

of the character of their users—the courageous lone gunman taming the wild West, prepared for self-defense in rural or urban settings, or exhibiting masculinity at shooting ranges and on recreational hunts. A mass-produced commodity ironically became “an enduring idiom of American individualism” (p. 186).

Haag juxtaposes this story with that of the family that owned and ran the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. Throughout, she weaves the life and legend of Sarah Winchester, an eccentric heiress to the family fortune, who embraced spiritualism to cope with the ghosts of personal tragedy and, Haag speculates, of the victims of the violence that her husband and father's business acumen helped deliver. While the book is filled with fascinating anecdotes and windows onto the cultural milieu of the Victorian elite, its emphasis on gun owners' biographies and business endeavors highlights the glaring absence of ordinary people from this account, particularly the experiences, dreams, and desires of the thousands of laborers toiling in Winchester factories. Despite this top-down orientation, Haag has written an essential text for anyone seeking to understand the origins of guns' popularity in U.S. society and the cultural mythologies that monopoly capitalism helped institutionalize.

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Epiphany in the Wilderness: Hunting, Nature, and Performance in the Nineteenth-Century American West. By Karen R. Jones. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015. xiv, 363 pp. \$55.00.)

Epiphany in the Wilderness is a fast-paced, sweeping history of the myth of heroic frontier hunters and their weapons. An important part of this history is the challenge to male dominance by “hunter heroines,” and the epic adventures of men and women in autobiography, fiction, nature writing, photography, theater, and taxidermy. As the nineteenth century ended and the frontier was declared closed, the image of the fearless and indepen-

dent hunter was partially transformed by the same media (and the same authors) into the figure of the game-preserving, national park–advocating conservationist.

The daunting task of keeping the tales told by over one hundred would-be Daniel Boones and Davy Crocketts is well managed by Karen R. Jones. Her study of hunter heroes and heroines and their environmental impacts builds on the foundations laid by Henry Nash Smith, Richard Slotkin, Carolyn Merchant, Lisa Mighetto, Gregg Mitman, Glenda L. Riley, Melissa Milgrom, Louis S. Warren, and others. Drawing on performance studies, she frames the hunters' West as theater. The hunters may have been wealthy or poor, male or female, British or American, but they all performed their American wilderness experiences as avatars of the nation's myths of heroic conquest, technological progress, and the creation of an empire.

Jones finds ample evidence that hunters and guides consciously or unconsciously performed characters that they thought were expected of their gender, race, class, profession, and nationality. Some of the stereotypes that emerged were inspired by pulp fiction, others by the events unfolding around them in the wilderness. For Jones, the physical environment, especially animals, is an important factor in the creation of a national myth.

In a book this wide-ranging, a few minor slips are inevitable. Her observation that “in recent years . . . historians have cast doubt as to the extent of firearms ownership on the frontier” is footnoted with a reference to Michael A. Bellesiles's *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* (2000)—a book thoroughly excoriated by professional historians (p. 78). While discussing the symbolic meanings of photographs of piles of antlers, hides, and slaughtered game in the 1880s, Jones finds themes of martial masculinity similar to those in the photos of Iraqi prisoners held at Abu Ghraib, but wrenched from context, this comparison adds little to the book's thesis and seems unnecessarily provocative.

These observations aside, *Epiphany in the Wilderness* is a valuable addition to our understanding of nineteenth-century western history and literature. It could be used in upper-division undergraduate and graduate classes

on the West, human-animal interaction, and regional and national character. It should also appeal to nonacademic readers interested in the West, hunting, and the dramaturgy of whites and Native Americans. Jones works examples of Indian performance of the hunt into almost every chapter and concludes her book with a too-brief analysis of the Ghost Dance revitalization movement of 1890 as part of *fin-de-siècle* conservation efforts. This kind of creative thinking should stimulate classroom discussions.

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Producing Predators: Wolves, Work, and Conquest in the Northern Rockies. By Michael D. Wise. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016. xxiv, 184 pp. \$45.00.)

In *Producing Predators* Michael D. Wise views “whoop-up country”—the borderlands between the U.S. state of Montana and the Canadian province of Alberta—through the prism of colonial theory. Both Blackfeet and wolves, argues Wise, fell victim to a discourse that contrasted predation with productivity. Settlers viewed Indians and wolves as creatures dedicated to cunning, stealth, and cruelty. Settlers, by contrast, identified their own livestock industry as productive and humane.

To transform Indians, the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) built a panopticon in the guise of a slaughterhouse. All beeves were to be killed under the watchful eye of agents. No more would Indians pursue cows on horseback and kill them the way they had killed bison. Slaughter was to be efficient, humane, and routinized. Via the slaughterhouse, the colonizers made butchering (among Blackfeet, traditionally a female task) into men’s work. Even as the OIA sought to make Indian stock growers into productive individualists, however, communalism continued. In the 1920s Blackfeet farmers and stock growers created a cooperative organization that sheltered them from economic storms.

In a final chapter, Wise examines the American Bison Society (ABS) conservation campaign. ABS leaders—particularly William Temple Hornaday—won support from settlers by participating in antiwolf pogroms and by representing conservation as “productive.” The ABS, meanwhile, ignored indigenous attempts to save bison, portraying conservation as the work of business-centric philanthropists.

Wise’s monograph is well crafted, thoughtful, and engaging. Much of it is convincing. Repeatedly, however, he takes leaps. In chapter 1, he asserts without evidence that the Blackfeet used alcohol to achieve altered states in which they could communicate with nonhuman beings. In chapter 2 he assures us that wolf hunting “fell mostly to the poor, the unemployed, or the colonized”; such “mimetic relations with wolves,” he adds, further reduced their status (p. 23). Cattlemen, by contrast, “sought to avoid the visceral acts of killing” to “establish themselves as producers rather than predators” (p. 29). Yet we hear few wolf hunters’ voices; nor do we learn their ages, vocational histories, or taxable property holdings. (Did newspapers or bounty records provide none of their names?) Wise instead offers scattered anecdotes about cattlemen finding killing wolves difficult at a time when the animals had become few and reclusive. If Montana cattlemen avoided “visceral acts of killing,” however, they differed dramatically from their cousins. Contemporary Arizona cattlemen gloried in hunting predators and received newspaper laurels for doing so. (The fact that cougars were bigger prizes than wolves, I hasten to add, is a contradiction worth unpacking.)

Wise, moreover, insists that the OIA’s contempt for predation led it to create a reservation cattle industry. Elsewhere, he reports that the reservation’s game was depleted. Presumably, the OIA—here as on other reservations—never sought to eliminate Indian hunting altogether but realized that stock raising could substitute for decimated game populations. To make that observation would complicate the thesis, not negate it.

Wise pushes too hard again when he posits that a 1920s OIA agent “transferred the agricultural abilities that his medicine powers represented” to Indian cooperative members. Wise also becomes overly strident in refuting