The Big Six:

Romanticizing An Era

Of The National Hockey League

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

University of Manitoba

In partial fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

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A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University

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ABSTRACT

This study is about romanticizing the Big Six Era of the National Hockey League. Romanticizing the past is a particular style of reporting which reveals both aspects of the past and what is salient in the social life of the romanticizer. The latter becomes manifest when the functions of this social practice are analyzed. The argument consists of an overview of the National Hockey League with emphasis on the twenty-five years of The Big Six, a consideration of the categories people within hockey culture employ when they think about the game, an explanation of what it means to romanticize the past, and an analysis of two individual and seven social functions of romanticizing The Big Six.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

According to sociologist Peter Berger, "[a]s we remember the past, we reconstruct it in accordance with our present ideas of what is important and what is not" (1963:56). Not only are the reported memories of the past selected for various reasons, the activity of reporting itself reveals much about the reporter's social context. Past facts are transformed into interpretations and the objective becomes subjective as we report on our understanding of the past in relation to the present. These interpretations, these subjective accounts of the past, constitute data which can be analyzed. An analysis of these reports can reveal what is important to the person or group engaged in selective remembering.

Romanticizing the past is a particular kind of remembering and reporting. Historical events such as wars, the depression of the 1930's, assassinations of political figures, sporting events, musical styles, and the 'Golden Age' of Hollywood are exemplars of romanticization. As sociologists, we can look at this activity as a social practice that serves to keep certain events, experiences, and cultural objects in the collective mind.

This thesis deals with romanticizing hockey. The emphasis is on the six team era of the NHL. For twenty-five seasons (between 1942-43 and 1966-67), the Montreal Canadiens, the Boston Bruins, the Chicago Blackhawks, the New York Rangers, the Detroit Red Wings, and the Toronto Maple Leafs made up the National Hockey League. Since the end of this era, the league has expanded to twenty-eight teams. This era was not a planned phase in the history of the NHL and, as a result, may be considered a historical accident. It has been the subject of much romanticization by fans, players,

1

and the media. For various reasons, which are mostly unclear, when people consider the history of the NHL, they look back most fondly upon this 'Golden Age'.

This thesis examines the activity of romanticizing the six team era by drawing upon a variety of sources. For example, the reminiscences of former NHL stars such as Milt Schmidt, John Beliveau, Paul Henderson, Billy Harris, and Marty Pavelich. Such accounts are common elements of player biographies, histories of the six team era, and interviews with players found in videos dealing with the NHL. I shall also discuss some of the symbolic objects of hockey culture which often serve as catalysts for people to romanticize hockey's past. What I have in mind here include the Stanley Cup, the Hockey Hall of Fame, hockey memorabilia, the 'Olympia Octopus', and road apples. The narratives arising around such cultural markers, like those of former players, both create and vivify images of the past. Also to be considered are stories about interesting events from hockey's past, such as the challenge for the Stanley Cup by the Dawson City Nuggets and the Richard Riot. As we shall see, when the past is romanticized, not only are important elements of the past recalled but what we consider important and of value in the present is highlighted.

Chapter two is an overview of the three phases or eras the NHL has undergone since its inaugural season in 1917-18. Brief accounts are provided of The Establishment Era (1917-18 to 1941-42) and The Modern or Expansion Era (1967-68 to the present). The emphasis is primarily on the twenty-five years between, namely, the six team era, hereinafter referred to as The Big Six. Here we focus on changes in the structure of the game, in equipment, famous lines, and significant events which, in part, constituted the happenings of this period in the NHL's history. This overview is a tapestry of facts and anecdotes drawn from the following sources; **The National**

Hockey League Official Guide and Record Book, Stan and Shirley Fischler's Great Book of Hockey: More Than 100 Years of Fire on Ice, Dan Diamond's Years of Glory 1942-1967, and The Official NHL Yearbook; the videos Legends of Hockey and Forever Rivals; the team histories The Chicago Blackhawks: A Sixty Year History 1926-1986 and The Leafs: Brian McFarlane's Original Six; Brian Kendall's biography Shutout: The Legend of Terry Sawchuk and the autobiography Jean Beliveau: My Life in Hockey. The purpose of this chapter is to acquaint the reader with the era of The Big Six.

Chapter three is an analysis of romanticizing hockey. Romantic narratives, infused with images and discourses about children playing hockey on frozen ponds, young men rising up from humble backgrounds in rural Canada to fame in the NHL, children fantasizing about winning the Stanley Cup, and great moments in international tournaments such as the 1972 Summit Series, are common elements of Canadian hockey culture. Conceptual categories, or continua, such as unorganized-organized, rural-urban, child-adult, play-work, national-international, and, most important for a consideration of romanticizing about hockey, then-now, are important aspects of such narratives. An analysis of narratives infused with these categories, such as those presented by Ken Dryden in Home Game: Hockey and Life in Canada, Jim Taylor in Wayne Gretzky: The Authorized Pictorial Biography, Roy MacSkimming in Gordie: A Hockey Legend, and those expressed in the Legends of Hockey video series, reveals that romantic narratives about hockey are patterns of myth making which are anchored in an empirical reality, but are not empirical, and that what happened in hockey's past is often thought to be better than what is happening now.

Chapter four is an explanation of what it means to romanticize the past. There are five components to this argument. The first, a summary of an argument by psychologist John A. Meacham, asserts that memory, although inherently formulated as an individual activity, is more fully understood when perceived as a social activity. The second, premised upon the interpretation of remembering as a social activity, links remembering to a nineteenth century European style of thought known as Romanticism. In other words, the two share common features. Here the work of Michael Levin, who identified six characteristics of Romanticism as an intellectual and aesthetic style, is considered. An important aspect of this component is that the word style in the phrases 'style of thought' and 'intellectual and aesthetic style' connotes that thought and remembering can be perceived as social. The third step outlines the dimensions of nostalgia as being similar to the characteristics of Romanticism, and hence a romantic style of thought. It is argued that thinking in a romantic style involves an emotional as well as a cognitive component, and a sense of loss. Important aspects of this component are Bryan S. Turner's four major dimensions of the nostalgic paradigm, and Eldon Snyder's elaboration on private and collective nostalgia. The fourth component reviews five studies which involve romanticizing as a topic or theme. It reveals that not only does thinking in a romantic style involve a sense of loss but also of something gained. The fifth aspect of the argument combines these four components in an explanation of what it means to romanticize the past.

Chapter five considers some of the individual and social functions of romanticizing the past in the context of romanticizing The Big Six. At the individual or private level, this practice allows for the recollection of noteworthy experiences from one's past and represents salient segments of an individual's biography. At the social level it

diminishes some of the negative effects of rapid social change, identifies generations, promotes positive values, provides social integration, expresses dominant cultural symbols, provides commercial opportunities, and naturalizes the arbitrariness of an established social order. Each of these functions involves something gained and something lost.

The six franchises are often referred to by members of hockey culture and the media as The Original Six or The Solid Six. Although these epithets allude to the importance and lasting influence these franchises had on the NHL, they are misnomers. For example, in 1917-18, the first season of the NHL, only the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Montreal Canadiens existed. As the seasons of the fledgling NHL unfolded, franchises in Ottawa, Quebec, Hamilton, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Philadelphia became part of the league and later disbanded. As well, two teams in Montreal, the Wanderers and the Maroons, were formed, played for a short time, then folded. The Boston Bruins joined in 1924-25, and it was not until 1926-27 that Detroit, Chicago, and the New York Rangers made the NHL a ten team league. It was not until this season that all six of these franchises competed in the NHL. For the next sixteen seasons, 1926-27 to 1941-42, they comprised only a part of the NHL. So, as only two existed at the start of the NHL, and as they made up only a part of the league up to 1941-42, it is a misnomer to refer to them as The Original Six.

Furthermore, several of these franchises were anything but solid. In spite of being a strong foundation for the growth and prosperity of the NHL, as the term Solid Six suggests, several of these franchises struggled on the ice, off the ice, or both during this era. For instance, the Montreal Canadiens struggled owing to poor attendance in the early 1940's. Nevertheless, they never suffered the same fate as the Maroons and

Wanderers. The New York Rangers played poorly in the early 1940's because they lost many of their top players to the war effort and came very close to suspending operations. Throughout this period, the Rangers were anything but solid and they failed to qualify for the play-offs eighteen times. The Chicago Blackhawks were often at or near the bottom of the standings and they did not qualify for the play-offs thirteen times. Their poor performance stemmed largely from the absence of an extensive farm system to recruit and develop young talent. During this era they won only one Stanley Cup and finished first in the standings only once. The Rangers and Bruins never won anything.

On the ice, this era was dominated by the Canadiens, the Red Wings, and the Maple Leafs. Montreal finished first twelve times and won ten Stanley Cups; Detroit finished first ten times and won five Stanley Cups; and Toronto finished first twice and won nine Stanley Cups. There was a solid three, not a solid six. This, combined with the fact that off the ice several of these franchises struggled, is another reason for questioning the image of a Solid Six.

For many reasons, the six teams may be referred to as The Big Six. They were neither 'original' nor 'solid', but they certainly are big insofar as they survived and endured. They created a strong foundation out of which the Modern Era of the NHL emerged, and influenced not only the NHL but hockey in general. They have legions of fans who support them regardless of whether they win or lose, they are currently the more stable and financially lucrative franchises in the ever changing world of professional hockey, and they have tradition. Having introduced and highlighted the contents of this thesis, let us now look at The Big Six in the context of the NHL's history.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIG SIX

The history of the National Hockey League can be divided into three phases or eras. The Establishment Era began with the 1917-18 season and ended after 1941-42. The era of The Big Six, which also lasted twenty-five years, started in 1942-43 and ended after 1966-67. The Modern or Expansion Era commenced in 1967-68 and has existed to the present. The Establishment Era commenced operations as an all-Canadian league and subsequently expanded into the United States. It expanded during the 1920's and contracted during the 1930's. The Modern or Expansion Era saw the NHL evolve into a continental league growing from six franchises to twenty-eight. This era was also marked by the assimilation of the floundering World Hockey Association, franchise transfers, and the emergence of a global talent pool which brought players from the United States, Russia, Sweden, Finland, and other European countries into the league. In what follows I shall briefly consider these two eras and emphasize the twenty-five years between them - the era of The Big Six.

In 1917-18, the NHL replaced the NHA (National Hockey Association) as Canada's premiere professional hockey league. The NHL was formed largely as a result of World War I. When a NHA team was disbanded because of the draft, the remaining NHA franchises were left arguing over the schedule. Edward J. Livingstone, owner of the league's Toronto Blueshirts, was the most vocal complainer and thoroughly disliked by the other owners. Unable to reach a satisfactory solution, a new league was formed - the NHL. This new league was formed in Montreal in 1917 to replace the troubled NHA. Frank Calder became its first President and secretary (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #1).

The fledgling NHL, which did not include Livingstone's Blueshirts, consisted of four Canadian franchises; the Montreal Canadiens, the Montreal Wanderers, the Ottawa Senators, and the Toronto Arenas (later renamed the St. Patricks and then the Maple Leafs). Early into its inaugural season, the Montreal Arena burned down, and the Montreal Wanderers were forced to withdraw from the league. For most of its first season, and all of its second, the NHL was only a three team league (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:131).

This new league was entirely Canadian. It was formed in the Windsor Hotel in Montreal (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #1) which became the location of its headquarters. All of the franchises were located in Canadian cities and all of the players were Canadian. For these reasons the league was named the National Hockey League; it was the premiere professional league of Canada's winter pastime.

Although World War I played a key role in the formation of the NHL, it was the social and economic milieu of the 1920's which led to the expansion of the new league over the next decade. The NHL's third season saw the addition of a fourth Canadian franchise, the Quebec Bulldogs, which folded after one season. Another new Canadian entry, the Hamilton Tigers, started up the next season. For five seasons (1919-20 to 1923-24), the NHL comprised four Canadian franchises. For the 1924-25 season the NHL added two more clubs. The Montreal Maroons became the fifth Canadian team and the Boston Bruins became the first American based franchise even though the latter team had a roster stocked with Canadian players (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:131-2). The NHL's expansion into densely populated U.S. cities was primarily undertaken for the league's future economic survival. Furthermore, in order to

be successful in the U.S. market, the NHL wanted and needed a franchise in the city of New York (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #2).

The Pittsburgh Pirates and the New York Americans entered the league in the 1925-1926 season (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:132). The Americans became the NHL's first and much needed New York franchise (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #2). As with the Boston Bruins, these two new teams were stocked with Canadian players. When the next season commenced, three more American based franchises were in the league; the New York Rangers, the Detroit Cougars, and the Chicago Blackhawks (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:132).

In order for professional hockey teams and leagues to be profitable and successful in the 1920's a large market was required, e.g., urban centers in the northeast area of North America. Cities like Chicago, Boston, Pittsburgh, New York, Detroit, Toronto, and Montreal were not only densely populated, but also had many knowledgeable hockey fans. Although this was also true of hockey fans in west coast cities such as Seattle, Portland, Victoria, and Vancouver, their population bases were not large enough to support professional hockey franchises.

During the 1920's, the top professional hockey team in the west (the champion of the Pacific Coast Hockey League) played the top professional hockey team in the east (the champion of the National Hockey League) for the Stanley Cup. The Victoria Cougars, the PCHL champions in 1925, won the Stanley Cup that year and were the last non-NHL franchise to do so. The following season the Cougars won the PCHL title again and traveled to Montreal to play the Maroons for the Stanley Cup. They were unsuccessful. This result became a growing trend with the professional teams from the west unable to compete against teams from the more affluent and populated east. They

simply couldn't match the high salaries the extremely talented and popular players demanded. These players frequently ended up playing for eastern based franchises who could afford, and were willing to pay them, large salaries (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #1).

Not only were many players sold to eastern based teams in the NHL, often whole teams were sold and relocated. For example, the PCHL's Portland Rosebuds ended up in Chicago. Major Frederick McLaughlin, a self-made millionaire owing to his investments in the world coffee market, purchased the Rosebuds for $200,000 and immediately renamed the team the Blackhawks. Although many believed this name was taken from an early Indian chief, the name was adopted in honor of the Blackhawk Field Gun Battalion, which McLaughlin had commanded in World War I. The Blackhawks played their home games during their first three NHL seasons in the 5,000 seat Chicago Coliseum (Pfeiffer, 1986:14) which had a very interesting history. It was originally erected in Europe, but was dismantled and moved stone by stone to the United States. It reappeared in Chicago in the area of 16th and Wabash. During the Civil War it was used as a Union prison, and was later converted into the Coliseum where many sporting and entertainment events were held (Pfeiffer, 1986:17).

During the 1920's the NHL evolved into a ten-team league. Six of these franchises were located in the United States. As a result, the league was divided into the Canadian Division and the American Division. For balance, the New York Americans were placed in the Canadian division (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:132). Initially, the NHL was 100% Canadian in terms of players, the location of its franchises, and in the location of its headquarters. By the league's tenth anniversary season, 1926-

10

27, six of its ten franchises were located in American cities. Since Canadian players still were dominant, the NHL, and hockey in general, was still considered Canada's game.

The growth, affluence, and prosperity the NHL experienced during the 1920's was short lived. The Great Depression of the 1930's brought about franchise failures and relocations. For the 1930-31 season, the Pittsburgh Pirates were defunct and the Philadelphia Quakers added. But, the Quakers and the Ottawa Senators never played the 1931-32 season and the NHL was left with eight franchises. The Quakers never returned but Ottawa returned for the 1932-33 season to compete for two more years (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:132-3). At the height of the depression, the financially troubled Senators were sold to St. Louis and became the St. Louis Eagles (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #1), who played only one season, 1934-35, and occupied the Canadian Division. After their demise, the league was again left with eight teams, five of which were located in American cities (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:133).

In 1937-38 another financially troubled franchise, the Montreal Maroons, played their last season. The loss of franchises because of the depression resulted in the abolition of the Canadian and American Divisions. The seven remaining teams competed in a league with no divisions. The NHL remained a seven-team league until the end of the 1941-42 season, when the financially troubled Brooklyn Americans, formerly the New York Americans, suspended operations. The social and economic reality of the 1930's was reflected by the NHL changing from a ten-team to a six-team league (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:133-4).

11

Upon the demise of the Brooklyn Americans, the NHL was left with six franchises; the Chicago Blackhawks, the Boston Bruins, the New York Rangers, the Detroit Red Wings, the Toronto Maple Leafs, and the Montreal Canadiens. The twenty-five seasons of the Big Six Era started with the 1942-43 season and lasted until the end of the 1966-67 season. After 1942-43, the structure of the game was changed with the introduction of a center red line to speed up the play and reduce offsides, and the implementation of a new face-off rule (Diamond, 1994:12). The last season of this era was Bobby Orr's first. He was an offensive defenseman and his style of play transformed the game. His influence was a large component of the transition from the Big Six Era to the Modern Era. Prolific lines, dynasties, and rivalries were some of the interesting aspects of this era in the NHL's history; an era which started, ended, and was characterized by innovation and change.

The first season of the Big Six Era was Maurice Richard's rookie year. As part of Montreal's Punch Line, Richard would become one of the first stars of this era. NHL President Frank Calder, who had been head of the league since its inaugural year, died. Red Dutton, former head of the defunct Brooklyn Americans, was named interim President until Clarence Campbell, Calder's personally picked successor, would take over (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:89).

After the completion of the 1942-43 season, a center red line was introduced in order to both speed up the play and reduce offsides. Prior to this, forward passing was permitted in the defensive, offensive, and neutral zones. But, the puck had to be carried over both blue lines. Strong fore-checking often pinned the opposition in their end of the ice for a long time. It was often difficult for a team being fore-checked to move the puck out of their zone because they couldn't pass across their blue line; they had to

carry the puck out of their end. A plodding style of play and numerous offsides were the results (Diamond, 1994:12). With the introduction of the red line, a player could pass from his own zone right up to the red line. Now the defending team was more able to launch a counter-attack, the fore-checkers were required to cover more ice, and the game opened up owing the importance of passing and speed. These changes made the game more appealing for the fans.

Another innovation which changed the structure of the game was a new face-off rule. This change affected the position of players when they took face-offs. Players used to line up with their backs to the side boards. This often resulted in a particular strategy; the players taking the face-off often ignored the puck and tied each other up and a second player would skate in and pick up the puck. The new rule required players to line up differently; their position was rotated ninety degrees which placed them standing with their backs toward their own goals. The emphasis was now placed on winning the draw. This change was implemented to speed up the play (12).

Throughout the Big Six Era many lines achieved notoriety. For example, Boston's Kraut Line, Montreal's Punch Line, Chicago's Pony Line, and Detroit's Production Line dominated. The Kraut Line actually achieved acclaim prior to the Big Six Era. Woody Dumart, Milt Schmidt, and Bobby Bauer, dubbed the Kraut Line because they all grew up in the German community of Kitchener, Ontario, emerged in 1937-38 when they helped the Bruins earn the best record in the NHL (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:73). The following season, the Kraut Line helped the Bruins finish first again and capture the Stanley Cup for the first time in ten years (74-75). Another first place finish followed in 1939-40. Milt Schmidt also won the league's scoring title (80). The 1940-41 Bruins finished first for the fourth consecutive year and won another Cup (83). Central to this

success of the pre-Big Six Era Bruins was the Kraut Line. Prior to the 1941-42 season, the entire Kraut Line enlisted in the RCAF (Royal Canadian Air Force). In the spring of 1943 the Bruins felt their loss when they were swept in the Stanley Cup finals by Detroit (89). The Bruins became one of the NHL's victims of World War II (85).

The Kraut Line returned for the first post-war NHL season in 1945-46, and helped the Bruins reach the Cup finals (which they lost to Montreal) (99). The Kraut Line continued to entertain NHL fans until the end of the 1951-52 campaign when Bobby Bauer retired. But, throughout the Big Six Era, both with and without the Kraut Line, Boston never recaptured the league championship or the coveted Stanley Cup.

In 1943-44 Montreal's Punch Line emerged with Maurice "Rocket" Richard playing right wing, Elmer Lach center, and Toe Blake left wing (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:91). Montreal finished with the best record and swept Chicago for the Stanley Cup (92) with Lach, Blake, and Richard one-two-three in team scoring. The next season Montreal finished first again, and Richard became the first NHL player to score 50 goals in 50 games. Elmer Lach was the league's leading scorer, and was also awarded the Hart Trophy as the NHL's most valuable player. Lach, Richard, and Blake finished one-two-three in league scoring (95).

In 1945-46, powered by the Punch Line, Montreal finished with the best record and won another Stanley Cup (99). In 1946-47, Montreal finished with the best record for the fourth consecutive season, but lost to Toronto in the Cup final. Maurice Richard was awarded the Hart Trophy as league MVP (101).

Although Toronto took top honors in 1947-48 by finishing first and winning the Cup, the Punch Line was still one of the league's top offensive units. Elmer Lach earned the Art Ross Trophy as the league's top scorer, the first time the NHL's leading scorer was

honored with this trophy (106). The 1947-48 season was also the last for Toe Blake who retired to coach the Valleyfield Braves of the Quebec Senior League (110).

The Chicago Blackhawks' Pony Line, made up of brothers Max and Doug Bentley, and Bill Mosienko (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:98), earned its name because of their small, coltish moves (125). Although the Blackhawks finished the 1942-43 season in fifth place, Doug Bentley was the league's leading scorer with 73 points, and his brother Max was awarded the Lady Byng Trophy. Prior to Mosienko playing with the Bentleys, a third brother, Reg, played a short time with his two brothers creating the league's only all brother line (89).

In 1943-44, the Pony Line helped Chicago reach the finals, but they lost to the powerful Canadiens in four straight games (92). In 1944-45 Bill Mosienko was awarded the Lady Byng while the Blackhawks struggled and finished fifth (95). As the Blackhawks struggled through the 1940's, members of the Pony Line continued to excel. For example, Max Bentley won the scoring title in 1945-46 and was also awarded the Hart Trophy as the league's MVP (99). The following season Max Bentley again finished first in league scoring (101).

In November 1947, Max Bentley was traded to Toronto for five players in one of the biggest hockey trades ever (104). Chicago received Bob Goldham, Bud Poile, Gus Bodnar, Gaye Stewart, and Ernie Dickens (McFarlane, 1996:98). In 1952 Bill Mosienko accomplished what will likely never be equaled or beaten. On March 23 at Madison Square Garden in a game against the New York Rangers, Mosienko scored three goals in twenty one seconds (125). This was and still is the fastest hat-trick in the history of the NHL. Gus Bodnar set up all three goals, and earned an NHL record for the fastest

three assists. Lome Anderson, the Rangers goaltender, never played in the NHL again (Diamond, 1994: 59).

The two Bentleys and Bill Mosienko were exceptional playmakers and stickhandlers. Unlike the other prominent lines of the Big Six Era, however, they were thwarted by rough play (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:101). Also, in large part owing the lack of depth in the Chicago line-up, the Pony Line was unable to lead the Hawks to a league title or a Stanley Cup. This was not the case with the other prominent lines of this era.

Another prominent unit was Detroit's Production Line. Sid Abel played center between Gordie Howe and Ted Lindsay (99). After Abel's retirement in 1954, the Production Line remained intact as Alex Delvecchio replaced Abel at center (107). The Production Line started to have an impact in the NHL in the late 1940's. The 1947-48 playoffs revealed signs of things to come as Detroit qualified for the Cup final but lost to Toronto (106). Detroit repeated as Cup contenders the next season, but lost again to Toronto in four games. But, the Wings captured their first of seven consecutive league championships, and Sid Abel was awarded the Hart Trophy as league MVP (107).

In 1950 the Wings defeated New York in the final four games to three. Ted Lindsay also finished the season as the top scorer and earned the Art Ross Trophy for his effort (118). In fact, the Production Line finished one-two-three in scoring. Lindsay was followed by Sid Abel then Howe (117). The following season, 1950-51, Gordie Howe captured the Art Ross Trophy (122). The Wings dominated in 1951-52 as they finished first and swept the final. Howe captured the Art Ross Trophy again and was awarded the Hart Trophy (127). After 1952-53, Howe was awarded another Hart and earned another Art Ross (130).

Detroit's winning ways continued through the 1953-54 campaign. They finished first for the sixth consecutive year and won the Stanley Cup by defeating Montreal. Howe earned another Art Ross (133-4). The next season the Wing's finished first again and defeated Montreal for the Cup (138). In 1956 Detroit qualified for the Cup final but were defeated by Montreal (142). After the 1956-57 season, Detroit was first for the eighth time in nine years, and Howe was awarded the Hart and earned another Art Ross (146).

The Detroit Red Wings of the late 1940's and early 1950's, powered by the Production Line, was clearly one of the dynasties of the Big Six Era. During their seven consecutive first place finishes they won four Stanley Cups, including two consecutively. Although a dynasty in hockey culture is usually "defined as any team that wins three or more Stanley Cups in succession" (100) the Detroit club of 1948-49 to 1954-55 indubitably qualifies as one.

Throughout the Big Six Era several other dynasties prevailed. For instance, through 1946-47 to 1948-49 the Toronto Maple Leafs, coached by Hap Day, won three consecutive Stanley Cups (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:226) and thereby became the NHL's first dynasty. In 1947 Toronto defeated Montreal in the finals and a Leaf, Howie Meeker, was awarded the Calder Trophy for rookie of the year (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:101). With the help of Max Bentley, acquired from Chicago, the Leafs captured the Cup again in 1948 by sweeping Detroit. Toronto also finished with the best record over the season (106). In 1949 Toronto swept the Wings to win their third consecutive Stanley Cup (110).

Another dynasty during this era were the 1955-56 to 1959-60 Montreal Canadiens (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:226). They captured the Stanley Cup an

unprecedented and thus far never repeated five consecutive times. Toe Blake, former member of Montreal's renowned Punch Line, was their coach (226). In 1956 Montreal started their dynasty with a Cup victory over Detroit as well as a first place finish (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:142). In 1957 the Canadiens defeated Boston in the finals (146). In 1958 Montreal won their third consecutive Cup and also finished as regular season champions (151). The Canadiens repeated as league champions in 1959 and won their fourth consecutive Cup (156). In 1960 Montreal finished first and swept Toronto in the finals (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:164).

Montreal's five consecutive Cups were only part of the dynasty. They also finished first four of these five years. In 1961 Montreal's hold on the Cup ended but they finished first over the regular season (167). In 1962 Montreal again finished first over the regular season (for the sixth time in seven years) (172).

Essential to the Canadien's dynasty was their offense. In fact, their offense was so dynamic it brought about a major rule change. Starting with the 1956-57 season, the power play rule was put in effect. A player serving a minor penalty could return to the ice if the opposing team scored on the power play (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:11). Prior to this rule change, the team with the power play could score as many goals as they could throughout the entire duration of the penalty as the offending player was only released after the complete time of the penalty had expired. This often resulted in the powerful Canadien offense scoring several goals on a power play, and putting the game out of reach for the opposition. The power play rule curtailed this from occurring (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:114).

The Maple Leafs, coached by Punch Imlach, again won three consecutive Cups from 1962 to 1964 (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:226). In 1962 they

defeated Chicago in the finals (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:172). In 1963 Toronto finished in first place and defeated Detroit in the finals (176). In 1964 the Leafs defeated Detroit in a seven game final series to capture their third consecutive Cup (180). Tim Horton, Dave Keon, Johnny Bower, Eddie Shack, Red Kelly, George Armstrong, and Frank Mahovlich were some of the key players in this Leaf dynasty (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:230).

Several innovations to the game introduced during the Big Six Era have endured to this day. For example, Bernie Geoffrion introduced the slap shot to the NHL. During a game Geoffrion missed the puck. In anger, he slapped the puck with his stick and it took off. He subsequently perfected this slapshot and hockey was changed forever. Using this technique, Geoffrion became only the second player to score 50 goals in a season (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #3). He was "[n]icknamed "Boom Boom" because of the reverberation of his stick hitting the puck and the puck hitting the endboards" (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:135). During the 1960's, Andy Bathgate of the Rangers and Bobby Hull of the Blackhawks became successful slap shot adepts (129).

What the slap shot lacked in accuracy was made up in velocity and intimidation (129). Goaltenders became so frightened they started to wear masks. Terry Sawchuk was terrified, Gump Worsely was amazed, and Jacques Plante responded by developing the goal mask (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #3). On November 1, 1959, while playing for Montreal against the Rangers in Madison Square Garden in New York, Plante was hit in the face by an Andy Bathgate slapshot. As a result, Plante was taken out of the game with a seven-stitch gash on his face. After receiving sutures he reappeared in the game wearing a goal mask. The Canadiens went on to win 3-1, and Plante wore the mask for the rest of the season (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:162).

Toe Blake, coach of Montreal, claimed that Plante was puck shy (which was a very insulting thing to say about a goaltender); Plante's response was that he had one head and wanted to keep it (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #3)!

Jacques Plante was responsible for several other innovations. For instance, he was the first goaltender to persistently wander outside the goal crease. This unconventional goaltending style was soon copied by other netminders throughout the league. Plante frequently roamed out of the crease to retrieve pucks which had caromed off the boards and skidded behind the net. There he was able to control the puck, pass it to a teammate, and then scramble back into his crease before any shots were taken. Plante was very effective at this, but it was considered taboo for a goaltender as it left the net completely unprotected. Furthermore, Plante also had the audacity to engage in this unorthodox style while playing for Montreal in the playoffs (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:130)! Also, Plante's agility and speed enabled him to develop a deadly and effective poke check. He frequently held back deep in his net, and then with his goal stick he would very quickly strike out at the puck held by the incoming forward. According to Jean Beliveau, he struck like a serpent and thus earned one of his nicknames - "Jake the Snake" (Beliveau, 1995:134).

Jacques Plante played a total of nineteen seasons in the NHL with five different teams. He was awarded one Hart Trophy, earned seven Vezinas, and played on six Cup winning teams. Despite these achievements, he is perhaps best known for his innovative goal mask, for which he has been dubbed "The Masked Man" (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #3).

Another innovation was the hook stick. Stan Mikita of the Chicago Blackhawks has been credited with this invention. Bobby Hull, Mikita's teammate in Chicago, provides

an account of this development. During practice, if Mikita did not like the stick he was using, he would lean on it and try to break it. Since he did not weigh very much (165 lbs soaking wet, according to Hull) he often could not break it. So, he would insert his stick in the door jam of the players bench and try to break it. This resulted in him merely curving the blade. He then skated around shooting pucks with his curved stick (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #3). Mikita was also one of the first NHL players to wear a helmet (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:188). Mikita, who played twenty-two seasons in Chicago, became the first player to win the Art Ross, the Lady Byng, and the Hart in one year. He accomplished this feat twice; after the 1966-67 season, and after the 1967-68 season (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:196).

The strategy of pulling the goaltender also became a salient aspect of the game during the Big Six Era. During their first contest of the 1946-47 season, the Red Wings were trailing the Leafs 3-2 in the final minute of regulation time. Jack Adams, coach of the Red Wings, pulled his goaltender and replaced him with an extra forward. Sid Abel scored to tie the game. The result was that pulling the goaltender became a popular coaching ploy. Paul Thompson, coach of the Chicago Blackhawks, unsuccessfully attempted this strategy in the early 1940's. But, it wasn't until Adams's success that other coaches started to employ this technique (Diamond, 1994: 26).

Another development was the gradual implementation of tandem goaltenders. In the early 1950's the Leafs dressed two goaltenders, Al Rollins and Turk Broda (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:120). By 1964-65 most teams regularly used two goalies. Only Detroit, with Roger Crozier, and Boston, with Eddie Johnston, were the exceptions (Kendall, 1997:224). Gump Worsley, who was a goaltender for Montreal and New York during the Big Six Era, claims the major reason for teams employing two goaltenders

was television. if only one goaltender was dressed for each team, a serious injury to either goaltender could create a lengthy stoppage of play. Either a back-up goaltender would leave the audience and suit up (this was often a trainer or spare goaltender of the home team), or the injured goaltender would be treated by doctors or trainers and then rejoin the game. When NHL games started to be televised, such potential interruptions in play had to be eliminated. The solution was for each team to dress two goaltenders (ESPN Radio Broadcast, November 24, 1999). A major rule change was put in effect for the 1965-66 season; teams were required to dress two goaltenders for each regular season game (NHL Official Guide and Record Book,1997:11).

In 1964-65, Terry Sawchuk and Johnny Bower earned the Vezina Trophy while playing for the Leafs. As a tandem, they finished with the league's lowest goals against average, and they refused to accept the Vezina Trophy unless both of their names were inscribed on it and they each received the same cash award. The league agreed, and the Vezina became a trophy emblematic of the tandem goalie system (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:184). This manner of awarding the Vezina was in effect until 1981-82, when the Vezina Trophy began to be awarded to the goaltender judged by the general managers of each of the NHL clubs to be the best at his position (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:192).

During the 1955-56 season, another major change was the emergence of the enforcer, otherwise referred to as the policeman or the instigator. The principal role of the enforcer was to intimidate the opposition. Lou Fontinato of the Rangers was one of the first enforcers. Such players are currently referred to as goons. When this term was first applied is not known. It was not used at the same time as the emergence of that style of player (the term goon came much later) (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:142).

Several innovations concerning the ice also made their first appearance during this era. The first was a corollary of televising NHL games. Commencing with the 1949-50 season, the NHL required that all ice surfaces in NHL arenas be tinted white to make television viewing easier. Previously, when ice surfaces were not colored, they took on a gray, mottled look as the arena's concrete or sand floors were visible through the transparent ice. The combination of gray ice, white snow, and scratches on the surface made the puck difficult to follow for fans and players (Diamond, 1994: 40).

The second innovation concerning the ice first occurred on March 10, 1955. During a game between the Leafs and Canadiens, a new ice cleaning machine made its debut in an NHL arena. The Zamboni, which rapidly cleaned the ice prior to the game and between periods, was soon a standard piece of equipment in most rinks in North America (84).

As the era of the Big Six unfolded, many events occurred which have become memorable and enduring aspects of hockey culture, e.g., the 1961 Stanley Cup final series between Detroit and Chicago, the Richard Riot, and the appearance of Willie O'Ree, the first black player in the NHL. The Montreal-Toronto rivalry, which originated in the early 1940's, has endured to this day.

The 1961 Stanley Cup finals between the Chicago Blackhawks and the Detroit Red Wings is widely considered a series in which the old or traditional style of play (embodied by the Red Wings) was up against the new or radical style (embodied by the Hawks). According to the Fischlers, the finals of 1961 "presented a microcosm of the old and the new, of what was best and worst, traditional and radical in hockey at the start of the 1960's" (168).

Delvecchio and Howe of the Wings were the quintessential traditionalists. Delvecchio, who played center, would carry the puck up the ice and pass it to one of his wingers. When Howe, a winger, got the puck he usually fired a wrist shot or a backhand. Players such as Howe also handled their own forechecking and policing. Howe had a reputation as a tough player who wouldn't hesitate to use his elbows and, along with his Wing teammates, his stick, to intimidate the opposition (168-9).

Hull and Mikita, on the other hand, were the catalysts and the essence of the new style of hockey. Although Mikita was very adept at stick-handling the puck down the ice, both he and Hull were perfecting the curved stick and the slapshot for a fly-down-the-ice-and-slap-it style of play. By the middle and late 1960's, this style became prevalent in the NHL (169). As a portent of things to come, Chicago defeated the Wings and captured their third and last Stanley Cup (167-68).

One vestige of the old style of play in Chicago's lineup during this series was goaltender Glenn Hall, one of the last of the iron man goalies. As noted earlier, throughout the 1950's and early 1960's, teams switched from one goalie who played all the regular season and playoff games, to a tandem system of a star goalie along with a backup goalie. Hall was one of the last of a dying tradition; up to this point Hall had completed the sixth of seven seasons playing every game in goal for his team. Sawchuk, in goal for the Wings, had played in 37 of 70 regular season matches. The tandem goalie system was slowly replacing the iron man goalie exemplified by Hall (168).

Perhaps the most talked about event of the Big Six Era has been the Richard Riot, which occurred in Montreal on March 17, 1955. In a game late in the season between the Canadiens and the Bruins at Boston, Montreal coach Dick Irvin was upset at the

amount of physical abuse his team was receiving from the home town Bruins. Irvin encouraged his team to come out fighting in the last period. One player, Maurice "Rocket" Richard, wasn't about to let Irvin down. During the final period Hal Leycoe, defenseman for the Bruins, provided the Rocket with a bloody cut on his scalp. Richard responded by challenging Laycoe to a fight and Laycoe declined. The Rocket persisted, but was restrained by his teammates and linesman Cliff Thompson. The latter, however, rather than steering Richard away from Laycoe, angered him by his physical contact and only made the situation worse. The result was that both Richard and Thompson fell to the ice. The Rocket was penalized. However, the incident wasn't over. The Boston newspapers demanded that more action be taken against Richard. League president Clarence Campbell responded by ordering Irvin, Richard, and people from the Bruins organization to his office. Surprisingly, Campbell's response was suspending Richard for the rest of the regular season and the playoffs (138).

In Montreal, where Richard had God-like status, Canadien fans went into an uproar. This suspension was unacceptable for many reasons; 1) it happened to the Rocket, 2) the suspension was for the rest of the season and the playoffs, 3) Richard was very close to capturing the league scoring title for the first time in his career. There was concern that he wouldn't win it as a result of the suspension (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #3). Finally, the Canadiens were close to, and were expected to, nose out Detroit for the league championship, but the suspension of Richard made this less likely (Detroit went on to win the league championship and defeated Montreal for the Stanley Cup) (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:138).

As time passed, Montreal's fans became more and more enraged over Campbell's decision. By March 17, when Montreal was to host the Detroit Red Wings at the Forum,

the city was in an uproar. To make a volatile situation worse, Campbell decided to attend the game. Shortly after arriving, Campbell had rotten fruit and vegetables thrown at him (138). A fan approached Campbell with what appeared to be an intent to shake his hand. Instead, the fan struck Campbell in the face. Jimmy Orlando, an ex-Detroit Red Wing, saw this and reacted by grabbing the fan and hitting him (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #3).

Suddenly, a tear gas bomb went off in the Forum. This sent the fans, already in a foul mood, scuffling and screaming to the exits. Jack Adams, the coach of the Wings, received a note under the Detroit dressing room door from Canadiens manager Frank Selke Sr. claiming that in the interest of safety, the game was to be forfeited and the building emptied (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #3).

After the Forum was emptied, about 6,000 to 7,000 people gathered in front. A bullet was shot through a window, fires were set, and cars were overturned in the ensuing riot. Later, a crowd estimated between 30,000 to 40,000 started rioting on St. Catherine's Street. Fires were set, and taxis and street cars were toppled over. To quell the rioting crowd, around 2:00 AM Maurice "Rocket" Richard went on both English and French radio to encourage the angry fans not to take the law into their own hands (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #3).

Another memorable event from the Big Six Era was the appearance of the first black player in the NHL. On February 1, 1958, Willie O'Ree made his debut with the Boston Bruins. O'Ree, a talented winger, was promoted from Quebec, where he had scored 22 goals in 1956-57. His first appearance in the NHL was for two games (Diamond, 1994: 116). O'Ree had good speed, but could not hold up against the rugged checking in the NHL. Nevertheless, he ended up back with the Bruins three years later for 43 games

(Fischler and Fischler, 1997: 149). O'Ree played a total of 45 NHL games in which he scored 4 goals and collected 10 assists (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997: 427).

One aspect of hockey culture which originated in the Big Six Era and has endured to this day is the Montreal-Toronto rivalry. According to broadcaster Dick Irvin, "nothing matches the atmosphere when the Canadiens play the Maple Leafs. It's still there in the hearts of the people". Irvin claims the rivalry started in the 1945 playoffs (MacAskill, 1996: Forever Rivals Video #1). Toronto defeated Montreal in the semi-finals even though Montreal had finished with the best record of 38 wins, only 8 losses, and 4 ties (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:95). Toronto went on to defeat Detroit in a seven game final series. For six straight years, from 1944 to 1949, one of these two franchises won the Cup. Only once during this six year period, in 1947, however, did Montreal and Toronto meet in the finals (which Toronto won). The rivalry on the ice mirrored a cultural one involving language, religion, and geography. It became French vs English, Catholic vs Protestant, and Quebec vs Ontario (MacAskill, 1996: Forever Rivals Video #1).

According to Ken Reardon of the Canadiens, "[i]t was legitimate rivalry, a real hate" (MacAskill, 1996: Forever Rivals Video #1). In fact, one of the longest and most bitter disputes in the history of professional sport exists between Reardon and Cal Gardner of the Leafs. The following transcription of interviews with these two players highlights the bitter feud which existed and the animosity these two players still have for each other.

> Ken: somebody cross checked me across the mouth
> Cal: I had cut him on the lip. We were fighting for a playoff spot.
> Ken: there was quite a bit of blood on the ice and uh my chewing
>   gum we all chewed gum had fallen on the ice and I could see
>   a couple of teeth sticking in it
> Cal: and all of a sudden one night he gives me the elbow and breaks
>   my jaw
> Ken: I wanted to get even ... make no bones about it
> Cal: he had already told a a magazine that he was going to break my

jaw
Ken: and the week the magazine came out I ran into Cal Gardner
accidentally. I never got a penalty and unfortunately he broke his
jaw on both sides.
Cal: it was an awful crack. That's an awful thing to do to a man.
Ken: so I had to go in front of Mr. Campbell ... (MacAskill, 1996: For-
ever Rivals Video #1).

Their accounts, videotaped separately and then transcribed in the above form, not only

depict the intensity and violence of the dispute between Reardon and Gardner, they

also exemplify the bitter rivalry between the Canadiens and the Leafs during the Big Six

Era. Not only has this rivalry transcended the Big Six Era, the animosity between

Reardon and Gardner remains. Nearly fifty years later they still don't talk. According to

Cal Gardner, "I wouldn't talk to him. I wouldn't lower myself to talk to him" (MacAskill,

1996: Forever Rivals Video #1).

The Leafs and Canadiens met again in the 1951 finals. All five games went into

overtime. It was in this series that Bill Barilko of the Leafs won the Cup with an overtime

goal. Shortly afterwards he perished in a plane crash (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:123).

In spite of this loss to Toronto, the 1950's belonged to Montreal as they played in the

Cup final ten years in a row, won six Cups (NHL Official Guide and Record Book,

1997:226), and finished first over the regular season four times (135-6). Montreal

finished the 1950's with five consecutive Cup victories, including two over the Leafs in

1959 and 1960 (226).

The rivalry continued in 1963 when the Leafs defeated Montreal in a five game semi-

final series. Toronto went on to defeat Detroit in the finals. The next season, Toronto

again defeated Montreal (in spite of Montreal finishing first over the regular season) in a

seven game semi-final series, and went on to defeat Detroit in another seven game

series to capture their third consecutive Stanley Cup (MacAskill, 1996: Forever Rivals Video #1).

The Big Six Era came to a close with the continuation of this rivalry in the 1967 finals. Toronto defeated Montreal four games to two and won the last Stanley Cup of the Big Six Era (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:192). Dave Keon was awarded the Conn Smythe Trophy as the playoff MVP and to this day has been the only Leaf to ever receive this award. From 1956 to 1969, Montreal and Toronto won thirteen of fourteen Stanley Cups (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:226).

The 1966-67 season was noteworthy for several reasons. First, it was the 50th anniversary of the NHL. Second, Chicago won the league title for the first time. Third, it was the first season in which the All-Star Game was played in the middle of the season. Montreal defeated the stars 3-0. This was the first, and only, shutout in the history of the All-Star Game. Fourth, a young defenseman named Bobby Orr played his first season in the NHL for the Boston Bruins. His impact was immediate; he packed arenas in his first season and was awarded the Calder Trophy for rookie of the year. Orr may not have created the blue line rush but he popularized it to the extent that he, in large part, changed the style of the game. He also regularly joined the offense as a fourth forward, and completely orchestrated the power play from the point. He became a model for a whole generation of future offensive defenseman. Fifth, as the NHL doubled in size for the next season by adding six franchises in the United States, this season was the last of the Big Six Era (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:190-93).

The 1967-68 season marked the start of The Modern or Expansion Era. The Oakland Seals, the Los Angeles Kings, the Minnesota North Stars, the St. Louis Blues, the

Philadelphia Flyers, and the Pittsburgh Penquins entered the league. A consequence of this expansion was that the league was split into two six-team divisions. The East Division comprised The Big Six franchises and the West Division the six expansion teams (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:138).

Not only did this expansion double the number of franchises, it also brought live NHL play to arenas in both the midwest (St. Louis and Minnesota) and the west coast (Oakland and Los Angeles). The Big Six franchises, with national television exposure, had attracted a national audience and now, as a result of expansion, interested fans in other areas of North America could watch live NHL action. In addition, new arenas accompanied new franchises. The $18 million Forum in southern California, the $6 million Metropolitan Sports center in Bloomington, Minnesota, the $12 million Spectrum in Philadelphia, and New York's new $25 million Madison Square Garden Center, were indicators of the affluence and prosperity the NHL was enjoying (McFarlane, 1989:95).

The NHL expanded again in 1970-71 with the addition of the Buffalo Sabres and the Vancouver Canucks (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:138). The Canucks became the NHL's third Canadian franchise and expanded its presence into the Pacific north west. The Sabres joined the pack of solid and stable franchises in north eastern North America. These two franchises joined the East Division while Chicago switched to the West Division (138). In 1972-73, the New York Islanders joined the stable core of franchises in the north east while the Atlanta Flames brought the NHL to the south western United States for the first time. The Islanders joined the East Division while the Flames joined the West Division (138). In 1974-75, the Kansas City Scouts were added to the contingent of franchises in the mid west, while the Washington Capitals joined the stable core of franchises in the north east (139).

From 1967-68 to 1974-75, the NHL tripled to eighteen teams. Of the twelve expansion franchises added in this eight year period only one, the Vancouver Canucks, was Canadian. Every stage of expansion saw a team or teams added to the solid core of franchises in the north east, and a team or teams brought into untested markets across North America such as the west coast, the mid west, and the southern United States. For the 1974-75 season, the NHL was realigned into two nine team conferences. The Prince Of Wales Conference (formerly the East Division) was made up of the Norris and Adams Divisions, while the Clarence Cambell Conference (formerly the West Division) contained the Smythe and Patrick Divisions (139). What was interesting about this realignment was that the conferences and divisions were not named after geographical regions as in other sport leagues. Rather, they were named after prominent and influential men who played key roles in the history of the NHL. In this way, the league used its tradition to showcase itself.

Over the next several seasons, many franchise transfers and mergers took place. The California franchise was transferred to Cleveland and became the Cleveland Barons. The Kansas City franchise was transferred to Denver and became the Colorado Rockies. In 1978-79, the Cleveland and Minnesota franchises merged, and the NHL was left a seventeen team league (139).

A major merger took place prior to the commencement of the 1979-80 season. The Edmonton Oilers, the Winnipeg Jets, the Quebec Nordiques, and the Hartford Whalers merged with the NHL when the World Hockey Association suspended operations (140). The three Canadian entries doubled the total number of Canadian franchises in the twenty-one team league to six. The next season, 1980-81, the Atlanta franchise was transferred to Calgary and became the Calgary Flames (140). This brought the total

number of Canadian teams to seven. The NHL now had, as during the era of the Big Six, one-third of its franchises in Canada.

In 1982-83, the Colorado Rockies transferred to New Jersey and became the New Jersey Devils. In 1991-92, the NHL added another team - the San Jose Sharks. This new addition marked the beginning of a trend, namely, the expansion and relocation of existing franchises into the southern United States. The next season a team was added in Florida, the Tampa Bay Lightning. As well, Canada got its eighth franchise as the Ottawa Senators entered the league. The year after, California was granted another franchise, the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim, as was Florida, the Florida Panthers. Also, the Minnesota franchise shifted to Dallas and became the Dallas Stars (140-2).

A corollary of this very rapid expansion into the southern United States was that the conferences and divisions were again renamed. In 1993-94, the Prince of Wales Conference became the Eastern Conference, and the Clarence Campbell Conference became the Western Conference. As far as the divisions were concerned, the Adams became the Northeast, the Patrick became the Atlantic, the Norris became the central, and the Smythe became the Pacific (142).

The NHL's entry into the southern United States continued with several more franchise transfers. The Quebec Nordiques moved to Denver and became the Colorado Avalanche, while the Winnipeg Jets became the Phoenix Coyotes (143). In 1997-98, the Hartford Whalers resurfaced in Raleigh, North Carolina as the Carolina Hurricanes (1999 NHL Yearbook, 1998:23). With the arrival of franchises in Arizona and North Carolina, eight of the NHL's franchises were located in the southern United States, while only six were left in Canada. Furthermore, the addition of the Nashville Predators in 1998-99, and the Atlanta Thrashers in 1999-2000, has raised the southern United

States franchise count to ten. Columbus and Minnesota are expected to have franchises for 2000-01 (2000 NHL Yearbook, 1999: 252).

Canadian cities like Winnipeg and Quebec, and small northern United States cities like Hartford, are no longer able to support NHL teams. These franchises moving south to 'greener pastures', along with expansion franchises starting up in the southern United States, are reflections of contemporary social and economic reality. Entertainment and communications corporations have become major players in the current economy, and their headquarters are located in large urban centers in the southern United States. Many people living in these centers want new forms of entertainment, and there are individuals and corporations wealthy enough to bring the NHL to these cities. The owners of franchises in Winnipeg, Quebec, and Hartford, lacked corporate sponsorship, revenue from ticket sales, and lucrative contracts with television networks which are required to remain in the Modern Era of the NHL.

In closing, the Big Six Era was not a planned phase in the NHL's history. It was a historical accident. For reasons we shall consider later, this 'Golden Age' has been the subject of a great deal of romanticization by hockey fans, players, and the media. Our next concern, however, is an analysis of romanticizing hockey.

CHAPTER THREE

ROMANTICIZING HOCKEY

How people think about the game is a salient aspect of contemporary hockey culture. Specifically, the tendency to romanticize its recent past has created a nostalgic aura which has taken on a life of its own. Some of the dominant images which have contributed to this pattern of myth making are children playing hockey on frozen ponds, young men from humble backgrounds in rural Canada achieving fame in the NHL, fantasies about winning the Stanley Cup, and great moments in international tournaments such as the 1972 Summit Series. This view of hockey is reinforced by conceptual categories (or continua) such as unorganized-organized, rural-urban, child-adult, play-work, national-international and, most important for present purposes, then-now. An analysis of these categories, the subject of this chapter, reveals that although romantic narratives about hockey are not necessarily empirically factual, they validate the belief that virtually everything about hockey's past was better than today's game.

The hockey romanticized may be a game of shinny played by children on a frozen pond in rural Saskatchewan, or on a sheet of ice made by dad in a backyard in Brantford. The game may involve children playing organized minor hockey at the local arena, or a fast-paced and exciting Midget AAA or junior competition involving skilled, rugged, and determined teenagers and young adults. The matches may be international such as the 1972 Summit Series between the USSR and Canada's finest professional players, or take place within a number of national professional leagues, the pinnacle being the National Hockey League. Regardless of the time, place, or level, a slightly varied form of the same game is played. Nevertheless, those whose image of

the game is colored by the past are more likely than others to have certain categories shape their thoughts and images about the game.

In constructing a cultural image of hockey played by children, categories such as unorganized-organized, play-work, and childhood-adulthood stand out. An analysis of several nostalgic depictions of hockey played by children will illustrate that these categories are operative when people think about the game. A good example here is Ken Dryden's **Home Game** (1994). Dryden's consideration of hockey is a romanticization of the game rather than an empirical account of the reality of the game. Throughout Dryden's nostalgic depiction of hockey the aforementioned categories are employed and invoked.

Within Dryden's "romantic narrative", the activities of children very often involve magic, imagination, dreams, and spontaneity. This is exemplified by hockey played by children in backyards, in driveways, or on the street. While engaging in this play, children typically make their own rules (if there are any at all) and pick their own teams. There usually are no spectators; a lot of what happens is spontaneous. Imagination and fantasy coincide with physical action, and very seldom are there hard, grueling practices - the kids just play. Rather than skate around pylons, they skate through an imagined New York Rangers. Their dreams transport them from a backyard to center ice at Maple Leaf Gardens. Suddenly, their opponents are no longer the Montreal Canadiens, they are the Russians.

Other hockey writers have presented similar accounts of hockey played by children. In **Wayne Gretzky: The Authorized Pictorial Biography** (1994) Jim Taylor provides a version of the childhood hockey experiences of The Great One. According to Taylor, when Gretzky was a boy, he and his friends played hockey on an outdoor rink

constructed by Walter Gretzky in the backyard of their Brantford, Ontario home. His

neighbor and playmate at the time reports that;

> "[w]hen we played hockey in the backyard we did it like
> the real thing." Brian Rizzeto says. "We'd stand at atten-
> tion like for the national anthem, then we'd drop our gloves
> and wrestle. Wayne never won. But then we'd start playing
> hockey - showdown, three-on-one, everything. When we
> picked teams, Wayne always took the little guys. They won
> a lot. If there weren't enough kids for teams it was practice
> time." (Taylor, 1994:13).

Although Gretzky became a famous hockey player and is considered by players, fans,

and the media to be one of the best players of all time, his childhood experiences in

"Wally Coliseum", as his family and playmates fondly called it (10), were typical of the

play of many Canadian children. They involved imagination, spontaneity, picking their

own teams, and playing by their own rules. They were free of adult influence and were

not structured as a form of work. They were playing what is often considered

unorganized hockey.

Ken Dryden discusses the road hockey experiences of Greg Koehler, a member of

the Toronto Marlboro peewee AAA hockey team in **Home Game** as follows;

> "The captain of the Marlies steps on his blade and resets
> it. He slams the screws tight against the concrete walk, cuffs
> the stick twice on the driveway, and is satisfied. Pulling the
> best of the hockey nets over his shoulder, he heads out to pre-
> pare himself for the coming game. Not imagery, but imagina-
> tion. Not memory, but creativity. Not work, but play." (1994:56-57).

Koehler's road hockey experiences, as described by Dryden, much like Gretzky's in

"Wally Coliseum" reported by Taylor, are considered to entail imagination, spontaneity,

and a focus on play as opposed to practice and work. According to these narratives,

when kids play shinny, magic and imagination are assumed to be central. These writers

are romanticizing about children playing hockey rather than describing this activity.

Although one could fault Dryden for presenting a subjective experience as an objective account of what is happening (after all, how can he really know what these teenage boys are thinking about when they play street hockey), the fact that his narrative rings true attests to the power that romantic images have for those who are familiar with the game as observers or participants.

He continues along these lines when he observes;

> "It is Greg Koehler, spinning at center ice, Maple Leaf Gardens.
> Billy Thompson, now Grant Fuhr of the Edmonton Oilers. The
> sheepish dog now 16,182 fans rising like a jack-in-the-box as
> the Great Koehler does the impossible yet again and scores the
> overtime goal to win the greatest Stanley Cup ever played." (1994:58).

This fantasy, magic, and play, which are central to the unorganized hockey played by children in backyards or streets are, it follows, at odds with the competitiveness and work ethic which are displayed by children in the local rink. The latter constitutes a world half way between the ludic one of childhood and the rule-bound, work-centered one of adults. Nevertheless, this is not to argue that adults are excluded from the former. For instance, they may facilitate what happens by constructing a backyard rink or perform marginal roles such as intervening as problem solvers when troubles arise;

> "[w]indows always were a problem at 40 and 42 Varadi Avenue.
> They broke so many in Sylvano Rizzetto's garage that he finally
> gave up and put in plastic." (Taylor, 1994:13)

and

> "Gordie (Howe) and thirty or forty other kids would play on the fro-
> zen slough as long as they could. Using weighted-down jam tins
> for goalposts, they'd chase a puck up and down the immense na-
> tural ice surface and endure ravening cold that routinely descended
> to 25F or 30F below zero. The chill would be heightened by fierce
> prairie winds whipping into their faces and clothing, and whenever
> Gordie and his brothers or sisters caught a touch of frostbite, Mrs.
> Howe treated it with cold water on cheeks, fingers and toes. But
> weather was just weather. It didn't deter Gordie from playing the
> game he'd fallen in love with". (MacSkimming, 1995:21).

But, children usually play street hockey or hockey in the backyard without the intrusive presence of adults. Upon entering the covered rink, the children are still playing the same game, but it has been modified. The influence of adults is now part of the game. According to Dryden, organized hockey "is a mini adult world, with adult coaches, adult fans and referees, adult sensibilities, expectations, and ambitions." (1994:63). The implication is that when children play in the rink, they no longer merely play hockey, they work at it. They practice and work very hard to make the team and to stay on it. Young players practice hours every week and even train and practice during the summer so they can play about ten to fifteen minutes a game. This work ethic characterizes the adult world. Work is such a prevalent aspect of adult life that a hard work ethic permeates many other spheres of adult existence. For instance, as far as recreation is concerned, adults often go to places like the tennis court or the golf course not to play tennis or to golf but "to work at their game". As far as relationships are concerned, adults don't meet, have sex, fall in love, and live happily ever after, they "work at it". Considering all this, it is not surprising that adult involvement in hockey played by children results in the game being structured like work.

Moreover, when children play shinny on a street or in a backyard they usually pick their own teams; in organized hockey, the teams are decided by others according to criteria such as age, level of skill, and determination. Children play street hockey with and against their friends and neighbors. In organized hockey children often compete to make the team, and if they are successful friendships are then formed with others who also make the team. One consequence of teams being formed by adults is that friendships are decided by someone else. This is yet another example of the impingement of the adult world on the organized hockey that children play.

Furthermore, after children compete to make the team, they no longer play against their friends; they compete against foes and rivals. While competing, they have to follow rules made by others and their 'play' is regulated. Any spontaneity, creativity, or imagination the children engage in takes place within a regulated situation. In the adult world, not only do men and women compete for jobs, many of the jobs obtained involve competition. Success on the job, in business, in academia, and other spheres requires success at competition and those who succeed, by definition, have a competitive edge and this competition is regulated by rules and laws. Many jobs allow for little or no spontaneity, creativity or imagination, and are characterized by labor exploitation and worker alienation. Those which do involve spontaneity or imagination require that such activities still adhere to rules, procedures, and deadlines.

There is a further difference between the organized play in a rink and the unorganized play in backyards and streets that should be noted. Children in the rink perform in front of adults and other children. As a result, their accomplishments and failures are on public display. The performances of individuals and teams are subject to both positive and negative scrutiny. Very often their performances are reported in the local paper. A team's winning record, exemplary teamwork, or latest victory may be written about for all to read. In addition, individual performances such as a high point total, scoring an overtime goal, or getting an excessive number of penalties may also be commented on. This kind of publicity does not occur when children play in backyards or in the street. Except for a broken basement window or a lump of snow 'accidentally' shot at a passing motorist's vehicle, the activities engaged in by children while playing shinny pass by largely unnoticed and unseen.

What this all means, as Dryden suggests, is that the involvement of adults not only changes the social context in which the game is played, it also changes the nature of the game;

> "[p]arents will always be parents; and when they are kids
> usually won't be kids. It is the difference between kids
> playing in a backyard and in an indoor arena. Backyards
> are for fantasy and play; rinks are for aspiration and mak-
> ing it. Backyards, in today's mind, seem idle and unpro-
> ductive; rinks are organized, maximized, busied and di-
> rected. Backyards are a kids world; rinks belong to adults."
> (Dryden, 1994:71).

At the same time, the successful adult hockey players were often the children who could combine the regimen and 'push' of organized hockey with the magic, imagination, and spontaneity of hockey played on the street or in the backyard.

> "Pylon hockey and street hockey represent a mix of the
> organized and unorganized, the formal and informal, the
> goal directed and fantastic, the disciplined and undisci-
> plined, the time-pressed and timeless. They combine the
> skill and cognitive functions of the brain, the "how" (skill)
> with all the creative ways (cognitive) in which the hows get
> put together. This happy mix characterizes the childhood
> of most great players. To the extent that Wayne Gretzky
> was made, not born, it happened far more in his backyard
> and sideyard than in all the arenas in Brantford." (Dryden,
> 1994:82).

An example of this possibility is Jean Beliveau, often referred to as "The Ambassador" and "Big Jean", who had a long and distinguished career with the Montreal Canadiens. The young Beliveau, like many youngsters who play hockey, developed his skills by playing pylon hockey in the local rink. He also developed as a hockey player by practicing in his own backyard. His father, to further encourage him, built a small practice rink on a pond behind their house. According to Beliveau, this is where he learned to stick handle (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #4).

The categories of rural-urban are also evident when hockey is romanticized. Peolple within North American hockey culture have a tendency to make light of or celebrate aspects of rural culture. In doing so, the past is judged better than the present. In other words, the idealized past is often identified with the rural and the inferior present with the urban.

Over time, Canada's population has become more urban.

> "[I]n 1901 more than one-fourth lived in centers of 10,000, but only 12 percent lived in metropoli of 100,000 or more. At the beginning of World War II (1941) roughly one-half lived in cities of 10,000 and about one-third lived in a metropolis of 100,000 or more; by 1991 the proportions were two-thirds and well over half respectively." (Mitchell in Driedger, 1991:62).

According to Dryden's narrative, one result of urbanization is that children "play more hockey now in arenas, with coaches and referees, and less on the streets, backyards or driveways." (81) The gradual shift of Canada's population into the cities has no doubt contributed to a decline in the number of children playing unorganized hockey in rural areas. Nevertheless, small towns still have their rinks, the smaller number of children in the remaining rural areas still play hockey on frozen ponds and streets, and there are backyards in the city where children play shinny. Dryden's tone of hockey "played by children as it used to be" exemplifies the tendency of using the rural-urban distinction to glorify aspects of rural culture (children playing pond and street hockey) with the agenda of making the past better than the present (hockey characterized by hard work and competitiveness). His comments about the effects of urbanization speak as much to the virtues of simpler times as they do to actual demographic changes in Canadian society. They also seem to overlook the fact that children still play unorganized hockey in small towns and that unorganized hockey is not extinct in urban areas.

Corresponding with Canada's increasing urban population is urban sprawl. Driedger

in **The Urban Factor** (1991) describes the situation in which

> "[u]pwardly mobile residents move to the outer suburbs or
> beyond, seeking the utopian advantages of both town and
> country. New businesses also start up on the outer edges
> of the city where premises are less costly, and manufactur-
> ing moves out there to expand. All these shifts to the outly-
> ing areas are made possible by the flexibility of automobile
> transportation." (1991:251)

Furthermore,

> "[s]uburbs can become gigantic, centerless bedroom devel-
> opments that may offer advantages to families with small chil-
> dren, but are boring for teenagers and youth because they lack
> clubs, sports arenas, and opportunities for social interaction."
> (1991:251-2).

These observations support certain aspects of Dryden's narrative. For example,

commuting time to the nearest hockey facility has increased. Moreover, ice time in

these arenas has become very costly. The increase in commuting time and the high

cost of ice time have led to fewer children playing organized hockey. Dryden's argument

is that urbanization has brought about a lower likelihood of children playing organized

hockey in urban areas as well as a decline in the number of children playing

unorganized hockey in rural areas (as fewer children live there). His account implies

that pond hockey and shinny played by children in rural areas, due to urbanization, has

almost disappeared from hockey culture. However, in actuality hockey played by

children in small towns across Canada is still taking place. The number of children

involved may have declined but it is still a common activity. Again, Dryden's account

only appears empirical.

A consideration of the legendary account of Gordie Howe, the 'farm boy' from rural

Saskatchewan, illustrates that rural-urban distinctions do not provide empirical

accounts of the past. According to Roy MacSkimming in **Gordie: A Hockey Legend**

(1995),

> "[a]s just about everybody knows, Gordie Howe hails from
> Floral, Saskatchewan, a handful of homes surrounding a
> grain elevator nine miles east of Saskatoon. It's one of those
> reliable Canadian facts, neatly symbolizing the heroic journey
> Howe had to make, geographically and spiritually, down the
> railway tracks from his humble prairie origins to big-league
> stardom in Detroit" (16).

This account is part of the legend of Gordie Howe. In actuality, however, Howe is not a

'farm boy' from Floral. According to MacSkimming, "Howe doesn't really come from

Floral at all" (16). Although he was born in Floral, approximately nine days after his birth

the Howe's moved to Saskatoon, where he lived until he left home to pursue his hockey

destiny. MacSkimming adds, "Howe is a Saskatoon boy, period" (16).

Nevertheless, throughout Howe's life and career, the media continually cast him as

the 'farm boy' from Floral. When the move from Floral to Saskatoon is considered, the

former is rural and the latter is urban. When the move from Saskatoon to Detroit (or any

other large metropolis such as New York or Chicago) is considered, the former is now

rural and the latter is urban. In one context in which the categories rural-urban are

employed, Saskatoon is urban. In another context Saskatoon is rural. The romanticized

account of the 'farm boy' from Floral achieving stardom in professional hockey adds to

the legend surrounding this great player (after all, Floral to Detroit is a greater odyssey

than Saskatoon to Detroit), and illustrates that the categories rural-urban are utilized to

provide romanticized rather than empirical accounts of the past.

The often romanticized account of the Stanley Cup challenge by the Dawson City

Nuggets perhaps best exemplifies both the Canadianness of hockey and the sense of

propriety Canadians have over the game. The categories rural-urban are also manifest

in this tale. In 1904, led by Colonel Joe Boyle, a group of bureaucrats from Dawson City in Canada's Yukon challenged the Ottawa Silver Seven (formerly the Ottawa Senators) for the Stanley Cup. What was remarkable was that the trek from Dawson City to Ottawa took three weeks and covered four thousand miles in the deep of winter. The Nuggets traveled by dog sled, suffered through delays and missed connections, and then embarked on a transcontinental train ride across the prairies. While in progress, this train ride was given plenty of coverage in the newspapers and subsequently became a famous national news item (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #1). In this account Canada's north is cast as rural and the nation's capital, Ottawa, is cast as urban.

Upon arriving in Ottawa in January, 1905, the Dawson City Nuggets faced off against the Ottawa Silver Seven. The Silver Seven, the defending Stanley Cup champions, defeated the Nuggets 9-2 on January 13. With the help of Frank McGee's fourteen goals, on January 16 the Silver Seven again defeated the Nuggets 23-2. McGee's goal scoring performance is still a record in Stanley Cup playoff history. He has been cited as Canada's first hockey superstar (Murray, 1996: Legends of Hockey Video #1 and NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997: 243).

This interesting and entertaining story claims hockey as Canada's game. The fact that a team from Canada's hinterland took part in a Stanley Cup challenge in the nation's capital tells Canadians that hockey was, and is, played by Canadians everywhere. The story symbolizes the passion and love Canadians have for hockey. It also provides a symbolic legacy for the Stanley Cup. Through such stories, it becomes a coveted piece of silverware with a glorious past. Some of the aura and mystique

which surrounds the Stanley Cup is created by this story. As well, this tale perpetuates the image that Canadians play hockey with ruggedness, determination, and passion.

The theme that hockey is Canada's game is central to the frequent romanticization of the 1972 Summit Series. A consideration of the collective thought concerning these eight games between Canada's best professional hockey players and the Soviet Union's National Team also illustrates that the categories national-international are often used to showcase a past which can then be considered better than the present.

According to Gruneau and Whitson,

"[t]here has always been a tension between the rhetoric
of globalism that surrounds international sport at the offi-
cial level and the nationalist passions and myths of national
superiority that the popular media routinely fuel" (1993:267).

Again,

"[i]n international hockey contests act as a medium for the
expression of Canadian identity and also for the reaffirmation
of a preferred version of "national character": tough and hard,
passionate yet determined, individualistic" (1993:267).

In other terms, abstractions such as "us vs them", national character, national superiority, and, in the case of hockey, Canada's proprietary relationship with the game, are actualized and manifested in international competition. This was exemplified by the 1972 Summit Series. Let us consider the context of this dramatic and symbolically defining event.

The Soviet challenge to Canada's self-proclaimed supremacy of hockey, which began in the 1950's and culminated in the Summit Series, was a clear manifestation of the use of sports to celebrate an ideology. The Soviets' and other socialist countries' strong desire to display success in sports, in this case hockey, to the rest of the world was their way of promoting their social system. For them, winning in sports was often

equated with being part of a better social system and living under the auspices of a superior ideology (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993:256).

The Summit Series also occurred at a time when the Soviet Union was starting to be more open to the rest of the world. In the early 1970's, the Soviet Union and its people were not as well known to the rest of the world as they are now. The Summit Series almost immediately took on an "us vs them" aura (which was equated with our ideology vs their ideology). The mystique of the Soviets, the "us vs them" aura, and Canada's sense of propriety over the game (hockey is Canada's game), combined to make the Summit Series a dramatic, mesmerizing, and thrilling event, with something beyond the series at stake. The series actualized and made tangible political and social differences.

But subsequent international hockey matches, even those involving Canada and Russia, have not recaptured the magic of the Summit Series. The social and economic reality of the global village has largely demystified international hockey. Russian players, as well as those from Sweden, Finland, Czechoslovakia, and the United States are now abundant in the NHL. Their proliferation has influenced the style of hockey played to such an extent that, according to Mats Sundin of Sweden, captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs, "[i]t's already hard to tell who is from where. The styles are getting more similar every year that goes by" (Stein, 2000:45). "Foreign" players are also prevalent in Canada's major junior hockey leagues. Furthermore, children growing up in these countries now share the same dreams as Canadian children - to play in the NHL and win the Stanley Cup. One can argue that, as far as hockey is concerned, the distinction between national and international has been eliminated.

Despite these changes to the game, the Summit Series continues to exert a strong influence on the collective memory for Canadian hockey. It does so by highlighting a

period prior to the 'European Invasion' when, according to many, hockey was 'our' game. Prior to the Summit Series, when there was still a difference between national and international, hockey was in many respects Canada's game. In fact, most of the players in both the NHL and Canada's major junior hockey leagues were from Canada. According to Joel Stein, "the percentage of Canadians in the NHL has dropped significantly, to less then 60%, down from almost 97% in 1967" (44).

During the 1990's, there were many indicators that Canada's self proclaimed supremacy of hockey and its proprietary relationship to the game have become aspects of the past. First, between 1990 and 1999, only two Canadian teams have won the Stanley Cup. Second, Canada lost the World Cup, formerly called the Canada Cup, to the United States in 1996. Third, at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan, the first time Canada sent their best professionals to this tournament, Canada's national team failed to earn a medal. Fourth, in the NHL All-Star Game, which currently showcases a Team North America against a Team World format, fewer than half the players are Canadian. Finally, the best player in the NHL over the last several seasons has been Jaromir Jagr and the best goalie has been Dominik Hasek. Both are from Czechoslovakia (Stein, 2000: 40-45).

While these changes to Canada's game were occurring, changes which have diminished the Canadianness of hockey, the romanticization of the Summit Series became a way for members of Canadian hockey culture to reassert their ownership of the game.

The categories (or continua) considered in this chapter, which are invoked when people within hockey culture and, to some extent, outsiders, romanticize hockey, are

manifestations of the overarching categories of then-now. In romanticized narratives, hockey played by children was primarily unorganized and took place on frozen ponds or streets. Over the last several decades Canada's population has become more urban. Now more children are playing organized hockey in large cities. Nostalgic accounts of hockey often depict the style of hockey played by children "in the past" as magical, spontaneous, and imaginative, and hence superior to the contemporary game, which is depicted as organized, regimented, and competitive.

Romanticizations of success in hockey are typically characterized by boys from rural areas in Saskatchewan or Ontario going on to heroism and stardom in urban centers such as Chicago, Detroit, New York, Toronto, and Montreal. Canadian hockey players are currently defined as inferior to those from Europe and Russia. In the not too distant past, hockey was considered Canada's game. Now there is a different reality. An analysis of the categories national-international revealed that Canada's proprietary relationship to the game has been challenged. Many fans, players, former players, and hockey commentators claim that the challenge has already occurred and that Canada has lost.

In sum, when people romanticize hockey they are creating an imagined world from the past. Aspects of the past are selected, highlighted, and celebrated. At the same time, what is at odds with this imagined world is underplayed, disparaged, and even ignored. Romantic narratives about hockey are not empirical depictions of the past. Also, what happened then is thought to be better than what is happening now. The next chapter addresses what it means to romanticize the past. Chapter five considers the functions of this activity in the context of romanticizing The Big Six.

CHAPTER FOUR

Romanticizing the Past: An Exegesis

What does it mean to romanticize the past? The goal of this chapter is to explicate this social practice. The first component of the argument is to establish that remembering, although properly viewed as an individual activity, is more fully understood when formulated as a social activity. The second component, predicated upon the first, links remembering with a nineteenth century style of thought known as Romanticism. The word "style" in the phrases 'style of thought' and 'style of remembering' connotes the social grounds of thinking and remembering. I shall try and show there exists a style of remembering that shares the same characteristics as the Romantic movement. The third part suggests that the dimensions of nostalgia are synonymous with the characteristics of the Romantic movement and, hence, a romantic style of thought. This serves to illustrate that thinking in a romantic style has an emotional as well as a cognitive dimension that specifically entails a sense of loss. The fourth component is a review of five scholarly works which specifically deal with romanticizing. What is revealed here is that the romantic style is not limited to a sense of loss but also to something gained. The fifth and last aspect of the argument combines the prior four in order to explain what it means to romanticize the past.

Remembering can be formulated as an individual or a social phenomenon. But according to psychologist John A. Meacham in "Reminiscing as a Process of Social Construction" from **The Art and Science of Reminiscing**, "...remembering is better understood as a social process than as an individual process" (Haight and Webster, 1995:37). What follows is a summary of Meacham's ideas concerning how

49

remembering works, as well as how historical perspectives developed since the late 19th century parallel the various perspectives advanced concerning memory.

One perspective of history is to describe events exactly as they happened. This positivist approach relies upon the collection of historical records, texts, and so on. A second project is to discover the underlying meaning in history whether this is presumed to be progress, the unfolding of spirit, or providence in the sequence of historical events. A third perspective is to construct meaning and attribute it to history. According to W. H. Walsh's philosophy of history, history is important not for the presentation of objective, past events, but for the opportunities it provides for each generation "to write its histories afresh" within the context of its present activities. A fourth perspective concerns the negotiation of who gets to tell their story and whose stories are left out. It is exemplified by the multiculturalism debate (38-9).

This array of historical perspectives, according to Meacham, is similar to the ontogenesis of knowledge predicated upon a movement from absolutist perspectives on events and their interpretation, through relativistic perspectives on what can be known, to an understanding that knowledge is the outcome of a process of inquiry involving many individuals (39). The study of history considers the past from differing orientations, as does remembering.

The traditional perspective on remembering, which focuses on remembering events exactly as they happened, is similar to the first perspective of history described above. The primary concern here is the accuracy of memories, i.e., the extent to which a particular memory corresponds with the event in the past. In this perspective, the unit of perception is the individual, and the authority (or lack thereof) of memory, rests with the person. Or so it would seem. For, in fact, authority resides in the original event and/or

the minds of other people such as researchers. Furthermore, three important issues are not addressed within this perspective: whose memories are these? what do they mean? and who has the authority to determine if the memories are accurate? (39-40).

Hence, the validity of the memories can be questioned by others. In other words, do the memories of the individual correspond to actual past events in the person's life? Because remembering is presumed to be located in the mind of the individual, it follows that if the individual's memories are judged inaccurate and, by implication, remembering processes are found to be faulty, then the person is considered to be unreliable. Or, the reminiscing of the individual may be seen as redundant and/or without value. Additionally, others may believe they have better access to these past events through their own study of history or from the standpoint of what they wish to believe about the events. The reminiscing of the individual may, however, confirm what is already known (40).

A second perspective on remembering is concerned with the discovery of the meaning of memories. Meacham states that "(r)emembering is understood not as a process by which the individual stores and retrieves an exact copy of the original information or event, but rather as a process by which the individual uses a few pieces of fact to reconstruct a coherent and meaningful memory" (41). Like the traditional perspective, this approach is individualistic insofar as the reconstruction of memories takes place within the mind of a single person and, as should be evident, is analogous to the second perspective of history, namely, the speculative approach (38-41).

In this case, a person may recall certain facts incorrectly yet by inferential reasoning arrive at a good understanding of the gist of the original event. The individual, in constructing a memory discovers whatever meaning is associated with the original

events, again appears to be privileged. But, this perspective is really more concerned with the distortions which may arise as the individual strives to construct memories that make sense within the context of present needs, motives, and circumstances. These stand in the way of his or her ability to discover the true meaning and lead to an important issue; if memories are likely to be distorted by present contexts, to what extent can they be a guide to the true meaning of the original events? As the context changes a person's memory is affected in different ways (41).

This perspective also leads others to respond to an individual's reminiscences by focusing on the subjective nature of the memories and hence on the likelihood that the individual's needs, motives, and circumstances have brought about distortions in his or her memories. Whatever meaning is constructed by reminiscing remains subordinate to the supposed true meaning. It is believed that behind the memories there is a set of facts that may lead to the discovery of the true meaning of the original events. The reminiscer may then be accused of failing to distinguish between objective facts and his or her subjective interpretation of them (41-2).

A third perspective on memory, analogous to the critical approach of history, has to do with constructing the meaning of memories. When there are only a few remembered details regarding past events it is possible to discover a large number of meanings which may link the past events in a coherent fashion. But, as the number of factual details remembered increases, the discovered meaning becomes a closer approximation to the true meaning (42). To consider remembering as the discovery of meaning (the second perspective) is to assume that the initially known facts determine the range of possible meanings that might be discovered. This calls for reconstructing, discovering, or uncovering whatever meaning which has been predetermined by the

facts. The third perspective, the construction of meaning, assumes meaning, and not the facts, as initially given. Once a meaning has been constructed, it has power to not only shape but bring into existence specific remembered details that appear to serve as support for the meaning. This process not only entails the construction of meaning but attributing this meaning to past events (42).

These individualistic perspectives of memory lead to the problem of relativism. Specifically, if what we remember reflects meanings we have constructed in the context of current needs, motivations, and circumstances, how can we know which memories are true and should be accepted and which are false and should be rejected? How can we, as individuals, distinguish in our own thoughts between valid memories and mere fantasies or reflections of what others have told us? What are true memories, fantasies, fabrications, and projections in the reported experiences of others? Among our reminiscences and those of others, how can we distinguish between memories which should be accepted as valid and worthy, and memories which are delusional and worthless? (43).

The question of relativism is less of a problem when remembering is conceived as a social process having social functions. For instance, when a person constructs a narrative which links past events in a meaningful way, others may question whether the interpretation of those events is valid outside of the context within which the person has constructed the narrative. When two or more individuals each construct narratives that are significant in their own lives find there is an intersection of their interpretations of past events, not only these individuals, but others, can have greater confidence in the transcontextual meaningfulness of the memories of those events. The social construction of meaningful memories of past events is not a simple matter and

depends on negotiating the meaning of memories with other people of differing ages and backgrounds (43).

Remembering or reminiscing are social constructions in a number of senses; (1) the constructed meanings of the memories can be socially validated through dialogue with others. Greater validity is more likely to be achieved when the constructed meanings are negotiated with many individuals representing a broad range of ages and experiences. (2) The construction of memories is guided by social identifications such as membership in a family, gender, race, social class, religion, and nationality. All individuals are members of groups, all memory is collective. (3) Social stereotypes and attitudes, including biases and prejudices, guide the constructive process of remembering, particularly when inferences are required to fill in gaps in the narrative of what can be recalled. (4) Memory does not occur in isolation, but while an individual interacts with others. Other people guide the reminiscer's remembering process through their questions, prompts, and reactions. Also, the reminiscer may arouse similar feelings in others, and incite them to cooperative action (43-4).

As far as memory is concerned, constructive processes and social processes are complimentary. The social nature of remembering requires that the process of remembering be constructive instead of merely a matter of storing and retrieving accurate copies of past events. If remembering was not a constructive process we would be in continual conflict with each other over whose memories were the faithful copies of past events (44-5).

The perspective that views remembering or reminiscing as a social construction parallels, in many respects, how historians do history. Both have a shared concern with the past, both focus less on facts than on patterns, interpretations, and meanings, and

54

both are interested in determining which facts and interpretations are, in some sense, true. Both also recognize the use of the past as a tool to understand the present, not an understanding of the past per se, as the goal (45).

Reminiscing reflects, among other things, relations of inequality and power. Reminiscing as a process of social construction occurs when two or more individuals each attribute a similar meaning to past events. Others may then view the validity of memories as being established across contexts. But what if the meanings attributed to the past events are not similar? If the individuals are in positions of relative equality, they can negotiate the difference. Insofar as the goals under conditions of equality are to maintain and strengthen friendship and the possibilities for cooperative action. To maximize the validity of what is socially constructed it is essential that the sharing of reminiscences and the negotiation of meaning take place under conditions of equality. By contrast, reminiscing becomes problematic when it occurs under conditions of relative inequality in power (45-6).

Traditionally, what has counted as history and what historical events have been considered worth remembering has been to a large extent a matter of who first establishes a meaningful sequence of historical events and who has the power to insist that others, including those on the margins, have to find their own histories and identities which are congruent with this meaningful sequence. Currently, multiculturalism involves recognizing the diverse meanings of history represented in our society and weaving them together into a societal history which accords equal respect to each meaning (46-7).

To the extent that reminiscing is a process of social construction, it is not merely influenced by but indeed grounded in the full range of social relations that exist in our

society. These social relations are characterized by inequality and differences in power as well as differences in age, gender, social class, ethnicity, and religion. Both the processes and products of reminiscing will reflect these relations (47).

In summary, memory is best perceived as a social rather than an individual process, as a constructive process rather than the mere storage and retrieval of true copies of past events, and as a matter of the coherence and meaningfulness of memories within present social and motivational contexts rather than as a question of correspondence of memories to past events (45).

Because memories can be formulated as social, a particular way of remembering can be considered a style. Remembering may be taken as a certain style which shares the characteristics of the intellectual movement known as Romanticism. Moreover, since memories are constructive processes, the past can be re-created long after it has originally occurred. Furthermore, as the coherence and meaningfulness of memories emanates within a particular present social and motivational context, the reasons for socially constructing a particular past can be ascertained.

There is a style of remembering, namely, romanticizing, which shares the same characteristics of the mode of thought which was the catalyst for the intellectual movement known as Romanticism. Understanding this modality will facilitate an understanding of what it means to romanticize the past. In his consideration of Romanticism as a style of thought (and intellectual movement) prevalent in Europe during the nineteenth century, Michael Levin (1974:404) identifies six characteristics of Romanticism. First, a rejection of the Enlightenment, especially its claims concerning the supremacy of reason, and the notion that the social order could be achieved according to human desires. Second, strong reservations about the adequacy of

science and an appreciation of the strength of the irrational and emotional aspects of human behavior, e.g., sentimentality, intuition, faith, and religion. Third, a preference for the past, especially the medieval times and earlier. In this connection, the Romantics stimulated a renewed interest in myths, sagas, legends, and folk songs. Fourth, an organic rather than mechanical conception of the state and a conservative bias which assumed that any institution which had survived the test of time must be worth preserving. Fifth, an appreciation of simple "unspoilt" rural folk and a love of nature. Sixth, a preoccupation with unique individuals and talents such as the hero and the genius.

Romantic thinkers saw emotion rather than reason as the most important component of human existence and looked backward rather than to the future. "Romantics saw humanity as having emotional ties to the past, and those ties provided a sense of community and gave stability to human institutions." (Winks et al., 1988:514). Their emphasis on the individual enriched the doctrines of liberalism, and nationalism was strengthened by their belief in historical evolution. Moreover, by focusing on cultural rather than political history, they attempted to bring about a more comprehensive understanding of human motivation, rather than a more narrow political or economic one (514).

The Romantic style of thinking was best revealed through literature, which provided the romantics with their fullest form of expression. The French novels and drama of the mid-eighteenth century and the Sturm und Drang movement in Germany during the 1770's and 1780's were part of the Romantic movement. The writings of Goethe and J.C.F. von Schiller represent the latter. In England, great poets such as Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, William Wordsworth, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge

were proponents of the reaction against classicism and rationalism (515-6). Also, around the turn of the century the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel became an influential proponent of romantic thought (520).

The romantic turn of mind and sensibility was also expressed in music. Romantic musicians sought out popular ballads and tales of national pasts and sought relief from the more rigid constraints of classical rules. Austria was home to Franz Schubert and Ludwig van Beethoven. Frederic Chopin resided in Poland and Hector Berlioz in France. But, these romantic musicians did not revolt against the great eighteenth century composers as the aforementioned poets revolted against their predecessors. Rather, their music evolved out of the older classical school (517).

According to Colin Campbell, "[t]he question of what romanticism is and how it may be defined has long been a subject of fierce debate among historians of ideas and literary critics and has even prompted the claim that no such entity exists" (1983:284). But, there exists "in Western Europe .... a widespread, distinct and fairly simultaneous pattern of thought, attitudes, and beliefs associated with the connotation 'Romanticism' [which] is overwhelming" (Remak in Campbell,1983:284). This pattern can be conceived of as a movement in the arts, a general world view, or as a style of thought.

The style of remembering referred to as nostalgia has a strong resemblance to romantic thinking. According to Bryan S. Turner, there are four major dimensions to the nostalgic paradigm. First, a sense of historical decline, loss, and a departure from some previous golden age of 'homefulness'. Second, a sense of the absence or loss of personal wholeness and moral certainty. Third, a sense of the loss of individual freedom and autonomy with the disappearance of genuine social relationships. Finally, the idea of a loss of simplicity, personal authority, and emotional spontaneity (1987:150-151).

According to F. Davis, nostalgia is "a remembrance or recollection of the past, a past that is imbued with special qualities" (in Snyder, 1991:229) and imbued with positive feelings such as pleasure, joy, satisfaction, and goodness. These feelings may also be imbued with sadness (Snyder, 1991:228). The latter may be either mixed with the positive feelings, or may obtain because the pleasures are perceived as in a past which can not be relived or reexperienced in the present (Turner in Snyder, 1991:229). Snyder's formulation of both private and collective nostalgia exemplifies and reaffirms that remembering is both individual and social. Private nostalgia involves the lived emotion of individuals and collective nostalgia is concerned with the collective memories of a society (1991).

By drawing a parallel between remembering in a romantic fashion and nostalgia, two important aspects of remembering in a romantic style are illuminated. First, considering the past romantically involves an emotional as well as a cognitive component. Second, a sense of loss is pervasive. Some recent studies on romantic or nostalgic thinking underscore the theme of loss as well as that of gain and merit our attention.

In "Norma Jeane and Jimmy Dean: Nostalgic Signifiers of the Postmodern Era", Andrea Fontana and Stanford Lyman consider how an individual's past and interpretations of it can be used to construct a social identity or self. The actual pasts and fictional interpretations of Marilyn Monroe and James Dean exemplify how the self remains an open-ended, ambiguous, and ever changing social construction. Inherent in this process, is the use of nostalgia, wherein history, myth, and media are combined with the everyday life of the individual. According to Fontana and Lyman, the former, (the signifiers), are combined with the latter, (the signified), to form a pastiche self (1995:169). This self, always being negotiated and changed, is never complete. As a

result, it has become difficult to differentiate between their 'screen' life and 'real' life and between fictional, legendary accounts, and historically accurate accounts of their lives. Monroe and Dean "represent the ambiguous self of the media world of postmodernity" (160).

But, in the social construction of postmodern selves and the creation of legends, as in all instances of appropriating the past for a current need, things were lost or left behind. According to Fontana and Lyman, the facts that Norma Jeane was a victim of a sexist society, and that Dean was an idol for rebellious youth, were ignored when they became part of mainstream, consumerist America. Aspects of their character, such as Monroe's innocence and Dean's introvertedness, were also lost.

Gained is the postmodern self, a social construction that is never completely actualized, in a constant state of flux, and fueled largely by the mass media and consumerism. Is Marilyn Monroe a dumb blonde, a skilled actress, a woman of loose morals, a victim of society, a sex symbol, or an icon of consumerism? Is James Dean a talented yet arrogant young actor, a symbol of rebellious youth, an unsurpassed young performer, an amoral character, a fad or an icon? (169)

The social construction of the postmodern self entails the construction of identity at the level of the individual. But identities for collectives can also be forged. For example, M. Michael Lustigman and Marsha R. Lustigman, in "Managing National Interests: The Bibliographic (Mis)placement of the Final Solution in Poland and the United States", consider how historical events can be shaped into a collective memory. They examine how the bibliographic subject classification of national libraries organize, and consequently authorize, the bibliographic collection, classification, and dissemination of Holocaust materials. Their interest is to discern how these libraries assist in shaping

and defining the collective sense and relevance the Holocaust has for its constituency. The implication is that national libraries both preserve and curtail collective memory.

Ernest Renan (in Lustigman and Lustigman) advocates that the idea of a nation is, among other things, a collective memory. What the national libraries store and how this knowledge is classified determines, in part, a nation's past. Thus, libraries are agencies of collective memories. How knowledge is classified in them determines not only what is remembered, but also what is forgotten. "Remembering is contingent on forgetting and both, Renan insists, are essential to the making of nation" (Lustigman and Lustigman:2). In other words, when the past is appropriated for the particular agenda of socially constructing a sense of nation, something is gained and something is lost.

According to the Lustigmans, one important consequence of bibliographic classification is that it establishes Jewish Martyrology as contingent on Polish Martyrology. In the absence of the latter, the former is impossible. In this way a derivative status is gained for the Jewish (9). In addition, the bibliographic classification of national libraries defines the fate of the Warsaw ghetto residents as a 'crime' related to WW II. Yet, the classification stipulates the destruction of the ghetto, and the slaughter of its inhabitants, as consistent with the other attacks by the Third Reich against civilian populations. Because what happened to the Jewish residents of Warsaw is deemed to have happened to other Polish citizens, this classification depicts that nothing out of the ordinary happened to these residents qua Jews. Although the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto and its population is acknowledged, this acknowledgement is limited to the recognition of these people as citizens of Poland. Lost are the interests of the Nazi regime concerning the Jewish Question, and the subsequent war against the Jews (9 - 10).

Along the same lines, in "The Dream of Spaceflight: Nostalgia for a Bygone Future" (1995), Wyn Wachhorst argues that the romance and dream of spaceflight did not disappear but were transformed after spaceflight became a reality. Rocket launches, the Sputnik program, and the Apollo missions realized both spaceflight and the idea of a human walking on another heavenly body. This transformation was reflected where the romance and dream of spaceflight was expressed, in the genre of science fiction. Moreover, as with all instances of romanticizing, something was gained and something was lost.

Prior to the realities of spaceflight, the romance of spaceflight posited a reality of its own. Spaceflight was romanticized long before it occurred. During the 1920's and 1930's, this dream was expressed in pulp magazines such as **Wonder Stories, Amazing Stories**, and **Astounding Stories** (Pringle, 1996:9). During the late 1940's and the early 1950's, science fiction became a popular form of mass culture. The dream and romance of spaceflight and the promise of its reality seemed almost in balance. "[S]paceflight was neither irrelevant fantasy nor mundane fact" (Wachhorst,1995:8). He goes on to argue that the reality of spaceflight began to reshape the nature of the dream. Insofar as the dream and romance of spaceflight were expressed in science fiction, this transformation was reflected by the changing popularity of different styles of science fiction like space operas, planetary romances, disaster stories, prehistoricals, and alternative histories (Pringle, 1996: 9-10).

Prior to the advent of spaceflight, a popular form of science fiction was the planetary romance, i.e., adventures set on other planets, often featuring sword fights and alien creatures. After the advent of spaceflight and men walking on the moon, however, the space opera replaced the planetary romance as the most popular sub-genre of science

fiction. Space operas, such as **Star Wars** and **Star Trek,** are tales of interstellar heroics involving mighty spacecraft and fearsome weapons (9).

In the latter decades of the 20th century, the goal of space exploration has changed. Planetary probes sent out to the far reaches of the solar system, and the Hubble Telescope peering into the vast expanse of the universe with the goal of finding extraterrestrial life, have replaced the goal of placing men on the moon. A corollary of this change in the impetus for spaceflight has been a transformation of the nature of the dream expressed in science fiction. Movies such as **2001: A Space Odyssey, Starman,** and **E.T.** and more recently television series such as **The X Files,** which use the theme of cosmic communion, humans communicating with alien life forms, have become the dominant works of science fiction. As a result of the changing nature of the dream and romance of spaceflight, a subgenre of science fiction lost popularity while another gained.

The ways in which native peoples are viewed also exemplifies the gains and losses inherent in romanticizing the past; a stereotypical view of the tribe has been gained while an accurate understanding has been lost. For example, in "Romanticizing the Tribe: Stereotypes in Literary Portraits of Tribal Cultures" Sura P. Rath argues that British and American fiction have served as media in which romantic stereotypes of tribal people have been created and perpetuated. As a consequence, these peoples have been consistently patronized, misunderstood, and, for the most part, demeaned. Although attempts have been made to dispel such images by movies, museums, and academic studies, they have only been partially successful. An accurate understanding of the tribe has been lost. Some of the popular works of British and American fiction have kept the stereotypes alive. Rath cites James Fenimore Cooper's **The Last of the**

Mohicans and Joseph Conrad's **Heart of Darkness**, as prominent works of literature which exemplify this practice.

In "Philosophy, Politics and Extralegal Action: Native Indian Leaders in Canada", Menno Boldt considers the influence of the philosophical traditions of the Enlightenment and Romanticism on the attitudes of Native Indian leaders toward extralegal action. These philosophies have, according to research conducted by Wendell Bell and Charles C. Moskos, been instrumental in increasing 'social scale'. The concept of 'social scale', which first appeared in the writings of Godfrey and Monica Wilson in 1945, refers to the number of people in relation to each other, and to the intensity of these relationships. It may increase along two differing but interdependent dimensions: the contemporary and the historical. When interaction between living people grows, contemporary scale is increased. When relationships with ancestry or tradition are emphasized, historical scale is increased. Moskos (in Boldt) suggests that contemporary scale was the issue of the Enlightenment, and historical scale has roots in Romanticism (206).

Bell and Moskos, in their studies of modern nationalism in the Caribbean, found that enlightened and romanticist leaders pursued political independence to increase the social scale of their people. Expanding opportunity for political participation, reducing ascriptive barriers to interaction, and ensuring equal opportunity for advancement would increase contemporary scale (206). "Historical scale was to be increased through closer interaction with the ancestral background of the indigenous group. This was to be achieved by rewriting the history of the indigenous peoples to provide unique symbols of identity and a proud sense of historical national community" (206). A rewritten past is a socially constructed past.

The work of Bell and Moskos also show that leaders holding enlightenment and romanticist values generally perceived the economic, political, and social system to be unjust. The law and the existing political establishment were equated with the status quo, and hence viewed as barriers to the aspirations of their people. Implicit in their findings is that these leaders would consider extralegal tactics to achieve freedom for their people from oppression (206). Boldt found this to be true with regard to Indian leaders in Canada (207).

What is important from Boldt's work is the concept of historical scale. As historical scale is rooted in the Romantic tradition, increasing it involves both romantic thinking and socially constructing a particular past. Increasing historical scale, along with a corresponding increase in contemporary scale, leads to greater solidarity. What is gained is an increase in 'social scale', and lost or controlled for are the devastating effects of colonialism such as marginalization, dispossession, and oppression.

To recapitulate, when people romanticize the past they are engaging in a complex style of thinking characterized by cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. Insofar as remembering is viewed as an individual or private activity, romanticizing has a cognitive aspect. To the extent that the cognitive component is imbued with feelings such as happiness, satisfaction, and sadness there is an emotional dimension. These emotions, in turn, are corollaries of the sense of both gain and loss which are essentials of romantic thinking. Finally, because remembering or memory is more completely understood as a process of intersubjectivity, there is a social dimension to romanticizing.

Prior to moving on to a functional analysis of romanticizing The Big Six Era, a brief consideration of several tenets of functional analysis is in order. According to Robert K. Merton, "[t]he theoretic framework of functional analysis must expressly require that there be a *specification* of the *units* for which a given social or cultural item is functional" (1968:84). In what follows, the unit subserved by the function is the individual for the two private functions and hockey culture for the seven social functions. Of course, individuals are romanticizing for each of the seven social functions, but the unit subserved is hockey culture, which consists of players, former players, fans, the media, and those with a modest interest in hockey.

Additionally, whether the function is manifest (has objective consequences for a intended specified unit which contribute to its adaptation or adjustment) or latent (has unrecognized and unintended consequence of a similar order) (117) is not pertinent in the consideration of each function for two reasons. First, for some individuals, romanticizing hockey has intended consequences for either themselves, hockey culture, or both; for others, the consequences are not intended. Second, once latent functions are uncovered and analyzed they become manifest.

Chapter Five

Romanticizing the Big Six

What are the functions of romanticizing the past? The following is an explication of two individual and seven social functions. At the personal level it allows for the recollection of noteworthy or memorable experiences from one's past and represents salient segments of an individual's biography. At the social level it diminishes some of the negative effects of rapid social change, identifies generations, promotes positive values, provides social integration, expresses dominant cultural symbols, provides commercial opportunities, and naturalizes what is arbitrary. I shall discuss each of these functions, with regard to romanticizing the Big Six Era, focusing on what is gained and what is lost.

At the personal level, romanticizing entails the recollection of noteworthy or memorable experiences from one's past. These experiences may be associated with emotions such as happiness, satisfaction, wonder, or amazement. Noteworthy past experiences such as high school graduation, one's wedding day, or watching a great athlete are commonly romanticized by individuals and imbued with positive qualities relative to the present. What is gained are positive emotional states; what is temporarily lost or partially displaced are any current negative feelings. For instance, feelings often associated with high school graduation are those of accomplishment, happiness, hope, and optimism. These may temporarily displace currently experienced negative emotions such as boredom, unhappiness, or anxiety.

This function is exemplified by Milt Schmidt, one of the members of Boston's famous Kraut Line, when he romanticizes about Bobby Orr.

> "When I consider the fact that I played against some
> great players and saw some great players ... I must

honestly say that deep down in my heart there's only
one guy I got to put ahead of everybody and that is
Robert Orr was the greatest player that I have ever
seen play and I have often said this story and uh maybe
its old hat but I'm going to say it again anyways and that
is that if somebody better comes along that's greater than
number four I hope the good Lord sees fit to keep me on
this earth because he will be something else." (Murray,1996:
Legends of Hockey Video #4).

This romanticization of Bobby Orr, whose first NHL season was the last of the Big Six Era, exemplifies how memorable an experience it was for Schmidt to have watched one of the game's greatest players and the positive emotions associated with this experience. The phrase "deep down in my heart" indicates the positive emotional arousal experienced by Schmidt. The phrase "I hope the good Lord sees fit to keep me on this earth" alludes to how memorable it was to watch Orr by indicating how thrilling an experience it would be for Schmidt to watch another player of Orr's calibre.

In **Jean Beliveau: My Life in Hockey,** Beliveau considers at length how remarkable Bobby Orr was. Beliveau claims that Orr, who won the Calder Trophy as rookie of the year in 1966-67, was a unique player who singlehandedly changed the style of hockey played in the NHL. Remarkably, he accomplished this in less than ten seasons. A large part of the radical change was that he made being a defenseman much more offensive. In addition, according to Beliveau, Orr elevated the speed of play to new levels, and thereby altered the pace of each game. Orr was so remarkable that he was awarded the Norris Trophy for best defenceman eight consecutive times (1995:216-222).

Watching a superstar player such as Bobby Orr, who has become a legend, would have been a thrilling and memorable experience. When Milt Schmidt romanticizes about Orr several years after watching him play, he is revealing how memorable it was

68

to watch such a great player and how these memories are laden with positive emotion. He is also implying that the typical NHL player, relative to Orr, is not that exciting to watch. The somewhat exciting experience of watching the typical NHL players of today can be temporarily displaced by romanticizing about Bobby Orr.

Another personal function is to represent and highlight segments of an individual's biography. For example, in the Celebrating the Century series at the University of Manitoba, Paul Henderson, one of the speakers, provided a personal account of his experiences with Team Canada and the historic goal he scored against the Soviets in the 1972 Summit Series. He also shared some of his experiences as a player in the Big Six Era. He mentioned his first NHL game in which he got into a fight after playing only eight seconds. He also claimed that during that era everyone knew all the players and that "hockey was hockey"; players played for the game and not the money. They were simply glad to be there. According to Henderson, NHL players did it (played in the NHL), and then they did their life (Henderson,1999). While reflecting on his experiences in the Big Six Era he was representing a segment of his biography that occurred at a time which was very different from the present. But, his claims about his past in this era are his reflections, and are not empirical accounts.

Indeed, hockey in the Big Six Era was different from that of the Modern Era. The absence of lucrative contracts Henderson alludes to is not the only difference. According to Jean Beliveau, both the players and the league changed a great deal between 1964 (near the end of the Big Six Era) and 1994. For instance, in 1964, teams played 70 games and 2 playoff series, had a maximum of 20 players and 1 coach, traveled by train, and were overwhelmingly Canadian. In 1994, the 26 teams played 84 games and 4 playoff series, traveled by airplane, had a minimum of 24 players selected

69

from a multinational talent pool, and had 3 coaches. Also, on average, players in 1964 were 5'10" and 180 lbs, while those in 1994 were 6'1" and 205 lbs (1995: 153-4). For the first four seasons of the Big Six Era, each team played only 50 games. For the next three seasons they played 60. From 1949-50 to the end of the Big Six Era they played 70 (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997: 134-136). Throughout most of this era each team played the other 5 teams 14 times during the regular season.

The lengthy train rides are gone, as are the all-Canadian professional hockey league, 14 intense games with the same team over the regular season, one coach teams, and a smaller cohort of players on the same team for lengthy periods of time. Henderson played when the NHL differed radically from today's league. Nevertheless, his accounts, as I shall try and show, are interpretive rather than empirical. He is representing a segment of his biography (playing during the Big Six Era) by romanticizing about it.

When Henderson makes claims such as "players played for the game and not the money" and "hockey was hockey" he is clearly romanticizing the past. After all, many players during the Big Six Era were unhappy over their pay and how they were treated by the team owners. They even attempted to form a players association to represent their interests as a group. Like today's players, they were concerned with money and other off-ice matters. Moreover, many of today's players, even though they are concerned with contracts and salaries, love the game of hockey and enjoy playing. To imply that NHL players today play only for the money is an unwarranted generalization. Additionally, contrary to Henderson, hockey is still hockey. The hockey currently played in the NHL is characterized by speed, finesse, skill, passion, and determination as well

as ruggedness and brutality. For many fans and players the game is still as interesting and exciting as the Big Six Era.

Having considered several individual functions, let us now examine seven social functions of this practice. Diminishing some of the negative effects of rapid social change has two manifestations. The past being romanticized may have been characterized by rapid social change while the present in which the romanticizing persons are situated may be characterized by stability; or the present may be characterized by rapid social change and the romanticized past may be considered more stable. The romanticization of the first and second World Wars and the great depression of the 1930's exemplifies the former, and that of the Big Six Era the latter.

Political, economic, geographic, and social instability have characterized the great world conflicts of the 20th century. The negative effects of suffering, upheaval, and chaos, which are corollaries of war, have been diminished by romanticizations of war in movies, television, literature, magazine articles, personal accounts, photographs, and museum displays. Similarly, harsh social and economic changes of periods such as the great depression are also softened by romanticization. For instance, it is not unusual to hear people who lived through the depression make such claims as "back then times were so tough we had to walk a mile to save a penny". These claims, uttered in a time of stability, often imply that walking a mile to save a penny was and is a good thing to do. Parents and grandparents, who experienced the depression, often use this and similar sayings to teach children that harshness can build character and make you appreciate the good times. Walking a mile to save a penny would have been a harsh and unpleasant action. But, when it is romanticized, it becomes a virtue. In this instance, romanticizing a negative, which occurred in a period of social and economic

71

instability, diminishes the negative effects of the social change by making the action have something positive to offer.

It is commonplace to say the present is marked by rapid change when discussing today's NHL. Since the end of the Big Six Era, the league, through expansion and merger, has grown from six franchises to twenty-eight. This growth, combined with franchise relocations, frequent trades, and players being placed in and out of the lineup has made keeping up with the happenings in the NHL challenging and time consuming even for knowledgeable hockey fans. Romanticizing the Big Six Era facilitates an acceptance of this change by temporarily diminishing its impact. In the Big Six Era, no franchises were added, relocated, or disbanded nor did any change their name. This comparison effectively provides the continually changing Modern Era with a legacy, tradition, and history characterized by stability. Temporarily displaced is some of the confusion and uncertainty which often results from rapid change and gained is a sense of continuity and stability.

An increase in the number of franchises has not been the only change which has brought about instability. Being an NHL player in the Big Six Era was substantially different to the world of today's NHL player. As a result of many factors, their daily existence in the past was more stable. First, during the Big Six Era players were traded less frequently. It was common for players to spend most, if not all, of their NHL playing careers with one franchise. Not only did this bring about stability on each of the teams, it was also one of the major reasons for the existence of the Punch Line, the Production Line, and the Pony Line. The same players were on the same team long enough for these potent offensive units to form. The Modern Era, characterized by frequent trades, has no comparable sensational lines.

Second, because most players played for one franchise, friendships endured for years. Roy MacSkimming, a hockey fan who wrote an unauthorized biography of Gordie Howe, romanticizes about these friendships. He describes the friendship between Gordie Howe and Ted Lindsay while they played in Detroit. Even though there were stark contrasts between their personalities "Howe at eighteen and Lindsay at twenty-one were inexorably drawn to each other" (1994;65). Their friendship was facilitated by the fact that "[i]n those days, and for years afterwards, all the Red Wing bachelors roomed together at various houses maintained by arrangement with the team" (65).

The most renowned home was Minnie (Ma) Shaw's, a mere block and a half from the Olympia where the Wings played their home games. Lindsay, Howe, and the other Wings lived here. Many of the players living together was a third reason for the stability in the lives of Big Six Era players. MacSkimming describes the role Ma Shaw and her home played in the Detroit organization;

> "Ma Shaw was a formidable, grey-haired widow who liked play-
> ing the piano, dealing cards and watching her "boys" in action
> at the Olympia. She combined the roles of den mother to the
> unmarried players and watchdog for Jack Adams, to whom she
> reported on her charges' conduct. Between the late 1930's and
> 1959, an estimated 175 players passed through the two-storey
> brick house she had inherited from her parents, where at any
> given time four Red Wing bachelors were billeted in the four
> bedrooms upstairs" (65).

According to MacSkimming, this type of living arrangement was ideal for the players and the Detroit Red Wing organization.

> "This living arrangement suited the players income level (no pent-
> house apartments back then), but it also provided them with com-
> radeship in a strange city, kept their morale up and cemented team
> solidarity. The players not only played as a team but lived, partied
> and hung out as a team. It helped them concentrate on hockey,
> keeping it their central focus" (66).

In light of such living arrangements, it is no surprise that players such as Gordie Howe and Ted Lindsay developed long lasting friendships, teams were characterized with solidarity, and their day to day lives were more stable than players in the Modern Era.

Engaging in activities together off the ice also made the daily lives of players stable and helped maintain team solidarity. For instance, every Monday was party night for the Wings: "[a]n Italian restaurant closed to the public on Mondays was regularly reserved for the Red Wings' private soirees" (93). According to one player, they used to go there with their wives and girlfriends and "let loose a little" (93).

Moreover, according to former Red Wings Marty Pavelich and Murray Costello (in MacSkimming), many of the players went to church together. "The Red Wings included a large nucleus of Catholics in those days, led by Adams himself. They didn't always attend church together, but Marty Pavelich says the frequency of team worship increased around playoff time" (93). This occurred for many years. According to Costello, who played for the Wings in 1955, it was a kind of tradition which kept the players close (94).

In considering the drawbacks of this "family" atmosphere, MacSkimming romanticizes like Dryden and Taylor do when they write about hockey. Jack Adams, who coached and managed the Wings during the Big Six Era, had spies who reported to him about players' sexual behavior. Adams was a strong exponent of "the old athletic/military school of thought that sex saps strength, drains energy, weakens legs and lowers aggression" (110). According to MacSkimming, Adams would

> "actually keep players under surveillance, serving them with
> a warning if he considered them to be overindulging in sex to
> the detriment of their game. Among the authorities Adams
> consulted on this pressing matter were his scouts, trainers,
> other players and Ma Shaw, who was sometimes in a position
> to know" (110).

Adams's interest in the sexual behavior of his players also extended to those who were married. While on the road "wives were not only prohibited from visiting their husband's hotel rooms - that would have presented an irresistable temptation to a lonesome left wing or randy defenseman - but also forbidden to telephone them directly " (111).

Despite such intrusive paternalism, such practices provided stability for the players, the teams, and hence the entire league. The following account illustrates the stability the Red Wing players enjoyed while alluding that other teams were similar.

> "The Red Wings' team culture was ... governed by a family
> spirit, with a family's loyalty and closeness and continuity, and
> a family's sense of pride in playing for Detroit. Like any NHL team
> of the Original Six era, this was a collection of young Canadians
> who lived for hockey, who came mostly from working class back-
> grounds and small towns scattered across Canada and had to
> create their own sense of community within an alien, industrial
> metropolis. But the Wings were even closer than most. Living
> together at home as well as on the road, they bonded by doing
> practically everything together, from playing cards and drinking
> beer to dating women and worshipping God. In time, they would
> become each other's best man at weddings, each other's partner
> in business ventures. They were a clan, with clannish ways (91).

The Toronto Maple Leafs, rivals of the Wings, enjoyed a similar closeness.

Billy Harris, a former Leaf, in **The Glory Years: Memories of a Decade, 1955-1965,** reminisces about their churchgoing while on the road. The Catholics went to Mass together as did the Protestants. According to Harris,

> "[f]or 10 years Tim (Horton) and I spent our Sunday mornings
> away from home during the hockey season sitting in a Presby-
> terian church, either in Chicago, Detroit, Boston or New York.
> Larry Hillman would join us when he was with the team, and
> during my last year with the Leafs Ronnie Ellis become a regular
> with Tim and me" (91).

The Leafs, like the Wings, also enjoyed Monday evening parties.

> "During my first season in the N.H.L., the Leafs would social-
> ize together at least once a month on a Monday evening. There
> were advantages. Most restaurants and night clubs were not very
> busy on Mondays. The Orchard Park Tavern, just north of the old

> Woodbine Race Track, was one of the more popular spots for our
> team parties. The married players tended to rely on bachelors such
> as Eric Nesterenko, Rudy Migay, Dick Duff and me, to bring pretty
> young women to the party" (76-77).

According to these memories, partying and going to church together created solidarity

and stability among the players during the long hockey season. They also exemplify

how former Big Six Era players romanticize their past experiences in the NHL and how

authors romanticize hockey's heritage.

A fifth factor which created solidarity, and hence stability, on Big Six Era teams were

lengthy train rides. They provided occasion for many team parties.

> "The 18-hour train ride home from Chicago was always a mini-
> party, especially if we were winning. When the cabs dropped us
> off at the station, the players would purchase a sandwich and a
> Budweiser six-pack. Tim Horten would purchase two or three
> bottles of Mogen David wine as a gift for his wife Lori" (93).

Harris goes on to claim that many of these bottles never reached Horten's wife because

they were consumed on the train ride home (94). According to Harris, the Leafs

> "usually had a good time on ... train trips home from Chicago,
> but apparently the Montreal Canadiens had an even better
> time; their trip was five hours longer" (94).

Throughout the 1940's and 1950's, travel from city to city was by train. In the middle to

late 1960's, travel by plane, usually for the longer journeys such as New York to

Chicago, started to displace these lengthy train rides.

These romantic accounts tend to ignore negative aspects of the player's daily lives

which were undoubtedly present. After all, there were players unhappy because of a

lack of ice time, players who were jealous of others over salaries, media attention, and

talent, and players who did not fit in and were sent to the minor leagues or traded. In

fact, even when the Wings were winning, Adams still traded many of his players. He

never wanted his players to stagnate or become complacent. Additionally, there were

frequent conflicts between players, coaches, and management. Friendships were formed and there was a sense of fraternity, but these relations did not typify the whole team. According to Gruneau and Whitson, "[i]n the final analysis the myth of community and social interdependence expressed in the discourse of the team-as-community is ideological" (1993:152).

The solidarity and stability enjoyed by each team led to intense competition and rivalry. As players spent much of their career with one team, each team tended to have a core nucleus of players from year to year. This, along with the fact that teams played each other over a dozen times a year (not including playoffs) led to intense competition and rivalry. As Marty Pavelich observed; "you played every team fourteen times a year, so everybody had a book on you. The players you'd go against knew all your moves; they practically knew when you went to the bathroom" (95). Consequently, bitter rivalries such as Toronto-Montreal and Detroit-Toronto ensued.

One of the key reasons that the stability of the Big Six Era is absent in the Modern Era is that players are now frequently traded. It is common for a player to play for four or five teams. Brent Ashton played for nine different teams (NHL Official Guide and Record Book,1997: 407). Steve Yzerman, who has played 17 seasons in Detroit, and Ray Bourque's almost 21 seasons in Boston are exceptions. Another result of frequent trade is the absence of prolific lines. The same players do not play on the same team long enough for them to form. Teams have become a mere aggregate of players wearing the same uniform; they seldom develop a unique identity. Additionally, members of the team do not live together, engage in social activities together, or spend their time on airplanes bonding. Consequently, enduring friendships are less likely to form. All told, players in the Modern Era spend very little time off the ice together.

77

A corollary to the increase in the number of teams is a reduction in the frequency one team plays another. For instance, the Leafs and Canadiens play each other during the regular season two or three times, not fourteen. As a result, teams are less familiar with each other and animosity and bitterness between teams are less likely to take root and fester throughout an entire season. This, combined with a lack of team identity owing to frequent player movement has effectively reduced bitter rivalries. Rivalries that do exist, e.g., between the Florida Panthers and Tampa Bay Lightning, the New York Rangers and New York Islanders, and the Calgary Flames and Edmonton Oilers tend to be less intense than those in the Big Six Era and likely will not become an important part of the NHL's legacy.

Rapid change has become one of the hallmarks of the Modern Era. When former players romanticize about the Big Six Era, they are invidiously importing a sense of stability which they consider to be missing in the Modern Era. The impact of the rapid change in the Modern Era is diminished by romanticizing about a more stable stage of its past.

Romanticization facilitates the identification of generations (Davis in Snyder, 1991:231) in a number of ways. Individuals who passed through their teenage and young adult years tend to identify themselves and others in the same age cohort as members of a particular generation. Additionally, those younger or older relative to a particular cohort may consider members of that age range as 'belonging to' a particular generation. In both instances, romanticizing the past helps to identify generations.

To the extent that adolescence and young adulthood are the primary periods for the imprinting of political memories (Schuman and Scott in Snyder, 1997:231) ageing results in nostalgia about events, styles, or fashions. For instance, hockey fans around

50 years of age and older are more likely to romanticize about the Big Six Era because they were teenagers or young adults while it was unfolding. They often speak fondly and proudly of Gordie Howe, the Montreal Canadiens of the 1950's, or Bill Mosienko's three goals in twenty-one seconds. Such players, teams, and events emerged as part of hockey culture at a time when certain memories easily became fixed. At times, these fans are referred to as 'purists' by members of their generation and those of others.

Gordie Howe was the embodiment of the quintessential hockey player. On the ice he was supremely skilled, physically rugged, and mentally resourceful. He was also very tough, and even mean when required. He could handle himself so well that opponents kept their distance out of respect. Off the ice he is a modest, decent, and self-depracating gentleman (MacSkimming, 1995:12). "Howe is generally accepted as the greatest all-round player ever to compete in the NHL, or in any other league, anywhere" (13). Furthermore,

> "Howe rewrote the record book against some of the finest
> goaltending the sport has ever seen. He held sway during
> the golden age of defensive hockey, when twenty goals a
> season was the standard of scoring excellence. And Howe
> ... never required the services of a bodyguard. He wasn't
> only great, he was tough. He stood up to them all, bar none
> (13).

The generation who watched the NHL when they were young adults while the Big Six Era was unfolding can romanticize about Howe, as does MacSkimming, and the other stars they were fortunate enough to have watched. They have a means of identification with other fans who also saw them, and they may also be identified by members of other generations as hockey fans who were privileged to see these legends in action. According to MacSkimming "If we know what hockey is *really* about, it's because we've

seen Howe and the other greats in their prime, their transitory gifts leaving indelible memories of how the game can and should be played" (15).

A person who watched a great team may also have a special bond with others who witnessed the same. One of these great teams was the Montreal Canadiens, who dominated the NHL of the 1950's. They won six Stanley Cups (including five consecutively), finished first over the regular season four times, and appeared in the finals ten consecutive times (Fischler and Fischler, 1997: 122-164). Twelve players were with the Canadiens for all five of their consecutive Stanley Cups: Jean Beliveau, Maurice and Henri Richard, Boom-Boom Geoffrion, Dickie Moore, Jacques Plante, Tom Johnson, Don Marshall, Claude Provost, Bob Turner, Doug Harvey, and Jean-Guy Talbot (Beliveau, 1995:112). The intense play of Maurice 'Rocket' Richard, the slap shot and consistent scoring of Boom-Boom Geoffrion, the stellar defensive play of Doug Harvey, and the incredible goaltending of Jacques Plante became memories which have endured to the present.

Similarly, being a member of a cohort of fans who witnessed a noteworthy event may also have the same result. As, for example, when Chicago's Bill Mosienko scored three goals in twenty-one seconds against the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden on March 23, 1952 (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:161). Remarkably, this took place in the NHL's history when the style of hockey was defensive and fewer goals were scored.

Other generations identified by a particular 'age' or time they lived through as teenagers and young adults are the Jazz Generation, the Hippie Generation, the Yuppie Generation, and more recently, Generation X. 'Purist' hockey fans, and members of the Jazz and Hippie Generations, often identify themselves, and may be

identified by others, because they are nostalgic about people, styles, fashions, or events which were part of their life during their young adult years. More recent generations, e.g., the Yuppie Generation and Generation X, may become the source of nostalgia as they become more distant in our cultural past. Those identified as members of a particular generation may perceive themselves as such even though they have little to do with each other. On the other hand, they may resent being lumped together with others with whom they share little.

As far as people younger or older relative to a particular generation are concerned, what they often gain is a stereotypical view of that generation. Lost, perhaps never even had, is an impression of that generation based on one's own perceptions. For instance, people who were teenagers and young adults in the late 1960's may be considered by others as former hippies because they were that age during the hippie movement. Also, hockey fans and former NHL players who were young adults when the Big Six Era unfolded may be considered members of hockey's old boys club. They were fans and players when 'men were men' and 'hockey was hockey'.

A third social function is the promotion of positive values. The romanticization of players like Gordie Howe, Maurice 'Rocket' Richard, and Bobby Orr, coaches like Jack Adams and Toe Blake, teams such as the Montreal Canadiens of the 1950's, and events such as the Toronto-Montreal rivalry, and Bill Mosienko's feat latently promotes positive values such as perseverence, dilligence, team work, commitment, sacrifice, and achievement. Heroes, great lines, and dynasties, which exemplify the result of adhering to these positive values, are social constructions created, in part, by romanticizing the past. A player who scores important goals, collects many points, and helps his team win championships is eligible to become a hero. Similarly, several

players on a line collecting many points, dazzling fans with brilliant plays, and helping their team earn success are socially deified into a 'great line'. Collectively, teams that win successive championships soon find themselves described as dynasties. When the accomplishments of players, lines, and teams are romanticized, heroes, great lines, and dynasties are socially constructed. As these players, lines, and teams achieve success through perseverance, dilligence, team work, committment, and sacrifice, the romantic thinking which creates heroes, great lines, and dynasties latently promotes these positive values.

The casting of players and teams into heroes, great lines, and dynasties entails invidious comparison. By comparative definition, today's players and teams have yet to achieve greatness to match their predecessors. As far as former players are concerned, Gordie Howe was a prolific scorer, a ferocious checker, a tough and intimidating player, and a hard worker. He was a gifted athlete who lasted an amazing thirty-two seasons in the NHL and WHA. Consequently, he is considered not only to have been better than his Big Six Era contemporaries but also better than players in The Expansion Era. His romanticization is a prolific aspect of hockey culture and latently promotes the positive values which were essentials to his accomplishments.

As far as teams are concerned, the talented Montreal Canadiens of the 1950's accomplished more than any other team before or after them. Their ten consecutive Stanley Cup final appearances and their five consecutive Stanley Cups have served as catalysts for their romanticization into a dynasty. They are considered to be the best team to ever play in the NHL. In spite of there being only three competitive teams throughout the Big Six Era (Chicago, New York, and Boston struggled consistently and were rarely considered favorites to win the Stanley Cup), the Canadiens's

accomplishments are impressive. As far as their romanticization is concerned, the fact that they were consistently victorious in a league which had only two other contenders is not important. It is a prevalent aspect of hockey culture and, as is the case with players, latently promotes positive values.

Bill Mosienko's three goals in twenty-one seconds is considered an amazing scoring accomplishment which will likely never be equalled or broken. Consequently, it is romanticized. But, a cursory examination of Mosienko's heroics reveals that his accomplishment has been equalled. In fact, it was equalled on the same three goals! Gus Bodnar made an assist on each goal and holds the record for the quickest three assists by one player (NHL Official Guide and Record Book, 1997:161). The romanticizations of Mosienko's three goals in twenty-one seconds pay no heed to Bodnar's accomplishment. Perhaps romanticizing two heroes involved with the same milestone would make Mosienko and his feat less amazing. Nevertheless, his accomplishment is romanticized and positive values are promoted.

Needless to say, romanticizing the past does not generally promote values which are considered negative. Events or people from the past characterized by indecency, criminality, laziness, and treachery are usually not romanticized. Consider, in this regard, the outrage expressed by former NHL players over Alan Eagleson being a candidate for induction in the Hockey Hall of Fame. Eagleson, a former player agent and head of the NHL Players Association, was found guilty, disbarred, and imprisoned for engaging in illegal behavior. Those venerated in the Hockey Hall of Fame are honored for contributions to the NHL and hockey in general. These contributions are the result of adhering to what we in society consider to be positive values. Upon being romanticized (which results from their placement in the Hall of Fame), the positive

values which are the basis of their achievements and contributions are reiterated. People like Alan Eagleson are not venerated in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

In addition to diminishing the impact of social change, identifying generations, and promoting positive values, a fourth function is social integration. Romanticizing the past can create an ideology of solidarity. This is illustrated by romanticizing about war. Each year around Remembrance Day, Canadian citizens, through television programs, newscasts, ceremonies in communities, displays, speeches from political figures, and the Remembrance Day poppy are prompted and encouraged to remember Canada's involvement in war. During the two World Wars the Canadian soldiers who fought overseas, and the citizens at home in Canada, were united by a common cause. The soldiers were united into fighting units, and the citizens were united as a nation.

When Canada's involvement in war became an aspect of the collective memory, this involvement became memorialized, in part, through Remembrance Day. The romanticization of war, which occurs around Remembrance Day, "unites" disparate people from various regions in Canada. Class, race, geography, religious denomination, and political belief are transcended. For instance, people in Halifax and Saskatoon, who have very little in common, are made to feel together when they romanticize about Canada's involvement. An ideological solidarity is created; disparate people are "united" by shared images and collective memories.

The Remembrance Day poppy is a symbolic object which prompts and encourages people to memorialize the Canadiens who lost their lives at war. In hockey culture, the Stanley Cup and the Olympia Octopus, for example, are symbolic objects which serve as catalysts for romanticizing about hockey. These images, in turn, serve to create

solidarity while ameliorating feelings of disparateness, struggle, competition, and conflict.

The Stanley Cup as a symbolic object elicits emotions which have an integrative function. Over the years, this trophy has developed a legacy and tradition which, in turn, has made it the most coveted trophy in professional sport. Hockey's ultimate prize generates competition, struggle, division, and hierarchy. For almost a century, the quest for the Stanley Cup, with its mystique and aura created by the romanticization of its past, has started each fall. Teams starting with a clean slate end up sorted into winners and losers. The goal of winning this trophy is what binds players into teams. As mentioned in the discussion of the stabilization of social change, teams in the Big Six Era were characterized with solidarity. Having their names inscribed on the coveted Stanley Cup was the major reason for their social integration as a team.

Additionally, romanticizing the Stanley Cup as prize establishes teams which win three or more consecutive Stanley Cups as dynasties. We can identify three in the Big Six Era. From 1947 to 1949, the Toronto Maple Leafs won three consecutive Stanley Cups. From 1956 to 1960, the Montreal Canadiens won five, and from 1962 to 1964 the Leafs again won three in a row. Their stellar accomplishments are integrated into dynasties by romanticization.

Another symbolic object, the Olympia Octopus, serves as a catalyst for romanticizing which in turn fulfills the fuction of social integration. During the 1952 playoffs, the Detroit Red Wings had won seven games in a row. They needed to win one more to be champions (winning two seven game series was required to win the Stanley Cup throughout the Big Six Era). Prior to the eighth game, Pete and Jerry Cusimano, two Wing fans, decided that a symbolic sacrifice was in order and that an

octopus, which has eight legs, would be a good omen for eight straight wins. So, on April 15, 1952, during this eighth game, Pete Cusimano threw an octopus onto the ice at the Olympia. Detroit won the game and the Stanley Cup. For the next fifteen years, Pete Cusimano threw octopi on the ice during every Detroit playoff series (Fischler and Fischler, 1997:127). Soon other fans picked up on this symbolic act, which has endured to the present. Now, even though a team needs to win sixteen playoff games to win the Stanley Cup, when the Wings play at home in the playoffs, fans frequently throw octopi on the ice.

This symbolic action, which originated during the Big Six Era, elicits thoughts about the glory days of the Detroit Red Wings. In the early 1950's, the Wings won many league championships and Stanley Cups. This success is linked with their present aspiration of winning the Stanley Cup through the symbolic act of throwing octopi on the ice. For the Wings and their fans, their present goal is integrated with their past success.

A fifth social function is the expression of dominant cultural symbols. According to Margaret Atwood, "every country or culture has a single unifying and informing symbol at its core" (1972:31). This symbol functions like a belief system that holds the culture together and facilitates co-operation for common goals. This symbol can be either or all of word, idea, phrase, image. Possibly, the symbol in the United States is The Frontier and in Canada, Survival (Atwood, 1972:31-2).

As far as The Frontier as symbol is concerned, Atwood claims it represents a place which is new and always expanding through the taking of or conquering fresh territory, where the old order can be discarded, and where hope for a perfect society exists but is never actualized. Survival, Canada's central symbol, is also a multifaceted and

adaptable idea. Early explorers and settlers faced survival in the context of Canada's natural elements and native peoples; French Canada faces cultural survival, clinging together as a people and retaining language and religion under a foreign government; English Canada faces its own cultural survival - the threat is Americanization. Atwood claims these symbols are manifest in Canadian literature and comprise part of the collective consciousness of a culture (31-2). Other examples of Canada's dominant symbol of survival are grain farmers on the prairies surviving poor crop prices and increasing input costs, people in the Maritimes and Atlantic Canada surviving depressed economies, and native people surviving dispossesion .

In the United States, the symbol of The Frontier is part of the collective consciousness. Americans tend to think of things as frontiers which need to be conquered. The Wild West was a frontier which needed to be conquered. Poverty and drug abuse are not to be eliminated or treated, they are to be wiped out or conquered. The continuing drive for profit by American corporations is a central component of global capitalism; markets are frontiers to be conquered. Outer space is a frontier in the process of being conquered. In the not too distant future, NASA space shuttles with Coca-Cola and Mobil Oil stickers plastered on their exterior will dock at the international space station. There, in Earth's orbit, astronauts and passengers will enter the space station where they will be greeted by billboards advertising Nike and Mondetta. They'll dine at Earls.

According to Gruneau and Whitson, "[h]ockey increasingly became our most popular cultural forum for playing out the central themes of Canadian life" (1993:136). For instance, the Canadien-Maple Leaf rivalry during the Big Six Era symbolized the tension between French-English and East-West. One of the most vivid examples of the

87

survival theme is The Richard Riot and its romanticization. During the late 1940's and the 1950's, the nationalist movement in Quebec found glory on ice. When the Canadiens and The Rocket were victorious, so was Quebec. Maurice Richard was considered the savior of French Canada. For the people of Quebec, he avenged the humiliation they suffered at the hands of English Canada (Fire on Ice: The Richard Riot, Video:2000). The Rocket is considered by many French Canadians to be the real social and political leader of the French in Quebec. For them, he helped the French survive. The romanticization of The Rocket and the Richard Riot reaffirms this theme of survival within French Canada.

The history of the NHL expresses both themes. The league, which originated with all Canadian franchises, all Canadian players, and with its headquarters in Montreal, has been characterized by a continuing process of Americanization (see Chapter Two). In this context, hockey has maintained its roots as "Canada's game". For the NHL, Americanization has created a paradox. It is required for survival and a threat to survival. The requirement is the profit which can be earned within the large American consumer market and the threat is the loss of Canada's proprietary relationship to the game.

For the United States, the NHL is yet another frontier to be "conquered". The southern United States, headquarters of prosperous information and entertainment corporations, has both the corporate backing and the large consumer markets required for successful NHL franchises. As a result, NHL franchises are flourishing in the southern United States. The NHL expanding into Arizona (desert), Florida (Everglades), and Texas (hill country) is yet another expression of the frontier as the dominant

American symbol. In the process, both geographical and consumer market frontiers are "conquered" and the NHL itself is being "conquered" as it is becoming more American.

In the context of Americanization, romanticizing the Big Six Era expresses Canada's dominant cultural symbol of survival. The Big Six Era was a time prior to the prevelance of American (as well as European and Russian) players and coaches in the NHL, and prior to franchises in the southern United States. The league was composed of all Canadian players and coaches and the fans were mostly Canadian. A corollary of the Americanization and/or globalization of the NHL is a threat to Canada's proprietary relationship to the game. The romanticization of the Big Six Era, particularly when engaged in by Canadian hockey fans, can be considered an expression of the dominant cultural symbol of survival. Canadian hockey fans are expressing a desire to maintain Canada's proprietary relationship to the game.

Another function is to provide commercial opportunity. Manifestations of this are the buying, selling, trading, and collecting of memorabilia and the utilization of memorabilia for advertising. Objects which have a nostalgic significance by being linked to noteworthy events and/or people from the past, and objects which are products of present situations and are anticipated to be of significance some time in the future are memorabilia. Baseballs, hockey sticks, clothing, autographs, team media guides, and photographs of people, places or events are examples. These objects are more valuable if they are autographed by the famous person associated with them. For instance, although a jersey worn by Maurice Richard in an NHL game is valuable memorabilia, one both worn and autographed by him is likely to be even more valuable.

According to Joe Daley, former WHA and NHL goaltender and owner of a sport card and memorabilia shop in Winnipeg, memorabilia appeal to many people for various

reasons. People of all ages, from all walks of life, and from all income levels buy, sell, trade, and collect memorabilia. The major reason for this widespead appeal is that there is something for everybody. For instance, there are $10 card sets which children can afford and $10,000 autographed baseballs which millionaires collect.

Memorabilia have their appeal for many other reasons. As Daley suggests, they provide an opportunity for people to have their mind involved with something, they are an outlet to express fondness for something, and they can bring a person closer to a team, an era, or a player (for instance, many collectors of memorabilia feel they own a piece of a famous person if they own memorabilia linked to that person). Additionally, memorabilia can be used to facilitate social interaction. Fathers collect memorabilia with their sons, and children share their memorabilia with other children. Memorabilia can also be displayed like a trophy in a den, study, or game room. This provides people with something to talk about and hence facilitates social interaction.

Whatever the reason for the appeal, memorabilia elicit positive thoughts about the event or person associated with the object. For instance, a father may show his son an autographed photo of Terry Sawchuk in a Detroit Red Wing uniform. At the same time, he may tell him stories about going to Maple Leaf Gardens with his friends to watch the Wings play the Leafs for the Stanley Cup and about meeting Sawchuk outside the Gardens and getting his autograph. In the process, the father shares the romanticization of his past with his son. In a similar fashion, a National Hockey League Guide from the Big Six Era, when pulled from a shelf in someone's den, elicits romanticizations when the contents are spoken about.

As far as Daley is concerned, the most important facet of memorabilia is history. Because sport cards are not primary historical objects they are not memorabilia. They

are bought, sold, traded, and collected but as they do not have a nostalgic significance they do not constitute memorabilia. Only some old cards, such as those of prominent players and those which are rare, are memorabilia. The fact that only a fixed number of these older cards were manufactured contributes to their appreciation in significance and value. Today, as sport card companies manufacture cards to meet market demand, there are both larger numbers of cards manufactured and more cards made of popular players. As a result, in the future they will not constitute memorabilia, nor will they appreciate in value.

The symbiotic relationship between the NHL and the mass media served to create much of the memorabilia associated with The Big Six Era. According to Gruneau and Whitson, since the end of the ninteenth century hockey has played a part in Canadian culture. However, it "didn't really begin to leave an indelible mark on Canadian culture until the means of symbolic production - telegraphy, magazines, radio, and finally, television - had become fully national in their technical reach, thereby creating the possibility of national audiences" (1993: 274). During the 1950's, *Hockey Night in Canada* radio broadcasts were well established as a Canadian national ritual. These broadcasts, along with the press and televised NHL games on CBC (which commenced with Foster Hewitt in 1952) played a role in making stars of Gordie Howe, Maurice Richard, and Bobby Hull. Photographs, film footage, recordings of radio broadcasts, back copies of magazines, and sport sections of daily newspapers constitute some of the memorabilia which emanated from this synchronous relationship.

Because memorabilia appeals to many people from all walks of life for many different reasons it is frequently and effectively used for advertising. The Big Six Era teams, the

other NHL franchises, and the NHL utilize memorabilia for promotion. The CBC uses memorabilia as a part of, and to promote, their popular television program *Hockey Night in Canada*. Additionally, many restaurants use hockey and other sport memorabilia to promote their business.

The use of memorabilia by Big Six Era teams, the NHL, and *Hockey Night in Canada* illustrates one of the tenets of functionalism. According to Robert K. Merton, "*structure affects function and function affects structure*" (1968:136). For our purpose, these structures within hockey culture have created a great deal of memorabilia which has been used in the romanticizing of hockey. This romanticizing, in turn, serves the function of supporting the structures which produced it.

The last social function we shall consider is that romanticizing naturalizes what is arbitrary. According to Roland Barthes, myths (which are manifestations of romanticizing the past) are a form of cultural discourse about the world people live in. The problem with myths, however, is that they tend to speak a conservative language; they depict the social world as natural when it isn't (in Gruneau and Whitson, 1993:132). So, unless challenged, various institutions and practices are presented as inevitable and necessary when, in fact, alternative possibilities are available. Examples of myths speaking a conservative language and naturalizing what is social are the UFO and alien abduction myths.

The last half century has been characterized by unprecented technological advancement. Technology both enhances our lives and dehumanizes. Technology permeates our existence to such a great extent that it seems natural. But, the creation of the technology, its purposes, who has access to it, and who can afford it are social and political concerns. Some of the consequences of the proliferation of technology

92

have been the UFO and alien abduction myths. Accounts of alien spacecraft hovering through the sky can be considered mythical metaphors for the prevelance of technology and how insignificant we are under its auspices. Alien abduction accounts and the corresponding stories of aliens experimenting on humans can be considered metaphors for the invasive "nature" of technology. Aliens probing the fetus of a female abductee or placing implants in a persons body are symbolic of invasive technologies such as IUDs, pacemakers, and Jarviik hearts.

UFO and alien abduction myths may be expressions of the fear and helplessness we experience owing the rapid and pervasive encroachment of technology into our lives. They also naturalize this phenomenon. In these myths, aliens and their spacecraft are present, while the social and economic inequalities which are causes and consequences of technology are absent. In this sense, the UFO and alien abduction myths speak a conservative language. They depict our technologically enhanced world as natural when, in reality, it is arbitrary.

Romanticizing about hockey naturalizes the game. For instance, accounts of children playing hockey on frozen ponds while they fantasize about winning the Stanley Cup have taken on mythical status within hockey culture. Romanticizing about children, frozen ponds, dreams, and the Stanley Cup naturalizes the NHL. This is owing that the Stanley Cup, although a cultural icon, is the property and symbol of the National Hockey League. This romanticizing shrouds the profit making motive of the NHL. Generation after generation of Canadian boys grow up thinking the Stanley Cup (and the NHL) is hockey. Through this romanticizing, the NHL and boyhood fantasies about hockey are seamlessly naturalized. The results are a small number of future NHL players, legions of lifelong NHL fans which financially benefits the league, and the

perception that the NHL is hockey. The reality that there are other professional hockey leagues is overshadowed owing the continual exposure to these romanticizations.

Romanticizing about hockey also perpetuates an image of hockey being a natural adaptation to the ice, snow, open space, and ruggedness of Canada's landscape. This naturalization of hockey ignores the social struggles between men and women, social classes, regions, races, and ethnic groups which have always been a part of Canada's history (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993:132). An example from hockey's heritage which glorifies the link between hockey and the natural elements of Canada, while at the same time overlooking the social, political, and economic differences of Canadians, is the account of the Stanley Cup challenge by the Dawson City Nuggets. In 1905, they travelled 6000 miles in 23 days to Ottawa to challenge the Silver Seven for the Stanley Cup (Vaughan, 1996:206). They overcame ice, snow, brutal cold, and rugged terrain across the wide expanse of Canada only to lose the Cup challenge. Romantic depictions of this event naturalize the game's relationship to Canada's landscape. Moreover, they do not focus on what is arbitrary about Canadian society.

This function is also a latent element in the frequently repeated and humorous account of children playing unorganized hockey with frozen horse droppings. Many older former players and hockey fans recall times from their youth when they used to pass and shoot road apples as they either could not afford or find a hockey puck. All that was required were children, sticks, and road apples. As a consequence, social and economic differences were less likely to prevent children from playing Canada's game. So, romantic accounts of children playing hockey with road apples naturalizes the game owing to social and economic differences not being salient in their play.

Romanticizing about hockey also serves to naturalize its lore, traditions, and major organizations (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993:132). For instance, the romanticization of the Big Six naturalizes the NHL's dominance of hockey. Romanticizing about heroes, great lines, dynasties, and memorable events from this era naturalizes a connection between the NHL as a power structure and hockey. The NHL's dominance of hockey is naturalized in a conservative, implicit fashion. Consequently, other professional hockey leagues and international hockey are considered second rate in relation to the NHL. "[M]yths have the capacity to confuse history with nature - thereby naturalizing one group's vested interest at the expense of another's" (133).

CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, we have considered the social practice of romanticizing the past within the context of hockey culture. The Big Six Era was highlighted as one of the several eras of the NHL's history, the categories we employ when we think about the game were considered, an explanation of what it means to romanticize the past was attempted, and the individual and social functions of this style of thought were considered in the context of romanticizing the Big Six. As these matters have been given thorough consideration any further recapitulation is, at this point, unnecessary.

Acknowledging several problems inherent in this study is, however, in order. Although many functions are served by romanticizing the past, and gains and losses are essentials of each function, the variable or variables which are the impetus for such thinking are unknown. At the social level, stimulation exists in the form of stories, photographs, film footage, newspaper articles, and so on, but such stimulation is only effective with some people some of the time. This leads me to surmise that the catalyst for such thinking may be at the psychological level. Any future studies which focus on this matter may also resolve other problems such as addressing differences between individuals concerning when they romanticize the past, and why some individuals engage in this practice more often than others.

Another problem is one of definition; is romanticizing the past synonymous with being nostalgic? For the purpose of this study, I have assumed they are the same activity. The basis of this assumption is that both are emotional reports of the past and both are social in essence. But, some readers may think they are different. However, the argument that we think about hockey in a certain style, and that this thinking serves individual and social functions, still aptly explains a significant element of hockey

culture. This is so regardless of whether we refer to it as romanticizing or thinking nostalgically.

Having reiterated the core components of the thesis and identified some of its inherent problems, several broader implications of this study need to be mentioned. Although the focus was on romanticizing hockey, the functions considered may also characterize this style of thinking regarding other historical events and periods. An analysis of romanticizing the Golden Age of Hollywood, baseball, Africa, the Civil War, and so on, would likely be characterized by the functions considered in this work. Moreover, the attempted explanation of this social practice is not limited to an analysis of romanticizing hockey.

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