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## The Bison in the Room: Hunting, Settler Colonialism and Gender Performance on the American Frontier, 1865–1895

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# The Bison in the Room: Hunting, Settler Colonialism and Gender Performance on the American Frontier, 1865–1895

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## ABSTRACT

This article explores the relationship between outdoor sports and the age of empire on the American frontier using the lens of gender performance. Focused on the years from the mid to the late nineteenth century, it provides an exploration of hunting as a vector of imperial masculine journey and a physical and imaginative pursuit where hunters stalked and shot the iconic animals of the western states on behalf of settler colonialism. In the first part of the paper, contemporary testimonies are used to plot the ways in which hunting desires to own the animal body fuelled a powerful homosocial culture grounded in ideas of primal pageantry. Sport and game in this context represented essential elements of a performative leisure economy in which pursuit and capture dictated the terms of human-animal engagement and refracted broader impositions of colonial political authority. From here, it turns to dynamics of community on the game trail where the primacy of the sporting hero was confirmed and recalibrated along racial, class and gender lines, before travelling indoors to examine how the afterlife of the hunt (expressed in taxidermy) allowed the authority of the victorious hunter to be performed in the 'great indoors' and for colonial claims over space to be materially and symbolically affirmed. Today, the stories of the imperial hunter elite and their taxidermy trophies represent traumatic historical artefacts. However, they also denote important remnants of empire whose complicated provenance helps to explain how mutually supportive mechanisms of masculinity and colonialism operated to sanction the killing and (later) the conservation of game species. Offering a closer look at 'the bison in the room' and its embodied story of pursuit and capture, this paper provides valuable insights into the dynamics of sport in colonial space and the value of performance as a useful category for contextualising human-environmental relations in the age of empire.

## KEYWORDS

Hunting; masculinity; empire; animals; sport; outdoors; American West; frontier

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## Introduction

This sporting journey starts not on the western frontier but in Madison Square Garden, Manhattan, where, on 13 May 1895, the inaugural 'Sportsman's Exposition' opened its doors to eager visitors. Here, in this newly opened indoor arena accustomed to hosting sporting events and concerts, was a heady dose of the 'great outdoors' collated under one roof. A celebration of a life under canvas and of the sporting vocation, the Exposition assembled in New York an expansive hunt-scape, complete with camp sites, animal trophies, outfitting ephemera and a swaggering complement of real-life sporting heroes. Attendees perused the gleaming armaments stacked in regimental order from Marlin, Remington, Colt and Winchester, flicked through the autobiographies on the stand of the *Sporting Library* promising narrative escapism and armed inspiration from the comfort of an armchair and paused to wonder at not one but two full-size frontier cabins. The first, under a sign entitled 'Recreation', was designed by western big game hunter George Shields and featured a menagerie of taxidermy trophies including the biggest elk taken from Montana, one of the last bison to roam the plains (both described as 'immense' by *Sporting Life*), and a floor rug made from the skin of a huge silver-tip grizzly. The second, sponsored by the United States Cartridge Company, offered a 'picturesque' log-home frequented by celebrated exponents of the hunt including Wyoming-based Ira Dodge, a man whose physical body bore the scars of experience as a grizzly bear hunter extraordinaire (a large skull, also 'immense', that belonged to one of the ursine foes who nearly 'chewed him up' also adorned a corner of the cabin). The Sportsman's Exposition illustrated several things. Firstly, the vitality of a late nineteenth-century leisure economy founded on restorative outdoors activity and sporting recreation. Secondly, the importance of the American frontier as a sacred landscape of wild promise with astonishing purchase on the popular imagination. And third, the potency of the sporting life as an idyllic terrain of masculinity in the age of empire. Designed to transport ticketholders away from the urban industrial modernity of the eastern seaboard to take in (and affirm by consumer spend), the Expo paid heed to the expansive transformative possibilities of the western game trail, a proving ground for manly encounter with a rugged landscape, for metaphysical reflections on life and death and for communion with like-minded fellows. In this, however, lay a fundamental problem. The bison herds that numbered 15 million in 1865 plummeted by the mid-1880s to less than 500 animals and many other species were at risk of extinction. Hunter's paradise seemed to be under threat from the very colonial thrust that facilitated its creation. Herein lay its final – and perhaps most important – message of the Exposition – the seamless reconfiguration of the hunter hero into conservationist champion based on a new performance of imperial masculinity. At the US Cartridge Company cabin, for instance, visitors could listen to the trailside lore of Montana

naturalist William Wright, self-confessed ‘penitent butcher’ and hear about the camera-hunting exploits of Colorado hunters Allen and Mary Wallihan. This narrative refresh had two important consequences: firstly, a new coda of game protection that established the model for twentieth-century wildlife management and, secondly, the validation of settler colonial claims to frontier space based on the moral ecology of the sporting naturalist.<sup>1</sup>

In the following pages, I explore the relationship between hunting, gender performance and settler colonialism on the American frontier from the end of the Civil War to the opening of the Sportsman’s Exposition. These years saw the rapid and wholesale transformation of the western landscape and also represented a ‘golden age’ of sport in which a procession of hunter heroes projected a powerful image of trailside masculinity and associated traits of bravery and resilience. Focused on the quest to bag specific animals – typically large and charismatic beasts – a buoyant and performative culture of masculine leisure brought together home-grown hunters and foreign tourists in a consumptive quest that abetted nationalist visions of manifest destiny and created a quintessentially western hunting experience founded on rugged adventuring and tussles with a striking collection of faunal adversaries.

There has been much valuable scholarship on hunting in recent years and this study builds on critical work on empire, sport and imperial dynamics across a global canvas from John Mackenzie, Harriet Ritvo, Karen Wonders, Greg Gillespie and Vijay Mandala. An act enmeshed in the eco-social machinations of colonial encounter and consumption, hunting was (as Mackenzie communicates) a ‘cultural characteristic ... rendered nebulous by its own ubiquity’. For Wonders, it represented a potent display of imperial masculinity, conflated through the lens of ‘victor and vanquished’. Gillespie explores how it channelled processes of sport, science and authorship, while Mandala points to axioms of governance, authority and racial identity embedded in the workings of the chase. As Jan Dizard and Garry Marvin elucidate, the symbolic parameters of the hunting experience were expansive, a ‘mortal stakes’ game that was prosecuted through ritual code and adeptly communicated the cosmopolitics of people and place. Inevitably, perhaps, this process of claiming space for the exercise of imperial identities embroiled the global geographies of the hunt in protracted contests over land rights, which, as Karl Jacoby documents, saw indigenous rights recategorised as criminal and the ‘hunter’s game’ (to borrow the title of Louis Warren’s twentieth-century study) elevated as a restorative pursuit based on the interlocations of sport, tourism and manliness. As Tina Loo, Tara Kelly and Monica Rico persuasively argue, underneath the touristic impulses of sporting adventure lay a networked, transatlantic, architecture of colonial authority, what Virginia Scharff labels a ‘masculinity in motion’.<sup>2</sup>

What this study adds to the academic discourse is a theoretical framework that foregrounds performance as a ‘hunting guide’ to helpfully deconstruct

the gendered and geopolitical striations of nineteenth-century imperial hunting. Most importantly, it explains how mutually supportive rhetorics of masculinity and empire allowed a cadre of hunter heroes to claim ownership over the faunal bounty of the American West *and* to reposition their moral authority in the context of animal scarcity. Turing to specifics, thinking through the sporting experience in terms of performance opens up the possibility of scrutinising the chase as it progressed through different phases of imperial activity – pursuit, capture, commemoration – stages of enaction and recital that served as critical foundations for the establishment of the hunter hero as a ‘hypermasculine cultural figure’ and an agent through which the practical and symbolic processes of settler colonialism could be accomplished. In his work on socially constructed realities, cultural theorist Roland Barthes talks about play, activity, practice and production as constituent parts of decoding cultural mythologies (what he called Text). Here, I apply these categories to read the choreography and culture of the hunt, revealing, in the process, a performance of ‘wild life’ that drew its vigour from projections of primal struggle, restorative challenge and campfire conviviality. Identified by Mackenzie as a ‘symbolic activity of global dominance’, the testimonial culture of the hunter hero played a key role in creating a moral ecology of the chase that inculcated rights of ownership and practically affirmed Euro-American command over species and spaces. An imaginative and material journey that enacted the land seizure and identity politics of empire through the medium of trailside quest, sport hunting paid heed to the alliance of sovereignty and storytelling in the operational dialectics of settler colonialism. Alongside literature and art, which Mackenzie posed as critical media for disseminating this new invented tradition, taxidermy was also a vital agent of communication that served to validate the hunter’s tale, knit together outdoor and indoor environments and allow for an active spectatorship of colonial celebration. Significantly, the ‘bison in the room’ was both firmly rooted in its frontier setting and also extraordinarily portable – as body and symbol – across an expansive imperial geography. A pliable eco-cultural artefact, its bio-engineered physiology was stitched together by a transnational narrative of hunter heroics that allowed the heady smoke of the hunter’s camp to infuse various sites of interior display across a global canvas.<sup>3</sup>

The first section of the paper picks up the hunting trail on the ground to reveal a heavily ritualised landscape of play in which the motifs of environmental challenge and metaphysical reflection conspired to create a potent theatre of manly restoration. The hunting quest – what Rico perceptively sees as an exercise of ‘disciplined violence’ – served up a powerful fusion of colonial and masculine desire in which the performative activities of pursuit and capture allowed Euro-American hunters to claim ownership over a frontier geography and to remake themselves through immersion in the wilds. Their complicity in the settler colonial project was demonstrated by (as they saw it) a rightful

occupation of space and the harvest of game trophies and an active relationship with the agents of national expansion (fur trading companies; the US Army) that was logistical and highly performative. As the next section indicates, the pageantry and power politics of the hunter hero was consciously and flamboyantly acted out, illuminated here by the hunting expeditions hosted by Buffalo Bill Cody. The third section turns to practice to explore the performance of masculinity around the campfire – a space of communion which staged the first retelling of the hunt. This fireside construction of sporting moral authority was confident and assertive, able to assimilate other hunting traditions and to fend off the disruptive possibilities posed by indigenous bands, local guides, female sports and market hunters to the hegemonic canon. Particular notable was the fact that, when game started to become scarce (and competing claims to animal capital even more problematic), sport hunters engaged in a flexible process of identity (re)construction to perform a powerful recalibration of colonial authority based on honour and conservation rites. In the last section of the article, the focus of performance moves indoors to look at the trophies of the trail – artefacts of production – in the dramatic, dioramic visions of the frontier that played out in home, commercial and civic settings and across local, national and international borders. At once biological fragments in possession of what Jane Bennett calls ‘a vital materiality’ and yet weighty emblems of masculine authority, the taxidermy spoils of hunter’s paradise brought a whiff of wildness and civilisation to their final resting places, thus establishing an intriguing relationship between outdoor and indoor space that brings a fresh perspective to the study of masculinities in the age of empire and sheds light on the diverse architectures of settler colonialism.<sup>4</sup>

### **Play: Primal Challenge and Transformation on the Trail**

According to Colonel Richard Dodge, there was nowhere on Earth like the American frontier as a sporting venue. Writing of his gamely experiences in *The Hunting Grounds of the Great West* (1877) he contended ‘I think that the whole world can be challenged to offer a greater variety of game to the sportsman.’ The western states offered monumental and panoramic landscapes – soaring mountain peaks, glacial-cut rivers and vast prairies of grass – that provided a suitably epic terrain for hunting adventure to take place in. Its signature animals – grizzly bear, bison, moose, bighorn sheep – presented a cast of formidable beasts who posed new challenges of stalk and capture for the sporting aficionado and were striking in appearance or character. Added to the faunal complement was the prospect of running into American Indians, a possibility which provoked delight and fear in the minds of Euro-American sports and only served to enhance the allure of the western game trail. This was, in the years under review here, a frontier landscape, a terrain in the throes of conquest where sporting parties rubbed shoulders with US Cavalry divisions and



government expeditionary parties seeking to catalogue, claim and control space on behalf of the American nation. For British sportsman William Baille Grohman, the region appealed as a 'primeval hunting ground ... full of untrammelled freedom', while John Mortimer Murphy, author of *Sporting Adventure in the Far West* (1870) regarded it as without comparison as a 'recreation-ground for those who love the ecstatic excitement of the chase' (and also appreciated its relative lack of 'irritating insects, poisonous serpents or deadly disease'). A combination of rugged scenery, charismatic megafauna and unencumbered adventuring encapsulated the appeal of western lands as hunter's paradise.<sup>5</sup>

The frontier had long been conjured as a mysterious terrain of great portent – an occidental crucible defined by one essential (and problematic) quality: wildness. Lewis and Clark, co-captains of the Corps of Discovery (1804–1806), the advance guard of American empire, talked of vast herds of woolly bison and mountain ranges of exceptional height and grandeur. Writing in the 1850s, Henry David Thoreau famously toasted the tonic of the wilderness as an effective prescription for encroaching industrialism and encouraged a look westward to the future. It was, however, in the so-called crisis of masculinity that marked the postbellum period that the visions of the trans-Mississippi landscape as a place of wild escape, imperial leisure and masculine regeneration gained special purchase. A response to various forces – the Civil War, economic depression, and the galloping pace of industrialism – these years witnessed an outpouring of concern at the over-civilised lethargy consuming the Euro-American man on both sides of the Atlantic. Catharsis was found in various crucibles of outdoor play, but the world of sport hunting especially emerged as a manly activity promising intense physical exertion, the exercise of raw sensory instinct, immersion in a testing environment and contest with (and triumph over) animal adversaries. Theodore Roosevelt, one of the most vocal champions of the 'strenuous life' wrote in *The Wilderness Hunter* (1893) of the energetic channels of 'hardihood, self-reliance and resolution' bred on the hunting trail and of the chase as 'among the best of all national pastimes; it cultivates that vigorous manliness for the lack of which in a nation, as on an individual, the possession of no other qualities can possibly atone'. According to Peregrine Herne, there was nothing to compete with the 'bracing power of a free life' on the game trail. This urgent fascination for taking up hunting as sport was transnational in scope – Herne noted that he had travelled all over the world in pursuit of trophies – and drew together elite urban Americans and wealthy British tourists into a fraternal band of sightseeing shooters that laid claim to a global imperial geography, as William Beinart notes, 'conjuring the empire as estate'. Alongside Africa and India, both critical destinations for gamely renewal, the American frontier held special allure for its package of savage charms and restorative backwoodsmanship. For the Earl of Dunraven, this was a place 'where Nature is formed in a larger mould than in other land ... robust and strong, all her actions full of vigour and young life'.<sup>6</sup>



An ancient past as hunter-gatherers, according to psychologist John Dewey, imprinted *Homo Sapiens* with an inbuilt reflex for decoding the dramatic. A pursuit founded on watchful waiting, bursts of movement, determined response and characterised by feelings of desire, exertion, expectancy and elation, the dynamics of the hunt, he argued, served up a formative cognitive skillset that allowed the human mind to successfully navigate the dramatic sensations inspired by, for instance, reading a book or watching a play. A critical analysis of Dewey's thesis is beyond the scope of this article, but what is valuable about his theory is its categorising of the hunt as a naturally dramatic activity and one, therefore, which had huge application for the performance of imperial masculinity that was seeking space to articulate itself in the latter years of the nineteenth century. On this, it seemed critically important that the proving ground of the game trail was situated in a land apart – what Theodore Van Dyke in *Flirtation Camp* (1881) 'described' as 'far beyond the orbit of the tramp, the chromo man and the insurance agent' – a place diametrically (and imaginatively) opposed to the everyday realm of industrial modernity. Offering the chance for a physical and imaginative journey to an alternative reality, the frontier appealed as a place where primal impulses of masculine power could be re-ignited by adrenaline-fuelled encounters (with landscape, animals and other people) and where the hunter's will and weaponry could be pitted against a range of faunal opponents. In this performative space, the hunter was able to find in himself what George Grinnell described as a 'fierce delight' of animal instinct hidden beneath the 'vener of civilization'. Adopting a romantic tone, C. W. Webber asserted he 'must go to the frontier to meet the dusky chivalry of the mountains', while Herne channelled a more visceral impulse. 'I thirsted', he said, 'my blood was on fire for sterner excitement – I longed to meet death in the face, and look for carnage'. Even before they reached frontier space, sportsmen were conjuring up a theatre of personal transformation and curative combat.<sup>7</sup>

Once on the western stage, the play started in earnest. A detailed sense of the performance mechanics of the hunt is particularly the word evident in the narrative tracks left in memoirs and published accounts. This corpus is not without its problems – not least that the gap between lived experience, memory recall and authorial voice makes it impossible to discern a factual sense of gaming dynamics. That, however, is less of a problem in this study, being, as it is, concerned with the popular construction of the hunter hero and the imaginative processes by which masculinity, coloniality and outdoors adventure became knotted together in the era of high empire. Thinking in more detail about the way in which the chase was choreographed by its leading men, Dewey's appraisal of the natural dramaturgy of the hunt provides a useful map for plotting the course of the masculine hunter as he journeyed along the path to restoration. His 'interest, suspense and movement' (what I label as walk and stalk) and 'graceful, prompt, strategic and forceful response' with its attendant stream

of emotions flowing through ‘want, effort, success or failure’ (delineated here as the moment and metaphysics of the kill) emerge as powerful waymarks that highlight the function of the western game trail as a critical geography for what Monica Rico labels as the establishment, elaboration and defence of masculinity.<sup>8</sup>

In the performance of the gaming quest, the hunter hero was both actor and director, his experience moving from first-person vantage to a sort of embodied spectatorship, always at the centre of things. Opening scenes on the trail typically indulged in the grand celebrations of scenery mentioned in the previous paragraphs, closely followed by a psycho-geographical movement through the hunter hero’s personal *terra nullius*, a landscape of discovery, the journeying through which brought wondrous sights and rejuvenating wanderings. As Heclawa mused:

To live for a season a primitive life, in close contact with Nature’s virgin charms; to forget for a time the petty jealousies and quibbles of our effete, selfish world; to climb lofty mountains, descend into the wildest gullies and deepest canyons; to thrust one’s way through dense thickets of brush and brier ... the absorbing interest of exploration with the excitement of the chase – oh, who can describe the freedom, the exhilaration, the abandon of such an existence.

To just move through this space, however, was not sufficient. A full experience of manly restoration demanded a rub with ‘nature red in tooth and claw’ and a character-defining challenge only obtainable through the ritual act of killing. Walk was less meaningful without the stalk. As George Shields pointed out, ‘the benefits I have derived from these expeditions, in the way of health, strength and vigour, are incalculable, and the pleasures inexpressible’ but seemed somehow lacking without the hunting quest. As he noted at the end of one day’s travel, on finally spotting a suitable quarry: ‘What a marvellous change came over me! I forgot that I was tired; that I was weak; that I was hungry, the instincts of the hunter reanimated me and I thought only of killing the grand game before me.’<sup>9</sup>

Leaping into an active pursuit mode – the hunting ‘find’ – allowed the operational function of the drama full rein. Endurance, patience, stealth and skill were needed as sports trailed fauna across often forbidding terrain. Animal quarry was rendered into suitably formidable foes in this story of pursuit, warriors, gladiators, monarchs of the desert and terrors of the timberline: veritable hunter-heroes of the animal kingdom. This gamely contest, meanwhile, was always most rewarding when it involved hard work and a whiff of personal danger. For Edgar Randolph, ‘those hunting incidents which have given me the greatest trouble and exercised my skill the most are the ones I recall with greatest pleasure’, while Dodge waxed lyrical on the important threads connecting masculinity, outdoors sport, endangerment and sporting salvation:

At no time, and under no circumstances, can a man feel so acutely the responsibility of his life, the true grandeur of his manhood, the elation of which his nature is capable, as when his and other lives depend on the quickness of his eye, the firmness of his hand, and the accuracy of his judgment.<sup>10</sup>

With the quarry stalked to a point of close proximity, the sporting quest approached its end game and the tempo of play momentarily changed. In this moment – the view to a kill – the hunter stopped in his tracks, both literally and figuratively. This point of pause had an important practical use in allowing for pursuers to steady their nerves, take a breath, and to set up and sight their firearms. As banker-turned-rancher Malcolm Mackay recalled of one bear encounter: ‘I dropped down behind a log, gathered myself together a bit, and let my heart action slow down as I watched him come closer and closer.’ This was, as Mackay pointed out, also ‘a thrilling moment’ that had critical symbolic purchase in the hunting performance for its sheer emotional force. A useful signal of the self-reflectivity that was embedded in the hunter’s engagement with nature, sporting types often characterised this pause as a sort of metaphysical hiatus which allowed them to confront the mortal power invested in their sporting agency and to fully anticipate their impending act of deadly gallantry. Grantley Berkeley, writing in *The English Sportsman on the Western Prairies* (1861) thought for a moment of sparing the bison (‘a rusty black monster’) from his rifle, before stepping forward and sending a bullet forth. ‘The time is come,’ he ‘whispered to the silent air; I must kill, or in these realms my power to have done so will be doubted’.<sup>11</sup>

The climax of the hunt – the kill – represented the landmark moment of manly restoration and hence performative portent. Would the hunter hero prevail? Would his primacy in the wilds be challenged by animal flight or a clumsy execution? For George Shields too there was an implicit theatricality in the mortal denouement of the quest. Describing the shooting of an elk after a long track from canyon to canyon, he mused: ‘Then was enacted the sublimest death-scene I ever witnessed.’ Watching the stricken animal blow air from its nostrils and fall to the ground with a final toss of its antlers, he exclaimed ‘the great monster was dead! Talk about great acting. I have seen great actors in their greatest death scenes, but never saw so grand, so awe-inspiring a death as this real death of the Monarch of the Rockies’. Rites of death and rites of passage seemed irrevocably bound. Paying heed to the gravitas of the moment and of the fraternal culture of ‘knowing’ that was bound up in the sporting vocation, Benedict Revoil effused: ‘Every hunter reading my faithful narrative will understand how my heart beat with emotion during these few minutes, which seemed to me as long as years.’ In the immediate aftermath of the kill, meanwhile, the hunter typically looked at, stood over (or sometimes on) his conquered foe in a powerful act of embodied authority, one that promised atavistic communion with an honourable opponent and an opportunity to revisit the trailside waymarks of performance that led,

inexorably, to this moment. Sacramental homage, philosophical reflection and a potent shot of regenerative energy coalesced around the animal body. Here, as Alfred Mayer articulated in *Sport with Gun and Rod* (1883) the hunter found salvation as a ‘civilized savage’, reclaimed his natural masculinity and could return to the city ‘with a calmed spirit’. A successful performance of hunter heroism rested on the sportsman’s ability to catch the game and also to play it.<sup>12</sup>

Seen through the lens of play, the game trail emerges as a transformative space in which the bristling metaphysics of personal proving combined with an embodied encounter with ‘the wild’ to craft a heady material and imagined landscape, one in which the sporting contours of leisured adventuring fed from and fuelled the gendered geopolitics of imperial authority.

### **Activity: Choreography, Leisure and Martial Performance**

Moving from Barthes’ first category, play, to his second, activity (which I read here as the ‘doing’) a telling example of hunting performance in action is served up by vignettes of two famous sporting expeditions led by William F. Cody, frontiersmen polymath and all-round plains celebrity. With a striking profile as market-hunter, army scout and high-end hunting guide, ‘Buffalo’ Bill starkly illuminated the interconnected nature of mercantile, martial and leisure economies in the West and vividly demonstrated the performative choreography of the chase. Threaded into the landscape of entertainment acted out on the plains were figurative and operative devices of imperial authority. Military testimonies from the time routinely describe hunting as good practice for war against indigenous peoples (who were often referred to as ‘game’), while the flourishing gunplay of the buffalo run was founded on a swaggering control over natural resources based on assumed white masculine authority. As Mbeme notes, ‘what holds for the animal holds for the colonized, and what holds for the act of colonizing holds for the act of hunting’. Indeed, for the military leaders and elite sportsmen who gathered at army posts for a dose of adventuring underpinned by colonial confidence, Cody played flamboyant host, providing not only ‘buffalo talk’ – advice on how to the trail the herd and make a kill – but an immersive and enacted hunting experience with horse racing, encounters with American Indians and armed demonstrations of sporting prowess.<sup>13</sup>

When General Sheridan and a group of New York sporting ‘thoroughbreds’ disembarked at Fort McPherson for a hunt in September 1871, their ‘packing out’ equipment ran to sixteen wagons, with two military companies as escort and William Cody all set for a command performance. As he noted:

I rose fresh and eager for the trip, and as it was a nobby and high-toned outfit ... determined to put on a little style myself. So I dressed in a new suit of light buckskin, trimmed along the seams with fringes of the same material; and I put on a crimson short handsomely ornamented on the bosom, while on my head I wore a broad *sombrero*.

Suitably attired for a grand show of frontier bravado, Cody presented his guests with a 200-mile itinerary of wilderness adventure during the day, with prizes for the first species killed, including a silver drinking set embossed with bison, and, at night, fine tales of trailside lore, accompanied by a rustic-exotic menu of Buffalo Tail soup, fish, prairie dog, rabbit, bison steaks, whiskey, ale, brandy and champagne, served by waiters in evening dress. The show went down a storm with the sports and Cody recalled the excursion as one of abject revelry, with empty bottles to be found where the party had camped 'for years afterward'. Writing up the excursion in *Ten Days on the Plains* (1871), Henry Davies described the striking impression made by Cody on a snowy white horse, clad in buckskin and carrying his rifle: a vision which 'realized to perfection the bold hunter and gallant sportsman'.<sup>14</sup>

Just a few months later, in January 1872, Cody again played hunter choreographer with aplomb, this time for Grand Duke Alexis and his entourage including General Custer – a salient demonstration of the links between the outdoors economy and the politics of indigenous subjugation. For this excursion, Cody acquired the services of Spotted Tail and his crack Lakota hunters who pursued the buffalo herd with arrows and lances in order to satisfy the duke's taste for a sample of theatrical savagery and to give him a suitably thrilling example of the indigenous hunter hero in action (Alexis duly went home with a 'killer' arrow). Cody crafted a suitably exciting corollary in the form of his own technique of mounted bison hunting. As he noted,

My great forte in killing buffaloes from horseback was to get them circling by riding my horse at the head of the herd, shooting the leaders, thus crowding their followers to the left, till they would finally circle round and round.

Here Buffalo Bill galloped through a whistlestop tour of heroic masculine archetypes, the bareback rider who assimilated indigenous practice, the rugged westerner on point and the gallant gentleman, knight of the plains. Inspired by Cody's lead, Duke Alexis borrowed his best horse (Buckskin Joe) and favourite rifle 'Lucretia'. Cody manoeuvred the duke into place to get his 'first chance and best shot', (and quite possibly shot the animal himself) before leading the party to the fallen bison, taking its head as trophy and its meat for camp steaks.<sup>15</sup>

Galloping across a western terrain that served as workplace, theatre and battlefield, Cody acted out the role of performing hunter hero with such conviction he was able to move from market hunter to marketeer of the frontier. Not only a facilitator and choreographer of the hunt for others, he also provided an object lesson in how to inhabit the role of hunter hero – how to ride, shoot and talk. Juggling his roles carefully, he knew when to step back and when to step up. Reporting on the expedition with Alexis, the *New York Herald* celebrated Cody as 'the hero of the plains': a keen example of the power of 'doing' in the establishment and elaboration of sporting identity. Wising he had the 'pen of a lady novelist' to truly do him justice, Dunraven described a man of

perfect physique and manners, a 'thorough gentleman ... full of memories of strange adventures ... a western hero'. With a shrewd understanding of the power invested in his performance (and of the frontier as both physical and imaginative space), Cody went on to have a colourful career as a dime novel star and international wild west showman. An expert facilitator of the chase, Cody's performances on the plains starkly illuminated the way in which mutually supportive mechanisms of race, gender, and class privilege enabled the hunter hero to assume command over a western stage.<sup>16</sup>

Approached using the conceptual framework of activity, the function of sport hunting as an enactment of masculine imperial authority is usefully illuminated. Supported by a performative choreography that blended physical interactions and aspirational designs, the contours of 'doing' on the trail allowed for the practical actuation of heroic imaginings and – when read as a corpus of collective behaviour – firmly situated the exertions of sporting adventure in a broader landscape of colonial identity politics and land appropriation.

### **Practice: Communion, Custom and Recalibration Around the Campfire**

The cathartic power of the hunt relied on a sense of personal contest and the idea of questing across isolated terrain. Salvation came through intimate moments of challenge and victory. However, the identity construction of the hunter hero also demanded the sharing of experience, a peer ratification that drew power from communing with others and in reflecting on a collective and exclusive way of knowing forged by sporting encounter. Roosevelt paid heed to the social dynamics of this performance canon in *The Wilderness Hunter* when he noted that 'No-one but he who has partaken thereof, can understand the keen delight of hunting in lonely lands.' Alongside the formative play of the game trail then, the hunter's camp served as a powerful venue in which the practice of the imperial hunter hero was established by recital.<sup>17</sup>

A powerful bond of fraternal journeying infused the game trail experience, with hunters reciting 'fast friendships' forged in the crucible of manly contest. For William Allen, 'more than half' the joy of hunting came from traversing with companions, while Malcolm Mackay described his partner Mullenore as a 'born hunter ... a man of untiring energy, dead shot and ... supernatural instinct' and of trailside stalks where their 'spirits blended'. At the opening and closing of the hunting day, the brotherhood of sports typically gathered for social sustenance around the campfire. Here they indulged in a powerful ritual performance that rehearsed and replayed the day's activities. In this campsite theatre, Roosevelt's axioms of toil and triumph – the full play of the hunting quest – was chewed over, exaggerated for dramatic effect, joked at and marvelled. As Dodge saw it, 'The return at sunset is to a good dinner, after which all collected about a campfire ... with pipes and bowl and

social converse, with songs or stories' represented 'free, careless happy hours unknown to formal conventional life'. Evident in such accounts was the sense in which hunters seemed acutely aware of the function and value of the camp as a performance space ably equipped for telling tales of the chase. Underpinning this jocular banter, meanwhile, was a powerful process of homosocial association. As Judith Butler points out, gender needs to be repeatedly performed to become 'real' and here, around the glowing embers of the frontier fire, the travails of the quest and the heroics of play were ratified by peer review. This camp site re-enactment was equally important for signalling command of the hunter hero over the western environment. As sporting types retraced the contours of their trailside journeys – geographies, tribulations, revelations and triumphs – they imprinted a powerful a testimonial track on the landscape. From narrative came ownership.<sup>18</sup>

What was interesting about the mobile camaraderie of the hunter hero fraternity was its ability to absorb and assimilate different hunting traditions while maintaining a supreme confidence as to its own hegemonic authority over game, narrative and environment. As Tina Loo notes, sport hunters 'went into the woods with something even more comforting: a sense of entitlement'. As they saw it, the game was theirs to play. Accordingly, alongside the motifs of delicious danger from travelling through what Henry Boller called 'Indian country' (a key aspect of the hunter's cognitive and narrative landscape of questing), there was also space around the campfire for indigenous trackers. Often expert trackers of game, the alternative models of heroism presented by Mandan, Crow and Pawnee hunters inspired interest for their knowledge of the chase, but also remained comfortably subaltern in their exotic primitivism. Allen enjoyed the presence of the 'wily warriors' from the Crow who 'added charm to the view', while Dunraven simultaneously valorised and denigrated an indigenous masculinity that he described as 'ignorant but independent ... wild but free'. Drawn to ideas of the 'natural man' and the 'noble savage' as conduits through which an affected urban masculinity could be redeemed, sporting types nonetheless took to describing their hunting regeneration as a journey flecked with indigenous referent and routinely borrowed clothing, terms and techniques to 'play Indian' on the trail. Sir Edward Poore, or 'wild E. Poore' as he commonly called himself, revelled in his westerly transformation into a 'half-breed' while Malcolm Mackay talked of his love for the 'free and independent life in a tepee' and used a stalking technique he called 'Indian it', which, he believed, assured him of good hunting 'medicine'. These appropriations – of indigenous ways (as well as ancestral hunting trails) – highlighted the binds of settler colonialism which threaded through the hunter's narrative.<sup>19</sup>

Engagements with other Euro-Americans who took to the game trail – local guides and lady adventurers – equally demonstrated a combination of flex and firmament in the realm of imperial masculine performance. As outfitters,



guides and camp mates, local frontiersmen were active participants in the practical and performative mechanics of the hunt. Like Cody, they choreographed the chase and served as talkers and listeners in the process of fraternal communion around the campfire. Baillie Grohman enjoyed time with these 'rough and uncouth champions of the wilds', while Murphy particularly appreciated their celebration of his gamely triumphs: 'theatrical congratulations ... given demonstratively'. At the same time, however, there was a clear hierarchy at work in the field of play. Dunraven applauded his guides as 'very good fellows as a rule, honest and open-handed, obliging and civil to strangers', but was also critical, condescending and suspicious of them. Endorsed by an inalienable sense of superiority drawn from entitlements of class and race, the authority of the imperial man was never under threat from the cast of frontier guides who appeared in the hunting drama as subalterns of trailside performance. Equally, when women strode into the masculine theatre of the western game trail, the cultural boundaries of hunter heroism presented a similar mix of elasticity and exclusivity. By virtue of their status as white and educated, lady adventurers found room to participate in masculine visions of imperial adventuring. As Violet Greville saw it, women too needed to throw off the 'feverish life of cities' to embrace the 'witchery of legitimate sport' and also played a useful role in the field in softening the male gaze. That said, female testimonies of the trail suggested definite boundaries to performance code. Calling herself the 'woman-who-hunts-with-her-husband, Grace Seton shared a line in game trail restoration with her husband (what she called 'the joy of the living and the doing'), yet her musings on a 'woman's dread of the unknown', recoil from acts of killing and depictions of a western landscape literally silenced by the up-pointing finger of her husband (referred to as Nimrod), suggested the gender boundaries of masculine performance remained firmly in place.<sup>20</sup>

As habits and custom – in other words, practice – the performance of the imperial hunter hero demanded an atavistic attention to the killing of game and a deadly exercise of 'savage instinct'. Regeneration, to quote Richard Slotkin's famous axiom, came through violence. The problem was, by the 1880s, the incursions of sport and market hunters as well as encroaching ranching, homestead and extractive economies, meant that the game populations which the imperial hunter hero needed to confirm his masculine credentials were disappearing fast. Something had to change and that came in the form of a critical recalibration of performance code that allowed the sporting elite to emerge as powerful advocates of game preservation. The primal thrill of the chase thereby metamorphosed into a new performance of sporting naturalism in which the honour rituals and confessional epiphanies which had long been part of the narrative mantra were affirmed and embellished to present as gallant restraint and preservationist ardour. According to Wilbur Parker 'the unassailable love of fair play' was 'the first thought of the genuine sport', while John Dean Caton noted the 'higher culture' of the true sportsman in the pursuit of

nature study. This re-engineered moral ecology of the chase allowed the self-styled sporting naturalists to distance themselves from the market hunters and the sports of yore who were infamous for their trigger-happy attitudes. As George Grinnell and Charles Sheldon reflected on in *Hunting and Conservation* (1925), these were years in which ‘two aspects of outdoor life, which, to the uninformed, may seem opposed’ came together. The foundational ethos of the elite Boone and Crockett Club (1887) exemplified the new tone of the sporting naturalist in promoting manly sport with the rifle, travel and exploration, the preservation of large game and the study of natural history. Emphasising their own good manners and castigating the heinous and wasteful killing of animals for the crass goals of pecuniary gain and blood lust, this fresh iteration of the sporting hero successfully adjusted the performance of the chase with his mantle of imperial masculinity intact. Accordingly, these ‘penitent butchers’ as Richard Fitter and Peter Scott labelled them, were able to establish themselves as authoritative environmental brokers and to establish a coda of wildlife management that secured their rights to continue to play the game.<sup>21</sup>

Practice enshrined a set of rules of engagement and established a shared community of sport hunters, one which was predicated on a gamely sequence of ritual observance (behaviour, custom, honour) and clearly highlighted the reflexive characteristics of the hunter hero. Perhaps it was inevitable that a community that focused so keenly on performance was predisposed to look at itself, particularly when it came to reminiscences about trailside revelations, contests and camaraderie. This praxis of digest – a rumination on the ‘doing’ – took place around the campfire and in various other venues, where hunters reflected on their activities as individuals and as a collective of ‘sports’. This nurtured a lively culture of homosocial bonding and, significantly, established a forum through which the hunter hero was able to categorise, distinguish and differentiate his exploits, even when the game was running out.

### **Production: Sporting Afterlives in the Great Indoors**

The outdoors amphitheatres of trail and camp allowed the play, activity and practice of the hunter hero to be established and affirmed. For the full power of the ‘thrill of the chase’ to be realised, however, the hunting ‘moment’ had to be transported and retold. Here focus switched to ‘the great indoors’ as a prime locus of production, where a lasting cultural ecology of the hunt was communicated, consumed and traded by a range of constituencies who developed an interest in its dramatic tones. This interior staging of the hunt took various forms – literature, art, photography, taxidermy – that were both personal and collective in application. Promising the chance for an intimate rendition of the game trail, hunter heroes witnessed their masculine regeneration via fragments of textual, visual and animal capital. At the same time, this heroic performance of grand adventuring, mortal contest and homosocial communion

was a highly transmittable lexicon with huge appeal for a public eager to take in romantic tales of wild westering and to endorse and enact the colonial project by active spectatorship. In a conscious reference to the threads connecting imperial rhetoric and imperial power, George Grinnell asserted that ‘hunting should go hand in hand with the love of natural history, as well as with narrative and descriptive power’. Stitched together with performative portent, the spoils of the sportsman’s bag carried this expansive tool-kit of colonial takeover to a variety of interior spaces. This section digs deeper into the complicated fixings of the re-animated animal by exploring four frontier artefacts of production across a transnational architecture of display that took in private houses, civic buildings and museum spaces.<sup>22</sup>

The trophy performed a number of critical functions in the re-enactment of the chase as it moved from an outdoors to an indoors habitat. A totem of the monumental West and of the masculine prowess of the hunter hero, it served both as a token of valour and a badge of proof. Without possession of the animal body, who was to know the sporting narrator was telling the truth about his frontier sojourn? In fact, the redolent power of the trophy once installed in the home space made it both product *and* a driver of the sporting quest. Large, rare and hard to capture animals were particularly prized as mounts. Reflecting on the death of his ‘monster elk’, Shields became wildly excited at the size of its horns and the imagination of them rehoused in his den. Once installed in the domestic interior, meanwhile, the trophy exuded a magical quality that allowed the sporting hero to revisit the hunting quest in all its sensory dramatics. Shields only had to look up at his elk (now posed above his writing desk and staring across the room with ‘that same grand, majestic look’) to be transported back to the moment of his triumph:

I can feel the fresh invigorating atmosphere, I can hear those frozen leaves crush under my feet as I walk, and my blood dances through my veins as I climb from hilltop to hilltop in pursuit of the noble quarry.

Taxidermy bodies, equally, held a magnetic power that invited fraternal reunion and a collective endorsement of armed imperial machismo. Shields was exalted when two fellow hunters came to look upon his elk and proclaimed the ‘largest and handsomest’ antlers they had ever seen, while William Hornaday, Shields’ friend and collaborator in *The Campfire Club of America* (1897), pointed out that ‘such an ornament calls forth endless admiration and query’. Nature was read in tooth and claw.<sup>23</sup>

For many sport hunters, the trophy only had value if it was shot by themselves: a keen indicator of its role as masculine signifier. Roosevelt pointed out that ‘nothing adds more to a hall or room than fine antlers when they have been shot by the owner’. However, as publics both sides of the Atlantic grew increasingly enraptured by tales of savage nature and thrusting imperial agency, consumer goods with a sporting flavour became all the rage. Taxidermy

found a place in the domestic interior as a borrowed performance of hunting heroics. A striking example of the period fad for trophy furnishings came in the form of the grizzly bear standard lamp interned in the entrance hallway to the London mansion of Baroness Eckhardstein on Grosvenor Square. This bizarre beast was part grizzly and functioning light, a conjugation which keenly demonstrated the 'wildly domestic' appeal of the hunting trophy. Mounted by the most famous taxidermist of the age, James Rowland Ward, whose 'Jungle' premises in Piccadilly displayed the conquered megafauna of empire in vividly engineered beauty and who served as a critical broker of outdoor play and homosocial fellowship, this particular specimen had been shot in Alaska (the most frontier part of the American frontier). Commanding a striking presence, the adult male bear was posed on its hind legs and judged to be one of the largest ever seen in Britain. The 'amiable monster' attested to the epic nature of frontier terrain while simultaneously offering a statuesque homage to the power of the hunter hero. Engineered into a pose of whimsical subjugation, he had been tamed for an afterlife of home decoration. Turned on from a switch on his back and illuminating the room with a soft red light, this subaltern of ursine and electrical design demonstrated the trophy animal as a mesmerising and disturbing beast.<sup>24</sup>

Another taxidermy exhibit – this time located in the Kansas-Colorado building of the Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia – equally demonstrated the importance of taxidermy animals as performers of the hunt. Here, in contrast to the Eckhardstein bear was a montage of faunal characters, representative animals of the plains and mountains, who bounded with vigorous energy across a frozen-in-time animation of frontier providence. Bison, bear, elk, puma, eagle and sheep all ranged over the meticulously crafted outcrops and grassy expanses, preying on or being preyed upon in a dramatic rendition of monumental nature in rugged grandeur and savage survivalist mode. The exhibit was significant in pointing to the role of taxidermy critters as portable emblems of a western landscape in the throes of territorial consolidation. This performance found natural habitats in various spaces, from expositions to civic buildings, even shops and saloons, and presented a powerful image of the frontier as a space of nature and one that had been claimed, catalogued and conquered by imperial might. Nature and nation powerfully aligned to badge the faunal complement of an expansive imperial geography as 'ours' in the Euro-American mindset. It was also significant in that the entire piece had been crafted by Martha Maxwell, a female hunter, naturalist and amateur taxidermist from Boulder, a fact which was advertised in a simple sign hanging from the display that read 'Woman's Work'. Maxwell was an intriguing character, a passionate hunter and vegetarian who believed that eating animals for meat was morally repugnant but immortalising them as taxidermy mounts was something entirely different. Touting a maxim that chimed with the cadre of sporting naturalists that were busily investing their pursuit of animal capital with

honourable portent, she noted: ‘All must die some time, I only shorten the period of consciousness that I may give their forms a perpetual memory.’ Her diorama, in fact, became one of the popular attractions of the exposition, impressing particularly for its life-like depiction and rendition of a patriotic landscape. The curator of the ensemble, however, received a mixture reception. While *People’s Journal* hailed her as a ‘living hero’ and the Colorado Committee presented her with a fast-loading commemorative rifle, others seemed less comfortable with the gender transgressive nature of her performance as hunter-taxidermist. As visitors filed past the stand mutterings were heard that she must be a ‘rough woman’, an Indian or a man in disguise.<sup>25</sup>

The final taxidermy vignette under discussion bore similarities to Maxwell’s creation in its focus on accurately depicting a slice of the western landscape. Designed by sporting naturalist William Hornaday, the exhibit presented a group of bison, a family, happily munching away at prairie grassland. Contained in a glass and mahogany case, it brought a glimpse of the frontier to the nation’s capital when it was unveiled at the Smithsonian Museum in 1888. Carefully choreographed, Hornaday explained how his specimens – which had been taken as part of two hunting expeditions to Montana in autumn 1886 which were specifically designed to capture some animals before the species was eradicated – were quite different to the theatrical re-incarnations of snarling predators that graced the exhibition circuit in intending to communicate science and offer instruction by bringing ‘life’ to the museum interior. Accordingly, his prairie vignette conjured a ‘peaceful home scene ... the very soul of Nature unchanged’. Here stood a cosy bovine family with a suitably huge bull, sturdy cow, smaller cow, a young bull, youth and small calf. His message was a complicated one – as bovine ambassadors Hornaday saw his preserved bison as ambassadors for their kin, ‘frozen in time’ while their relations were enmeshed in a bloody fight for survival on the real plains. On the day of opening, the *Star* celebrated the ‘picturesque group’ installed in Washington that presented ‘A bit of the Wild West reproduced at the National Museum – Something novel in the way of taxidermy – Real buffalo-grass, real Montana dirt, and real Buffaloes.’<sup>26</sup>

Production, the final act of performance, served up a powerful endgame: the immortalisation of the hunt itself. It did this through text and image and, especially, through the preservation of the animal body, the ritualised interment of which wrapped up the choreography of the chase in ‘tooth and claw’ and saved it for posterity. An animated vector for heroic imaginings, the eco-engineered remains of vanquished foes inspired further interlocutions and allowed the hunt to leap across time and space to embrace a global spectatorship.

### **Performance Revisited: Restor(y)ing ‘the Bison in the Room’**

The buffalo group grazed inside their plains capsule at the Smithsonian until 1957, when they were destined for a new life in storage boxes. As curators

took the diorama apart, they found under the prairie grass a small box containing a note. It read as follows: 'Enclosed please find a brief and truthful account of the specimens which compose this group ... killed by yours truly. When I am dust and ashes, I beg you to protect these specimens from deterioration and destruction ... – WTH.' Many today would not share Hornaday's sentiments. Antiquarian, tatty relics, grisly emblems of empire, taxidermy animals are generally seen as pariahs. Banished to basements or (as many museums did) unceremoniously burned, certainly best forgotten. I argue differently. The reanimated spoils of the imperial hunter hero are highly problematic artefacts of subjugation, brutal and unpleasant signifiers who cannot be separated from the power politics of settler colonialism. In that sense, they can never be post-colonial. However, by revisiting the story of their capture and immortalisation, the opportunity presents for a fuller understanding of the relationship between hunting, outdoor sports, masculinity, and settler colonialism *and* for a new narrative framework that places animal (rather than hunter) centre stage.<sup>27</sup>

As this study has shown, the mechanics of play, activity, practice, and production usefully illuminate the ways in which a culture of masculine outdoors sport facilitated the material and symbolic exercise of imperial authority. Enacted through the performative matrix of the quest, hunters were able to craft, corroborate, and recalibrate colonial control over spaces and species. This worked to create hunter's paradise as an exclusive domain and to conjure a landscape of wildlife protection that was rooted in colonial ontologies. In thinking through the synchronous connections between the conquest of place and people, Patrick Wolfe notes that 'land is life'. Significantly, the implicit codes of ownership that were rehearsed in late nineteenth-century sporting narratives ('our' animals, hunting grounds and rights to play) not only served to disenfranchise American Indian communities from ancestral sites and practices in the late 1800s, but also provided the foundation for a modern conservation legislation which continues to privilege Euro-American/sporting codes of engagement with nature over indigenous land rights, ethics and notions of personhood. How we represent the historic performance of the hunt thus remains critically important due to its relationship to contemporary matters of environmental sovereignty. As Lorenzo Veracini points out, settler colonialism is a fixture of our present as well as our past.<sup>28</sup>

Does taxidermy always reproduce colonial ways of knowing? Looking beyond the lens of imperial capture, a return to the *animal* part of the reanimated animal serves as a conduit for fresh narrative possibilities. Mute witnesses, yes, but these creaturely creations leap from walls and cases to deliver a surprising cacophony of messages. Thorsen describes the taxidermic menagerie as 'evocative, talkative, chimerical, knotted, and hybrid', engineered entities with a special power to 'trigger emotions, tickle the curiosity and invite conversations and discourse'. Fragments of matter and metaphor, these oxymoronic beings seemingly incite us to talk and to touch, to collectively reflect

on their embodied meanings. Donna Haraway famously described taxidermy as a ‘practice to produce permanence’. True enough, but its meanings are not static. Gazing on the signature trophies of the chase two hundred years after their deaths opens the possibility for an interrogative act of restor(y)ation, to read ‘against the archival grain’. For one thing, a closer scrutiny of the events surrounding their capture, what geographer Merle Patchett calls a ‘tangle of beings, processes and places’ caught up in the imperial bind, necessarily summons a conversation about the troubling geographies of hunting performance and to mitigate what Hasian and Muller call the perpetuation of ‘accidental colonial nostalgia’. An important conduit for memory, the taxidermy animal thereby reprises its historic role as biotic prompt to point to the problematic legacy of empire and the threat posed by our species to global biodiversity: both critical issues for our present. Equally, by focusing attention on the taxidermy animal itself, we step into an expansive eco-cultural panorama and discover a new set of hidden histories to be excavated. This is a powerful act of decentring (or recentring) attention, an experiment in decolonial tracking that pays heed to the agency and lifeways of other beings (human and non-human), the many meanings of landscapes and multiple codes of belonging. Learning to ‘live’ (as Garry Marvin invites us to do) with taxidermy, in this context, means confronting the anthropogenic without resorting to the anthropocentric, in other words, allowing space for the ‘bison in the room’ to stand centre stage in a new performance of the hunt.<sup>29</sup>

## Notes

1. “A Great Show; The Sportsman’s Exhibition.”
2. Mackenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 7; Ritvo, *Animal Estate*; Wonders, “Hunting Narratives,” 269; Gillespie, *Hunting*; Mandala, *Shooting a Tiger*; Dizard, *Mortal Stakes*; Marvin, “A Passionate Pursuit”; Jacoby, *Crimes*; Warren, *Hunter’s Game*; Rico, *Nature’s Noblemen*; Loo, “Of Moose and Men”; Kelly, *Hunter Elite*; Scharff quoted in Rico, *Nature’s Noblemen*, backcover.
3. Woollacott, *Gender & Empire*, 71; Barthes, “From Work to Text,” 158; Mackenzie, *Empire of Nature*, ix. For methodological explanations on the use of performance in understanding hunting and gender dynamics, see: Rico, *Nature’s Noblemen*, 11; Marvin, “Passionate Performance,” 46–47; Jones, *Epiphany*, 11–19.
4. Rico, *Nature’s Noblemen*, 6; Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 1–6.
5. Dodge, *Hunting Grounds*, 118; Baille Grohman, *Fifteen Years*, 2, 4; Murphy, *Sporting Adventure*, 2.
6. Roosevelt, *Wilderness Hunter*, 29, 8; Herne, *Perils & Pleasures*, 296; Beinart, “Empire,” 167; Dunraven, *Hunting*, 18.
7. Dewey, “Interpretation,” 224; Van Dyke, *Flirtation Camp*, 1; Dodge, *Hunting Grounds*, 3; Webber, *Hunter Naturalist*, 280; Herne, *Perils & Pleasures*, 279; Grinnell, “To the Walled in Lakes.”
8. Dewey, “Interpretation,” 224; Rico, *Nature’s Noblemen*, 10.
9. Heclawa, *In the Heart*, xix; Shields, *Cruisings*, 25, 176.
10. Randolph, *Inter-Ocean Hunting Tales*, 32; Dodge, *Hunting Grounds*, 3.



11. Mackay; *Cow Range*, 167; Berkeley, *English Sportsman*, 292.
12. Shields, *Rustlings*, 40; Revoil, *Hunter*, 273; Mayer, *Sport with Gun and Rod*, 11.
13. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 166.
14. Cody, “Famous Hunting Parties,” 137–40; Cody, *Adventures*, 223; Davies, *Ten Days on the Plains*, 29.
15. Visscher, *Buffalo Bill*, 223–24; Cody, *The Life*, 295–303, 310, 320.
16. New York *Herald*, January 14, 1872; Dunraven, *Hunting*, 9.
17. Roosevelt, *Wilderness Hunter*, 8.
18. Dodge, *Hunting Grounds*, 72; Mackay, *Cow Range*, 133, 147; Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 24–25; Allen, *Adventures*, 185.
19. Loo, “Of Moose and Men,” 312; Dunraven, *Hunting*, 24; Boller, *Among the Indians*, 48; Mackay, *Cow Range*, 148–50; Allen, *Adventures*, 131; Poore quoted in Harper, *Paul Kane’s Frontier*, 333–34.
20. Baille Grohman, *Camps*, 30; Murphy, *Sporting Adventure*, 342–43; Dunraven, *Hunting*, 180; Greville, *Ladies in the Field*, iii–iv; Seton, *Woman Tenderfoot*, 15, 361, 283, 83. On local guides, see also: Coleman, “Rise of the House of Leisure.”
21. Parker, “What Constitutes,” 24; Caton, *Antelope and Deer*, 345–46; Grinnell and Roosevelt, *Trail and Campfire*, 343; Grinnell and Sheldon, *Hunting and Conservation*, xi; Fitter and Scott, *Penitent Butchers*.
22. Grinnell and Roosevelt, *Trail and Campfire*, 331.
23. Shields, *Rustlings*, 42; Hornaday, *Taxidermy*, 158.
24. Roosevelt, writing in Wallihan and Wallihan, *Camera Shots*, 8; Fitzgerald, “‘Animal’ Furniture,” 273–80. See also: Bateman, “*Ursus Horribilis*” for an excellent study of one iconic piece of taxidermy furniture.
25. Dartt, *On the Plains*, 119, 6–9; *People’s Journal*, October 2, 1876.
26. Hornaday, *Taxidermy*, 222, 239, 249; *Washington Star*, March 10, 1888. Also see Shell, “Skin Deep.”
27. “W T Hornaday Note About Bison,” (1957), Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession 11-006, Washington, DC.
28. Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism,” 387; Veracini, *Settler Colonial Present*; See also Eichler and Baumeister, “Hunting for Justice.”
29. Haraway, “Teddy Bear Patriarchy,” 25; Would, “Tactile Taxidermy”; Patchett, “Tracking Tigers,” 18; Hasian and Muller, “Decolonizing,” 287, 288. For an example of how taxidermy specimens can be tracked back to document historic animal populations and movements, see Coutu, “The Elephant in the Room”; Marvin, “Perpetuating,” 157; Thorsen, “Animal Matter,” 185.

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