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**“My Chief Object – Fine Heads”: Big Game,
Imperialism, and the Hunt for Masculinities in the
British North American West**

Recent work on travelers and hunters in British North America suggests that codes of conduct and attendant social meanings emerged for the gentleman hunter, based on a masculine imperative related to the imperial conquest of wild lands and, more importantly, to the changing relationships between the British traveler and Aboriginal hunters. This paper examines such constructs of masculinity as revealed through the travel and exploration narratives of imperial-minded British big-game hunters in the British North American West from 1847-1872. As our title suggests, we are interested in the interplay of hunting, imperialism, and masculinity both within the British hunter groups and in relation to their Aboriginal guides. Recent work has identified the importance of class and race in conjunction with masculinity in the establishment of a hierarchy of social and economic relationships among British fur traders, particularly in the region of British Columbia in the late nineteenth century. However, British big-game hunters, the first wave of tourists who came to the West explicitly for hunting and leisure, have not been scrutinized historically.

A critical reading of the British hunting code provides one of the central themes of this paper. British big-game hunters emerged from an aristocratic cult of nineteenth-century hunting, through which a specific code of conduct for the sport was espoused. This sporting code situated big game hunting within the confines of respectable manly leisure to morally justify and rationalize technically the slaughter of game. Conversely, Big game hunters positioned the activities of lower class pothunters and Aboriginal peoples, or individuals who hunted merely for sustenance, as uncivilized and unmanly. British hunters invoked a culture of imperialism and respectability by associating sport hunting with the process of colonial exploration and the civilizing of savages; further, the science of natural history legitimized and the collection of ‘specimens’ and hunting trophies. Invocations of

the aristocratic sportsmen's code brought British big-game hunters to the front lines of empire building, in part, by positioning the uncivilized, wasteful savage as a binary opposite.

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The Circular Cage of Dress: Subjecting the Upper-Middle Class Victorian Woman to the Panoptic Gaze

The nineteenth-century upper-middle class American woman was imprisoned by yards and yards of cumbersome layers of clothing, bound by tight corsets and the dragging weight of long heavy skirts. The Victorian women's clothing, in particular the corset, can be interpreted as a structure that in very concrete and real ways confined and constricted their bodies. This paper explores the lived female experience of how fashionable dress acted as a structure of containment in disciplining Victorian women. Panoptic mechanism serves as a framework for analysis in this study and it utilized in two distinct ways. The first is dress as a physical structure of containment that disciplined Victorian women, just as Jeremy Bentham's prison walls did a prisoner. Panoptic mechanism is then used as a metaphor for fashionable dress.

The idea of the panopticon comes from Jeremy Bentham's plan for reforming prison architecture. A Panopticon is an architectural structure with a central tower with windows facing divided cells located within the surrounding structure of buildings. The prisoners could be viewed at all times and thus would perceive themselves to be under the constant surveillance of a guard. The belief that they were watched would result in the prisoners imposing discipline upon themselves, making them active participants in their own supervision. Foucault adopted Bentham's principles of the Panopticon as a new discipline of modern social control. Applied as a new surveillance-power Foucault understood the panoptic mechanism to be capable of disciplining bodies.
