

The American Hunter-Naturalist and the Development of the Code of Sportsmanship

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During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a small but growing and vociferous group of environmentally concerned sportsmen arose in the United States in counteraction to the savage tendencies in hunting prevalent in their day. By 1900, a stylized, idealistic type of hunter called the "hunter-naturalist" developed. Combining respect and scientific and aesthetic appreciation for nature and nostalgia for what they considered purer, wilder hunting in the past with the moral imperatives of gentlemanliness, the hunter-naturalists championed and amplified the general code of sporting ethics called sportsmanship. The impetus behind this movement was largely elitist. Sportsmen from America's upper class sought to dignify hunting for sport and check the savage hunting impulse. Even before the middle class rose up after the turn of the century to score several triumphs of regulation over large, unscrupulous corporations, patrician sportsmen embarked upon their own "search for order" by regulating themselves and their overly-rapacious colleagues, the commercial hunters.¹ Only a few of the hunter-naturalists grew to regret their hunting and to suggest abolition of that sport; the overwhelming majority proposed wiser usage of wildlife resources.

The hunter-naturalists viewed hunting as the best mode of environmental perception, the truest appreciation and apprehension of nature's ways and meanings. Most of them arrived at this philosophy through the combined influences of nature study and hunting experience. Preferring to look at the wilds scientifically and dispassionately, the hunter-naturalists had little sympathy for pastoral visions or anthropomorphic stories of animals. The hunter-naturalists evinced a thorough understanding of the ecological bases of natural existence. The appearance of the hunter-na-

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turalist ideal signified the sure emergence of an ecological consciousness in the United States.

The hunter-naturalist type originated in disgust for the barbarous and avaricious practices by both sport and commercial hunters. If the hunter-naturalist seems to us too idealistic, his antithesis, the “game butcher,” was considerably less honorable. Whether the “game butcher” engaged in “market gunning,” shooting animals for whatever price their meat, skins, or feathers could bring, in “game-hogging,” sport shooting prodigious numbers of animals for no reason beyond shooting, or in “pot-hunting,” shooting or trapping animals by means of unfair or un-sportsmanlike methods, he had little remorse and much contempt for the creatures of nature. On the federal level, the Lacey Act of 1900 outlawed market hunting, but the “game hog” and the “pot hunter” persisted in the new century under the generic term “hunter-slob.”² This ogre, which the sporting magazines such as *Sports Afield* and *Outdoor Life* recurrently deride, hunted any number of anything, anywhere, anytime, anyhow to satisfy his grossest recreational urges. The hunter-naturalist sought to avoid and control this brutality by maintaining what he considered a deep reverence for nature’s beasts and by restraining hunting methods and appetites. None of the hunter-naturalists practiced their preached ideal relentlessly; all were susceptible to occasional indulgence in the mentality and methods of their less honorable hunting brethren. Yet the hunter-naturalists resisted these lapses from the ideal behavior and posture and strove to remedy what they felt were moral deficiencies.

The hunter-naturalists’ sportsmanship code refined the traditional European cavalier notion of the fair hunt by adding the dimensions of scientific curiosity and sympathy for the prey. Acquaintance with nature should deepen the hunter’s commitment to the code. “The big-game hunter cannot possibly be of much use from a serious standpoint unless he is a keen naturalist,” asserted Theodore Roosevelt.³ Another quality that the hunter-naturalist deemed desirable was articulation of the code by written word as well as example. Backwoods hunters had probably possessed knowledge of and possibly some respect for their quarries, yet inarticulateness had prevented the full transmission of the ideal back to civilized regions. Now, posited the hunter-naturalists, hunting literature should be cerebral as well as instinctual, inspiring as well as exciting, erudite as well as commonplace.

The motives beneath the adoption of the sportsmanship code for hunting were complex. Part of the impetus was self-centered pragmatism on the part of the hunter-naturalists. Facing dwindling game reserves, the hunter-naturalists made efforts to ensure future hunting for themselves and their progeny. Some critics pointed to this interest in conservation as a

self-serving rationalization designed to continue hunting privileges for the elite.⁴ To a degree the elite was engaging in status politics, angrily defending their patrician-bred privileges against onslaughts of *nouveau riche* who in the eyes of the hunter-naturalists had no appreciation for hunting. Against such Philistinism concerned sportsmen formed themselves into many local and several national clubs or associations devoted to the propagation and protection of wildlife. The most notable of these was the Boone and Crockett Club founded in 1887.⁵ Yet the concept of status politics does not explain the outcome of the sportsmen's efforts. Species such as the white-tailed deer, ring-necked pheasant, and diverse ducks multiplied rapidly to numbers beyond the hunting capability of a finite elite who were committed to bag limits.⁶ The game laws and the wildlife management practices that resulted from the hunter-naturalists' endeavors not only increased the available amount of game and saved what was left of some species, but also increased the chances of the average hunter to shoot some game at all. Before legislative restrictions, game butchers of all sorts were depriving less ambitious hunters of their sport. The hunter-naturalists promoted their code as a democratic assurance of the chance to hunt. The provisions of the code that state and federal laws incorporated reflect this visionary concern: restricted seasons, bag limits during the seasons, protection of the females and the young, outlawing unfair hunting methods and poaching, and relatively modest license fees.

On a deeper, psychological level, the hunter-naturalists developed the sportsmanship code to reconcile their own fears and societal criticism that sport hunting was merely thinly disguised savagery and that the pleasure derived from shooting was inherently sadistic. Unlike the Puritans, who had deplored hunting for sport because such necessitated contact with the brutalities of nature beyond the moral hedge of the town and also encouraged contact with the avatars of Satan, the Indians, the late nineteenth-century hunter-naturalists entertained no theological proscription against the sport.⁷ Still they sought to curb any undue sadism, any brutalization of themselves. Imbued with genteel Victorian moralisms, the hunter-naturalists codified this restraint under the mantle of manliness, and even further, under gentlemanliness. This curbing led to a de-emphasis on the importance of the kill, or number of kills, and a re-emphasis on the redemptive and instructive aspects of hunting ceremony and ritual and on the tonic qualities of the outdoors. If a hunter-naturalist decided to kill, he must do it with utmost sportsmanlike methods; if not, he received the great consolation of communing with nature. The hunter-naturalist need not sacrifice the strenuous life and eager hunting, but he must experience such only within the limits of the code. Unlike later novelist Jack London, they did not celebrate hunting as an atavistic activity, arousing man's baser passions. Hunting must instead

be an art, an ennobling, instructive ceremony confirming the hunter's manhood and self-mastery in the wilderness.

Dwelling upon the psychological ramifications of hunting for sport led the hunter-naturalists to grapple with the paradox at the heart of sport hunting: killing an animal that the hunter had tracked or awaited so long filled him with both pleasure and remorse. Familiar with the large body of frontier legendary that enthusiastically extolled conquests over beasts while at the same time lamenting the beasts' passing, the hunter-naturalists experienced this ambivalence themselves at the moment of the kill.⁸ The sportsmanship code recommended restraint, particularly of the enthusiastic pleasure arising from the kill, yet in a larger sense the hunter-naturalists dismissed these mixed emotions as secondary to the primary satisfaction of fulfilling an ecological role by sport hunting. Drawing upon their deep aesthetic and scientific appreciation of nature, the hunter-naturalists applauded what they felt was their own vital role in nature's grand design.

Along with the sportsmanship code, the hunter-naturalists displayed an ecological consciousness and a firm commitment to conservation and wildlife management. They were not sentimental nor overly romantic about nature, nor were they paranoid. All aspects of nature, whether grim or beautiful, were necessary to the networks of life systems. Most of the group would approve naturalist John Burrough's remark: "Nature does not care whether the hunter slay the beast or the beast the hunter. She will make good compost of them both, and her ends are prospered whichever succeeds."⁹ Natural history taught the hunter-naturalists that animals belonged to a food chain, an ongoing process of birth, growth, death, and decay. But this ecological theory condoned survival hunting, yet offered no natural reason for sport hunting. To this breach, the hunter-naturalists trotted out their arguments for wildlife management. As the crowning achievement of evolution, man must not only use his intelligence to control himself and society wisely, he must also control nature intelligently. Hunting seemed to be an effective, humane means of controlling animal populations. Whatever pleasure the hunter-naturalist gleaned from shooting was all in the line of duty or well-deserved recreation. This rationale of wildlife management underlay much of the conservation movement in the early twentieth century, and remains today the cardinal tenet of the powerful National Wildlife Federation and other hunters' associations.

The close influence of nature upon hunting has had a long history in America. Our first eminent naturalists such as John James Audubon and Alexander Wilson were hunters. They garnered their specimens by the gun, but both also hunted for sport. In 1820, hoping for an appointment

as a naturalist on an expedition to the newly-acquired Florida territory, Audubon exclaimed, "I walked out in the afternoon . . . and saw nothing but hundreds of new birds in imagination within range of my gun."¹⁰ Nine years later, and much busier, he complained, "I am at work and have done much, but I wish I had eight pairs of hands, and another body to shoot the specimens."¹¹ Yet for Audubon this scientific collecting did not preclude pleasure from hunting. In his fifties, he took a six-month sojourn, up the Missouri River country in 1843, studying the mammals. He peppered his journal with notations of both happy and disappointing hunts: "I shot a Wild Pigeon and a Whippoorwill, female, that gave me much trouble"; "Went out, but only shot a fine large Turkey-hen, which I brought down on the wing at about forty yards"; "Great flocks of Geese and Pelicans; killed two of the latter"; "Hunted and shot one Raven, one Turkey Buzzard, and four Wood-Ducks"; "Shot two Blue-winged Teal"; and many more.¹²

In a similar manner, Wilson wandered the forests for science and sport. From one such rambling he composed a long poem, "The Foresters," which detailed his kills:

There, on the slaty shore, my spoils I spread.
Ducks, plovers, teal, the dying and the dead;
Two snow white storks, a crane of tawny hue,
Stretched their long necks amid the slaughtered crew.¹³

On that same trip, Wilson bagged a rare crossbill "in the interest of science," but devoted most of his time to chasing game birds.¹⁴ Despite their intense love for the fauna, both Audubon and Wilson had only hazy notions about conservation. Like their fellow hunters, they blazed away at whatever flew. Wilson indulged in the ironic, when in March, 1808, he shot and dissected eleven creepers in order to confirm his ideas on their feeding patterns and plumage.¹⁵ Audubon and Wilson combined their loves for natural history and hunting, but unlike their hunter-naturalist spiritual descendants, they did not merge remorse for their prey with the finer emotions of aesthetic appreciation of nature.¹⁶

Pre-Civil War writers, too, provided raw material for the later refined formulations of the hunter-naturalist ideal. The biographers of the archetypal American hunter, Daniel Boone, lauded both his hunting prowess and powers of natural observation.¹⁷ David Crockett, for all his rapacious hunting attitudes, had at least a sneering familiarity and respect for the wilderness and its creatures.¹⁸ In a more literary vein, James Fenimore Cooper followed the honorable hunter-naturalist figure, Natty Bumppo, through five Leatherstocking novels. Although fictitious, Bumppo embodied the best traits of the wilderness-oriented and the civilized American. Cooper repeatedly praised Bumppo's uncanny

knowledge of “natur’ ” and often provided him with foils, such as the officious Dr. Battius in *The Prairie*, to dramatize this store of wisdom.¹⁹ Similarly Francis Parkman felt fondness for his guide in *The Oregon Trail*, Henry Chatillon, for his invaluable schooling in the outdoors.²⁰ Chatillon held to a rudimentary code of sportsmanship by shooting only buffalo bulls and eating as much of the carcass as possible before killing other animals. Yet neither the fictitious Bumpo nor the incarnate Chatillon were averse to hunting for sport, to taking the occasional potshot to keep their shooting eyes sharp.

Hunters less articulate than the pre-Civil War writers also contributed much to the notion of the direct influence of natural awareness upon hunting success. The mountain men and fur traders and other frontier hunters believed that their survival and livelihood depended upon how well they “read” nature, how skillfully they could track animals by natural signs. The half-legendary exploits of these men filtered back East and provided unending grist for popularizers, who in turn further romanticized strenuous wilderness hunting.²¹

Personal narratives of hunting deeds gained eager audiences before the Civil War.²² Often the authors of these accounts cast nature as the adversary, an entity that Americans must conquer heroically. These writers usually embroidered their tales with sensationalistic events. In one of these narratives the term “hunter-naturalist” first cropped up. Charles W. Webber, in his *The Hunter-Naturalist, or Wild Scenes and Wild Hunters*, catered to the public hunger for sensationalistic wilderness excitement, but also interlaced his tales with gentler sentiments and occasional remorse for the hunted beasts.²³ Webber devoted three adulatory chapters to Audubon, who he considered the exemplary hunter-naturalist. Fancying himself a disciple of that worthy, Webber wrote of man’s fearful responsibilities toward animals. His comment must be one of the most saccharine reasons for gunning yet expressed by hunters in America:

We know them not as the insensate objects of a rude caprice, dumb foot-balls to our blind and heady passions, to be chased and torn and worried in our savage glee--but as the creatures of our dedicated love, to be guarded gently, nurtured well, and led by easy ways up, through serener airs, to happier fields.²⁴

Still in this romantic temperament later in the narrative, Webber assured the reader of his constant genuflection before the altar of nature and his frequent abstention from shooting:

Many’s the time have I forgotten to shoot, and let the stately deer go by unscathed, while I stood breathless to admire its graceful action, and the charming unity of its antlered presence here, with the swaying of old boughs and lapsing leap of streams.

With such moods upon me. I could not bear to hurt the lovely creatures; it seemed as though a voice of our mother nature chid me: "Shame! shame! to slay the beautiful!"²⁵

In the next sentence, however, the hunter returned to his less refined nature: "But I was usually as keen a hunter as ever startled the ancient echoes with the rifle's shrill ring."²⁶

Despite their early interest in the ideal of the hunter-naturalist, pre-Civil War writers hardly seemed sincere in wishing such a code on American hunters. For these authors, the hunter-naturalist ideal was a Romantic whim, a lofty fiction suited to the sentimental philosophy of the day. Their expressions made little impact on the American environmental attitudes underlying exploitation of the continent's resources. Few Americans before the Civil War expected that such hunting restraints would become necessary in an America so abundant with wild game. Even the sportsman who was most concerned with dignifying sport hunting, English-born Henry William Herbert, who wrote in the 1840s and 1850s under the name "Frank Forester," seemed more intent upon converting Americans to English sporting etiquette than upon protecting wildlife from too much degradation. Not until after the Civil War did Americans, led by sportsmen who benefited from an ecological perspective from studying natural history, understand the practical as well as the philosophical need for the hunter-naturalist ideal and the attendant code of sportsmanship.

During the 1880s and 1890s the formal emergence of the code of sporting ethics complemented by ecological awareness invested the ideal of the hunter-naturalist with its highest dignity. The writings of the hunter-naturalists reflected their intense concern for the future of wildlife, both game and non-game species, in America. This concern resulted not from abstract conceptions, but from direct natural contact while pursuing the animals for hunting pleasure or scientific knowledge. Having personally observed the slaughter of the bison and witnessed the near-extinction of other animals by market hunters, many prominent hunter-naturalists, such as George Bird Grinnell, Charles Sheldon, George Oliver Shields, William Temple Hornaday, Henry Fairfield Osborn, and Theodore Roosevelt, began calling for wiser usage of wildlife resources and wider public acquaintance with the wilder, unromanticized aspects of nature.²⁷ As early as 1874, Grinnell printed in Charles Hallock's journal, *Forest and Stream*, editorials that vehemently protested wholesale slaughter of the nation's wildlife. During the next winter, in response to the editorials and arising out of the simmering discontent with wildlife destruction, nearly a hundred sportsmen's clubs, ten or twelve state groups, and one national association formed to propagate and protect wildlife. Four years later the number of sportsmen's clubs had tripled to 308.²⁸ During

the last quarter of the century, these organizations actively supported legislation to control or outlaw commercial hunting of both game and non-game species and waged a media campaign for the legitimization of sport hunting and vigilant conservation measures.

Undoubtedly nostalgia for previous hunting paradises, a complaint labeled the “good-old-days lament” by environmental historian John Reiger, fueled the reasoning behind this campaign.²⁹ Disgusted with the market gunning and poaching that was depriving them of good hunting in favorite old haunts, some hunter-naturalists reacted angrily and directly at these enemies. Other hunter-naturalists found in their own hunting cause for self-reproach and indulged in romantic elegies for their stricken prey. In 1883, George Oliver Shields thus wrote in his *Rustlings in the Rockies*:

I sat down and gazed for twenty minutes upon his lifeless form and bitterly did I reproach myself for bringing to an untimely end so noble, so majestic an animal. What a strange passion it is that leads men to slaughter of innocent creatures, and what a strange fancy it is that leads them to think such slaughter sport! It is too deep a problem for my untutored mind; I leave it to the metaphysician, to the psychologist.³⁰

Most hunter-naturalists, Shields included on the basis of his other writings, preferred to attack the problem of destruction of wildlife from a scientific and ecological viewpoint. In 1904, Henry Fairfield Osborn, addressing the Boone and Crockett Club, placed the issue in historical perspective:

Our animal fortune seemed to us so enormous that it could never be spent. Like a young rake coming into a large inheritance, we attacked this noble fauna with characteristic American improvidence.

Now, concluded Osborn, America as an old penitent must redress her grievances to nature.³¹ To the hunter-naturalists in the audience, the speech reflected how intertwined the ecological and moral necessities in the struggle had become. The notion of improvidence was anathema to these well-bred patricians. Self-restraint was the only foreseeable remedy for this malady. But the hunter-naturalists also saw that reckless over-hunting was a sin against nature’s design as well as against propriety.

Most of the hunter-naturalists were familiar with the new science of ecology that had sprung up from George Perkins Marsh’s seminal work, *Man and Nature* (1864). Many hunter-naturalists had friends at the major universities who kept them abreast of this new all-inclusive form of scientific inquiry that insisted upon the interrelatedness of fauna and flora in biomes. Yet, even those hunter-naturalists who did not benefit from such university contacts were beginning to sense the same ideas in their

own natural study and outdoors fieldwork. Although their understanding of ecology never approached the sophistication of our modern ecologists, the hunter-naturalists were able to demonstrate that destruction of habitat or the depletion or extermination of a species resulted in several other disruptions in the ecosystem. To correct these abuses, the hunter-naturalists pushed for game preserves and the quick outlawing of unbridled market hunting. None of the hunter-naturalists advocated the abolition of hunting for sport. Such sport, they claimed, was a manly virtue necessary to a masterful people. Moreover, hunting in this restrained and respectful manner, the sport hunter performed a vital role in wildlife management. The sport hunter balanced species imbalances that natural methods had yet to equalize; he trimmed herds and flocks so that superfluous members of those herds and flocks would not die of starvation or prey too successfully on weaker species. In 1925, Grinnell and Charles Sheldon, in their preface to their Boone and Crockett Club book, *Hunting and Conservation*, reaffirmed the hunter-naturalists' main ecological sentiments on hunting as valid sport:

Animals are for man's use, and one of these uses is recreation, of which hunting is a wholesome form. So long as it does not interfere with the maintenance of a permanent breeding stock of any species this recreation is legitimate and praiseworthy.³²

Sharing these notions and spearheading the cause in a symbolic manner was Theodore Roosevelt. Grinnell and other hunter-naturalists had an earlier and more direct influence on the actual implementation of governmental game management policies, but the prolific and vociferous Roosevelt brought the issues of wildlife conservation and sportsmanship to the widest national forum.³³ Roosevelt also represented the culmination of the development of the hunter-naturalist ideal. In 1911, at the twilight of his hunting days, Roosevelt wrote, in an essay entitled "The American Hunter-Naturalist," that "one of the most interesting developments" within the past thirty or forty years had been

the wilderness wanderer, who to the hardihood and prowess of the old-time hunter adds the capacity of a first-class field naturalist, and also, what is just as important, the power of literary expression.³⁴

Roosevelt was reviewing a book on hunting in the Yukon by his colleague, Charles Sheldon, who he claimed was "not only a first-class hunter and naturalist but passionately devoted to all that is beautiful in nature."³⁵ Three months earlier, Roosevelt had delineated his conception of the hunter-naturalist ideal in an editorial entitled "A Hunter-Naturalist in Europe and Africa":

Half a century or so ago it looked as if we would develop hunters who knew nothing whatever of anything except hunting, zoologists who knew life only from museum

specimens, and outdoor lovers of nature who were not competent to make additions to scientific truth, nor yet to deal with and describe nature in its wilder and more imposing forms, animate and inanimate. Nowadays, however, we are tending to develop much higher types of all of these; and also a type which includes them all.³⁶

Perhaps no American hunter-naturalist exemplified that latter type so well as Roosevelt himself. Roosevelt continually promoted the ideal of the hunter-naturalist. He praised colleagues, such as Hornaday or Frederick Selous, who seemed to evince the traits of that ideal.³⁷ In 1887, upon Grinnell's instigation, Roosevelt helped found the Boone and Crockett Club, an organization that became a veritable clearinghouse of conservation ideas and personages. Roosevelt also contributed to the first formulation of the by-laws of the club. Those by-laws, which contain the requirement that members must have shot an adult male of at least three American big-game species of fair chase methods or still-hunting and other sportsmanship requirements as well as proposals to further natural science, read like a panegyric to the hunter-naturalist ideal. Attracting to the club many prominent, concerned hunter-naturalists, Roosevelt remained an active member until his death in 1919.³⁸

The close connection of hunting and natural history had been locked in Roosevelt's mind since boyhood.³⁹ One major influence was his uncle, Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, an eminent hunter and early conservationist. Robert Roosevelt was largely responsible for the bill that created the New York Fish and Game Commission; he served as its commissioner for twenty years.⁴⁰ Young Theodore whetted his curiosity for nature early--"While still a small boy I began to take an interest in natural history"--so much so that he could write later that upon entering Harvard, "I was devoted to out-of-doors natural history, and my ambition was to be a scientific man of the Audubon, or Wilson, or Baird, or Coues Type."⁴¹ Roosevelt's later books on the outdoors showed the success of his devotion. *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885), *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (1888) and *The Wilderness Hunter* (1893) formed "a natural history trilogy of the West."⁴² These were a new type of hunting book, adding to accounts of the chase fascinating sketches of scenery, flowers, and animals large and small. Together with later volumes, such as *Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter* (1905) and *A Book-Lover's Holidays in the Open* (1916) they ranked high in the estimate of hunter-naturalists, such as Grinnell, John Burroughs, Fairfield Osborn, Frank M. Chapman, and C. Hart Merriam, and even the naturalist John Muir, who was not very disposed to hunting.⁴³ Roosevelt's intense concern with accurate natural description embroiled him in the "Nature Faker" controversy from 1903 until 1911. Taking offense at the anthropomorphic portrayals of animals in books by Ernest Thompson Seton and Rev. Wil-

liam Long, Roosevelt waged a campaign of debunking such misleading presentations, culminating in his article, "Nature Fakers," in September, 1907.⁴⁴

In 1872, Roosevelt began his long career as a hunter-naturalist, collecting many of his specimens by the gun. His motives for hunting engendered much debate. Although his hunter-naturalist colleagues found nothing wrong in hunting for sport, political critics and cartoonists never tired of comparing Roosevelt's blustering foreign policy to his hunting escapades. Sierra Club founder John Muir repeatedly attempted to convert Roosevelt to his preservationist views, feeling that the bloodletting in hunting was unbecoming for the president of the United States. Recent critics have added to the criticism. One suggested that for Roosevelt hunting was both an outlet for sadistic aggression and a means by which he could triumph over his younger brother, Elliott, in their sibling rivalry.⁴⁵ Another critic claimed that Theodore was "close to psychopathic" when killing animals.⁴⁶ Certain events in Roosevelt's hunting lend credence to this view. Once after shooting a mountain goat, the "yell of delight" that Roosevelt "let loose could have been heard for two miles in any country," remembered one ear-witness.⁴⁷ In 1879, Roosevelt told his Harvard classmate, Henry Davis Minot, that he had tapered off specimen collecting, giving the reason as "I don't approve of too much slaughter."⁴⁸ Yet the next fall, Theodore and Elliott shot over 400 birds on a two-month hunt.⁴⁹

Clearly, Roosevelt received some degree of satisfaction from the killing. As his conservationist ideas grew stronger, however, he played down the thrill of the kill.⁵⁰ Typically he wrote in 1904: "Laying stress upon the mere quantity of game killed, and the publication of the record of slaughter, are sure signs of unhealthy decadence in sportsmanship."⁵¹ Over and over, he returned to this theme:

All hunters should be nature-lovers. It is to be hoped that the days of mere wasteful, boastful slaughter are past and that from now on the hunter will stand foremost in working for the preservation and perpetuation of wild life, whether big or little.⁵²

Whether Roosevelt lived up to his preachings or not, the code of sportsmanship and the ideal of the hunter-naturalist had few more eloquent spokesmen. Through the workings of the Boone and Crockett Club, Roosevelt left a legacy of inspiration to those of his contemporaries such as Hornaday, who carried the cause of fair play for animals into the 1930s. The formation of the National Wildlife Federation and the arrival of outstanding game management theorists such as Aldo Leopold in the 1920s assured continuance of Roosevelt's spiritual bequest. The ideal of the hunter-naturalist prefigured twentieth-century reconsiderations of the place and value of hunting for sport in an urban society.

After the passing of Roosevelt's generation, hunting for sport encountered increasing criticism in the United States. Anti-hunting critics argued that the sport was a barbarous activity incongruous with modern, sophisticated, technological systems of sustenance. Ironically most twentieth-century hunters countered by adopting the modern hunting and recreational advances that technology created and offered. Mechanization, in the forms of overland vehicles, long-range rifles, and even airplanes and helicopters, deprived these hunters from the original sense of ordeal connected with the hunt since primitive times. Nylon clothing, artificial heating devices, and freeze-dried trail foods further insulated these hunters from the raw climates, from the vagaries of nature. Elaborate wildlife management programs, rather than ecological processes, produced much of the game supply. The culmination of this mechanization and game farming was the shooting preserve, where the proprietor often sacrifices sport in order to please his impatient, well-paying customers. Yet enthusiasm for sport hunting under whatever the conditions did not dampen. As of 1970 over 14,000,000 American hunters continued to flock to the fields and preserves annually, spending there over 200,000,000 recreation days and paying over \$2,000,000,000 for the privilege.⁵³ Many hunters still regarded contact with nature as one of their primary reasons for hunting for sport. Indeed 5,540 such sportsmen at the 1973 North American Wildlife Conference ranked "being close to Nature" as the first satisfaction of sport hunting, above such other motivations as escapism, companionship, and shooting.⁵⁴

Yet anti-hunting critics and some hunter-naturalists scoffed at the hunters' commitment to nature, and in doing so challenged the validity of the hunter-naturalist ideal. Vehement antihunter Cleveland Amory held in his book, *Man Kind?* (1974), that the ideal was untenable and purely nostalgic in that few hunters approached it in actuality, or even aspired to it.⁵⁵ In 1967, naturalist Bil Gilbert, himself a hunter, termed hunting "a dirty business" and the average hunter "a hypocritical nuisance,"⁵⁶ Writer Vance Bourjaily, a long-term upholder of the concept of the good hunter, flatly declared in *Country Mutters* (1973), "Most hunters, I would have to say now, love not nature but guns."⁵⁷ Similarly, another writer, Edward Abbey, in his book, *The Journey Home* (1977) classified ninety-nine per cent of the sportsmen not as hunter, "engaged in the ancient, honorable, and serious business of providing meat for kith and kin," but as gunners whose major purposes for sport hunting ranked as follows:

1. Get away from wife and kids for a few days
2. Get drunk and play poker with cronies by the light of a Coleman lamp in tent, lodge, or Winnebago
3. Swap lies with same
4. Maybe shoot some legal game

5. Failing that, shoot some illegal game-cow, horse, chicken, game warden, etc.
6. Failing that, shoot something-side of barn, road sign, his own foot, whatever's handy."⁵⁸

Other old-time hunters echoed this lament against what they considered the general incompetency of modern American hunters. For example, Mason Smith complained in 1974:

The sport long ago became another witless mass diversion automatically performed in the autumn by droves of the wrong people, a meaningless, commercialized, anachronistic, habitual, indulgence, an annual all-points diddle of women, employers, the deer, ourselves. We've learned to live with the mob wheezing and hacking about the woods in search of a hood ornament.⁵⁹

In his *Sand County Almanac* (1949), conservationist Aldo Leopold diagnosed the problem as mechanization destroying the code of sportsmanship, that "self-limitation on sport," that "distinctively American tradition of self-reliance, hardihood, woodcraft, and marksmanship."⁶⁰

Despite such a body of opinion, many hunters still felt that Leopold's ideals were practicable, or at least recapturable. The hunter-naturalist ideal still exercised a strong appeal within the hunter community. Sporting magazines constantly assured the hunters and critics that the "hunter-slobs" were in the minority.⁶¹ The hunter must still respect and learn nature's laws, wrote Charles Waterman in his book, *The Hunter's World* (1970), reaffirming the ideal:

The hunter's pleasures. excitement, and to a large degree. his succes--all are influenced by his role as a naturalist, his awareness of his surroundings and how the overall pattern of wildlife affects his days in the field.⁶²

Mid-twentieth century hunters often proved as sensitive and remorseful as their hunter-naturalist predecessors. Rocky Mountain game warden and hunter Frank Calkins typified these hunters:

But when the bird crumples and comes crashing to earth as a grayish, blurred blob, my exultation falls down around my ankles like a pair of old shorts. I always wish I could put the dead bird back into the sky and restore its marvelous symmetry.⁶³

Such a perception of the emotions of the hunter at the moment of the kill attested to the resiliency of the hunter-naturalist ideal. The debate over hunting and the questioning of the viability of the hunter-naturalist ideal will continue, but as long as hunting for sport remains legal, many hunters will engage in the timeless pursuit of nature and aspire to the tradition and the ideal of the hunter-naturalist which reached its apotheosis in Theodore Roosevelt.

Notes

1. For a fine presentation of the elitist origins of this movement see John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation* (New York: Winchester Press, 1975), especially Chapter One. The phrase "search for order" refers to the conceptual tool that Robert Wiebe framed his book, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), around. Wiebe attempted to explain the impulse for Progressive regulation as a search for the order, the clarity of small-town American life, embodied by the Chautauqua ideal, that urbanization, industrialization, and immigration had disrupted. To the extent that the hunter-naturalists tried to sort out the confusing, often contradictory mass of game protection and bounty laws before the Lacey Act, they too engaged in a search for order.
2. See Theodore W. Cart, "The Lacey Act: America's First Nationwide Wildlife Statute," *Forest History*, XVII (October, 1973), pp. 4-13. See also Reiger's critique of Cart's categorization of the statute's supporters, *American Sportsmen*, p. 65.
3. Theodore Roosevelt. "A Hunter-Naturalist in Europe and Africa," *The Outlook*. 16 Sept. 1911, p. 111. rpt. in Roosevelt, *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt, The National Edition*, 20 vols., ed. Herman Hagedorn (New York: Scribner's, 1926), XII, p. 369.
4. See Holway R. Jones, *John Muir and the Sierra Club: The Battle for Yosemite* (San Francisco, 1965), p. 4.
5. For a detailed account of this organization, see Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, Chapter Five.
6. See Peter Matthiessen, *Wildlife in America* (New York: Viking Press, 1969), p. 63.
7. See Richard Slotkin's brilliant analysis of the Puritans in his book, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), Chapters II-XI. See also Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), Chapter Two.
8. See Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, *passim*.
9. John Burroughs, quoted in Matthiessen. *Wildlife in America*, p. 200.
10. John J. Audubon, *The Life of John James Audubon* (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1893). p. 77.
11. Maria R. Audubon, ed., *Audubon and His Journals*, 2 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1897), I, p. 61.
12. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 473 and 487; II, pp. 173. 168. 167, and 154.
13. Alexander Wilson, *The Foresters: A Poem: Descriptive of a Pedestrian Journey to the Falls of Niagara in the Autumn of 1804* (Newtown. Pa.: S. Siegfried and J. Wilson, 1818). rpt. in Alexander B. Groart. ed., *The Poems and Literary Prose of Alexander Wilson*, 2 vols. (Paisley: Alex Gardner, 1876), 1, p. 152.
14. Robert Cantwell, *Alexander Wilson. Naturalist and Pioneer* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1961), p. 128.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
16. Later ornithologists and other naturalists continued the similar practice of combining hunting and "scientific collecting." See Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, pp. 43-44 and 65-66.
17. See Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, Chapters IX and XII.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 553-564.
19. James Fenimore Cooper, *The Prairie. A Tale* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1827), for example, pp. 134-138.
20. Francis Parkman, *The California and Oregon Trail: Being Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1849), especially Chapter Two.
21. For a modern example of the persistence of this trend see Vardis Fisher, *Mountain Man* (New York: William Morrow, 1966).
22. Two representative examples are Friedrich Gerstacker, *Wild Sports in the Far West* (London: Routledge, Warnes, and Routledge, 1859). and Peregrine Herne, *Perils and Pleasures of a Hunter's Life; or The Romance of Hunting* (Philadelphia: J. W. Bradley, 1854).
23. Charles W. Webber. *The Hunter-Naturalist: Romance of Sporting; or, Wild Scenes and Wild Hunters* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1852).
24. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

27. Reiger offers a list of eighty nineteenth-century American sportsmen and naturalists who figured prominently in the battle for wildlife conservation, although several were more important earlier in the century. This list, by no means complete, confirms the upper class origins of the wildlife protection movement and sportsmanship. See Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, pp. 45-46.
28. Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, pp. 39-40.
29. *Ibid.* pp. 36-39.
30. George Oliver Shields, *Rustlings in the Rockies: Hunting and Fishing* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke, and Co., 1883), pp. 40-41.
31. Henry Fairfield Osborn, "Preservation of Our Wild Animals." Address to the Boone and Crockett Club. 23 Jan. 1904, rpt. in George Bird Grinnell. ed. *American Big Game in Its Haunts* (New York: Field and Stream Publ. Co.. 1904), p. 357.
32. George Bird Grinnell and Charles Sheldon, eds. *Hunting and Conservation. The Book of the Boone and Crockett Club* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925). p. xi.
33. Retger made a very convincing argument for Grinnell as the father of modern conservation efforts, but failed to note sufficiently Roosevelt's tremendous symbolic boost to the cause from the office of the Presidency. See Reiger. *American Sportsmen. passim*.
34. Roosevelt, "The American Hunter-Naturalist." *The Outlook*, 9 Dec. 1911, p. 855, rpt. in Roosevelt, *Works*, XII. p. 414.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 417. See also Roosevelt's comments on Sheldon a year later: "Mr. Sheldon is an outdoor naturalist, a fauna naturalist, as well as a great hunter. He is the direct reverse of a game-butcher; he cares nothing for a 'big bag.' He kills only what must be killed." Roosevelt, "Three Capital Books of the Wilderness." *The Outlook*, 30 Nov. 1912, rpt. in Roosevelt, *Works*, XII, pp. 381-382.
36. Roosevelt, "A Hunter-Naturalist in Europe and Africa," p. 111. rpt. in Roosevelt, *Works*. XII. p. 369.
37. See Roosevelt, "Our Vanishing Wildlife," *The Outlook*, 25 Jan. 1913. rpt. in Roosevelt. *Works*, XII, p. 419; Hornaday is "a trained naturalist, an explorer of and dweller in the world's waste spaces, a man who has been a mighty hunter in the proper sense of the word. but whose chief work for many years has been the effort to preserve and not destroy wild life,": and Roosevelt, "African Nature Notes and Reminiscences," rpt. in Roosevelt, *Works*, XII, p. 355; "Mr. Selous is much more than a mere big-game hunter, however; he is by instinct a keen field-naturalist."
38. For details on Grinnell's role in the founding, see Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, Chapter Five.
39. See the revealing letter that he wrote to his mother on 16 Mar. 1879, rpt. in Roosevelt, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 8 vols., ed. Elting E. Morison (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951). I, p. 37: after rhapsodizing about the beauties of the Maine woods under snow, he informed her, "I shot a buck, a coon, some rabbits and partridges and trapped a lynx and a fox-so my trip was a success in every way."
40. R. L. Wilson, *Theodore Roosevelt. Outdoorsman* (New York: Winchester Press, 1971), pp. 7-8; Paul Russell Cutright, *Theodore Roosevelt, The Naturalist* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), pp. 9 and 33.
41. Roosevelt, *An Autobiography*, rpt. in Roosevelt, *Works*, XX, pp. 16 and 25.
42. Cutright, *Theodore Roosevelt, The Naturalist*, pp. 53-54.
43. See Grinnell, "President Roosevelt as a Sportsman," *Forest and Stream*, LX1 (1903), p. 437; Burroughs, *Camping & Tramping with Roosevelt* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906), *passim*; Osborn, "Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist," in *Impressions of Great Naturalists* (New York: Scribner's, 1924): and Cutright, *Theodore Roosevelt, The Naturalist, passim*.
44. Roosevelt wrote to Burroughs on 6 July 1903: "Ninety-five percent of the 'School of the Woods' stuff is deliberate invention of an arrantly silly type," rpt. in Roosevelt, *Letters*, III, p. 512; "Nature Fakers," *Everybody's Magazine*, XVII (Sept., 1907), rpt. in Roosevelt, *Works*, V, pp. 375-383.
45. Howard Umansky, "The Roosevelt Family: A Case of Sibling Rivalry," unpublished paper read before the American Historical Convention, San Francisco, 29 Dec. 1973.
46. Cleveland Amory, *Man Kind? Our Incredible War on Wildlife* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 25-31.
47. Jack Willis, quoted in G. Edward White, *The Eastern Establishment and the Western Experience: The West of Frederic Remington, Theodore Roosevelt, and Owen Wister* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 87.
48. Wilson, *Theodore Roosevelt, Outdoorsman*, p. 24.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

50. See Roosevelt's comment rpt. in James Morgan, *Theodore Roosevelt, The Boy and the Man* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1919). p. 301: "As we grow older, I think most of us become less keen about that part of the hunt which consists in the killing. I know that as far as I am concerned I have long gone past the stage when the chief end of a hunting trip is the bag. One or two bucks, or enough grouse and trout to keep the camp supplied, will furnish all the sport necessary to give zest and point to a trip in the wilderness."
51. Roosevelt, "The Master of Game," rpt. in Roosevelt, *Works*, XII, p. 353.
52. Roosevelt. *Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter*, rpt. in Roosevelt, *Works*, III, p. 125.
53. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Resource Publication No. 95, *National Survey of Fishing and Hunting* (Washington. DC., 1971), p. 5.
54. Reported in Amory, *Man Kind?*, p. 38.
55. *Ibid.*. *passim*
56. Bill Gilbert, "Hunting is a Dirty Business," *Saturday Evening Post*, 21 October 1967, p. 10.
57. Vance Bourjaily, *Country Matters, Collected Reports from the Fields and Streams of Iowa and Other Places* (New York: Dial Press, 1973). p. 375. Contrast this with his earlier views in *The Unnatural Enemy* (New York: Dial Press. 1963).
58. Edward Abbey, *The Journey Home: Some Words in Defense of the American West* (New York: E. P. Dutton. 1977), pp. 51-52.
59. Mason Smith, "Lone Watch in a Gold-Fobbed Forest," *Sports Illustrated*, 25 November 1974, p. 58.
60. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 177-178.
61. For example, Jack Samson, editor of *Field and Stream*, wrote, "There are slob hunters, and they do stand out, but they're not high in numbers." Quoted in Peter Gwynne, "Hunting under Fire," *National Wildlife*, XII (Oct.-Nov., 1974), p. 40.
62. Charles F. Waterman, *The Hunter's World* (New York: Random House, 1970). Frontispiece, p. 12.
63. Frank Calkins. *Rocky Mountain Warden* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971). p. 128. See also the comment by a former professor of social ecology, Sam Wright, who resigned to go live and hunt in Alaska, in his article, "On the Trail of the Grizzly. A Bear Hunt for Survival," *American West*, VII (Nov., 1970), p. 37: For me the climax of a hunt brings not only elation, but an accompanying feeling of the bottom dropping out beneath me, a sinking sensation in the stomach along with a deep sadness. I have wondered if the gesture of forgiveness or the small rituals of gratitude to the spirit of the animal that exist in many hunting cultures were born from this kind of response. I know that, on my part, I seldom squeeze a trigger without silently mouthing at the same time, "Forgive."

Solon on Athletics

*James G. Thompson**

The athletic spirit of the ancient Greeks is well-known and their contributions in this area were no less spectacular than they were in other fields of human endeavor. Their devotion to athletics has prompted scholarly investigations into many aspects of the historical development of their athletic festivals. Little effort, however, has been devoted to investigating the relationship of such festivals to concurrent social and economic reforms. The purpose of this paper is to show how the athletic festivals at Olympia and Isthmia were connected with the social and economic reforms of Athens designed by Solon in the sixth century B.C. Moreover, we shall examine the contradictory evidence concerning Solon's attitude towards athletics in general.

Solon's reforms were an attempt to deal with social and political unrest in Athens. While his legislation failed to resolve the internal problems plaguing Athens with any degree of permanency, his laws were in part responsible for paving the way towards democracy which followed later in the same century.¹ The discontent of the underprivileged classes in Athens had risen to dangerous levels, and Solon, who apparently had the confidence of all parties, was appointed to resolve the crisis and legislate for the future.² He first cancelled all debts for which land or liberty was the security, and hereby released the peasants from serfdom, restored their farms and redeemed those who had been sold into slavery.³ Furthermore, he prohibited all future borrowing on the security of any individual. These measures were known as the *seisachtheia*, or "shaking off burdens."⁴ Solon also reformed the constitution. Previous to his enactments the governing of Athens was shared exclusively by the *aristoi* or "the best men."⁵ The aristocratic monopoly of government control caused discontent among those people who were improving their financial status through new-found maritime endeavors while still being denied an opportunity to share in the affairs of the state.⁶

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