulf halts generating plants in Ohio; a balance of payments unfavorable to the United States drains American dollars into bank accounts in Frankfurt or Yokohama; Italians produce Fiat automobiles in the Soviet Union; Japanese build a hydroelectric system in Ceylon. There are political connections: wars begun in Europe unleash reverberations around the globe; American troops intervene on the rim of Asia; Finns guard the border between Israel and Egypt.

The ecological, demographic, economic, and political connections to which Wolf refers are the basis for inequality. Connections require or are at the least made possible, at one level, by individual mobility. Connections are the outcome of modes of mobility that speeded up production and consumption, reaching into and changing the connections among people and places where there had previously not been such connections, and also changing the relationships among connections. I explore three processes and structures of capitalism that brought about changes in connections at the turn of the twentieth century: mechanization, industrialization, and mass production and consumption.

Motorcycle mobility has and continues to shape and be shaped by the construction of spatial inequalities in capitalism. Since the introduction of personal motorized vehicles in the late 1800s, individuals' mobility has both sped up connections and changed the way power operates at and among spatial scales that are interconnected parts of modes of mobility. The changes to these connections refer to time-space compression, Marx's 'annihilation of space by time,' which Massey (1994:147) describes as the "movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching-out of social relations, and to our experience of all of this." Riders reproduce their relationships to production and consumption through their mode of mobility – the motorcycle. Through mobility I can relate how motorcyclists make use of and are affected by cultural and geographic elements that reproduce riders' marginality and centrality.

Various levels of spatial engagement, such as the affective differences created by local, regional, and global forces, have contributed to riders' constructions of communities or subcultures. I do not mean to suggest that there is always a simple correlation between reified processes, such as the North American industrial revolution and their effects, such as riders' motivations. Rather, spatial scales are imagined, traversed, written about, and practiced. They enact different and competing demands on riders as a result of time-space compression. Concretely, riders have jobs and families, buy food, and require medical attention and a place to live. Basic living practices would seem to imply parallels with others who live 'away' – spatially distanced and perhaps even disconnected – from the spaces riders call 'home.' Yet riders also consider themselves 'mobile' to others' 'local.' Riders are tourists. But they are also producers and consumers of local and regional difference, such as determining the boundaries and

unequal powers of 'urban' and 'rural.' Global movements of capital and labor are more than a concept; they are processes within which riders take part that impinge on or facilitate their mobility. To what extent, then, are riders either elites or marginalized people? Attending to the local, regional and global creates a dynamic between the freedom to be mobile and the freedom from economic uncertainty. I go about understanding riders' mobility through geographical scale and the contradictions processes of class and differentiation produce in riders' lives.

Methods

To accomplish this task I have relied mainly on the technique of autoethnographic "hanging out." By autoethnography, I mean that my own mobility is heavily implicated in, rather than the main focus of, this thesis. Autoethnography has complicated my methods. I am a motorcyclist and come from a family of riders. Riding my own motorcycle has given me entry into many riding circles, including those established by my parents in the past two decades. However, I cannot possibly pretend that I am speaking either 'objectively' or 'as a' (Moss and Matwychuk 2000) rider. Like all of the riders I know (of), the circumstances of my life affect my mobility. Sometimes, mobility and the power to define experience and differentiation are interdependent parts of a larger context; that is what I explore. "Hanging out" implies that my fieldwork experiences in general, and with Marina and Wayne in particular, have drawn upon relationships differently defined than the 'science' upon which traditional fieldwork and ethnographic authority are usually based (Pratt 1986; Ryang 1997). My travel, like that of all riders, is a "form of knowing" (Pratt 2001).

'Native' anthropology and its utility have been fiercely debated. Often its value has been seen, on the one hand, as detrimental to undertaking appropriately 'objective' or 'authentic' anthropology (q.v. Ryang 2001; Narayan). On the other hand, native anthropologists have claimed heightened reflexivity that 'outsiders' are unable to achieve (Abu-Lughod 1991). My own sense of being a motorcyclist while doing anthropology with motorcyclists has made for some difficulties regarding how far I should textualize my 'nativeness' and therefore include myself. I am necessarily a part of both. At some points I have tried to be clear, when referring to 'we,' whether I mean riders or anthropologists, subject or author. Sometimes I have purposely blurred the lines, as chapter two illustrates. The combination of motorcyclist and anthropologist is a tricky one to navigate when mobility, knowledge production and its transmission are part of both.

Hanging out with riders has meant that I have my own ideas about who 'we' are and why 'we' ride motorcycles. The techniques I use here were formed in the give-and-take of how the riders I know tell their stories. Socializing at cafes, campgrounds, club meetings, gas stations, rallies, homes, and ice cream bars where I encountered other riders across North America is also part of being a rider. I have also experienced the flows of silence that occur while riding and read innumerable articles in motorcycle magazines. None of these experiences qualifies me, above all others, to speak 'as a' rider, and perhaps by simply mentioning them I am protesting too much. But without the opportunity to ride a motorcycle, I would not have been able to have access to or write about *Sparks* or Marina's and Wayne's stories in ways that recognized how mobility is a part of political economy.

To a certain extent "hanging out" has also effected the way I have written about people. I found that using a tape recorder was virtually impossible because most conversations took place outside where sounds dissipate or are easily drowned out. In addition, most riders have an oral rather than written tradition concerning motorcycling. I have tried to ensure, in "hanging out," to avoid privileging textual traditions over oral practices. Attending to orality and nontextual expressions becomes particularly important because texts tend to reaffirm "bourgeois sensibilities" (Zandy 1998:238). The subjects of Chapter 4, Marina and Wayne, like many North American motorcyclists, are sophisticated consumers of the written word. But their main means of communicating their motorcycling knowledge is oral traditions at campgrounds, rallies, and on the telephone. Neither Marina nor Wayne makes extensive use of the internet in the form of online political and technical riders' "communities" or email to stay in touch with other riders. They do correspond with one or two other riders through handwritten letters and send postcards to close friends and family when they are on the road.

As a result of their emphasis on orality and the recording difficulties that I encountered in "hanging out," most of Chapter 4 is my "revoicing" of their voice from notes written after our conversations took place, although I was able to transcribe some conversations as they took place. Past motorcycle events and rides tend to be remembered and commemorated year after year. My conversations with Marina and Wayne reflected non-repetitious storytelling that included similar themes as stories repeated long after the event is over: acceptance of personal risk, motorcyclists' identities, inclusion in riding groups, and how women fit into the overwhelmingly male activity of riding a motorcycle.

The locales, histories, groups, and individuals that comprise a nominal and contested motorcycling "we" in this work have no direct connections to each other except for a sort of snowball sampling based on mobility. The serendipity of chance meetings on the road is really my own mobility making these events and people stand out for me. For example, the archival research I did in Galt, California, relied upon the internet and a motorcycle trip. My husband's motorcycling networks include an internet link with disparate groupings of riders, including a listserve comprised of people all over the globe interested in the BMW /5 ("slash" five) series motorcycle produced from 1969-1973. Duane Ausherman was a BMW dealer in the late 1960s early 1970s. He now lives in Galt, California, where we stopped to pick up motorcycle parts. On a sunny May afternoon he hosed off his already immaculate shop floor while telling us about the artifacts and treasures he had collected from the early days of motorcycling. After pulling out the factory manual of an exceptionally rare and famous motorcycle he used to own, he proceeded to carefully draw his collection of *Sparks* from the shelves. He reverently carried them inside for our perusal.

On our second visit, Duane explained how he came into possession of these magazines about a motorcycle few enthusiasts even know existed. In his days as a motorcycle dealer, Duane would lunch with his mechanics at a local restaurant. One lunch hour a restaurant employee approached Duane and asked if he would like the old volumes her father had left after his death. Her grandfather had been *Sparks'* editor. At the time I credited serendipity for delivering a previously unknown piece of motorcycling history into my hands. In the course of analyzing and writing this thesis, I came to

understand that finding or intentionally gathering such information requires social, geographical, and economic mobility.

I have chosen to speak with two family members, riders whom I have known all of my life – Marina and Wayne. My methodological reasons for expanding the view of riders from a motorcycle subculture to individuals embedded in historical processes are both practical and theoretical. Practically, I do not have the time or space to talk to every "type" of motorcyclist in America, or even those in a chosen circle of riders, as traditional ethnography would dictate. Theoretically, it is not my place to categorize or authenticate riders and their motives. More to the point, experience gained at rallies or other social events fails to explain how riders navigate contradictions when considered only in terms of itself. That is, my job is to reconnect at personal, social, and cultural levels the simultaneous construction of riders as exotic and mainstream; elite and marginal; and knowledge producers of cultural distinctiveness and homogenizing consumers of the same. Bodily knowledge and "common sense" are not, of themselves, sufficient anthropological methods (Ebert 1999:19-23), nor is fieldwork experience the same as "truth" (Vincent 1991:46). Autobiography, therefore, gets bumped from a writing convention or exercise in reflexivity, to a method and analytical tool (following Moss 1999).

To take up again the question of where this research occurred, a further discussion of 'hanging out' is warranted. For the most part, motorcycles were only peripherally involved in transporting myself from Victoria, British Columbia, to the many locales in Michigan, Arizona, and California where this work took place. Four of six trips were on an airplane, although motorcycles often waited at my destination and were the focal point

of the trip. If I were to focus on the structure of a spatially bound ritualized event such as a motorcycle rally, as opposed to 'hanging out,' I would lose the ability to comment on mobility at all.

As a counter to the practice of 'seeing movement' in a static, ahistorical sense, I am suggesting that processes (such as industrialization, globalization, and capitalism) and structures (such as the law, transportation infrastructure, and associations of like-minded people) of travel are part of any knowledge-producing enterprise (Pratt 2001). While an individual's mobility and how it comes about involves all of the material aspects of that person's life, ideologies of capital, such as paid work as a natural phenomenon, also arise in and through the production and reproduction of individual's lives and society (Smith 1999:ix-xvi). Mobility seen this way is intrinsically a part of anthropology and a vital part of motorcycling practices. By extension, mobility informs my methods and sources in this work.

My research design, then, highlights the need to seek understanding from seemingly unconnected people, places, space/time, and events in order to focus on the particulars of mobility and power. To integrate the lives of individuals and groups of riders historically, I show how mobility "links to larger political and economic processes" (Wolf 1986:387; e.g. Tsing 1993). In so doing, I reject the power of "the field," as it has developed in anthropology (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997) to dictate geographic, political, and historic boundaries; to travel by motorcycle is neither to participate in generic sorts of events at interchangeable locales nor to create and recreate a singular society solely on the margins of mythical "mainstream culture."

Making sense of motorcyclists' mobility is not so much a matter, then, of 'these' riders and 'those' riders, outlaw clubs, and mainstream community. It is a matter of stopping to listen to stories of the geographically dispersed, and to ask why mobility is important to them and how their mobility is affected by their own engagement with production (as well as modes of production) and consumption. To ask these relevant questions of motorcyclists is to necessarily reframe the 'field' of anthropological work. Following Des Chene (1997:69) I conceive of "the field" in my fieldwork as more than simply the place where I am "on duty" to observe others. By broadening this concept of "the field," I can holistically and reflexively link riding on an individual and group level to larger processes such as capitalism.

In order to gain the particulars of motorcycle mobility, I focus on three groups of riders. First, the stories written by anthropologists who ride reflect themes that are common to riding and to anthropology. Second, the stories written by North American riders in the early twentieth century motorcycle publication *Sparks* comprise some of the first motorcycle riders. Finally, two touring riders from Michigan have told me what riding and being riders means to them. By 'touring' I mean traveling long distances – regional or extra-regional travel – over many days as opposed to short, single day excursions. Marina and Wayne, and other riders, would introduce a third category of 'sport touring' to express a preference for traveling on curving, technically challenging (and less traveled and well known) roads as opposed to highways.

Rider/Writers

Rider/writers are motorcyclists who document their own journeys and the journeys and lives of those they meet along the way. They are motorcyclists who are knowledge workers – authors of travelogues, ethnographies, mechanical guides, maps, philosophies, and theories – because of their mode of mobility. They have made the motorcycle a tool for gaining and analyzing their own knowledge of the world for others.

Following up on the latter idea of rider/writers above, Chapter 2 is a critique of motorcycle culture as it is variously presented by rider/writers. Anthropology and motorcycle travels are similar in their practices of knowledge production and reliance on mobility. The Journey, capitalized and romanticized, has represented various aspects of travel and knowledge. Here I use it in the sense that travel is the impetus for meaning-making and its transmission. Anthropology and motorcycling, in their own particular historical situations and practices, have privileged the Journey as a form of gathering and disseminating knowledge of other people and places (following Pratt 1986). Keeping the Journey in mind, it is perhaps not so puzzling that social science research with motorcyclists tends to study those situations one encounters while stopped and only when mingling with other riders.

Sparks

The stories contained in *Sparks* allow me to engage the history of the technology and its social organization that makes up riding. I have developed a picture of struggles over the meanings of work and leisure and described various prescriptive technological

practices that were common throughout the northeastern United States at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Sparks is an archive comprising the institutions, processes, and symbols of riders who have made motorcycles "charismatic objects" (Holbrook Pierson 1993) and the means of achieving dispersed social networks. Des Chene (1997:79-80) notes the spatial and temporal value to anthropological work of incorporating such archives:

> Moving around (or not) as necessary and seeking traces of the past are two of the ways we might be able to achieve a less extractive kind of research, to study villages (towns, neighborhoods...), not just study *in* them, while still (or rather thereby) illuminating larger patterns and processes. Making *conceptual* connections between place x and theory y is insufficient. It is by making *historical* connections between places that we can both make theoretical advances and learn about the people and social phenomena we study [emphasis in original].

Through *Sparks* I can recover such a history, and with it ideologies of space and time that contribute to differential practices of motorcycle mobility as well as that of production and consumption.

In spite of the advantages using a historical source confers, *Sparks* is problematic because it was a marketing tool for the M.M. motorcycle. *Sparks* represents one motorcycle manufacturer's vision and construction of motorcycling at the turn of the century. Its editorial goals are the sale of motorcycles and the construction of a culture of consumption around which riders might relate to each other. These aims lend a skewed perspective to motorcycling in that period, but not one that is totally without merit. Certainly *Gourmet Magazine* does not give a complete picture of the social significance and ritual elements of eating in late twentieth century North America. Yet it does

demonstrate the construction of those aspects related to eating and food, which are important to its elite consumers (Reynolds 2002, pers. com.).

Marina and Wayne

The Michigan riders are my parents, Marina and Wayne. The fact that I have ridden many thousands of miles with family members has allowed me to participate in and observe their riding and interactions with others on and off the road. While I can hardly claim that this work represents the beliefs and practices of all, or even a majority of motorcyclists, by choosing to work solely with Marina and Wayne I have sacrificed the breadth of working with an entire group of related or unrelated riders for the depth I could only have experienced with lengthy association.

Marina and Wayne are "typical" motorcyclists in the sense that they fall into statistical averages of economic and social indicators, such as age, income, and education levels, identified by the motorcycle industry. They attend rallies, belong to clubs, and socialize with other riders. They appear to fit nicely into these categories, but the point that needs to be stressed is that their experience of mobility and of riding is not 'universal.' Marina's and Wayne's riding is uniquely affected by their engagement with structures, institutions, and processes of mobility. Health and work are the explicit themes that ran through Marina's and Wayne's stories and are related to their motorcycle mobility through production and consumption.

Historical and Contemporary Mobility

The body of this thesis is split into five chapters, with Chapters 2, 3, and 4 concerned with different groups of riders and historical positioning. The first group in Chapter 2 are the authors of popular and scholarly works who are, like myself, rider/writers. Their work shows how knowledge production differentiates riders from non-riders and from each other on the basis of culture and identity. Chapters 3 and 4 provide detailed information about motorcyclists' mobility from the beginning and tail ends of the twentieth century. They explain the classed and gendered construction of motorcycle mobility. They also explore riders' experience of classed and gendered mobility. In Chapter 5, I focus on the nature of power in the mobility of motorcyclists. Namely, I explore how motorcyclists have the ability to exercise and define mobility given work, family demands, and navigation of the biomedical system.

Thinking of mobility as a process that grows out of the material relationships of production and consumption emphasizes the spatial and material practices of people who ride rather than a culture(s) of riders. Wolf's (1982) idea of a shared world has powerful implications for the effects of who gets to frame mobility and how people *do* mobility. To me, "connections" suggests that one facet of power is the process of historical, differential, practiced mobility.

CHAPTER 2

Riding/Writing

The motorcyclist encounters the road as a writer encounters the page. There is no proper approach, no correct path, no true line. The page is never blank but is always littered with tracks and debris left by those who have gone before; ... To ride is to write and to write is to read and rewrite a text that has already been written (Mark C. Taylor and José Màrquez 1998).

The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries and costumes in order to present this new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language (Karl Marx 1994:188-89).

Riders write – about and for – riding and riders. Aside from works that focus on the workers and capitalists who produce[1] motorcycles, most of the literature about motorcyclists can be found in popular books, mainly travelogues (e.g. Simon 1979, Pedersen 1998), but more recently topical and historical treatments of various motorcycling subgroups including women (e.g. Ferrar 2001; Hollern 1999) and outlaws (e.g. Reynolds 2001). Motorcycling literature also includes general or marque-affiliated magazines (e.g. BMW Owners News), and essays produced by lobbyist groups (e.g. Gray 2000; Gray 1993). In our often-implicit theoretical discussions, rider/writers engage in data collection and writing similar to descriptive anthropology. While most rider/writers do not actually "do anthropology," I am deliberately blurring the lines between academic and popular rider/writers. In some cases, academics' writing of motorcycling has been unnecessarily privileged over the similar work of their non-academic counterparts (but

see Drutt 1998 for an eclectic mix that emphasizes 'disciplined' knowledge). Even when the events of a ride are recounted in travelogue style, their descriptions implicitly frame problems, questions, and experience with theoretical discussion. Still, riders have written most of the ethnographic social science work about U.S. motorcyclists (e.g. Giusto 1997; Hopper and Moore 1990; Joans 2001; Maxwell 1998; Michalowski and Dubisch 2001; Watson 1982; Wolf 1991).

I review three ethnographical works about North American motorcyclists (by North American motorcyclists) that have achieved popular or disciplinary notice. All of the anthropological rider/writers I survey here begin with the assumption that motorcyclists form some kind of social grouping, be it community, subculture or self, that is dependent on permanent places, or temporary imagined, constructed, and invented space. From this assumption, a theme of these works is that at times riders are a subculture apart from the dominant culture. Each covers different subject positions and motorcycling niches. Daniel Wolf's (1991) *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers*, as the title notes, describes "The Rebels," a group of outlaw bikers in Alberta, Canada. Andrew ("Chip") Maxwell's (1998) *Motorcyclists and Community in Post-Industrial Urban America* delves into American 'mainstream' riders, their ritualistic gatherings and the reasons why their contemporary riding communities exist. Although not an anthropologist by trade, Melissa Holbrook Pierson (1998) claims a spot in the auto-ethnographic genre of motorcycle writing with her popular account *The Perfect Vehicle: What It Is about Motorcycles*. Ryang (1997:44-45) notes that when autobiography, fiction, poetry, and other genres are described as 'ethnographical,' ethnography and anthropology becomes difficult to define.

In including Holbrook Pierson in this review I have tried to underscore two points. First, academics are not the only audience for motorcycling texts. Holbrook Pierson's work is relevant here because it is relevant to riders; it speaks to identity, history, and social organization. Second, while Maxwell and Wolf foreground their status as anthropologists, they have not made clear how being motorcyclists has influenced their work. Holbrook Pierson's book is an account of why people desire motorcycles and riding, as well as the process of becoming a motorcyclist as experienced by Holbrook Pierson herself.

Three other anthropological works about North American motorcyclists have been published since I researched this literature. They include Barbara Joans' (2001) *Bike Lust: Harleys, Women, and American Society*, Suzanne McDonald Walker's (2000) *Bikers: Culture, Politics and Power*, and Raymond Michalowski's and Jill Dubisch's (2001) *Run for the Wall: Remembering Vietnam on a Motorcycle Pilgrimage*. To greater and lesser degrees the subjects of each of these books are "bikers," people who are seen by "the public" or the authors as members of a marginal subculture. I have not included them here for two reasons. First, they were published very recently, after I started this literature review. I mention them because they demonstrate that anthropological interest in motorcyclists continues. Second, Wolf, Maxwell, and Holbrook Pierson have written texts that examine received popular cultural categories of motorcyclists: outlaws, mainstream riders, and women. Because I explore how and why rider/writers have constructed motorcycle subcultures or communities, their varied work provides a basis for comparison and contrast.

Risk-Takers, Exotics, and Freedom-Lovers

Social scientists bring forward three categories of overlapping rider positionings that I have named Risk-Takers, Exotics, and Freedom-Lovers. The categories presumably represent motorcyclists' identities and motivations for riding. The problem with conflating personal or culture-wide motivations with identity is that risk-taking, exoticism, and freedom may correspond to the theoretical positions, methodologies, and riding preferences of their authors. In other words, the construction of these subject positions says as much (or more) about the rider/writer as it does about motorcyclists and their mobility. I should note here that many riders do in fact self-identify, as individuals and as groups, with risk, exoticism, and freedom. Social scientists have not wholly misrepresented their subjects' in their stories of riding and riders. However, what I demonstrate below is that those who study riders have essentialized the differences between "us" and "them" so as to impute a discrete motorcycle culture or subcultures, and therefore appropriately exotic, anthropological, subjects. What I am interested in here is how rider/writers' knowledge production – their assumption that riders primarily comprise discrete motorcycle cultures or lifestyles – has obscured power, class, and gender considerations.

Risk-Takers

The importance of risk studies to my discussion of motorcyclists and mobility does not have much to do with the research and its findings. Rather, I survey the risk literature because it is an academic genre of riding that is *not* written by rider/writers but by non-riding academics. Risk studies utilize the same notion of cultural distinctiveness

as ethnographic rider/writers, and so seem to be related to how academics perceive the riders they find emerging from the stories. Risk studies shape the questions ethnographers ask, the problems that they find significant, and relevant themes.

The Risk-Taker genre of motorcycle writing involves more or less quantitative measurements of the risk to riders and society at large involved in riding motorcycles. Writers with epidemiological, public health, or actuarial interests have identified sociological categories that form the basis for "high" risk groups of riders all over the world. Some of the risk factors researchers have associated with motorcycling employ cultural stereotypes that motorcyclists are deviant and/or dangerous. Some indicators of risk that have been studied are age and ethnicity (Wong et al. 1990), skill level (Reeder et al 1997), poverty, 'broken homes,' lack of education, and even lack of intelligence (Chalmers 1993).

One outcome of risk studies is that they readily transfer the perceived dangers of motorcycles to the people who ride them. Although I do not address the burden of risk in any detail, I have wondered for some time if it is the act of motorcycling or motorcyclists themselves who are 'risky.' Riders seem to concur with the idea that they are the problem. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) in the U.S. stresses modifying riders' behavior and thinking as key to managing risk. MSF courses teach students that riding a motorcycle safely is ninety percent mental and ten percent physical ability or strength (MSF 2001). While these statistics may be valid, they place the entire burden of safety on the individual rider as opposed to traffic systems, automobile driver training, or machine failure.

Riding is undoubtedly a dangerous activity. The question for social scientists, however, has not been the nature of danger per se, but risk. Risk (as opposed to the perception of risk) is an actuarial measurement that can be expressed mathematically as the probability of an event happening multiplied by the consequences of that event once it has happened (Society for Risk Analysis 2001). Because risk studies are based on simple models, they either fail to take into account or minimize the importance of the cultural and historical context of both the 'risky' event and the fundamentally cultural construction of risk formulae themselves (Douglas1994). Risk perception and management are thus associated with a method that connotes objectivity.

Actuarial models and their perceived objectivity allow risk and risk perception studies to construct a perspective of riders outside of any historical or cultural context. As such, risk studies portray riders as belonging to a static, homogenous subculture(s) preoccupied with their dangerous and expensive leisure activity. One result of the medical/actuarial interest in motorcycling has been an emphasis on biological aspects of riding, including accident outcomes and sociobiological explanations for why riders ride. Alternatively, qualitative ethnographic work appears to culturally and historically situate riders by delving deeper into riders' motivations and asking the questions who are riders and why do they ride.

Exotics

It is possible that riders see themselves as more exotic for the people and places in their travels that they write and talk about. Riders/writers of all persuasions, but particularly those of the adventure-writing genre, have promoted motorcyclists as an

exotic type of traveler (e.g. Simon 1979; Pedersen 1998). From their entry into the field of personal motorized mobility, motorcycles were seen as ideally suited for the 'discovery' of exotic 'others,' even (or especially) when that other includes 'self.' For example, Simon (1979:7) describes his motorcycle circuit of the globe. Although he departed London October 6, 1973 and most of the book is presented chronologically, he begins his account with a snapshot of travel in India:

> Few motor vehicles were on the road. Some men were riding bicycles, and a few drove ox carts or rode in pony cabs. There were some buzzing auto-rickshaws too, which are three-wheeled scooters with cabs for passengers. They were unlikely to have spare petrol. In the state of Bihar you could get three or four meals for the price of a litre of petrol.

Much of the adventure riding/writing genre emphasizes the discovery of Others who live outside of the 'North,' utilize technologies that are unfamiliar to or simpler than those to which 'Northern' riders are accustomed, and appear to be outside the sphere of monopoly capitalism and mass consumption and production.

According to this Othering practice found in adventure writing, which assumes a Western author and reader and contrasts the technology available to a Westerner (the author) with that of the (exotic) other people, the freedom to travel by motorcycle becomes metonymic for social, economic, and geographic mobility. Those who are free, and therefore mobile, also have the power to create representations of riders[2] and 'local' people in their writing. Following Pratt (1992), I think that travel writing and its conventions are an aspect of the imperialist project.

Anthropologists have perhaps mirrored motorcyclists' dual role as purveyors of their own and others' 'Otherness' (cf. di Leonardo 1998). In a similar vein to the 'discovery' of elite Victorian travelers who explored the geography, natural history, and

people of "far-away" places by literary critics, anthropologists are now studying riders. The difference is that anthropologists here are not only performing participant observation *of* riders, but also *as* riders. The distinction is important because exoticism, like risk, influences our initial assumptions about motorcyclists and mobility, as well as our conclusions.

Freedom-Lovers

The questions rider/writers have taken up are who are riders and why do they ride. While these questions seem straightforward, they also imply some questions about 1) how North American motorcycling and motorcyclists (and similar 'travelers,[3]' such as RVers[4]) are viewed and written about by academics, 2) how class, gender, spatial and power considerations in the histories of North American motorcyclists have been erased from social science works in favor of lifestyle and culture, and 3) why the way ethnographers formulate problems matters to this study of individual mobility. These questions need to be asked because often, rider/writers state that riders desire "freedom" as an explanation for why riders ride and leave the analysis hanging and the term undefined. To further examine this concept of mobile, freedom-loving (sub)cultures or communities espoused by academic writers and its ironic cultural and social circumscription of motorcyclists, I trace the routes some rider/writers have taken to explain motorcyclists and motorcycling.

Daniel Wolf and The Rebels

As a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Alberta, Daniel Wolf (1991:10, italics in original) set out to research a "*subculture* [that] *had remained ethnographically unexplored.*" He writes of an outlaw brotherhood bound together by the difficulties they confronted as a result of cultural boundaries. Freedom-loving members of the Rebels erect boundaries between themselves and *citizens*, people who blindly and uncritically trade their freedom for the relative safety of normative values. Club members were working class men pursuing the freedom to live outside of social paths of least resistance and from what they considered the "regimented" lives of citizens. According to Wolf, the public's definition of 'outlaws' was gangs of motorcycling criminals who actively terrorized 'local' people. Outlaw bikers also refer to themselves as "one percenters" (Wolf 1989), denoting that the other ninety-nine percent are motorcyclists with mainstream values. The Rebels' manner of dress – which is heavily prescribed by club rules – and the use of motorcycles visually demarcated the boundary between members and non-members, as well as signifying the club's territorial possessions. Outlaw club members are by definition male (Wolf 1991:132-33) and almost solely working class (Wolf 1991:30-35). Women associated with The Rebels outlaw club are by definition not members, but pieces of property belonging to individual members or collectively to the club (Wolf 1991:132-137).

Wolf concludes *Rebels* by stating: "An outlaw motorcycle club [including 'copycat' clubs found in the rest of the world] is an experiment with utopian communalism; it is a personal grasp at self-fulfillment and a collective search for community that rides on wheels along the inner-city streets and sprawling highways of

industrial society" (1991:340). According to Wolf, outlaws ride because it gives them the strength of numbers necessary to live according to the principles they choose.

'Chip' Maxwell and "Nonspatial" Communities

Maxwell studied 'mainstream' BMW and Goldwing riders at rally sites in North America. Maxwell claimed his work differed from Wolf's in their choice of subjects (1991:264). He claims that the outlaws Wolf rode with and wrote about are a marginal group, and not representative of riders who comprise ninety-nine percent of all riders. Mainstream riders are never truly defined beyond the idea that they are citizens who go to work, have families, and who entered motorcycling in the 1960s and continued to ride for the next thirty years. This emphasis on 'normalcy' in addition to statistical information points to a set of subjects who are male, middle-aged, and middle class. A BMWMOA (Cohen 2002:34) demographic survey confirms that the riders Maxwell would have met at rallies were 98 percent male. Riders' average age would have been 53 years with an average income of $95,900.

Maxwell claims his subjects were outside 'normal' American culture only because movies and journalistic representations of motorcyclists portrayed deviants, an image that all of the mainstream riders in North America have not been able to oust from the public psyche. He contends that membership in the AMA sanctioned institutions and clubs that attracted mainstream riders are completely open to women, people of color, and people of differing abilities. He cites minimal intra-group conflicts as a reflection of the stability and internal coherence of motorcycle culture. Discrimination against

anybody who was not white, male, middle-class, and heterosexual were problems external to the motorcycling community (Maxwell 1998:282-86).

According to Maxwell, riders were "nonspatial" in the sense that their cohesive communities were built on identity and boundary maintenance rather than geographic proximity to one another. Mainstream riders bought t-shirts with a rally logo on them, or wore matching helmets, providing appropriate visual signs of their cohesiveness and identity. The mainstream riding community tolerated the media-aggravated bias against them because the camaraderie of motorcycling represented their best hope for finding community in post-industrial America. Riders rode and attended rallies as a means to replace localized kin relationships and friendships ruptured by deindustrializatoin with a community that celebrated mainstream motorcyclists' unique perspectives on mobility.

Holbrook Pierson and Charismatic Objects

Holbrook Pierson's book was written for popular consumption and has enjoyed considerable acclaim among riders and would-be riders for its scholarly and poetic treatment of motorcycling and the history of women who rode before her contained within it. Holbrook Pierson departs from Wolf's and Maxwell's perspectives that focus on an aggregate ridership through her use of autobiography. Her concern lies with the meanings of motorcycling she constructed for herself, as well as the meanings passed on to her by her riding partners. Personal relationships with other riders occupied a central position, from which she theorizes a loosely bound network of individuals each attempting to discern their own path to understanding what motorcycling means to their human condition. For Holbrook Pierson, the Other was everywhere and everyone.

Holbrook Pierson is the only rider/writer I survey here that examines discrimination against women in motorcycling as a part of riding. In a section about the bias women encounter when they ride, short biographies sketched the motorcycling accomplishments of talented women from the past hundred years. Some were not allowed to retain titles and trophies fairly won. Others simply echoed the frustration Holbrook Pierson felt when men could not accept that she rode a motorcycle "all by herself," or worse, told her that she had no right to do so. The women in these stories are members of Holbrook Pierson's sorority, connected by a sisterhood that transcends time, history, and class.

For example, in 1907, fifteen-year-old Clara Wagner became a member of the Federation of American Motorcyclists (FAM). After winning a 365-mile race, her trophy was taken away and given to a man. Holbrook Pierson recounts the stories of several more women who experienced discrimination based on gender and were exceptional riders, while noting that women who ride are also exceptional in riding. While attending motorcycle races in New Hampshire with three other riders, Holbrook Pierson went along with the desire of her two male companions to visit Weirs Beach, an area where calls for "tits" are made and burnouts take place. A burnout is a display of power, usually performed at night, where groups of riders are gathered: the rider engages the front brake, and then revs the engine while engaging the clutch. The rear wheel spins, creating a great deal of noise, smoke, and the acrid smell of burning tire, but no forward movement. Sometimes the motorcycle pivots on the front wheel and spins around, a move that requires some skill. Burnouts not only destroy the rear tire, but high engine revolutions can damage the motorcycle's pistons, valves, and drive train. Most riders do not subject

their machines to this abuse, but some can be persuaded to enter burnout contests after drinking has loosened their inhibitions.

Holbrook Pierson commented to one of the men in her party that burnouts are the result of an "undeveloped [male] ego." His response was "that's the stupidest shit I've ever heard." He told Holbrook Pierson (1997:177-78), "[you] love the attention when men howl at [you], as do all the other women here, because look, they're having a good time, and this is all about fun, which if [you] can't appreciate [you're] a loser."

Clara Wagner is not so much a foremother connected to Holbrook Pierson by class or history, but a sister who experienced discrimination simply because she was a woman who wanted to ride motorcycles. Holbrook Pierson finds her own search for Self, and the reasons women ride, in a personal journey that gives her the freedom from imposed definitions and representations of self.

Who "We" are

The stories presented by these authors suggest that their subjects may have used a similar tool, for freedom, mobility, and forming community or culture, but within different social structures. The various discrete social structures outlined by Wolf and Maxwell point to cultures or communities that maintain ideological boundaries between themselves and non-riders. For Wolf, outlaw social structure was primarily working class and male. In the touring groups with whom Maxwell worked, the social structure was primarily middle class, normative, and ostensibly inclusive. Holbrook Pierson proposes structures of gender inequality that are paramount, while class distinctions are minimized. Both Wolf and Holbrook Pierson see riders on the margins of society,

members of subcultures of resistance. For Wolf, the Rebels resist puritanical middle class conformism, consumerism, Taylorism, and dominant mainstream control, which is ultimately perceived as weak and feminine (Wolf 1991:134-137). Holbrook Pierson resists sexist, patriarchal, working and middle class, dominant mainstream cultures and subcultures. Maxwell, on the other hand, puts social groups of motorcyclists at the social center. But mainstream riders' desires for community and friendship are unfulfilled by postindustrial society creating the conditions for developing a new, family oriented community subculture. This social structure allows riders to form a group, not by resisting the alienating consumerism and commodity fetishism of capitalism, but by embracing it to create a community. Although Wolf and Maxwell include class as a category mainly referencing income, the process and culture of class was not a prime consideration for either author except as "freedom."

Holbrook Pierson demonstrates that resistance to patriarchy within motorcycling has a long history. Wolf and Maxwell, however, tend to see the history of riding emanating from the Hollister, California riot of 1947. Maxwell also views motorcycle culture as a post World War II phenomenon, equating motorcycling with a generational, 1960s "radical cultural critique" (1998:271). Riders are middle-aged people who, in their youth, were caught up in an ethos of freedom and change.

The details of the Hollister riot are instructive because the discrete cultures that Wolf and Maxwell describe were in a sense created from the media's invention of outlaw culture. Outlaw and mainstream clubs formally differentiated shortly after 1947 when the Gypsy Tour to Hollister, CA resulted in altercations between townspeople and riders.

C. I. Dourghty Jr. (1947), a staff writer with the San Francisco Chronicle wrote of this event:

> State Highway patrolmen tonight imposed informal martial law in downtown Hollister to curb the riotous activities of an estimated 4000. Almost 60 persons were injured, three of them seriously. Several more arrests were made and a special night court session was convened to punish those charged with reckless driving and drunkenness. The outburst of terrorism - wrecking of bars, bottle barrages into the streets from upper story windows and roofs and high speed racing of motorcycles though the streets - came as participants in the annual "Gypsy Tour" sponsored by the American Motorcycle Association converged on Hollister for a three-day meeting.
>
> EVENING LULL Shortly after dusk tonight, the force of 40 highway patrol officers, commanded by Captain L.T. Torres of San Benito County, forced a lull in the terrorism. Armed with tear gas guns, the officers herded the cyclists into a block on San Benito Street, between Fifth and Sixth streets, parked a dance band on a truck and ordered the musicians to play. Hundreds of individuals who invaded the town yesterday for the motorcycle show, about 10 percent of them women halted their riotous "play" to dance. Their formal ball at the American Legion Hall was canceled by police orders. The dancers scuffed their way through inches of broken glass, debris of bottle barrages thrown during the day. The officers stood almost shoulder-to-shoulder along the curb.

Doughty (1947) further questioned the legitimacy of the riders' presence in their 'local' area, saying: "The 'tour' brought the largest amount of transients in recent history to Hollister. Hundreds slept in 'haystacks' according to police and in the city park and squares." Interviews with Hollister shopkeepers tell a much less sensational story of the Gypsy Tour (Gardiner 2000). The point is not whether Doughty's account was true, but that it was accepted and publicly commemorated (q.v. Sider and Smith 1997) in ways that marginalized riders because they were identified with indigence and violence. Riders' mobility was seen as disruptive rather than a leisure activity, perhaps because working class people (as opposed to elites) were mobile within local spaces that 'belonged' to and were maintained by bourgeoisie residents.

Print and film media quickly created hysteria that linked people who rode motorcycles with destructive, anti-social behavior and marginal social status. Wolf writes, "There is a tendency to view the Hollister motorcycle riot and its subsequent national media coverage as the genesis of the 'outlaw biker' – it was the birth of an image" (Wolf 1991:7). An image is not a culture, but both Wolf and Maxwell believe that the image media reports and Hollywood movies have some part in the origination of motorcycle culture.

Prior to the late 1940s and early 1950s, riders were not necessarily understood to be "outlaw bikers" (bikers) in the same way they are today. Wolf (1991:4, 9) uses and sometimes conflates three definitions of outlaws. The first definition is a club or group that does not have a charter with the American Motorcyclist Association. A second definition, a motorcycle crime gang, reflects outlaws' economic activities. While Wolf recognizes that some outlaw clubs have formed organized crime syndicates based on loyalty to their brotherhood, he emphasizes the variation between clubs in the extent of their illegal economic activities such as prostitution and theft (Wolf 1991:268). Finally, Wolf most often defines outlaw bikers as members of a riding subculture who all lived in the same city or region, or are linked to a national organization other than the AMA through local chapters. Riding subcultures have stringent, proscriptive, and prescriptive rules for behavior and social mores.

In the case of motorcycle culture, rider/writers, manufacturers and clubs can exploit unique social and cultural aspects of riding in order to sell motorcycles, club memberships, accessories, books, and services. Cultural capital comprises the unique elements of culture for which monopoly rent may be charged if people retain control over

"authenticity." According to Harvey (2001:395), "All rent is based on the monopoly power of private owners of certain portions of the globe. Monopoly rent arises because social actors can realize an enhanced income stream over an extended time by virtue of their exclusive control over some directly or indirectly tradable item which is in some crucial respects unique and non-replicable." For example, Victoria, British Columbia trades on its reputation as a clean, "more British than Britain" west coast city in order to increase tourist trade.

In privileging motorcycle culture over wider contexts, rider/writers also authenticate their own beliefs and practices of riding, and they are not alone. Motorcycle manufacturers need riders to produce and disseminate knowledge about 'real motorcycle experience' in order to sell their product. Take, for example, Harley-Davidson's attempt in 1995 to trademark the sound of their motorcycles' exhaust pipes. Due to its rather idiosyncratic and, for many years, unimproved design Harley-Davidson claimed that riders identified the sound with their machine and the sound was therefore the company's intellectual property (Sapherstein 1998). Harley dropped the matter in 2000 (Davis 2000), but continues to be the only acceptable motorcycle for some riders. Whether they are 'outlaw' or 'mainstream,' clubs also benefit from protecting what are seen as unique aspects of motorcycling, although they are careful to not get carried away with exclusivity.

Along with the relationship between knowledge production and space, "we" need to enquire about how consumption fits in other than in its role of creating a distinct motorcyclist identity. Uniqueness and authenticity are implicated in what makes motorcycling different from pursuits that are classified as similar because they are used

for similar purposes: transport, risk-taking, and leisure. Discovering unique or authentic places and people is part of motorcyclists' cultural capital.

Depending on whether they are attempting to normalize riders or show their differences with respect to mainstream culture, rider/writers present their own identities differently. Wolf, for instance, writes, "Outlaw bikers view themselves as nothing less than frontier heroes, living out the 'freedom ethic' that they feel the rest of society has largely abandoned" (Wolf 1998:9). Although Wolf is not saying that outlaw bikers *are* frontier heroes, his comparison leaves little doubt that he believes this to be an accurate description of outlaws. Wolf was an outlaw at the time of his research and writing. Saying how outlaws view themselves *as* frontier heroes does not make clear in *The Rebels* whether Wolf subscribes to this identity or not. Yet the Counts (1996:13), Canadian anthropologists like Wolf, write in their ethnography of RVers,

> A decade ago, in a symposium on the anthropology of deviance, someone asked one of the participants, a young anthropologist who had recently completed a lengthy study of a motorcycle gang, "Didn't you feel uncomfortable doing research with bikers?" The anthropologist smiled and responded without missing a beat: "I don't think you understand. I *am* a biker."

Although the Counts do not identify the rider/writer they reference, he is likely Daniel Wolf. The discrepancy between Wolf's identification in his book as an anthropologist who became a biker, and at a conference as a biker who is also an anthropologist, is an epistemological one. Who is making theoretical claims? Wolf the anthropologist, or Wolf the biker?

As an author, identifying one's relationship to the subjects is important so that the finished text reflects the relationship of one's "community" or "culture" to wider social,

geographic, economic, and political contexts. I am suggesting that when some rider/writers write about 'themselves,' they may have proposed *a priori* categories of "identity-based reflexivity" (Nagar 2002:183). As a result, anthropological biases for seeing a discrete community or culture leave mobility, as well as class and gender, out of the picture

Maxwell seems to eschew mobility, class, and gender in giving an example of mainstream riders' marginalization. He describes a 1997 rally in North Carolina where BMW riders were, among other incidents, overflown by a police helicopter blaring from its loudspeakers *Ride of the Valkyrie* and the "Bad Boys" song from a 'real life' television police show. Maxwell's text and the ensuing email correspondence between rally attendees suggests that local police not only harassed riders, but did so simply because harassing motorcyclists is socially if not legally acceptable for police. Maxwell likens the harassment to the life-threatening discrimination previously only experienced by "racial minorities." He concluded his thoughts with a quote from an American motorcycle magazine that referenced the Fontana, North Carolina police: "Their daddies were training firehoses on demonstrators in Birmingham; their granddaddies were lynching 'uppity' blacks in Selma" (Higdon in Maxwell 1998:277).

The "locals" were less certain whether the riders' treatment by the sheriff's department was unprovoked, or deliberately provocative. I met with a member of the Fontana police department in North Carolina two years after the incident. He claimed that the helicopter flight and music was a joke (although not a funny one to these riders in the wake of the FBI siege on Waco, Texas, in 1993 when the FBI blared music through

loudspeakers at David Koresh and the Branch Davidians), and that the riders had tried to circumvent alcohol regulations in the dry county before the rally.

Altercations between Fontana police and the rally participants did not end after the riders had gone home. Maxwell omits the fact that the affluent, informed, and well-organized riders from all over North America mounted an acrimonious letter writing campaign to discredit the sheriff during the 'local' election. Throughout the election letters from riders appeared in the local paper and campaign contributions were made to the sheriff's opponent. Perhaps due to the increased focus on the sheriff, damaging personal information about him became public. The sheriff subsequently committed suicide.

Images of Motorcycle Culture

In spite of the differences in class, sex, gender, appearance, individual motivations, and guiding organizational principles between these sets of subjects, each of these texts promotes the idea of motorcycle culture. Along with the ethnographic enterprise of adventure riding/writing, another 'Othering' orientation commonly held among these ethnographical texts is the connection riders find with an ancient and noble human tradition of wandering. In their flirtations with the concept of mobility (as opposed to motorcycle 'culture' or 'community'), the story underpinning motorcycle culture seems to be that until settlement took hold of our spiritual 'ancestors,' allowing complex technology and systems of managing people to order their lives, mobility was a natural human condition that put us in touch with nature and our own abilities to shape, resist, or live within it as a community of fully-realized individuals. Answering why

riders ride seems to come out in the form quests: for community (Maxwell 1998); for utopian ideals of togetherness and freedom (Wolf 1991); and for Self (Holbrook Pierson 1998).

Speaking for the Rebels, Wolf (1998:9) states, "The appeal of outlaw clubs to their members is very different from what the public understands. Outlaw bikers view themselves as nothing less than frontier heroes, living out the 'freedom ethic' that they feel the rest of society has largely abandoned." Holbrook Pierson (1997:153) also adds a temporal dimension, but with different 'ancestors' in her motorcycle culture origin story:

> If we had remained mobile, like the aborigines, we too might have retained eyes like theirs, capable of seeing the natural world. As Chatwin described it in *The Songlines*, the aborigines' "religious life had a single aim: to keep the land the way it was and should be." Our aim, in our fixed world with eyes turned ever inward, is just as single-minded, it seems: to accumulate goods. At the end of this metaphoric road stands the nonmetaphoric Kmart, glistening like Oz and filled to the rafters with a hundred cheap mementos of wildflowers, in forms of candle, air freshener, sachet, cologne, bath bead, potpourri, and incense stick. In its prior life, of course, the ground under the big store bloomed with wildflowers. ...At the moment, even the growing movement based on simplifying life has spawned more commodities, books and magazines that tell you how to get there. But one uninstructed option remains to pack a very small bag and hit the road.

Riders, in the estimation of these musings, reclaim a universally human tradition of mobility taking us back to egalitarian roots. The invention of motorcyclists' "tribalism" alludes to a nearly biological imperative for riding, freeing rider/writers from the messiness of dealing with power in North American mobility. It speaks to these rider/writers as the origin myth for motorcycle culture, whether it denotes a connection to contemporary yet ancient natives who belong to nature or latter day constructions of free and adventurous American pioneers.

This emphasis on mobility as a means of escaping the present serves to downplay the fact that motorcycling is far from a commercial-free option. Riders can choose from numerous catalogues and vendors for their special accessories, clothing, books, magazines, T-shirts, pins, parts and other paraphernalia. These are purchased at rallies, among other places, that provide an area for commerce between motorcyclists and vendors:

> Rallies also are highly commercialized events, and logically so given the motorcycle's status as a commodity and object of material culture with strong symbolic overtones. An area set aside for vendors consists of tents which contain an array of "aftermarket" parts (those not made by the original motorcycle manufacturers), accessories, camping gear and clothing. In addition to purchasing those items to reinforce one's identity through modifications to the bike, the motorcyclist also can choose from among hundreds of enamel pins and embroidered patches which symbolize his or her attachment to the larger community (Maxwell 1998:279).

While the consumption of motorcycle accessories *may* reinforce identity by pointing to cultural differences between riders and non-riders, as well as among different sorts of riders, it certainly tutors riders in how to belong to motorcycling through a "lifestyle market." I have taken the this term from Field (1997:259-71), who uses it to describe the hegemonic obscuring of class by political organizations that are based on a loose consensus of what constitutes a "lifestyle." Identity is constructed around the consumption of the components of that lifestyle.

One example of the lifestyle market in motorcycling is the Whitehorse Press catalog, a publication devoted mainly to texts for, about and by motorcyclists. Among its offerings are a series of books whose titles begin with *Motorcycling Roads of the* and end with a geographic region of the United States, such as the Southwest. They inform riders of the least traveled and most enjoyable motorcycling roads. Many of these roads, such

as Deal's Gap (US 129) in North Carolina and Tennessee, confer status upon those who have ridden it, thus intensifying the exotic nature of motorcycling and becoming more elite. Less well-known roads are important too. Another rider might seek to authenticate her or his membership by asking if, while riding Deal's Gap, the other rider also had a chance to ride the Cherohalla Skyway. The consumption of a text such as *Motorcycling Roads of the East* allows riders to purchase knowledge previously 'discovered' by other riders.

Some rider/writers reject consumption as a reason for why people ride or find community in riding. Kelly begins his submission to the BMW Motorcycle Owners Association's (BMWMOA) magazine *BMW Owners News*: "the 'Motorcycle Culture,' this strange class of citizens that sociologists have identified was all around me, and now, by the mere purchasing of my buddy's bike, I was apparently a part of it" (Kelly 2002:30). Nevertheless, the new owner's initial perception of belonging through consumption changed to a view of motorcycle culture that stressed the importance of fictitious kin, family relationships and their role in creating motorcycle communities. He continues by telling the story of a long, rainy trip where he met an elderly man and his young grandson in a restaurant after pulling in from the inclement weather. He had been on his way to visit his sister and her newborn son. The "grandfather" took Kelly to his home and gave him the rain gear he needed to achieve his goal of celebrating the birth of another family member. Kelly further invokes the importance of kin ties and the "family values" of charity, consideration and altruism as the ultimate source of motorcycle culture over the affects of production and consumption.

Anthropologists have, to some extent, also mirrored the self-identifications of riders as Exotics and Freedom-Lovers to counter the violent and antisocial images of bikers as "nasty savages" (di Leonardo 1998) found in movies and journalism. But in their quest for an alternative, they conjured a "noble savage" on two wheels. A more useful approach might be to explore the historical connections between the images constructed by and of riders and riding, whether as freedom seekers, or exotics, or resisters, and the material and social worlds in which they exist.

The representations of motorcyclists, like the ones I've chosen to review here, have resulted from an ahistorical view of motorcycling and "commonsense" or utilitarian definitions of mobility and freedom founded on the culture concept. As Abu-Lughod (1991:143) states, "Culture is the essential tool for making other. As a professional discourse that elaborates on the meaning of culture in order to account for, explain, and understand cultural difference, anthropology also helps construct, produce, and maintain it." Anthropological theorizing of motorcyclists transforms "us" into a culture or subcultures obstreperously defending ourselves against an unhip norm. Wolf, Maxwell, and Holbrook Pierson contrast motorcyclists' values and practices, collectively a motorcycle culture, whether it is a risk-taking, exotic, or freedom-loving subculture within a widely generalized "North American" culture, with those of the general population or norm.

To the extent that Wolf's, Maxwell's, and Holbrook Pierson's stories all subscribe to cultural boundaries between riders and non-riders (and sometimes among riders), these writers are representative of an ethnographic genre. Rider/writers' methods and practices associated with the formulation of their questions tend to view motorcycling as a culture,

either deviant (Wolf 1991), risk-centered (Holbrook Pierson), or a community marginalized through the public's association of mainstream riders with 'deviant' ones (Maxwell 1998). By describing risk, exoticism, and freedom, I call attention to the power rider/writers have wielded in confirming the public's and perhaps their own images of stereotypical bikers with distinct cultures or communities.

Ebron and Tsing (1995:390) have cautioned, "as 'women writing culture,' we are particularly concerned to move beyond understandings of culture that have confined women inside cultural communities." I implied at the beginning of this chapter that the interest in North American riders by North American rider/writers had some connection to the politics of knowledge production. Ebert (1996:119) succinctly makes the argument that:

> Not only can and should one speak for the other and *with* the other, but the *other is not other*. Rather, the other is connected to all others (including those at the center) by the relations of production. All others are constructed, in spite of all their surface differences, by the same laws of motion of capital...Difference, it is now clear, is not simply an epistemological practice to unfound universalist foundations, it is a political apparatus to perpetuate the regime of nomadic, molecular subjects, and in so doing keep the existing social structure intact.

Anthropologists' positionings become theoretically and methodologically important because knowledge production is linked to mobility through capital.

> Reflexivity in US academic writing has mainly focused on examining the identities of the individual researcher rather than on the ways in which those identities intersect with institutional, geopolitical and material aspects of their positionality. This kind of identity-based reflexivity is problematic because it fails to distinguish systematically among the ethical, ontological and epistemological aspects of fieldwork (Nagar 2002:182).

Reflexivity has become important to anthropology, particularly when asking who has the right to produce knowledge about whom. To that end anthropologists have explored concepts such as 'halfies' (Abu-Lughod 1991), autobiography (Oakley and Calloway 1992; Ryang 1997); and writing "as a" (Moss and Matwychuk 2000).

For Holbrook Pierson, Maxwell, and Wolf, donning motorcycle helmets preceded wearing their "anthropologist's hats." Of these rider/writers, Holbrook Pierson's *The Perfect Vehicle*, is autobiographical. Holbrook Pierson and her relationships with other riders are the subjects, drawing the reader to conclusions regarding gender discrimination, the importance of individual mobility, and how her identity is formed from these.

Motorcycle ethnography is popular at a time in U.S. anthropology when it is okay to do work 'at home' provided the subjects are sufficiently Other. In light of popular and academic approval, representing motorcyclists as a curious, marginalized, and at least slightly dangerous sort of subculture is not going to rock the political boat or threaten powerful economic interests. Still, anthropologists' sudden interest in motorcyclists does not answer why rider/writers have turned to motorcycle culture for their questions, or how their knowledge production fits into a larger framework.

Producing Culture or Mobility?

Anthropologists may be relatively silent on the motorcycling phenomenon precisely because North American riders have a long history of organizing and speaking for themselves. For example, the American Motorcycle Association (AMA), which acts as an umbrella organization for affiliated local clubs and sponsors racing events, filled the

activist role left vacant when the Federation of American Motorcyclists (FAM) folded in 1919 after sixteen years of motorcycle advocacy (AMA 2002). FAM was a driving force for the social and political organization of early twentieth century motorcyclists who tried to make motive power acceptable when horses were the dominant form of land transportation. General and marque-specific motorcycle clubs continue to pattern their organizations after FAM's social/political goals and member services, although many have adopted a decidedly corporate structure for administering extensive rents, properties, investments, and membership dues as well as sponsoring racing and other skills events.

Another possible reason for increased interest in motorcycle ethnography besides their construction as marginal is that North American work "at home" and about leisure pursuits has begun to gain disciplinary acceptance as "fieldwork in common places" (Pratt 1986). di Leonardo (1998:67) has cautioned, however, that:

> The United States, from the vantage of anthropology departments, is too often considered a playground, an R&R site...The less one knows of American historical political economy, the easier it is to believe that there are circumscribed populations in the United States with identifiable "cultures" that are one's professional property to inscribe.

Her rather forceful critique of anthropology "at home" echoes Ortner's (1991) concerns that American anthropologists have ignored 'class' and "ethnicized" their subjects in the process.

In the literature, motorcyclists are risk-taking, exotic, and freedom-seeking. As I have shown, these positions might also be stood on their heads to explore the ways that the literature about motorcyclists portrays riders as risky, exoticizing, and members of discrete subcultures who conform by either resisting dominant ideals or embracing them.

Rider/writers have to varying extents validated images of discrete social groups created by the press and Hollywood. In the process of producing anthropologies of riders, rider/writers have also described themselves and their motorcycling identities.

In the next chapter I take up the details of motorcycle mobility at the turn of the twentieth century. Following Eric Wolf's (1982) treatment of problems in history, economics, and politics as fundamentally spatial connections, some notion of how mobility is mediated by the history of labor and leisure is necessary to understand the material basis of motorcycle mobility. Riding and writing about it has gone on since the early 1900s, preceding the texts surveyed here by eighty to ninety years. The historical circumstances in which the social aspects of motorcycling came to be were a time of intense change in American and global relations of production. Motorcyclists took an active part in processes of production and consumption, a role that I will show still 'weighs on the brain' of riders.

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[1] Wolf (1982:xx) notes that workers no longer produce or assemble things, but parts of things. Capitalists do not really produce anything.

[2] Mary Helms (1998) discusses the intrinsic power of the Journey; geographic, social and economic mobility; and geographic and symbolic distance in her wide-ranging survey of "long-distance specialists" prior to industrial revolution. The point I am trying to make here is similar, but issues from a historical and material context rather than a symbolic one.

[3] I have put 'travelers' in single quotes as a reminder that the designation is problematic, not only because people who do not use a prescribed technology are also mobile, but also because I have narrowed the definition of traveler to mean one who enjoys the freedom and flexibility of choice in her or his travel.

[4] The Counts' (1996) ethnography *Over the Next Hill: An Ethnography of RVing Seniors in North America* establishes a connection between freedom and mobility while discussing mobile communities. They write:

> Many North Americans believe that social change has resulted in the destruction of community. This concern is echoed by scholars who argue that although North Americans value mobility and privacy, these values deny us the opportunity to know each other well in casual, informal relationships. Our high regard for freedom and independence has robbed us of a sense of community, they tell us…RVers have fashioned communities that give them the sense of belonging and mutual interdependence that many North Americans say is missing from modern life. They do this while building their lives on mobility and independence, values they equate with freedom (1996:xvi).

CHAPTER 3

The Matter of History

In their concurrent century [with automobiles], motorcycles have changed little of the world. But they require a different scale by which to measure their change, a more personal one that registers on the ground of immediate experience.
Melissa Holbrook Pierson (1997:60)

There is no corner of life so private and personal that issues of race, class, color and culture do not penetrate it.
Deborah D'Amico-Samuels (1991:82)

At the turn of the twentieth century U.S. capitalism became more extensive and intensified in a climate of unprecedented American industrial capacity, military strength, and access to overseas and internal commodities and markets (American Social History Project 2000:20-119; Moore 2002:177-78). This turn-of-the-century expansion was in part driven by the internal combustion engine, which made its debut in 1885 as a means of individual transportation (Middlehurst 1988:10). People had grown accustomed to harnessing stationary steam engines to perform production-related tasks previously performed by muscle, wind, or water generated power. The application of a mechanical, motor-powered tool in the service of an individual's mobility, however ubiquitous today, was not a given in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among the questions that concerned those building and marketing motorcycles were why somebody would want to own one and who that might be. The American Motor Company, producers of the M.M. motorcycle, also produced *Sparks: A Motorcycle Monthly* in order to provide a

its self-promotion of the M.M. motorcycle. Speaking to the concerns of middle- and upper class audiences, it also provided a social framework into which riders could comfortably place themselves – "a natural sort of brotherhood among motorcycle riders" (Cook 1910:28). To the extent that their articles were chosen for publication or solicited by *Sparks'* editors, riders answered in detail the questions: who are riders and why do they ride. Riders who published articles in *Sparks* were white, middle class, or bourgeoisie men who had enough leisure time to ride for the pleasure of riding.

The following history of the company places *Sparks* in historical context and provides information about one of the early producers of a motorized tool for individual mobility. The rest of the chapter focuses on the riders who are the classed and gendered consumers of motorcycling; of constructions of 'nature' and 'culture;' and of mobility. The riders, in turn, are producers of classed and gendered knowledge about the nature of mobility at a particular time and space(s)/place(s) in U.S. history, and the people they met on their journeys 'away.'

A History of Marsh-Metz (M.M.)

Marsh-Metz (M.M.) motorcycles came into existence in Brockton, Massachusetts with the 1906 partnership of William Marsh and Charles Metz. Each man had produced his own motorcycle before merging their talents to manufacture and market roadsters for touring the as yet unpaved American countryside. William Metz had worked as a designer for the Orient bicycle company, which beginning in 1898 made a belt-drive motorcycle common to the period. In1902 Metz left Orient and introduced his own Metz

Motorcycle. William Marsh founded the American Motor Company and factory in Brockton in 1900 to produce the Marsh Motorcycle. The joining of the Marsh and Metz machines in 1906 (Wilson 1995:272-73) – and the present-day obscurity of the marque – could not be considered unusual for the early twentieth century when motorcycle marques proliferated in any workshop capable of strapping a gasoline engine to a bicycle frame. These companies and workshops would vanish in the wake of economic recession, war, and Ford's relatively inexpensive Model T (Middlehurst 1988:52-54). By creating a magazine aimed at selling motorcycles to the literate middle class, Marsh and Metz created a niche and recorded a unique social history and ideology of personal mobility in the United States from 1909 to 1912.

Sparks: *A Motorcycle Monthly* was first published in July, 1909. The magazine's format included a mix of travel writing by motorcyclists, direct marketing to customers, concerns associated with establishing a national dealer network, and technical information about M.M.'s internal combustion engine and its adjustment. The content of *Sparks* targeted motorcycle riders affluent enough to tour for pleasure, including potential riders from the ranks of bicyclists and members of the first and most influential lobby group for motorcyclists at that time, the Federation of American Motorcyclists (FAM). M.M. took every opportunity to market their product, emphasizing their motorcycle's utility to potential contractors such as the United States Army (Thompson 1909:15-17).

Sparks drew material from several sources within and outside the company. The editor, Robert G. Ewell, wrote pieces extolling the merits of riding any motorcycle and anticipating reasons for hesitation or ambivalence on the part of potential riders. M.M.'s

owners and *Sparks'* editor sought to provide detailed accounts in order to communicate their meaning of motorcycle mobility to riders:

> It is our aim to make this little publication so strong a factor in motor circles that without "SPARKS" the *social side of the sport* would lose its momentum, as your motor does when the Sparks cease in the cylinder
>
> All these little communications from readers will help to stimulate an interest and *foster a mutual acquaintance which will add to the pleasure of being a motorcyclist*. It is always beneficial for those with a common interest to compare notes, and it is the purpose of "SPARKS" to give all motorcycle enthusiasts an opportunity to do so in these columns (Sparks 1909a:2 italics mine).

Sparks' purpose was thus established: to sell motorcycles while generating social networks. These associations of riders, mediated by *Sparks* and motorcycle clubs, would produce meanings of motorcycles as unique tools of individuals' mobility. *Sparks*' marketing strategy was therefore to emphasize the social and leisure possibilities of riding. Bicyclists (AMA 2002) and four wheeled motorists (AAA 2002) had already established such a template for social interaction.

Articles and letters were also solicited from M.M. riders and dealers who attempted to build the leisure activity at its infancy as well as sell the motorcycles produced by M.M. These contributions give historical clues as to how motorcycling fits into a rapidly urbanizing time and place, where the gap widened between middle and working class people. Managers, accountants, and others among the ranks of highly paid office workers found their personal geographic and social mobility, as well as their financial security, greatly increased. Factory workers' and other industrial and non-industrial wage laborers' mobility was circumscribed by conditions requiring the sale of their labor.

These conditions included long hours, lay-offs, wage reductions, no overtime benefits and lower wages for 'women's jobs.' With the increased importance of mobility and incipient mass consumption, elites who were encouraged to motorcycle and the manufacturers of motorcycles articulated what they considered positive aspects of motorcycle travel.

Mass production was well under way by 1910. Clothing, furniture, food, and cleaning products were manufactured rather than produced 'at home.' Mass consumption, on the other hand, was quicker to develop for staple goods that could be produced cheaply (American Social History Project 2000:167-168). Mass consumption of motorcycles and other new forms of technology would require the significant pay increases North American workers won with the advent of industrial unions post World War I and the cold war economy after World War II. Expensive durable goods such as washing machines, however, had not yet supplanted home or craftshop-based production, just as the motorcycle had not replaced the horse, train, or trolley for working class people. In the case of M.M. motorcycles, *Sparks* marketed nature and travel as much as it sought consumers for its product.

Sparks' contributors were certainly not representative of all those who chose to ride "a motor" between 1909 and 1912. Writers received remuneration for their efforts that encouraged an emphasis on the M.M. and leisure travel: "for every letter published we will pay at the rate of $4.00 per article and $1.00 extra if accompanied by photo of rider and machine. The amount to be taken up in articles selected from our catalog of Motorcycle Accessories or part payment towards a new machine" (Sparks a 1909).

Kodak's 1900 introduction of the one-dollar Brownie box camera (American Social History Project 2000:202) introduced realism and an empirical quality to riders' travel reports. Capturing nature in the "tourist's gaze" (see Urry 2001) made representations of it appear solid and factual. In addition, travel reports containing photos literally put people in the picture, and thus marketed "the social side of the sport."

Serial trip reports, industry news, tips on how to sell M.M.s and technically oriented articles proffered an ideology of riding based in consumerism. Advertisements for better tires, sprung seats, lights, generators and other paraphernalia not yet standard equipment on motorcycles encouraged riders to purchase equipment that would make their roadsters more comfortable and better able to travel long distances (see Figure 1).

M.M. was not simply marketing a motorcycle, but a progressive ideology that nature could best be accessed through technology. Thus motorcycle travel promoted healthfulness and the motorcycle industry. The American Motor Company, in their final issue of *Sparks*, prefaced George B. Graves' 1912 account of *A Motorcycle Tour Through the Granite State* with a defensive note regarding the importance of writing about motorcycling, and therefore the 'need' to consume motorcycles and motorcycle mobility:

> It simply being a lifelong habit of Mr. Graves to preserve a graphic account of all his pleasure expeditions, recording them in his characteristic way, feeling that it more than doubles the pleasure to go over the pleasant memoirs in the years to come. Our object in putting our money into the printing and distribution of the story is simply to bring to readers' realization, what a delightful and wholesome sport motorcycling really is.

Among the ideas put forth in travel reports were the experience of nature and the

social importance of creating a common bond among motorcyclists. Foremost among the magazine's goals were to "[advertise] the merits of the world famous M.M. motorcycle" and to "stimulate an interest and foster a mutual acquaintance which will add to the pleasure of being a motorcyclist." (Ewell 1909:2). Their travel reports served to create an image of riding and riders that built on images of a changing world with changing needs.

Producing Space, Time, and Nature on a Motorcycle

The production of motorcycles (and other goods) in the United States required ready supplies of labor, raw materials, and markets. As large-scale industry intensified and the influence of capitalism spread through better transportation technology and its infrastructure, new divisions in spatial/social spheres emerged that nevertheless reflected the interconnections among different spatial scales (Moore 2002). Along with the physical infrastructure of roads, signage, and map-making, I include here motorcycle dealership networks and the social networks *Sparks* endeavored to develop. Work and home life experienced a sharp divergence, as did the use and conception of urban and rural areas as separate and unequal entities. Trains, cars, and motorcycles geographically linked urban and rural, work and home spheres, while dissociating them by idealizing places/spaces as having binary meanings and functions.

M.M. and other manufacturers played a role in constructing these conceptions in two ways. First, motorcycles provided individuals with motor power to extend commodified leisure time by 'shrinking' space. Motorcycles gave middle and upper class people the power to escape the city for less crowded, cleaner, more 'natural'

environs. The second point is closely related to the first. Transmission of how to effectively produce leisure time was accomplished through *Sparks*. In this sense *Sparks* was a forum for rider/writers that encouraged the idea of distinct spaces, these being more accessible to a motorcycle owner than to people who used mass transit or horses. *Sparks*' contributors offer two categories into which the reconceptualization of space fit as part of the production process: the construction of nature to facilitate the creation of leisure spaces for urbanites and the need for transportation in cities.

Recreating Nature

Nature, in *Sparks*, is a technologically simple place populated by quaint, unchanging people. It contrasted with crowded, busy, productive urban environments where the 'real' work of manufacturing drove human progress, and where the bourgeoisie resided (Moore 2002:189). For *Sparks'* rider/writers, nature ultimately served the needs of urbanites for leisure, healthful retreat from urban production centers, and production of food and labor that industrialization precluded in large cities.

In a quest to answer anticipated objections to motorcycling, *Sparks*' editorials emphasized the technological superiority of motorcycles (M.M. catalog 1909) and urban motorcyclists while playing on concepts of time, space, and nature. They published pieces by M.M. riders that validated their views. George B. Graves, *Sparks*' single most prolific writer enthuses in his serial, *Vacationing on a Motor for Health and Pleasure*, that he is "an ardent lover of nature and all sports that bring one into closer touch with her" (Graves 1909:5). Graves took up a "wheel" (motorcycle) in his early 50s. His

decision to ride was in part an outcome of his familiarity – and perhaps his discouragement with what he considered to be a lesser technology – the bicycle. His comments reflect his initial concerns and subsequent infatuation with motorcycles:

> I had no idea of ever riding it myself, for I distrusted them all; I, an old, experienced bicycle rider who for thirty years had never been without a mount of some kind, commencing away back in the seventies with the old, iron-tired velocipede, then through the successive developments of the wheel in turn; high, ordinary, star, safety, and eventually forsaking them all for the horse.
>
> Now there was something about the powerful little joygivers that rather held me in awe of them, but being of a somewhat venturesome nature, when my son went south, which was a few months after the purchase of the motor, leaving it on my hands, there was nothing for me to do but sell or ride it, so I determined to conquer it, though not being a mechanic it was rather an undertaking as there had always existed in my mind that a man must be a machinist in order to be able to control them.
>
> This as demonstrated in my case, proved something of a fallacy, for I started on the trip I am going to tell you about with absolutely no knowledge of a gas engine or any of its parts.
>
> This is the way the "lucky fool motorcyclist," as I have been designated, answered the call of the motor and became a rider of these space annihilators (Graves 1909:5-6).

Graves identifies himself as a man desirous of Natural spaces, a man searching for an idyllic Victorian landscape through technology. While riders may have used motorized technology to attain an experience of natural spaces, Graves and other middle class people did not necessarily have an intimate knowledge of machines. Graves and his counterparts were carriers of a new idea of nature as a place one traveled to with the aid of technology. Bourgeoisie riders only needed to utilize the technology for the purposes of acquiring and defining nature that motorcycle designers and mechanics understood. This was a conceptualization of nature as a

healthful playground accessible to urbanites through technology. Motorcycle travel served to contrast nature with urban environments, effectively localizing nature as 'rural.'

Graves' repertoire paints a picture of nature and the ways it was constructed from an urban point of view. In his serial, *Riding for Health and Pleasure*, nature is one of the pleasures available to urbanites through motorcycle technology's ability to annihilate space. Yet Graves perceives nature to be useless unless it produces health and pleasure for urbanites.

The following passages reveal how motorcyclists used their social positioning to take advantage of the unequal spatial construction they helped to create through their mobility. Some places embodied for Graves the industry and industriousness of nature put to good use:

> Here [in Rindge, New Hampshire] the utilitarian spirit of the farmer had converted the farmsteads into pleasure resorts for the townsick, and at the same time added to his store of sheckels, and the result of the combination was to be seen in the improved roads and their bordering farms (Graves 1910:26).

On a later trip outside of Rindge, Graves echoed these sentiments, again writing approvingly of the transformation of farms from food production into accommodations for tourists:

> Through this section there is a hopeful evidence of enterprise and prosperity. It having been found that better returns could be garnered from summer boarders than could be wrested from the soil, many of the old, wornout farms have been remodeled and fitted for the entertainment of those who, wearied with the dust, grime, noise and struggles of the city, seek a renewal of their vital forces in the woody retreats here opened to them (Graves 1912:26).

Other towns and stops revealed Graves' urban bias for the ways that people utilized technology to shape and define their environment. First, rural places and their inhabitants are seen as timeless entities through the various kinds of technology employed there and their relationships to nature:

> When I reached Milton I dismounted to have a look around and see what, if any, changes had taken place since I last visited it nineteen years previously in company with my wife, on a bicycle tour. Here was the same hotel, as unchanged as though it were yesterday, the brazen clang of the copper disk in the front hall summoned us to breakfast, and the village, too, seemed to have quietly drowsed, nestled in the protected hollow of the encircling hills (Graves 1910:20).

Graves surveys the town, standing above it and beside the motorcycle that had transported him quickly and efficiently to a place apparently untouched by time. He imagines an unchanging technology, and therefore timelessness, in referencing the "copper disk." He suggests that Milton's circumscribed location has left it preserved, as in his own memory. Although nineteen years had passed since Graves' last visit, Milton had gone on summoning its guests to breakfast by the periodic beating of a gong. Graves savors his memories, and also keeps them intact as he describes the town from a distant and elevated vantage point.

Continuing the theme of employing technology to better understand or utilize nature, Graves and his riding partner, Bob, stop at the farm belonging to his 'country sister:'

> One more short climb of about two miles, a final quick spurt up a little steeper slope, a turn from the road into a private driveway, and we were at the end of our Sunday riding, for this was my sister's farm. They were not expecting us, so the welcome was all the more manifest and hearty. The two dogs, Jack and Patsy, voiced their delight in a series of sharp, staccato yelps

> and violent tail wagging. We spent the rest of the day inspecting all the pastoral attractions, chief among which, and entirely new to me, was a wild goose and his mate. The female was setting while the male maintained a vigilant watch, and the way he hissed and snapped at any intruder was really quite alarming. Here I saw for the first time, milk run through a separator, the cream issuing from one spout, and the skim milk from another. We had the pleasure of eating, at tea time, some of the good housewife's butter that we could vouch for conformed absolutely with the pure food law's requirements. While in the pasture two colts came to the fence and eyed us inquiringly, and I started to focus the camera to catch them, but before I could get them in range they picked up their heels and tantalizingly galloped away, all novel and delightful experiences for a city-bred man. Yes, brother, get a motorcycle and let it carry you to where you can see what some of the wonders of nature and country life are like (1912: 13-14).

Graves' sister's farm is filled with a carefully nurtured life that provides for the needs of the people who live there as well as guests. Here the technology used to produce food and harness nature (and the idea of the natural world) bridged urban and rural areas in that food production utilized industrial technology. Food-producing technology characterized by a butter churn and a cream separator is a novelty for the urbanite Graves, but one that is familiar because he perhaps sees it as fundamentally urban technology validated by an urban aesthetic and the national regulatory authority of the Pure Food and Drug Act. Graves contrasts novel rural technology with his motorcycle and his camera. Through these technologies he almost 'captures' the experience and the strength of nature to resist urban incursions, symbolized by a galloping colt. The motorcycle thus becomes a tool for exploring agricultural ways of life embodying unfamiliar but 'appropriate' productive technologies.

While some people remain in another temporal universe and others produce food

while reproducing urban-centered images of nature, Graves sees the labor of some rural 'others' in nature as being better deployed in urban settings. That is, one of nature's products is people. If rural areas failed to live up to urban standards of surplus productivity, they could always supply labor:

> No wonder the enterprising youth of these towns want to leave them for more commercial centers, where there is some chance to further their ambitions, instead of browsing the kine in stagnating content.
>
> But many of the sturdy qualities transmitted from the hardy parents, who forced the boulder filled farms to yield them sustenance, are back of the successes of these country nurtured boys.
>
> In fact I know of a farmer's son from this town of Milton who, stirred by this same unrest, left for the city where his energies could find a wider, more productive field than the barren ones of New Hampshire, who is now operating the largest engraving business in this country today. So though they do not raise men to build up and develop their own towns, these beautiful little birthplaces produce brains and brawn that move the nation. Surmounting the top of the hill a long incline dipped sharply before us; not for a coast, and such a slide I never had before and I have been all through the White Mountains on a bicycle. Did you ever watch the swallow in its flight, or tumbler pigeons take their daring dips and not wish that you too could fly through the air and annihilate space with equal ease? Well here we have it all, a quick downward swoop, then a water bar slows you, then another fall, ah! There is a large puddle, the brake is quickly applied, you glide by and then, all over again until you reach the bottom. I shouted for joy, it was so exhilarating (Graves 1910:20).

Graves' description of the motorcycle serves a double purpose. The analogy of motorcycles and swallows naturalizes the technology and his use of it. At the same time, he naturalizes the use of rural labor for urban businesses and factories by drawing on Social Darwinism, and perhaps the belief that rural, native-born American stock is inherently "hardy."

As the gap closed during this developmental period of motorcycling between

'civilization' and nature, the separation of rural and urban functions increased. Riders were able to move swiftly from city to town with their space annihilating technology, effectively dissociating rural food production from urban industry. Space-time compression allowed urbanites to reinvent rural towns as oases of pleasure while downplaying the productive capacity of the land in favor of urban, technological production and the tourist trade. Nature's leisure possibilities, aesthetics, and productive capacity, from the perspective of a bourgeoisie urban man, issued from its capacity to produce food, leisure space, and labor for cities. Through his use of technology, Graves was able to visit small towns, commodified as natural spaces, and validate the rural places that comprised it. Rural places containing naturalized resources, themselves become a resource to be exploited for the labor contained within it, the 'exhilarating' leisure possibilities that were being invented, and the greenspaces lacking in urban areas.

Sparks made more direct economic arguments for riding a motorcycle when discussing mobility within urban areas. Rider/writers may not have seen the Northeastern U.S. countryside as a cultural construction, but they did note changes wrought in the landscape and rural economies by an influx of automobile and motorcycle tourists, as well as an exodus from rural areas to urban factory jobs. Similarly, faster, more flexible transportation (in terms of space and time), allowed men working in a location other than their homes to spend more time with their families.

Transport

Said Jim Dumps to his little wife
"I've got to go to town,

But for trolley cars I've got no use;
They shake me all around.
I elbow in the fearful din
And dangle by the strap,
Tho' if I sit down, it's ten to one
Some fool falls in my lap.
The car gets stuck, runs off the truck,
Or else the power dies,
And there it stays while people gaze
As tho' hipnotized [sic]."
(French 1910:42)

Transportation is by definition utilitarian. The mode of transportation chosen, however, depends on social organization in addition to available technology and the kinds of needs people have. At the turn of the century, as factories relocated just outside of city centers in an attempt to avoid labor activism (Moore 2002:186-87) and because of a shift from transporting commodities by water to transporting by train (American Social History Project 2000:29), commuters required transportation to and from their places of work. *Sparks'* editor spoke to potential riders whose perceptions of changing needs might sway them to buy a motorcycle:

> So this is March. The month when so many are on the fence. The question is, shall I ride a motorcycle during this coming summer? It is not wholly a question of money. There is a secondary consideration. The question is not, can I afford to own a motorcycle, but can I afford to be without one? Did you ever stop to sum up the advantages and disadvantages of a motorcycle as adapted to your own individual life?
>
> Take for instance the most common example, a man who is employed some distance from his home, possibly in the next town, or perhaps he lives in a rural district (as we all ought to.) Walking is out of the question. He must have some means of conveyance. If the electric or steam cars are handy he uses this means of transportation, if not he "keeps a team" and "drives" back and forth; or perchance he is one of the martyrs who pump a treadmill bicycle, if the distance is not long and the roads are level.

> All of these means of transportation have their disadvantages and objections. Most of us are only too familiar with the horrors of hanging by a strap for an hour in a stuffy car after a day's work, or breathing the foul atmosphere of a steam train on a sweltering summer day.
>
> There is not room here to discuss thoroughly the comparative advantages and disadvantages between a good motorcycle and other means of individual transportation, but just figure it out for yourself – both from a standpoint of pleasure and economy. You know what it costs you by your present method of transportation. Just compare it with the figures we shall quote further on. People are just beginning to wake up to the fact that the motorcycle, in its present degree of perfection, is destined to become the most common and favored means of transportation for the millions who make daily trips between their homes and their place of business. Its advantages are innumerable. It is the fastest, most economical, most comfortable, most conducive to health of body and mind – what more do you want (Sparks 1910d:1-2)?

Individual mobility did free those who could afford it from the perceived indignities and limitations of public transportation. As transportation, however, motorcycles have limits in temperate climates or regions. Motorcycles have a tendency, due to their inherently unstable nature, to fall over when confronted with ice and snowy conditions. Slow winter sales of the M.M. motorcycle suggest that most riders confined their trips and purchases of motorcycles to warmer months (Pickens 1909:18-21).

While the editor tries to make an argument for the motorcycle as the utilitarian vehicle of the motorized twentieth century, New England winters have never been conducive to two wheels. Most would-be riders at the turn of the twentieth century, like contemporary riders, needed alternative winter transportation. This quickly adds to the cost of commuting. In addition,

motorcycles require dry, fairly warm storage over the winter, or they will not function in the next riding season. The American Motor Company undoubtedly recognized motorcycles' limited utility in northern regions: a large sales office, repair shop, and dealership possessing over one hundred motorcycles and thousands of parts opened in Dallas, Texas in 1909 to serve as a distribution center for the American southwest and Mexico (Sparks 1909b:35-37).

But urban work life influenced motorcycle marketing in other ways. The factory whistle and the time clock had long since commodified time. Management studies codified it so that clerks, managers, and accountants might preside over unskilled and skilled workers' time (American History Project 2000:41-43; Gartman 1986:179). The motorcycle's ability to create time was therefore an alluring selling point for M.M.:

> There are many men who board near their work and only return home to their families once a week. If the distance were not too great they could return home each night on a motorcycle and save money at that. And yet there are others who "take their dinners" because they live a few miles away from home. This is only half living. Why continue when a 10 minutes' spin on a motor would take you home to dinner with time to spare? There is no question but that there are thousands of men in this country today who would derive great benefits by owning a motor, physically, economically and mentally. Are you one of them? (Sparks 1910e:2)

With the separation of work spaces and family spaces inherent to centralized manufacturing techniques, motorcycle manufacturers constructed a motorcycle culture, utilizing the relatively new concepts of leisure and commodification of time and space. Fundamental changes in notions of time and space were wrought as mass production factories and new technologies required a ready supply of labor. *Sparks* identified the

M.M. motorcycle as an elite tool for producing and consuming time and space, although these capacities alone did not make the motorcycle an object of commodity fetishism. An intervening step was required: the separation of home and work spaces, as well as the identification of rural, food producing spaces with nature, and the industrialized manufacturing centers of the city with culture.

Thus the cultural constructions of motorcycles as both leisure and transportation tools are bound up in production practices and the ideologies of nature, the family, space and time that riders reproduced. Through the 'annihilation of space,' *Sparks*' writers simultaneously constructed the motorcycle as a tool for the production and consumption of time, space, and nature.

Consuming Nature for Health and Leisure

Once produced for urban elites, nature and motorcycles were a means for consuming the world for health and leisure. This was primarily an urban and middle class world experiencing a separation from nature (while constructing nature as a leisure and health pursuit), a shift in the functions of the rural and the urban, and an increasingly 'classed' and 'gendered' daily existence.

Intellectual elites of the late 1800s, Henry David Thoreau among them, advanced the idea that an intimate engagement with nature through exercise and vegetarianism resulted in health benefits (Burbick 1994:62-65). The practice of these ideas by social and intellectual elites continued throughout the Progressive Era, (1900-1914), which was characterized by social reform of inequalities caused by expanding capitalism in the

United States. The movement addressed "cultural, economic, social, and political dislocations and inequities" (American Social History Project 2000:208). They suggested that the acceptance of industrialization, mass production and consumption were aesthetic choices that could be rejected. For the new bourgeoisie riders, motorcycles allowed them to overlook reform and concentrate on escaping stressful or onerous urban conditions. Few working or middle class people, however, had the luxury of turning down a paycheck.

The preservation of natural idylls carried on into the early twentieth century as industrialization intensified and capitalism became more extensive. The consumption of nature had the effect of conflating notions of health and leisure with each other and with rural spaces. Riders/writers of *Sparks* and fictional sources of the period cited health as a benefit of consuming the rural on two counts. First, city life, with its accompanying industrialization, could spoil the enjoyment of good health through its rapid pace and the ill effects of its byproducts. Secondly, the consumption of nature was thought to have salutary effects. In order to enjoy good health, urbanites were instructed to travel to rural areas where they could partake of fresh air and open spaces unavailable in industrialized cities. The leisure time to accomplish this task was to be simultaneously produced and consumed by riding a motorcycle.

Motorcycling drew its mystique, and motorcyclists drew their definitions and meaning of space and place from similar sources of contestation and tension as those surrounding the creation of other leisure spaces. The entire concept of leisure space was new to people who lived in cities suddenly industrialized with Taylorist manufacturing,

filled with migrant workers, and mechanized modes of production quite separate from former centers of production in home and community work spaces. Public parks of the era functioned as boundaries between upper class neighborhoods and their working class counterparts as semi- and unskilled workers filled neighborhoods. Reformers of the day created a formal, Victorian landscape architecture unsuited to the ball games and 'boisterous' activities of the working class. Obtaining green space within increasingly dense urban areas was a source of struggle, as working class people demanded the location of parks suitable for picnics, ball games, and social liaisons between members of the opposite sex be accessible (Rosenzweig 1987:214-230).

Industrialization ushered in a further spatial separation of home and work, while essentializing leisure space and time as things to be consumed. The process by which an essential and then commodified rural came to be defined in terms of the urban desire for nature is complex. Freedom from the urban center in the form of time/space collapse offered an alternative – and perhaps a more "authentic" one – to the engineered greenscapes of city parks. Motorcyclists' engagements with nature in an "unspoiled" countryside represented the antithesis of urban areas and their deleterious affects on health.

In the Tom Swift adventure series of the period, which unabashedly celebrated the progressive and liberating qualities of new technologies, the medical sanctioning of motorcycling winds through the story of *Tom Swift and His Motor Cycle* (Appleton 1910). Our young hero, Tom, acquires his motorcycle from a man whose doctor "thought riding around the country would benefit [his] health" (Appleton 1910:32). The

rider/patient unfortunately crashes in front of Tom's house, discrediting his doctor's opinion that "the machine would do [his] liver good." The rider/patient tells Tom "I'd as soon be without a liver entirely as to do what I've done to-day. I am done with motorcycling" (Appleton 1910:33). In the end, the rider/patient returns in an automobile because "my doctor insisted that I must get out in the open air. I'm too stout to walk, and I can't run. The only solution was in an automobile, for I never would dream of a motor-cycle. I wonder that one of mine hasn't run away with you and killed you" (Appleton 1910:198). Some motorcycle adventures ended badly. Yet the consumption of nature for health and leisure (through technology) remains a consistent theme.

Sparks proclaimed its interest in the health and leisure agenda by asking its readers "What is worth while?"

> This is the great question we all must face. We must all answer it for ourselves. There are as many different views and as many different answers as there are people. The question might be answered for all by saying that anything which makes us and those around us more happy and contented is worth while.
>
> But there is one thing certain – upon this point most of us agree – we must all have a little recreation, a little pleasure, a "hobby" as some call it. Something to divert the mind from the cares and responsibilities of our work, and in the case of indoor workers, especially, something to bring us in touch with the open country where the lungs may be filled with pure, fresh air, where we can get in closer touch with nature. This is not only worth while, but it is a necessity if we want to get the best out of this mortal life and avoid becoming narrow and unhappy in our thoughts and inner life (Sparks 1910d:4).

The agenda is pleasure; more specifically, the 'healthful' pursuit of nature – glossed here as the attainment of rural space by urban people (geographic and social distance from cities) and an idyllic as well as ideological place ('open country,' someplace with 'pure, fresh air'). *Sparks* (Sparks 1910e:2) continued with this refrain, playing on a 'manly'

need to dismiss mental illness or depression as a self-indulgent by-product of urban living:

> Then boy, buckle up, stick your jaw out; you've got another fight on your hands. You fought others and won; now fight yourself, and to the finish, too. And it isn't any frame-up for half the gate receipts and part of the profits of the moving picture rights, either. It's a fight to a finish. No rules – bite, kick, scratch, gouge, strangle, trip, stamp – anything to win. Your manhood is hanging in the balance. First, take yourself in hand. Talk to yourself, reason with yourself. Use logic, entreaty, eloquence. In vain? Then lick yourself, pound yourself into a pulp. Do it till both your eyes are in mourning, nose gazing steadily at your ear, lip cut, body swollen. All this metaphorically, of course. For the only trouble with you is that you've got the "blues." ...What's the cause? Often overwork, very often indigestion, sometimes unsatisfactory environment, occasionally sickness or trouble at home, now and then financial difficulties, and quite frequently a realization of how far the work accomplished falls short of what you hoped for and planned on and determined to do. But whatever their cause, you've got 'em. They're with you good and plenty, and the next thing to do is to get rid of them. Now the method.
>
> The present attack of the blues will soon change to happiness, song will follow sigh, laughter succeed weeping, courage will take the place of quaking, action will supercede doubting. But how? In two ways, by change of scene and exercise – change of scene to help the mind, exercise for the body.

Two spatial dichotomies are 'prescribed' by the bloody-minded writer for men who are battling their own minds. The first is the separation of urban and rural, embodied in the idea that a 'change of scene,' ostensibly from urban workspaces to rural leisure spaces, would have a positive affect on health. Work and home spaces are clearly delineated, with poor mental health mainly attributed, directly and indirectly, to work. The negative effects on health due to work are found in 'financial difficulties,' too much work, and dissatisfaction with work. Many workers experienced profound dissatisfaction with their jobs in the early twentieth century. Taylorist manufacturing required an upholsterer, for

example, to drive the same tacks hundreds of times a day rather than performing all of the operations required to turn out a finished piece. The result was mind-numbing boredom, mental strain, and injuries (American Social History Project 2000:198-99; Peterson 1987:43). However, middle class workers who could afford a motorcycle might escape from these conditions, as the author suggests.

Like the first passage in this section, the one above places the onus of wellness on the individual. Men with 'the blues' are then transformed into consumers through the writer's prescription:

> The method? Now we're getting down to brass tacks, in the expressive language of the day.
>
> An M.M.
>
> The benefits to be obtained from an M.M. are many and varied. While it might not seem at first glance that there was very much exercise to be obtained from a motorcycle, you must remember that the principal benefit of exercise is the fresh air which is pumped into the lungs. Fresh air in abundance, and air of a purer quality, can be obtained on a motorcycle trip, however short, than could be secured by walking.
>
> Further than that, there is a valuable by-product of the motorcycle, and that is the vibration, which, while not strong enough to be objectionable, is, nevertheless, sufficient to be extremely beneficial. But entirely aside from any exercise afforded by the motorcycle are the benefits of the additional time spent with nature, away from the hustle and grind and greed of the city. Such exercise will freshen and quicken and strengthen us, show us how petty and unreal most of our foolish fears are, and send us back to our work with a deeper conception of the meaning of life, our duty to ourselves and to our neighbors.
>
> In a brief time one can be whirled from the smoke and grime, the rush and roar of the city, to the land of green fields, of cool, shady woods, where blossoms perfume the air and gladden the eye (Sparks 1910e:3).

While spaces are contrasted by sight, smell, and sound, time also factors into health. It

should be available in an acceptable quantity, implying that the motorcycle, unlike any other conveyance, can supply time, and therefore a sufficient kind of space, to its urban rider:

> There is nothing that will add so much to our happiness and contentment of mind as to get away from everything, to get way out in the open country many miles from the scenes and activities of our every day lives – not two weeks out of the year – not once every six months – that is too seldom to have any effect. What we all need is to take a few minutes every pleasant day, or at least once a week, and "go off." Get the habit – it's a sure cure for "the blues." It is worth while – you will eat better, sleep better, you will think better and be better, and if this is not worth while, what is?
>
> Now, then, what are you going to do about it? You believe it – you believe that this is true. You would like to follow out the suggestion. If you are like most men you are neglecting this side of your life. A man's life is made up of habits – you have been neglecting the out-door recreation habit. You have not been giving even a small proportion of your time each day to this most important of all habits. You have thought of it many times yourself, but somehow have not seen just how you could work it in with your every day life. Probably for the lack of some means of conveyance, you do not own a satisfactory vehicle to take you around quickly, cheaply and safely. But you no longer have that excuse. The M.M. will remedy that. Then it will be up to you. There is nothing like the M.M. to give you the proper amount and the proper kind of daily recreation. On a motorcycle you can go to a different place every time, this giving a variety to the scene; and if you have an M.M. you can get there and back every time and feel satisfied each time you return from a little trip. There is no other means of individual transportation offered that will fill the bill in every way. What else can we find that is always ready for immediate use, that costs so little to run, that requires so little attention, that covers so many miles in so short a time and still is within the reach of most any man earning ordinary wages. Think it over, talk it over and then send in your order for an M. M. (Sparks 1910d:2-3).

In removing themselves from urban centers, motorcyclists were able to take control of how they spent their time and where they were able to travel. Ultimately, their consumption of motorcycles and their accessories, the space and accommodations of rural areas, and the labor flooding into urban factories celebrated the machine's ability to

give its rider the power over and the experience(s) of time and space to produce their own meanings of the world as industry increasingly proscribed the meanings of time and space (i.e. work, family, leisure). Access to the power of the motorcycle to choose speed and direction had particular kinds of restrictions attached to it. These restrictions issued from industrialization and affected who had access to motorcycle mobility.

(Im)Mobilizing Class and Gender

Historically, North American motorcycle mobility has been the provenience of middle and upper class white men. The construction of riding as a leisure pursuit necessitated a great deal of disposable income for the purchase of a motorcycle, its maintenance and travel expenses. Those who wrote to *Sparks* could not only afford these expenses, but managed to index riding as male and naturalize their elite perspectives.

Women accounted for only a handful of motorcycle riders in the earliest days of touring, although the participation of these few are today held up as an example of the inclusiveness of motorcycling (e.g. Holbrook Pierson 1998; Maxwell 1998).

Class

Between 1900 and 1910, 'native' farmers flocked to American cities for the industrial, clerical and managerial jobs, particularly in the automobile industry, that promised entry into a middle class, or at least the ability to save some capital to provide a cushion against poverty (Peterson 1987:12). Motorcycle transportation for working men was rationalized by an idealized and naturalized family form, where a spatial division

between home and work also implied a sexual division of labor. Middle and upper class travelers stayed in lodgings for an entire summer, sometimes traveling throughout a region but more often remaining in one place for the season. Men would often return to work during the week, visiting on weekends or only for the duration of their summer vacation.

Motorcyclists approaching summer lodgings traditionally occupied by summer vacationers faced discrimination from members of their own classes and innkeepers despite riders' bourgeoisie or upper class status signaled by their ownership of an expensive motorcycle. Graves and his riding partner, Bob, regularly stayed the night at hotels and inns. Sometimes innkeepers refused them a room, however, because other patrons expected motorcyclists to look rich, even when riding a motorcycle:

> The signals of closing day were now beginning to flame in the western sky and we began to seek a resting place for the night. Just as we were commencing to feel a bit uneasy, we came to a somewhat imposing looking hostelry. The piazza was filled with a well-dressed crowd, who were evidently sojourning for the season. "This looks good to me," said Bob as he walked toward the steps. A very stylishly dressed female creature arose and raising her lorgnette, with elevated eyebrows, superciliously surveyed him from top to toe. My, what a polar freeze out! With a truly courtier like sweep of his (unplumbed) cap, Bob advanced and innocently asked, "Are you looking for anything, Madam?" With haughty disdain, she turned, with her chin at an angle of forty-five degrees, and swept into the house.
> In the meantime, I was negotiating with the clerk for a night's lodging and food for two and was about to conclude the deal, when Bob put in an appearance with his khaki disreputables and again it was all off. "They had no room, all full, very sorry, etc."
>
> We turned disgustedly away and I trimmed Bob for fair for being a spoil sport and not keeping in the background. I asked him what he proposed to do now that we had lost our chance there. He planned that we should ride on until we came to another house of entertainment, when he would ride by, returning later in the evening and I with my new stylish dust and rain-proof outfit should do the soliciting (Graves 1912:22-23).

Graves was certain that Bob was not the problem, but his clothing that marked him as working class in spite of his motorcycle. At the next hotel, Bob made an entrance Graves found more acceptable:

> I secured a room with two beds at the Cutter House and waited for Bob to show up. When he finally came, behold, he was arrayed in the best sporting suit he could find in the stores of the town. He said he had stood for being introduced as "my friend, the blacksmith" about as long as he could. My but what a difference a good clean suit makes in a man even when motoring (Graves 1912:23).

The American Motor Company's rather obvious marketing aims in publishing *Sparks* point to riders' and the company's increasing interest in the consumption of intensified mobility in the form of the motorcycle, leisure space, and what *Sparks* presents as simplistic rural culture disconnected from urban capital. While many mass-produced products relied on advertising to encourage brand loyalty and therefore insulate producers from competition (American Social History Project 2000:180), M.M. created an exclusive 'lifestyle market.' *Sparks* aimed for an audience who wanted dependable touring machines (Sparks 1909f:4) and charged $ .50 for a yearly subscription to their publication, limiting access to the magazine to literate, wealthy travelers. M.M. did not seek to increase actual ridership by lowering the price of their motorcycle, for it was built to be a luxury vehicle. Instead, they defined, implicitly and explicitly, the class parameters of who should own such a vehicle.

Gender

Motorcycle accessories of the early twentieth century not only made the rider

safer (in the case of headlights) and more comfortable (with the addition of sprung seats), but provided for women's comfort and inclusion – as passengers. *Sparks'* experiment with creating a community of highly mobile, pleasure-seeking riders (as opposed to racers or those involved in other contests of skill) includes a very few women. The occasional upper class woman hobbled by voluminous skirts and feathered hat toured with her husband in a sidecar. Even fewer women were themselves riders. Four men wrote about their female passengers, usually their wives. During the entire publication series only one woman, Mrs. H.G. Smith of Detroit, Michigan, actually wrote to *Sparks* regarding her own riding.

With *Sparks'* demographics and the general paucity of women rider/writers in mind, most of the women discussed here are seen through the eyes and writing of the men in their lives. Like Holbrook Pierson, I do not have interviews, letters, or any other material from the early twentieth century that directly explains why women were under-represented compared to men. English and later U.S. manufacturers did attempt to tap women's wealth with direct advertising to women (Middlehurst 1988:63), which should have increased the number of women who drove their own machines if riding was a purely economic activity. But any notion of women's initial involvement or lack of it necessarily involves piecing together women's social, cultural, and economic positioning at a particular time and place, and then projecting the relationships implied there onto motorcycling.

In working class households at the turn of the century, women's income from factory work, taking on boarders, and homework was often applied to communal needs

(Sacks 1993). Bourgeoisie women would have been able, through a husband, father, or other man who managed her financial affairs, to purchase a motorcycle for their own use. Apparently a married woman's participation was contingent upon the approval of her husband. Mrs. H.G. Smith, whose letter appears below, belongs to a two-motorcycle family. This is what she had to say:

> I accompanied my husband on a ten day's vacation through the country in Michigan and I went everywhere he did, through some of the worst sand roads that I ever saw. We had clay roads, muddy roads, new turnpike roads, old turnpike, middle aged turnpike, and pike. When I would strike the sand I would pike right through it for I had the power *that is the motor power*. I never was stuck for want of power to pull through. My machine has turned half way around lots of times and tried to throw me off, and on one occasion it turned all the way around, but I turned around, too, so as to be agreeable. One thing I like when I go out with my machine is to be agreeable. If my M.M. really insisted on going in the ditch, sooner than be disagreeable, I would go with it, but it has been pretty good about that. One time I was riding on a cowpath, and the path crossed a big ditch which I did not see until I was right up to it, and could not stop in time, but it did no harm. I got up and pulled my machine out of the ditch and went on. Another time my husband was ahead of me. It had rained the night before and the roads were quite muddy. We came to a culvert that was over a ditch about 6 feet deep and no railing; my rear wheel skidded and threw the front wheel around so it went over the end of the bridge. I stepped off the machine, the engine caught on the end of the planks and saved it from going down about six feet in a beautiful cushion of mud and water. No harm was done.
>
> On that same trip I rode my M.M. over five hundred miles and had no other accidents and absolutely no machine trouble. I have ridden my M.M. Magneto Special over a year and it has not cost ten cents for repairs of any kind. The only thing that I do not like about it is that it will not run without gasoline and oil, but it don't [*sic*] use much of that. I had my second M.M. two years ago. I had an M.M. Battery Ignition which I rode one season with good results, but my husband desired to get me a Magneto Special.
>
> When the Detroit Automobile Dealers Association was to have their Glidden tour parade July 20, 1909, they invited the motorcyclists to participate, which I, with several others did, and I won first prize. The large object right back of me in the small picture is a Cadillac Auto representing the landing of Cadillac in Detroit. It took first grand prize for the best decorated auto. The prize was

> a $100 cut glass punch bowl with 12 glasses. My motorcycle was decorated with yellow and purple violets and 40 yards of baby ribbon. Wrapped on the frame were the initials D.M.C. (Detroit Motorcycle Club) also on the side of the tank and on the chain cover. My prize was a motorcycle lamp and generator.
>
> I take a great deal of pleasure in motorcycling and find it a healthful and enjoyable out-door recreation (Smith 1910:19-22, emphasis in original).

Smith goes to great lengths to point out that the power of motorcycling is, in fact, the power of the motorcycle. Yet, her point obscures the way that the use of such power was a profoundly classed and gendered experience. Unlike the male rider/writers above, she did not see or, perhaps sought to downplay social and geographical relationships as a source of power. Graves, for example, describes differences and power differentials (in which he is implicated) between urban and rural areas. Smith's letter initially indicates that only her motorcycle's relationship to her matters. Although her visits to ditches and mud puddles could certainly be read as satire, she 'obliges' the bike and goes where 'it' takes her. Given her social positioning, the incongruity of Smith's stated passivity with her actions is perhaps not surprising.

Still, Smith is an accomplished rider and lets her reader know that she is capable of riding great distances under adverse conditions. Sacks (1993:16-17) offers an explanation for contradictory notions in the exercise of power that occur between working class and bourgeois women:

> On their income alone, neither [working class] mothers nor daughters could support themselves, much less participate in the commercial sphere of leisure life which began to emerge in turn-of-the-century cities. Even though they were economically vulnerable and legally lumped with children as dependents of men, mothers and daughters each resisted in their own way the dominant culture's concept of femininity, which made success as a woman

> contingent upon "successful" management of dependence on a man. In the face of the odds, daughters claimed adulthood, their own sexuality and entitlement to the pleasures of working-class urban recreational life. Mothers likewise claimed adulthood on the basis of their labor and place in the community.

Sacks' argument can be extended to the classed and gendered power found in motorcycling. Upper class women riders and their male counterparts had similar economic access to motorcycles, but women were still dependent upon their husbands for the privilege. Smith mentioned getting a new motorcycle, the Magneto Special after riding the Battery Ignition model for a year. According to M.M.'s 1910 catalog, the Magneto Special was the top-of-the-line model. Smith is saying, in effect, that her husband is willing and able to purchase for her the best motorcycle available with which she can engage in a bourgeoisie leisure activity and claim a place in bourgeoisie culture.

Through *Sparks*, at least, other women's experiences must be inferred. Those passages with the greatest detail of how women were involved have focused on a sexual division of labor. A poem following Graves' first installation of "Riding for Health and Pleasure" indicates that women and men often maintained separate modes of mobility:

A Letter from Wifey
Any Summer Resort, July 1
Dear Hubby:
Close the windows when it rains,
Send a check.
Feed the cat at any pains,
Send a check.
Water daily all the plants,
Send a check.
Let no other dames entrance,

Send a check
Shut the house up tight at night,
Send a check.
Every day a letter write,
Send a check.
Don't with ashes carpet strew,
Send a check.
Do not work too hard, but do
Send a check.
With love, Wifey

The poem illustrates that gender relations of Victorian middle class society structured motorcycle riding as much as any other activity. "Wifey," comfortably ensconced at the family summer home or vacation spot, not only reminds her man that she is entitled to and requires his support, but also that he must perform the household's unpaid work, or supervise its completion, in her absence. In addition, she asserts her sole right to "hubby's" resources. Upper class women had the opportunity to extend their leisure activities to rural resort areas, which they usually accessed by means other than a motorcycle. Graves' wife and daughter traveled by train for their family's two-week summer vacation destination 14 miles east of the Connecticut River. The mobility of the Graves women stressed safety and the destination rather than the journey.

When women did travel by motorcycle, they were most often passengers. One couple honeymooned on their M.M., escaping hoards of well-wishers in a sidecar rig. Edward V. Brewer (1909:6), author and groom, writes "Our time was our own and our home wherever we made it, so we decided to stop right here for the night." The groom from St. Paul, Minnesota tells us the menu for the happy couples' wedding supper: "Erbswurst (pea soup), fried trout, bacon on the side, mashed potatoes (evaporated),

biscuits baked in a collapsible tin reflecting oven, and coffee." The couple prepared elaborate meals and carried large quantities of food, in addition to "[a] waterproof tent, air mattress, axe, fishing-tackle and firearms...one fry-pan set into another; into these two cooking pots, then the coffee-pot containing cups, bowls, knives, forks, spoons, etc., all aluminum" (Brewer 1909:6). Edward Brewer gives no clues as to whether a sexual division of labor was employed, perhaps because it was not important to him, but more likely because "women's work" on the road entailed the same responsibilities women undertook "at home." He does not mention who caught the trout, cooked the feast, cleaned it up, and repacked the equipment. Certainly the specialized camping equipment was expensive, and the Brewers were not "roughing it."

Women's experience of leisure time depended a great deal on their marital status and class. Unmarried middle class women were constrained by social mores dictating their modes of mobility and their inclusion into normalized bourgeoisie or working class cultures. In the case of motorcycling elites, women's marriages opened the door to individualistic leisure possibilities outside of urban centers.

History Matters

In *Sparks*, riders are presented as a type of person willing to pursue a mode of travel reflecting elite social values. These included literacy, travel as an intellectually stimulating and knowledge-producing experience (as seen in travelogues and photos taken by motorcyclists) for the traveler, and the ability to comment on and construct these experiences in a way that legitimizes their ability to comment and construct while

ignoring how they came to have such power (Pratt 2001). Upper middle class urbanites were interested in touring distances, and were encouraged to see fellow riders as a special group based on their consumption habits. M.M. riders were those (almost exclusively) men who could afford to own a leisure tool when unskilled laborers could not support a family of 5 working 12 hours a day (American Social History Project 2000:176).

Class and gender have always been deeply rooted in who rides a motorcycle and to where. In the early twentieth century, elites riding motorcycles headed for rural areas where they could enjoy the fresh air. Here urban dwellers were encouraged to consume the rural by medical doctors and their own certitude in their right to consume it. Rural tourist riders, the very people who owed their enhanced (compared to unskilled laborers) livelihoods to capitalist production redefined rural places and people in terms of their utility for and subordination to cities and urbanites. Rural areas were experiencing a conversion from small-scale food production to the production of nature, labor, and healthful spaces – leisure spaces – for and by urban travelers. The production and consumption of nature through capital's 'annihilation of space' continue to play out in the lives of contemporary riders.

Figure 1: Advertisement in *Sparks* for a Sprung Saddle

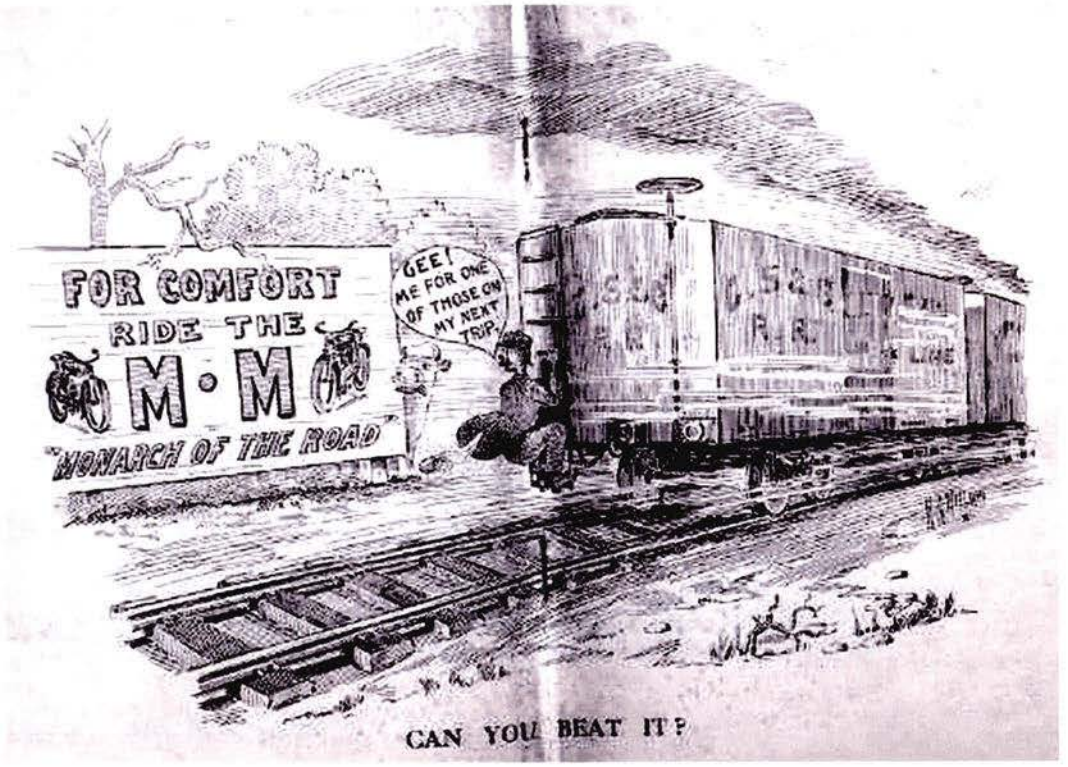

Figure 2: *Sparks* Cartoon Depicting Transportation 'Choices': "Gee! Me for one of those on my next trip."

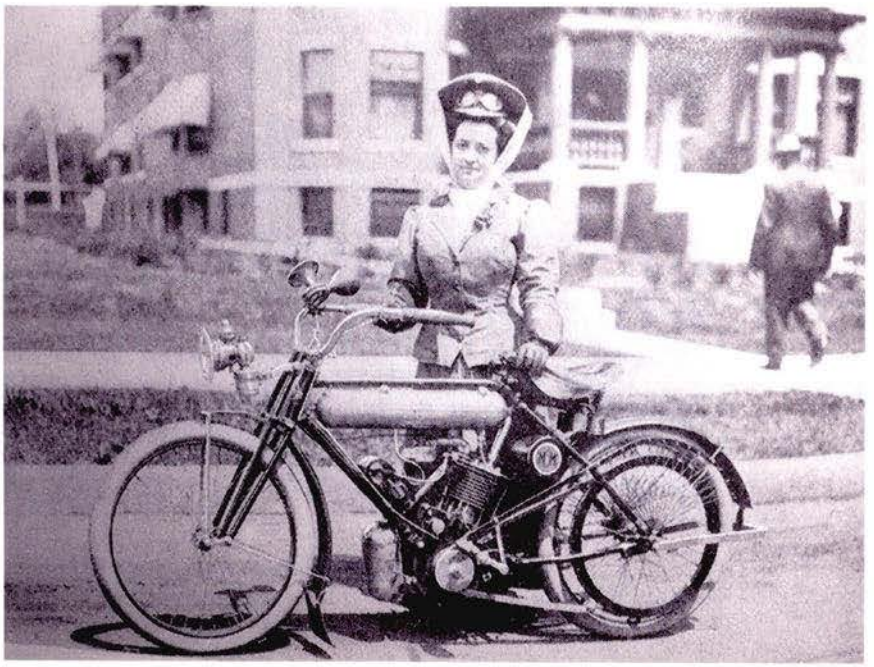

Figure 3: Mrs. H. G. Smith

Figure 4: Mrs. H. G. Smith Riding Sidesaddle

Figure 5: Edward V. Brewer and His Bride

CHAPTER 4

Meeting the 'Local(s)'

Marina and Wayne are the 'locals' in the title of this chapter, as well as the subjects of it. 'Local' and 'locals' are problematic terms because they tend to obscure modes and inequalities of mobility in 'dwelling,' as well as the situatedness of riders and the contexts of their mobility. I use them here to call attention to Marina and Wayne as individual riders whose lives have bridged both rural and urban areas; as members of an industrial workforce in and around Detroit, Michigan; and as healthcare 'consumers' who resist the geographic, economic, and personal limitations that the U.S. biomedical system (and also the cancer for which Wayne has been treated) have imposed on their mobility. Marina and Wayne are 'locals' in the sense that I have focused on them as individual riders who are highly mobile motorcyclists because of and despite these positionings.

In order to produce a historical and spatial understanding of motorcycle mobility, I compare Marina's and Wayne's experiences to *Sparks* and the Progressive Era that brought about mass production and the beginnings of mass consumption, including the production and consumption of nature. Like George Graves and his *Sparks* contemporaries, Marina and Wayne produce, reproduce, and consume ideas of Nature through motorcycling.

In addition to Marina's and Wayne's enactment of Progressive Era ideals, I discuss mid-century occurrences in motorcycling because events in motorcycling at this time influenced academic rider/writers' constructions of motorcycle culture as well as

Marina's and Wayne's identities as motorcyclists. By historically connecting Marina's and Wayne's mobility to *Sparks*, I confront three ideas put forward by Maxwell and Wolf that I presented in Chapter 2: 1) that World War II and its following economic boom was the singular and formative event in contemporary North American riders' social history; 2) that riders form a culture or subculture that has nothing to do with "how they get there" in the larger sense of historical and material considerations – mass production and consumption, the separation of rural and urban functions, and how mobility is classed and gendered; and 3) that riding is essentially an "nonspatial" activity that both reflects and provides for the needs of a community of post-industrial, baby-boomer riders.

The Marina and Wayne story does not fit neatly into the idea of motorcycle culture as a community or bound group with mid-century origins. Instead, their mobility points toward the continuities and discontinuities that arise from capital. Although Marina's and Wayne's daily relationships with work and the U.S. biomedical establishment differ considerably from *Sparks'* riders, the meanings that turn-of-the-century riders reproduced about space, time, nature, health, and leisure continue to have an impact on their mobility.

A History of Marina and Wayne

Marina and Wayne began riding motorcycles in 1976 at the ages of twenty-nine and thirty, respectively. Although Wayne was interested in riding, they could not afford to buy a motorcycle or travel before then. Instead they worked to attain economic security. Wayne completed his tool and die apprenticeship at Ford Motor Company in 1969. Marina left her job at General Motors' headquarters in Detroit to raise her

daughters. She returned to work at General Motors when they reached school age. Wayne earned very little as an apprentice, but Marina organized their lives and accounted for every penny they spent. By 1974 they had saved and borrowed from Wayne's grandmother enough money for a down payment to build a house on three acres in Highland, Michigan. Marina and Wayne are middle-class in the sense that they own their home, and that they have acquired savings, investments, and pensions that enable them to stop or reduce the hours they must devote to paid work. While they have achieved their goal of economic security, their worldview is firmly constructed from working class sensibilities that emphasize the value of skills in a deskilled and deskilling industrial workforce.

Marina

Marina is an accomplished motorcyclist. Before learning to operate a motorcycle in 1985 at the age of 37, she rode pillion[1] with Wayne. In 1985 Marina bought a new 800cc BMW, which was 'set up' (having the riding position, color, luggage, and motor) to suit Wayne in the event that she didn't like riding after all. In 1987 she became a certified motorcycle safety instructor. In 2002 she is a veteran instructor of several Experienced Rider Courses offered by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, she teaches at annual National BMW rallies and regional programs. Her involvement in the formal BMW organization also included her membership in two chartered BMW MOA clubs: the BMW Touring Club of Detroit and a non-regional club with members from all over the United States and Canada known as Ride & Party, whose name makes a credo self-explanatory.

Marina has kept a riding journal since 1990. In it she documents the states (49) she has ridden by herself and with her husband, Wayne, favorite routes, riding conditions, motel reservations, and her activities when she is not on her bike. Her international trips include a tour of Mexico in 1994 with a women's only motorcycle tour group and riding across Canada in 1998. In 1988 the Riders Advanced Training School (RATS) offered a women's only racing school at the racetrack in Gratin, Michigan, which Marina attended. Marina attended track school five times to become a faster and better rider. The father and son instructors, Reg and Jason Pridmore, called her "I-lean" because she was able to lean her motorcycle so far over in corners.

In 1986, a year after Marina began riding her own motorcycle, she quit her job with General Motors and began a bachelor's degree in Training and Development. Part of Marina's reason for leaving GM involved the quality of her time: she says exhaustion would have curtailed her riding if she had continued as an administrative assistant at the General Motors Proving Grounds. "Part of it," she adds, "probably was I hated the job."

At this point in her life, in 2002, she does consulting work as a management trainer, sits on the board of the BMW Motorcycle Owners of America Foundation and tries to navigate her husband and daughters through the cancer that has stolen her family's peace of mind and changed the meanings they attribute to their mobility.

Wayne

Wayne does not relate motorcycling to quantitative accomplishments in the same way Marina does (number of states ridden through, years of riding, number of solo trips taken). He issues stories about people other than himself and events and places he has

witnessed. His stories carry lessons and always direct his listener to the importance of attaining high levels of skill and knowledge in motorcycle riding. In his characteristically self-deprecating words, he has "been around" (traveled) and done some "running and gunning" (road racing) with riders who approach motorcycle travel from varied perspectives, some that differ from his own ideas of riding. These include "lifestyle guys" of Detroit's west side outlaw gangs; the fast, long distance, knowledgeable "poverty riders" who crisscross the United States, Mexico and Canada all year, every year following the weather and their own economic fortunes; and members of AMA sanctioned clubs.

Wayne sees himself as an "independent" – a rider who does not owe his loyalty to any riding organization or club. He does not identify himself as a "member" of any organization, although he belongs to the same clubs as Marina. For him, motorcycling is an individualistic pursuit. Wayne enjoys the company of other riders 'locally' and on the road, but insists that no club dictates how he rides or performs in any other area of his life.

Some working class riders of the 1950s to the present (and the Harley Davidson Corporation) embraced the slogan "live to ride, ride to live." Riders who did not conform or appear to conform to the separation of rural and urban or home and work spheres that had been laid out at the turn of the century were branded outlaws by the print media and Hollywood. These riders chose to live at the margins, taking jobs as needed and camping. Riders who "opted out" were eventually demonized in popular culture.

In contrast to people who "live to ride and ride to live," Wayne's mobility was dependent on his job and his union. Wayne worked at Ford Motor Company for 31

years, spending most of his time as a journeyman tool and die maker in the building generally called "The Rouge," which he called "The dirtiest, smelliest factory in the world." In 1966, after graduation from Wilbur Wright Technical high school, where public school students spent half of their time learning a trade useful to Detroit's industrial base, he passed the Ford Motor Company's rigorous apprenticeship entrance test. The house that he and Marina built on three wooded acres of former pastureland is a continuing source of pride and peace for him. Oaks, hickories, Jack pines and broadleaf softwoods are all carefully nurtured for generations of people whom he will never meet. To attain this space, he drove first an hour, then 90 minutes one way to work every day as suburbs spread north and west of Detroit's urban hub and traffic grew more congested.

Wayne's parents moved to Detroit when his father, a plasterer, returned from the European theater after World War II. His mother was from New Jersey, and his father from the rural farming community of Atlas, Michigan. Their two-bedroom house situated in Detroit's west side would eventually shelter three children, Wayne's parents, grandparents, a cousin, and his aunt and uncle. The "family farm" that belonged to Wayne's great-grandfather and then his great uncle's family in Atlas, Michigan provided game and a recreational outlet for the household. All male members contributed to the household economy through wage work, mainly in the auto industry and construction work that flourished or dried up depending on the state of the auto industry.

Producing Space, Time, and Nature on a Motorcycle

Since the 1980s a new group of North American bourgeoisie became attracted to motorcycling. These riders have the economic power to consume space, time, and a

"motorcycle lifestyle" without the experiences, skills, or knowledge that working class riders value. The "new riders" buy motorcycle touring packages to "exotic" global touring destinations such as Africa, Iceland, and Peru, or rent motorcycles and travel on their own. Motorcycle manufacturers such as Harley have realized that sales from accessories and apparel can easily outstrip motorcycle sales, and thus the lifestyle accoutrements of motorcycle culture (however the individual rider might define them) can be purchased in any motorcycle dealership. Some elements of the commercialized motorcycle "lifestyle" include customized, large displacement motorcycles, the "right" attire (from fringed leather vests to Cordura riding suits), and electronic gadgets such as computers, cell phones, and global positioning systems.

Wayne

By dipping into his cache of motorcycling knowledge, Wayne demonstrates his skills and experience. On his way to meet me at a northern California rally, Wayne found a man taking his first long distance motorcycle ride. The two men rode together until they stopped for gas. The neophyte filled his gas tank and showed Wayne his GPS (global positioning system) unit and cellular phone while they talked in the late afternoon. Wayne could have "made" (ridden) more miles and gotten to the rally sooner. But he knew, sans electronic locating devices, that no suitable place to camp lay within riding distance that day. Noting the spot indicated on the GPS unit where the other rider intended to camp, Wayne commented to the people listening to his story "I knew I was going to have to take that poor boy under my wing – he was going to camp at 6,000 feet [of elevation] in May!" When Wayne related this story at the rally, experienced riders,

all friends, howled at the thought of having so much technology at one's disposal but not having the 'common sense' to sleep at an elevation below which low temperatures and wind do not discourage tree growth.

From the end of World War II to the early 1970s, factory workers could afford to buy a motorcycle and travel, thanks to the union struggles that increased wages and vacation benefits to the point where one person owned separate modes of mobility for transportation and leisure. Union agreements meant that even in the face of inflation and an economy based on low-paying service industry jobs, some blue collar workers continued to be able to afford motorcycle mobility. Since the proliferation of inexpensive Japanese motorcycles coincided with inflation, "downsizing", increasing energy prices, and increasingly global mobility of labor (particularly of service industry workers) and capital in the United States, union workers and skilled tradespeople may have comprised the majority of American motorcyclists. People who rode motorcycles shifted from Nature-seeking bourgeoisie desirous of improving their health to working class people now able to afford motorcycles. However, working class leisure mobility was not a simple transference of elite practices to the working class.

The slogan credited with revolutionizing the consumption of motorcycles by all classes was "you meet the nicest people on a Honda" (American Honda Motor Co., Inc. 2002). Print advertisements featured clean-cut men at the controls and smiling women on the back. Like *Sparks*, Honda's slogan emphasized "the social side" of riding a motorcycle in order to increase sales and consumption of riding. Unlike the M.M. Company, Honda was able to take advantage of an ethic of mass consumption and social networks that were already in place. Motorcycle mobility was thus reinvented by mass

media as a mass-produced leisure tool. Riders consumed motorcycles – and through them the natural world – in record numbers. While motorcycle manufacturers' marketing programs changed popular ideas of the acceptability of riding for some people, the ability of working class riders to pursue and sustain their geographic mobility has its roots in larger processes of economic and social mobility. By 'acceptability' I mean that Honda convinced would-be riders that they could be working and middle class people with jobs and still consume a motorcycle for leisure. Honda's strategy was similar to M.M.'s development of a motorcycle "brotherhood," except that M.M. was overcoming a bourgeoisie bias against running or operating machines and focused more exclusively on the few who could afford a luxury motorcycle rather than mass-producing motorcycles for the mass consumption of the working class.

Wayne and his riding partner above each have different practices of mobility and ideas of space. Wayne relied on his knowledge of elevation and weather patterns that he had learned from other riders and through twenty-three years of riding experience. In addition, he draws upon his knowledge of machines and the tradition of tool and die making, where skill lies in personal knowledge rather than a machine. The GPS rider, on the other hand, made his plans with the assistance of more technology, but without knowledge of local conditions. His construction of space depended on technological representations of it rather than personal knowledge.

Knowledge has many sources, but for riders, not all of these sources have the same pertinence or status. Mintz (1985:185) writes of desire, mass consumption, and identity:

To the extent that we can define things for others under circumstances that

> make it difficult for them to test the meanings we attribute to those things, we are exercising control over whether those others use these things, consume them or fail to consume them or disdain them. We affect their self-definition by motivating their consumption, thereby entering intimately into the organization of their very personalities: who and what they think they are.

Mass consumption has changed motorcycling to the extent that both motorcycle culture and the material accoutrements that comprise it can be purchased. However, working class riders' self-definitions contest the mass consumption of motorcycling with their emphasis on skill and experience.

Consuming Nature for Health and Leisure

Motorcycling in the United States, when viewed from the perspective of historical developments – in labor and industrialization; gender politics; and biomedical practice and thought – also speaks to an uneven experience of the changes to North Americans' political, economic and geographic mobility.

Notions of motorcycles' utility formed in the United States' Progressive Era continue to influence Marina and Wayne's images of space, time, and Nature. Notably, Marina and Wayne consider connections to Nature facilitated by motorcycles to be freeing from their urban working conditions. *Sparks* emphasized regional differences between urban and rural that riders could ostensibly take advantage of in their daily lives. Through improved infrastructure and technology, a more extensive geography is available to Marina and Wayne, but they make similar distinctions between their urban work spaces and rural leisure spaces.

When confronted with illness working class people are restricted in their recourse

to treatment options and doctors that might be available in other regions. Centralized treatment and the limited options available through individual insurance plans conflict with Marina's and Wayne's ideals of health and Nature. Biomedicine is a barrier to Marina's and Wayne's mobility and consumption of Nature – the actions they associate with a good and healthful life.

Marina and Wayne

'He spends all day reading that newspaper from cover to cover and it has nothing to do with our lives,' snaps Marina. Wayne has cancer, quite possibly caused by thirty-one years of factory work (Kaerlev et al. 2001). His oncologist provoked her by refusing to give a referral for an oncologist in Arizona, which would allow Marina and Wayne to spend the winter riding motorcycles in the sun. The insurance company would not pay for out-of-state care without the signed 'consent' of his regular oncologist. Without this approval they could not afford to seek treatment outside of Michigan and would be forced to stay in Michigan to spend what they thought might be a last winter together. She told the Michigan oncologist 'you're putting a gun to my husband's head. How would you like it if someone put a gun to your head?' Marina finally prevailed.

Marina wonders when or whether Wayne will see their present fight with the biomedical establishment and the cancer itself as a more pressing problem than the global, national, and state politics set out by the *Detroit Free Press* every morning. She spends her days making phone calls to receptionists at the insurance company, the oncologist's office, the UAW retiree benefits officer, and me when I am not 'home' with them. She writes letters to insurers, doctors and billing clerks; requests copies of any

documentation, such as diagnostic tests; and makes copies of Wayne's thick file numerous times for the cadre of doctors who all need the same information and don't seem to share it with each other. Most importantly, she refuses to accept "standard practice" when she sees that it is inequitable, circumscribing, and sometimes life-threatening.

Wayne reads the newspaper and tries to get through his day of chemotherapy-induced diarrhea, stomach cramps, fatigue, and the hand-and-foot disorder that causes his skin to peel away leaving painful sores on hands and fingers too sensitive to peel an orange or wash dishes. Although I doubt that she intended her remark about Wayne's newspaper reading habits to comment directly on their mobility, the force of her objections regarding her local struck me. Cancer and its treatment had literally immobilized their lives. In this 'local' context, Marina became furious at Wayne's habitual global information-gathering of wars and taxes, NAFTA and the NASDAQ, all of which have everything – and nothing – to do with how to truck two motorcycles and themselves to Arizona in March when the oncologist would not cooperate with their plans for continued mobility in the face of restrictions imposed by cancer and its treatment.

Marina's tenacity in seeking mobility proved to be critical to Wayne's treatment. Marina and Wayne gained access to sophisticated diagnostic tests and imminent expert opinions because Marina insisted on holding doctors accountable. Without her efforts, Wayne would have undergone only those approved because of their statistical significance. Marina's initial insistence on maintaining their mobility also focused doctors' attention on curative treatments rather than the toxic palliation he was then

undergoing.

Removing spatial and temporal barriers through technology has not freed riders from inequitable practices surrounding production and consumption. In the United States working class people are geographically circumscribed by healthcare protocols and the requirements of the private insurance system that are often dependent on a job that will even provide such benefits. Although Marina's and Wayne's leisure mobility is at stake in their need for biomedical treatment, their mobility has always depended on jobs that provided insurance and enough money to attain leisure mobility. In 1967 when Wayne began his tool and die apprenticeship, only the automakers could have provided the standard of living that afforded him and Marina their rural house, medical care, and mobility. The financial stability their jobs provided also limited them to the Detroit area. Wayne despises cold winters, but tolerated Michigan's climate because of the employment opportunities and high wages available to him there as a tool and die maker. When he retired, he envisioned spending entire summers "on the road" and winters ensconced in Arizona. In the desert his riding would not be hampered by unfavorable weather conditions. They had hoped to move to Missouri after Wayne's retirement. In part, they have stayed in Michigan because Marina has not retired. Marina's corporate clients are generated by the auto industry.

Classed and Gendered Knowledge

Motorcycling continues to 'belong' to mainly white men, and riding for leisure still requires surplus time and money. In spite of women's increased participation in leisure activities not open to them (either economically or socially) at the beginning of

the twentieth century, the percentage of women who ride has not changed dramatically in the past one hundred years. Like the elite men of a hundred years ago, middle class professional women are beginning to see riding as an "empowering" activity – one that removes them from the cares of work to open spaces and the mastery of a 'masculine' machine (House 1999).

I put forth two speculations: first, riding has been 'masculinized' through the kinds of knowledge working class men hold important. These knowledges include how machinery runs, and how to use and build industrial tools. Wayne knows how machines work, and indeed, how they were built and designed in the first place. Second, men have maintained their dominance in riding through the above knowledges and skills that are socially privileged, gendered, and classed. The very fact that the unmarked case "rider" applies solely to men, relegating women who ride to the marked case "woman rider," betrays an institutionalized unease with women who ride motorcycles.

Wayne

Appendix A contains an article printed in the Detroit Free Press as part of a series describing the affects of Ford's[2] on the people and organization of Detroit (James 1999). Each week a new installation would appear to spark a new discussion. In the cab of his Ford F150 truck I would read selections from that week's piece. Wayne then commented on how hard the workers fought for shorter work weeks, more vacation time, better pay and health care benefits, and less hazardous working conditions. Ford Motor Company has set up contradictions in Wayne's mobility. Wayne's job both circumscribed and expanded his mobility. While the pay was high enough and vacation time long enough

after 10 years to take extended motorcycle trips, these benefits bound him to Ford's for over 30 years.

Tool and die makers represented one of the very few "skilled" jobs left after Ford anticipated Taylor's "Scientific Management" theories by deskilling jobs and relocating precision in the machines and work organization rather than the workers (Peterson 1987:30-45; Gartman 1986:39-59). 1910 was a liminal period between artisanal work and Taylorist manufacturing techniques. Skilled tradesmen still knew every part of a manufacturing process and thus had enough bargaining power to ensure a wage they could live on. At this time, seventy-five percent of all workers used machinists' skills at Ford's to complete their jobs. By 1914 most jobs could be learned inside of a week. This disparity in skills wrought by Henry Ford rendered most autoworkers powerless, except for the tool and die maker who took six years to learn his craft (Peterson 1987:36-37).

From this tradition Wayne performed a role other than that of tool and die maker: he was what I call a 'fixer.' Being a fixer meant that Wayne volunteered for or was asked by union officials to move to certain jobs within the Rouge plant that were targeted by management for work speedups, harassment of certain workers, or coercive attempts to have one set of workers doing jobs outside of the union agreement. Wayne was called upon because he was willing to resist management pressure. His punishment for taking on this role was to be assigned particularly dirty or dangerous jobs by management.

To work outside of a union agreement was not a petty thing. Tool and die makers protected their status by demonstrations of superior skill level. In addition, Wayne was loyal to the ethic of trade, as opposed to industrial, unions. He says, "I was a tradesman first, and then I worked for Ford Motor Company." His adherence to high standards of

quality frequently put him at odds with management who only desired, in Wayne's words, "reasonable quality."

Wayne tells a story of a job that had been taken from tool and die makers and given to lower paid machine maintenance workers. The tool and die makers felt that giving the job to 'lesser' workers devalued their skills and made them more vulnerable to management demands. They responded by failing to 'fix' the underlying problem, and thus put the entire job out of the experience of the maintenance staff. Perhaps because of his long, enforced association with Ford's and pride in his trade, Wayne has developed a strong sensitivity to deskilling within his profession and outside of it. He emphasizes a holistic set of skills and knowledge in motorcycling and appreciates those who have bothered to gain them.

In the sixty-eight years intervening between the last issue of *Sparks* and Marina and Wayne's entry into riding in 1976, a cultural shift occurred from elites who 'discovered' nature through their mobility to working class riders who mapped their esteem for skills and authenticity onto the countryside. This shift corresponded to the further deskilling of work, the integration of food producing spaces with industrial spaces into monopoly capitalism, and mass consumption. The process of class in mobility reproduced gendered inequalities at the same time as it created spatial ones.

Marina

1997 marked the first American Motorcycle Association (AMA)-sponsored Women & Motorcycling National Conference. Then AMA President Ed Youngblood (American Motorcycle Association 1997:2, italics mine) wrote in the conference program

> Female motorcyclists, as a group, have been treated *inconsistently* by the motorcycle industry and community in America. While it is widely recognized that women can and have played a powerfully beneficial role in confronting the "image problem" suffered by all motorcyclists in popular opinion and the media, on other fronts their own community has treated them like outsiders, or has failed to take them seriously as market influencers and *primary consumers*.

I call attention to Youngblood's use of the word 'inconsistently' because the treatment of women motorcyclists by 'their own community' has been remarkably consistent in its exclusionary tactics. As an example, Youngblood later highlights women's tenuous position in competitive racing in 1971, when women were permitted to compete but not to hold titles. Rejection, double standards and isolation of women not only continue daily, but also are obfuscated by the notion that motorcyclists are not gender biased because motorcycles, as a technological tool, don't know or care about the sex of their rider. Notwithstanding engineering standards that produce motorcycles for riders much taller than North America's "average" woman, subscribers to this theory fail to acknowledge that motorcycles are nothing but heavy paperweights without a motorcyclist to pilot them. Motorcyclists, as opposed to motorcycles, are susceptible to discriminating against women and maintaining a patriarchal hierarchy in motorcycling.

Women & Motorcycling organizers invited Marina to give a seminar she called "Dealing with People Who Don't Take You Seriously." The Columbus Dispatch, a newspaper serving southern Ohio, including Westerville, site of AMA headquarters, ran a feature on the conference that included comments from Youngblood and conference participants. Below are excerpts taken from portions of the article dealing with Marina and Youngblood's perceptions of "women riders":

> Marina Ackerson, of Highland, Mich., knows [about dealing with people who don't take you seriously] firsthand. Biking through Texas recently in a drenching rain, she stopped for gas in a small town. Three attendants greeted her, expecting her male companions to arrive shortly. When they learned she was alone, they warned her not to continue because of the rain.
>
> "People aren't used to (women bikers)," said Ackerson, 49, a 12-year veteran who will discuss "dealing with people who won't take you seriously" at the women's motorcycling conference (Bridgeman 1997:1).

The unstated, but not-so-obscure point to Marina's seminar and interview is that people "out there" don't take women seriously, particularly when traveling and especially when riding a motorcycle. The article then takes up Youngblood's perspective on discrimination against women who ride:

> In 1994, Ackerson plunked down $11,000 for a BMW with a 1,100-cubic-centimeter engine, large enough for man or woman. She calls it "The Hulk." At 5 feet 1 ½ inches, riding with the seat in its lowest position, Ackerson can't stand flat-footed. Yet she has ridden across the country several times.
>
> While she and other women continue to struggle for parity, they are often treated better than men by outsiders, Youngblood said "When (bikers) pull up and two or three pull off their helmets and are women, it softens things." Ackerson is accustomed to being a curiosity. During one trip, she and a girlfriend pulled into a rest stop in Indiana. They drew repeated stares from one young man. "Women bikers?" he asked. "Well, it is the '90s," they replied (Bridgeman 1997:2).

Rather than emphasizing the universality of the mode of motorcycle mobility, Youngblood stresses social differences between men's and women's treatment by 'outsiders' when they get off their motorcycles. For him, the presence of women in a group of riders is useful for mitigating 'local's' fear at the sight of multiple 'bikers.' Marina's rest stop experience in Texas contradicts Youngblood's claim that women are a social asset in groups of riders. In fact, Marina found, as a woman, that when she and her friend pulled off their helmets their legitimacy as

riders was questioned. Women's ongoing contestation of the 'masculinization' of riding necessarily confronts the biases of people who don't ride, as well as riders who, at best, see the presence of women in riding as serving a useful social function.

In her seminar Marina continued her story about the three gas station attendants in Goldthwaith, Texas:

> Later that morning I pulled into a rest area east of Waco. It had stopped raining and I wanted to take off my rain gear. I had passed a pickup truck aways back and he now pulled into the rest stop behind me. After checking me out, the elderly gentleman asked. "Where are you going?" One of my rules of the road is to never tell anyone exactly where I'm going. So, I said east. He assumed that I was going to Virginia and proceeded to talk to me as if I was. Relaying this incident to two women in a diner later that day, the elderly mother, with a walker, commented it was dangerous for me to be traveling alone, but the middle aged daughter replied, "mom, she looks like she can handle these old Texas boys.

Marina's notes end with some exercises about women empowering themselves. She asks conference participants to imagine themselves in situations where they have an opportunity to be assertive, to "be taken seriously," rather than passively accepting an affront to their "freedom."

Women Who Ride with Men Who Ride

Three years later, in February 2000, Marina and I had our own conversation regarding how a woman should react to "people who don't take them seriously."In our Phoenix Valley rental unit, Marina and I made cookies for our daily hike. We argued back and forth about the nature of a problem we had both had riding the day before. At issue was male riders' behavior toward female riders. Marina believed that I, if not all

women, needed to be aware of factors other than discrimination, such as risk, that are integral to our interactions with other riders. She was especially concerned that my anger at our riding experience would cause me to make mistakes when I rode and endanger myself. I was furious that I had been marginalized because I am a "woman rider."

Our previous days' ride began with the pack of twenty riders headed east out of the Superstition Mountains to Superior, and Globe, Arizona. As usual, the fastest riders set the pace at the front. Two women and several men who belonged to the club took the fast, sweeping curves they knew so well at over 120 miles per hour and quickly outdistanced the rest of us. Some prefer to ride below their own and their motorcycles capacity to leave space and time for reacting to the inevitable surprises such as a car coming around a blind corner taking up half of the oncoming lane. Others were simply less skilled. Following a faster man, I passed several riders until I came upon a man on a Ducati 900ss. The Ducati has a tremendous capacity for speed in corners and in straight stretches. However, the Ducati's rider was new to weekend club rides and also to riding. At each blind curve, with its exit path of straight road hidden from sight until halfway or more around the blasted out rock face, the Ducati man entered as fast as he dared and then suddenly tightened his grip on front and rear brakes to prevent himself from going over the yellow line, through the lane of oncoming traffic and over the edge of the cliff. After his terrifying performance the man would "gun" his throttle and speed through the straight to get to his next death-defying corner. As I moved through the pack I could see that he allowed several riders of higher skill levels but riding lesser machines to pass; in this manner a large pack of riders who don't know each other sorts itself out according to how fast each is comfortable with and capable of riding. On occasion riders choose to

either outdistance or lag behind if they perceive someone's riding a threat to her or his own safety. On her dual purpose on road/off road machine, Marina rode at the back of the pack where she could enjoy the ride without competitiveness marring her experience or her safety. When I came behind the man who we had breakfasted with along with the rest of the club, he refused to leave room for me to get around him although I was clearly capable of staying ahead of him in faster and slower corners. My frustration mounted every time he grabbed at the brakes then twisted his throttle hard when the road became more manageable for him.

Had he suddenly gotten tired of much slower motorcycles overtaking him, or did he have a problem with me, a woman, overtaking him? If only I had never experienced men who will not sell a bike to a woman for fear of it becoming a "girlie" bike or rejected a particular model as a "girl's bike." If I had never been ignored, if no rider had ever insisted on indexing me "female rider" to the unmarked case "(male) rider," if no one had ever assumed (without riding with me) that my skills were suspect simply because I am a woman, I might have given Ducati guy the benefit of the doubt. If he hadn't let the large, bearded man in front of me clear passage I might have told myself that he simply didn't notice my presence. Unfortunately, none of these possibilities seemed likely.

So Marina and I made cookies the next day, attempting to sort out our suspicions, understandings, and grievances around our treatment by other riders. She commented:

> I remember one time I was riding to a rally – [BMW Touring Club of Detroit] people were there, and I told one of them that I was going to ride home by myself and this older guy from the club, in Texas somewhere, he said "wow, I wouldn't even do that." It's how much risk you're willing to accept, not just a gender thing.

The conversation continued with Marina expressing her point that more than gender influences what people do, while I continued to fume about Ducati Guy. Marina told an analogous story of risk that became a story of discrimination:

> I first started riding by myself after about three years. It took me a while to get up the courage. My first rally alone was the Trail of Tears Rally in Missouri and I went to the Indy with Marie – oh, did it rain! It was solid mud! Her and Melissa, the one who passed on the double yellow [line] on the Coast Highway and died. They used to call them the "M&Ms" 'cause they used to travel together…Marie was a grandma several times over. She used to write me all the time, then she got into other sports like whitewater [rafting]. She had a few mishaps so she was leery of riding with other people. She ran into someone once [following closely on a corner trying to pass]. I thought she was a really good rider – you know how someone can ride like shit…She still has a bike, but doesn't ride much anymore. It's more difficult when you don't have a husband to take care of your stuff…They say Melissa got divorced because she was always at rallies! People see me at rallies and tell me 'you'd better be careful, Melissa went to rallies alone and she got divorced.

At this point I had to ask Marina if she thought a similar warning would ever be issued to a man. "Well…it could happen" Marina said, not quite willing to admit that a double standard might be in play. "But is it said in the same way?" I insisted. "No…" she replied, ending our discussion on this point but picking up another thread:

> After that trip I decided to take one solo trip a year. I couldn't better my skills with [Wayne]. I don't like leading because he nitpicks everything I do, so it's easier to just follow. When I do lead, I'm so worried about doing things his way that I start to second-guess myself. Now I feel like I can't even go around the block by myself because I've been following his ass for three weeks. I've been all around the country!

"Riding alone" carries gendered distinctions, even when women ride their own motorcycles. Marina rode to the Indianapolis 500 race with her female friend Marie, but considers that ride to be one she did "alone" because they were not riding with a man. On our previous day's ride in Arizona, I had also considered myself to be "alone." Like

Marina, I felt autonomous when I was not subject to the riding style and speed of a man that I knew. Marina makes still another distinction in men's and women's roles when she discusses motorcycle maintenance. When Marina travels "alone" with other women – without a man – each woman cares for her own motorcycle and gear. But Marina sees a gendered division of labor where men oversee the regular maintenance motorcycles require.

All male riders do not manipulate their classed and gendered knowledge in such a way that they exclude women from riding. However, mechanical knowledge of motorcycles is a barrier that many women have not crossed. Marina sees her credit card as her on the road mechanic when she is riding "alone." Most women, however, earn lower wages than their male counterparts, are over represented in low paying service sector jobs, and contribute much of their income to family responsibilities. All of these economic barriers to women's participation in motorcycling are byproducts of industrial production and the gendered separation of work and home.

The masculinization of riding continues to be a source of exclusion for women's participation as riders of their own motorcycles. Manufacturers' marketing campaigns increasingly directed at women do not change the attitudes of male riders who see women as intrusive and unacceptable participants in all aspects of riding. Men, who continue to comprise approximately ninety percent of the riding population, frame who should ride a motorcycle and who should not. Marina's encounter with the gas stations attendants illustrates that women are generally seen as certain kinds of spatial consumers. That is, women may consume and define the local spaces of home, or even region, without much comment. But when women venture outside of regional boundaries, their mobility

evokes questions of danger in the minds of 'the locals' and with other riders.

As Youngblood alluded in the *Columbus Dispatch* article, men face different challenges when riding. At a campground in Alberta, Wayne washed our clothes while I cooked our evening meal on a camp stove. He encountered a woman in the campground's laundry facilities and said hello to put her at ease. Wayne was disappointed that she refused to speak to him and moved away from him. He thought that the woman had moved away because she perceived him to be dangerous. Wayne says he talks with more people when he is on the road with Marina or myself. He believes people approach him with less trepidation when we are present.

Working class riders exercise two kinds of freedom: freedom to and freedom from. That is, when riders travel on their bikes for leisure they exercise their freedom to ride. Union jobs in the factory gave more people, men especially, the time and money necessary for motorcycle mobility. Men's incomes are not only higher than women's, but they are more likely to work at a high-paying trade. The contradiction to local and regional job possibilities that enable riding is that they also limit riders' mobility. The local contexts in which Marina and Wayne practice mobility – rallies they attend, the towns they visit, and the places they live, work, and seek medical attention – must be constantly renegotiated. Freedom from oppressive work conditions or the protocols put in place by the U.S. biomedical system requires that they remain vigilant about their economic security and the local, regional, and global contexts which shape production and consumption.

[1] Pillion is an English term for the motorcycle's "back seat." English and European riders have more extensively used motorcycles than North Americans as a means of transporting men and women. In the United States, where motorcycles are mainly leisure tools for men, women are usually passengers. By indexing "rider" as male and "passenger" as female, derogatory terms for passenger have come into use. For example, "bitch seat" refers to the pillion seat. T-shirts with "If You Can Read This The Bitch Fell Off" printed on the back have also become popular.

[2] People from the Detroit area reference Ford Motor Company in the possessive 'Ford's.' As in 'Henry Ford's factory.'

CHAPTER 5

The Descendants of Travelers

The stories by anthropological and non-anthropological rider/writers written in *Sparks* and in ethnographical works and told by Marina and Wayne are stories of travelers; of 'how you get there matters.' Motorcycle mobility matters because twentieth century riders have experienced and enacted their riding, work, and health relationships to capital through that mobility. Motorcyclists' relationships to social structures and institutions of work, leisure, and health play out over space and time, as well as through kinship, culture, and place, and so I would like to conclude by discussing how the riders discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are "the descendants of many travelers" (Zandy 1998:229). I have taken this phrase from Janet Zandy, who writes in *Traveling Working Class* about mobility as it is differentially expressed in the idioms of class:

> We [people from working class culture] are the descendants of many travelers – those who gambled on new opportunities, those who were violently torn from their homes, and those who were displaced by economic change. The literature and culture we call contemporary and American brims with tropes of migrations, border crossings, movements, disruptions, dislocations, and unsettled settlings. I use the word travel to acknowledge a degree of choice that earlier generations may not have had. But it is hardly a vacation, and it is not an easy journey. We need space to tag the necessary baggage, to draw a map of the territory, and to imagine alternative places (Zandy 1998:229).

Zandy references two journeys. The first is of mobility that brings into focus Wolf's

(1982:2) connections among history, geography, labor, and capital. Travel is a multi-generational, spatial, and cultural outcome of struggle, resistance, and material relationships. The second is of being working class, and the difficulties in telling stories from working class perspectives when bourgeoisie sensibilities, aesthetics, class, and consumption are normalized. This passage draws out four points about the classed and gendered nature of motorcycle mobility and motorcyclists that I would like to briefly revisit by way of a conclusion: degree of choice, baggage, mapping of territory, and imagining alternative spaces.

Degree of Choice

Choice refers to continuities and discontinuities in the possibilities for mobility that riders negotiate within capital's cultural and historical structuring of time and space. The choices for mobility that Marina and Wayne make, like those of *Sparks'* and the ethnographical rider/writers, depend upon their classed and gendered relationships that are structured to some degree by capital. Massey notes that time-space compression differentially affects choice. She writes that in relation to capital and agency that "mobility, and control over mobility, both reflects and reinforces power" (Massey 1994:150). The power that mobility reflects and reinforces has a material basis and involves the power I have invoked to write this thesis, the power of early twentieth century bourgeoisie to restructure the meanings of geographical spaces, and the power on Marina's and Wayne's parts to resist

spatial and temporal circumscription at work and in acquiring healthcare. Choices in mobility are also the power to resist mainstream dominant bourgeoisie culture, to create and reinscribe community at the rallies Maxwell attended, and the power to challenge patriarchy as Holbrook Pierson does.

M.M. initially created a product to be consumed by a bourgeoisie with some money and leisure time on their hands. Their mobility was an escape from the demands of work and the rapidly changing, crowded, and increasingly polluted urban environment. Graves and other *Sparks* writers rationalized their consumption of riding and motorcycles with a need /desire for some healthful diversions. Women's consumption of space and of motorcycles was much more circumscribed, as were their choices for 'spending' their leisure time. Motorcycle marketing was then extended around mid-century to a unionized proletariat, which also now had some money and leisure time. At times, various riders had a "desire" to resist the way their time and space was structured by manipulating, playing with, or consuming the marginal "outlaw" image. Women's participation, or lack of it, in motorcycling tends to reflect the masculinization of travel and "discovery," as well as the masculinization of mechanical knowledge (in spite of women's continuous roles in industry). Women's choices are limited by the gap between women's and men's discretionary income.

Baggage

Mobility in motorcycling and in anthropology requires some understanding of positioning – the baggage that we bring to knowledge production and the baggage of gender discrimination and class – in order to discuss how theorizing marginality and centrality have produced conflicting views of culture (q.v. Ebron and Tsing 1995). Part of the baggage of riding lies in who tells the stories, the nature of their authority, and how riders are represented in these stories. My positioning in this text, like that of other riders, is important because riders' marginality and centrality are themes around which motorcycle culture coalesces for many rider/writers. Representing riders as members of discrete subcultures or as part of the mainstream speaks to theoretical concerns of representation, of 'truth,' and of mobility and power. To some extent rider/writers, including Maxwell, Wolf, Holbrook Pierson, and myself make truth claims based on our own motorcycle mobility that are part of the baggage we bring to riding as authors.

Ill health, gender stereotypes and discrimination, family or social responsibilities, status considerations, and biomedical system restrictions are also baggage. *Sparks* rider/writers considered ill health to be a function of the quality of their time and of the kinds of spaces available to them. For Marina and Wayne, ill health is another circumscribing aspect of their lives, like work, family responsibilities, and the biomedical protocols that emphasize centralized treatment and physician control.

Motorcycles and riding have had a profound effect on the identities of their consumers. For example, women's consumption of motorcycles depends on their

economic status, but also on the fact that riders see motorcycles as a tool for male mobility. Women's self-definition as riders comes with the assumption that "we" are outsiders to "the road" even before swinging a leg over the saddle. For over one hundred years, motorcycling has been dominated by men, to the extent that Marina sees "riding alone" as a kind of autonomy from male control over her mobility. Smith, who wrote to *Sparks* about her motorcycle adventures, rode with her motorcycle as companion, motive power, and director of speed and direction.

Mapping the Territory

In addition to freedom from the baggage of our lives, motorcycle mobility may also be a means of culturally reproducing the transformation of political, economic, and geographical relationships that capital had created between food- and labor producing areas and industrial areas. But it is also a means of challenging the transformation of political and economic relationships that capital has created. Mass production and mass consumption delimited new spatial and temporal boundaries between work and home, and in the process those spaces have become classed and gendered.

By mapping the territory of spaces redefined by capital, and challenges to those redefinitions, I have found a way other than describing bound, discrete cultures to answer the question, where is marginality "located" in motorcycling? At the turn of the twentieth century, a struggle developed between progressivist bourgeoisie riders attempting to bring about a horseless consumer society and the end of the status quo that limited mobility to trolleys and trains for mass public transportation and horses or

bicycles for individual transportation. They saw motive power as marginal in a horse-powered society. Competing views of nature were rooted in geographical, classed, and gendered relations represented as binaries: between 'urban' and 'rural,' and 'home' and 'work.' For contemporary rider/writers, marginality is also located in class struggle, but class tends to be glossed as "freedom." Outlaw stories (Wolf 1991) tell of men who recognize that they are only as mobile as their willingness to put the club ahead work and family, institutions that have exerted a great deal of hegemonic force on workers. Mainstream riders' stories (Maxwell 1998) speak to the freedom to consume space rather than, or perhaps in spite of, class and gender. Marina's and Holbrook Pierson's stories make the point that to be marginalized in terms of the spaces one negotiates involves the masculinization of riding, but also the masculinization of work spaces. In presenting Marina's and Wayne's stories, I have tried to show that marginality in motorcycling has a material basis and varies depending on context and positioning. Where Marina and Wayne are marginalized, in their confrontations with management and with the biomedical establishment, their mobility, and therefore pursuit of motorcycling, is also compromised.

Imagining Alternative Space

Space and how riders afford it and invest meaning in it, particularly the way space is experienced in different modes and histories of mobility, involves contests of power over knowledge production and ideologies of consumption. Therefore, how motorcycle journeys are accomplished and to where; how motorcyclists create and define our

destinations and journeys through and in our various life histories and practices; how we decide who is acceptably and perhaps "authentically" mobile and who is not; and how travel by motorcycle has been both a privileged and marginal position in North American society all matters.

Imagining alternative space is not always an easy task. Braverman (1974:279) comments:

> So enterprising is capital that even where the effort is made by one or another section of the population to find a way to nature, sport, or art through personal activity and amateur or "underground" innovation, these activities are rapidly incorporated into the market so far as is possible.

The freedom to imagine other kinds of spaces than those of the time clock, work responsibilities, the stress of jobs and unhealthy spaces may be linked in part to the possibility and the freedom to consume those spaces through technology (Appadurai 1996:33-4). Wolf (1991), Maxwell (1998), and Holbrook Pierson (1998) use motorcycles to fill in spaces missing from postindustrial society. Theirs are both postmodern and functional social spaces where brotherhood, communities, and self are created through their mobility.

Postmodern spaces are also potentially hegemonic spaces (following Ebert 1996). Motorcyclists may become imprisoned and marginalized members of a culture of difference, negatively defined as unrooted, deviant, or inauthentic in relation to a stationary, normative, non-riding culture, when wider contexts that affect mobility are not attended to. Maxwell (1998), and to some extent Wolf (1991), believe that the 1947

Gypsy Tour to Hollister, California and the resulting media coverage and movies about motorcycle culture forever cemented images of motorcyclists as invaders of orderly, middle class, normative space. Youngblood, past president of the AMA, imagines spaces of riding where women act as shields from the biases and beliefs of the non-riding public. Maxwell imagines Fontana, North Carolina, the site of the disastrous meeting between BMW riders and the sheriff's department there, as an 'ethnicized,' discriminatory space, comparable to lynching southern blacks for no other reason than "race."

Or they may become the marginalized and exoticized producers of a way of life that many need but few have. *Sparks'* rider/writers imagined that motorcycles transported them to nature, a health-giving space away from the responsibilities and stress of jobs, families, and unhealthy urban spaces. For Marina and Wayne, mobility opens classed and gendered spaces like those of work and health to new spaces that offer more "freedoms" that can be negotiated with skill, knowledge, and experience. Counterintuitively, the "risks" that they take in riding are a testament to staving off uncertainty. Marina and Wayne are always prepared for contingencies. Their knowledge base and motorcycling skills stave off the unpredictability of road surfaces, weather, and the actions of other road users so that they stay in one piece and enjoy themselves.

Moving On

I have only touched here on the classed and gendered nature of mobility as it relates to the mobility of capital. Thinking about mobility should be expanded beyond motorcycling and leisure activities, as Nash (1989) accomplished in her ethnography of

Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The entwined histories of the residents of Pittsfield and the General Electric Corporation provided the ground for answering Nash's and others' questions that follow from Eric Wolf's (1982) "connections":

> I returned from my last field trip to Bolivia with the feeling that I had to do my next field work in my own country. It was 1971. The war in Vietnam was still going on and the moon landing had just been achieved. I had become so distanced from my native land that I could no longer answer the questions people in Third World countries asked North Americans. How could a nation that could send a spaceship to the moon endure poverty at home? Why do workers support the wars against their brothers and sisters in Third World countries? How do workers in the big corporations live (Nash 1989:1)?

My own experiences as a woman whose father has cancer have impressed on me the need for understanding how to navigate the terrain of biomedicine and the need for social, geographic, and economic mobility to map that terrain. Most importantly, how can we incorporate and apply concepts of mobility, space, and time into anthropological work to actively resist power?

Early in this project, I attempted to explain my necessarily partial[1] understanding of the links between method and theory in anthropology to my father. I finally hit upon an analogy: 'It's just like riding a motorcycle; how you get there matters.' In writing this thesis, I realized that how you get there also sums up the exploration of personal, motorized, two-wheeled mobility that this research with motorcyclists from the United States undertakes. How motorcyclists get to where they want to go has been both romanticized and vilified in the media, academia, and the places where riders gather

together. Riders create hierarchies of ability; "how you get there" capably, with style and speed matters in riders' stories.

What matters to a historical materialist understanding of men and women of different classes who ride motorcycles is that riders of the past and present live in wider social, political, economic, and historical contexts than the ones we experience 'on the road' (cf Wolf 1982). These contexts 'dwell' outside of the notion of discrete 'culture(s),' instead composing and constructing the spaces and practice of riding, as well as the spaces that make up practice in anthropology (Abu-Lughod 1991:146; Collier 1991:117-130; Smith 1999:ix-xvi; Wolf 1982) and geography (Harvey 2001:108-120; Massey 1994:1-24; Nagar 2002).

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[1] Partial because the links between method and theory tend to be ignored in much anthropology (Davies 1999:10-17).

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Appendix A

Our tumultuous century

Ford's $5 workday sparked Detroit's industrial heyday

November 29, 1999

The first shadowy figures showed up at plant entrance No. 2 -- the employment office door -- by 3 a.m. They huddled against near-zero January winds, hands shoved into pockets, hats pulled low, waiting for the whistle at the world's largest automobile plant.

The men were polite at first. They formed a line. They spoke of the big news that brought them there this day, Jan. 6, 1914. They could scarcely believe it. They felt lucky to be the first in line.

But with each minute, more men materialized, and the line soon stretched several blocks down Manchester to Woodward Avenue, alongside the sprawling Ford Motor Co. complex in Highland Park. By 5:15 a.m., two more lines had formed. By daybreak, the three lines had become a mob of about 4,000. Two Highland Park police officers nervously watched men keep coming and coming, filling the streets, blocking the streetcars, motor cars and horse-drawn wagons.

The police had never seen such a crowd. It was like a gold rush. The men were, a reporter observed, "of all races and nationalities, unemployed men and men whose jobs suddenly had grown distasteful; rough-handed men in black shirts and soft-handed, white-collared men eager to trade bookkeepers' stools" for a laborer's job at Ford. Foreign languages filled the air. So, almost palatably, did hope.

At 7:30 a.m., the two officers tried to clear from the door the dense but still good-natured crowd, now numbering at least 10,000. They called for assistance. Twelve officers -- bluecoats -- came to help.

"Then," a reporter wrote, "the real trouble began."

Early the previous morning, two men had conducted a news conference in the plant's executive offices. The men knew their news was big, but they never guessed how big.

One man was James Couzens, 41, who would one day be Detroit's mayor. He was a stocky, stern-faced fellow who, people half-joked, smiled once a year. As secretary-treasurer, he was widely credited for the daily operations and phenomenal success at Ford Motor, then not quite 11 years old.

Couzens did most of the talking.

The other man already had some renown among the emerging class known as industrialists. He would become a household word after this day. And 85 years hence, in 1999, Fortune magazine would crown him businessman of the century.

He was a slender man with pale, intense blue eyes that were difficult to forget. Henry Ford was 50 and, to most, a puzzle. An unusual thinker. A rule-ignorer. As a young mechanic in the 1890s, he had fiddled into many dark nights on his "gas-buggy," as the neighbors called it.

Ford was among a spontaneous combustion of factors earning Detroit a reputation worldwide as the place to be for anyone who wanted action in the auto game.

By the time Ford test-drove his first car in 1896, the Germans and French had been selling cars for years. And hundreds of auto or auto-related factories were operating all over the country between the 1890s and 1914. It was a kind of an Industrial Wild West.

But Detroit, and Michigan, had some key advantages. Detroit had a strong network of factories that made engines, boilers, ships and stoves, and provided a ready pool of skilled, machine-savvy laborers.

Detroit also had big money from 1800s industries. Coal, lumber and mining barons invested in this fledgling motor car business.

But perhaps more important, Michigan happened to be home to unusual pioneers who, like Ford, had vision, persistence and instinct. They included Ransom E. Olds, Henry M. Leland, William C. Durant, the Fisher brothers, John and Horace Dodge, David Buick and Walter Chrysler.

These men had bet and won on the gas engine while others had bet on steam or electric. They built factories in Flint, Lansing and Detroit, always cutting a new edge, and the world's best and brightest minds flocked to them. Detroit began to burst with intellectual and industrial energy. It was the Silicon Valley of the teens and '20s, a kind of Emerald City.

A 'car for the great multitude'

Henry Ford was part of, but apart from, this elite group.

Most other automakers built cars for rich people. Henry Ford did not like rich people. He saw an untapped market in ordinary men, and in 1907, he had announced to his astonished board of directors that Ford Motor would build only one, affordable, durable and "universal" auto -- the Model T.

"I will build a motor car for the great multitude," he said.

Ford knew that building one standard car would allow him to adapt mass production, only sporadically used in other industries, to the making of motor cars.

Top managers quit in disgust. There was doubt and derision. But Ford built his Model T at his small plant on Piquette Avenue, experimenting with time-cutting production techniques. The Model T sold so well, Ford bought 57 acres in Highland Park and built the auto plant of the future -- six-story glass buildings, handsome office buildings, a power plant.

But the workforce of Detroit in 1914 was volatile, full of unskilled immigrants and resentful craftsmen whose work Ford's assembly system largely had rendered obsolete. And this new assembly line work was mind-numbing, dehumanizing. People were not used to it.

Prevailing working conditions did not help. Laborers worked six days a week, nine hours a day with 15 unpaid minutes for lunch. The highest paid line workers made $2.34 a day; most made much less. It was barely enough to live on. There were no such benefits as insurance, pensions, profit sharing or sick pay.

Men quit in droves. They quit because they were tired, sick or mad. They quit after a few days to get a quick paycheck because they were dead broke. They quit because they couldn't even go to the bathroom on company time.

By 1913, Ford and other factory executives faced chronic, astronomical turnover -- nearly 400 percent a year; that meant Ford had to hire 52,000 men to keep a workforce of 13,600. Something had to give.

History is announced

The day before the news conference, Couzens and Ford had called a board of directors meeting. It's unknown which man came up with the idea they were about to announce this Jan. 5, but both endorsed it.

There's a story out at the Highland Park plant, they told reporters. Be here at 10 a.m. sharp Monday morning.

The reporters swept into Couzens' office. Ford stood by the window. Couzens began to read:

"The Ford Motor Co., the greatest and most successful automobile manufacturing company in the world, will, on Jan. 12, inaugurate the greatest revolution in the matter of rewards for its workers ever known to the industrial world.

"At one stroke, it will reduce the hours of labor from nine to eight, and ...the smallest amount to be received by a man 22 years old and upwards will be $5 per day."

The raise would actually be profit-sharing paid in advance in regular paychecks, Couzens explained. "It is estimated that over $10 million will be thus distributed over and above the regular wages of the men."

Moreover, the company would add a third shift, Couzens added, and hire 4,000 more men.

The reporters were stunned. A *doubling* of wages -- even for the lowliest sweeper? For a *shorter* workday? *Ten million dollars* in profit-sharing? The reporters knew this was Detroit's biggest-ever news story.

The news headlined the afternoon editions and resonated, in the words of one historian, like "an economic second coming" across a Detroit that had changed dramatically since 1900.

The garden atmosphere of 1890s Detroit -- shady boulevards, horse-drawn carriages, stately residences -- had given way to 50 square miles and more than 500,000 residents, a population doubled since 1900. Louder, dirtier, throbbing, Detroit was a city of electric wires, sputtering autos and new office buildings and factories squeezing neighborhoods from City Hall to Union Station.

Word spread among these factories and older neighborhoods inhabited by native residents, Germans, Canadians, Irish, English and Poles. It spread among newer European immigrants -- Italians, Lithuanians, Hungarians -- who had flocked to Detroit for work. They had found work, all right -- and misery in their poverty.

The more settled fared little better, for there was no real middle class yet in America in 1914. Job security was up to your foreman, who might not like your accent. It was a frightening, meal-to-meal life. What little people had, they could lose overnight.

And now, by God, Henry Ford was going to change that.

To qualify for the new wage, employees had to pass inspection by Ford's Sociological Department investigators, who visited workers' homes. Workers had to show they could budget and save money, keep their homes clean, speak or learn English.

Many figured the invasion of privacy was worth the $5 a day.

A wait -- and finally, a job

Tuesday morning, the day after the news conference, police swung their clubs and shouted orders, fighting a seesaw battle to keep the mob at bay.

Then suddenly, at about 8:30 a.m., the employment door opened. A wild cheer rose from the crowd. A man in a suit stepped outside. He held up his hand. Silence fell.

"We are not yet ready to begin taking on extra men!" he shouted. "None will be hired today, and it is useless to stay longer!"

He stepped back inside. The door slammed shut.

No! the men shouted. The mob grew louder, angrier. Some threw stones at the big windows. Finally, the police dragged out a fire hose and set it down in plain view. The crowd began to disperse.

But people came back Wednesday. The scene repeated.

By Thursday, "scarcely half" the numbers of job seekers showed up, the Free Press reported, and the spirit of prior days had evaporated.

Thousands did finally land those jobs -- after Ford set up a special employment office on a nearby farm in mid-January -- and Ford marched into history.

News of the $5 day dominated headlines worldwide for days. Ford drew criticism and praise. But his lead was soon followed, and his plant techniques -- known as "Fordism" -- emulated everywhere.

Today, Ford is credited with first using wide-scale mass production and with creating the middle class and the age of consumerism; he had simply made buyers of his employees.

Detroit, meanwhile, solidified its total dominance in the auto field. These heady events helped set up the city's Golden Age in the 1920s -- symbolized by the opulence of the Fisher Theatre and the General Motors building.

Ford made 15 million Model Ts in all. But the plant of the future soon became the plant of the past. In 1927, most operations moved to Ford's River Rouge plant. Work at Highland Park declined steadily until the once-mighty plant shut down in 1973.

Today, weeds overgrow a historic marker at the plant. The office building where Ford and Couzens made history is gone. The building where thousands eyed the door survives, but it, too, sits empty and neglected, nary a tourist in sight.

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