



# ***BEREDEN SCHERPSCHUTTERS AND RIFLE RANGERS: CULTURAL TRANSLATIONS OF BUFFALO BILL IN EUROPE***

*The reception, dissemination and cultural translation of Buffalo Bill (dime novels) in Europe (Germany and the Netherlands) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century*

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December 7, 2015  
Words: 39.935



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## INTRODUCTION

Numerous and various scholarly publications have discussed the great success of the Western (American) dime novels in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Western hero and his (or her) adventures found a mass audience in the United States as well as in Europe. These dime novels mark a cultural revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century American and European publishing world, as they found a new audience which had previously not been known to exist, they had cultural impact, in both the United States and Europe, which affected society in more ways than just entertainment.<sup>1</sup>

The Buffalo Bill dime novels originate from in the encounter between William F. Cody and Ned Buntline. Although William F. Cody had a reputation in the 1860s as “Buffalo Bill,” a scout, hunter and frontiersman, he was largely unknown beyond the American Great Plains. This all changed in 1869 when Cody met the eccentric dime novelist, Ned Buntline. Buntline wrote sensational and highly fictionalized stories and stage plays which contained elements of Cody’s real life. In December 1869, Buntline started a serial story "Buffalo Bill, The King of Border Men," in the *New York Weekly*. Inspired by its success, Cody invented Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and took the show on a national tour in 1883. Four years later, he moved the show to Europe, where the frontiersman was a sensation and served as an American icon in Paris, London and Milan. These (inter)national shows and stories transformed William F. Cody from a real

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York: Vintage Books, 1950), 100.

life scout into the famed Buffalo Bill; legendary character of the American West and dime novel hero with both national and international fame.<sup>2</sup>

Don Russell underlines that publishers produced and translated Buffalo Bill dime novels in great quantities:

The total number of different Buffalo Bill dime novels comes to 557, again as nearly as it can be figured out. No complete file of them exists. Neither the 1,700 total nor the 557 originals include series issued outside the United States, which would add several hundred reprints and translations and many originals printed in England, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

This raises the question of whether or not these European versions of the Buffalo Bill dime novels were mere translations of the American novels—which appears to be the case upon comparing the covers (pictures) and titles of the European versions with the original American novels. However, close analysis and cross comparison reveals that there were actually substantial differences between them. As a result of this compelling discovery, this thesis will focus on the cultural translation of Buffalo Bill dime novels by looking at the reception, the technical translation and the cultural context of the Buffalo Bill's Wild West tours as well as the novels at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The American Buffalo Bill dime novels in Europe were first translated in Germany. Thereafter these translations were translated into other European languages; this 'circle of translation' offers insight into how American Western stories were received in different countries and cultures. This paper will primarily focus on the German and the Dutch cultural translations of dime novels, as they can help us better understand how American culture managed to influence Dutch culture through shifting orientation between various cultures of reference in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because, Cody had already become a public figure by the 1870s, the timeframe of this paper will be set more precisely between the 1870s and the late 1930s, the period in which Buffalo Bill

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<sup>2</sup> Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*, Ebook (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 58.

<sup>3</sup> Don Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 388.



shows toured Europe. We will use the translated European dime novels as a ‘cultural lens’ to look at the ‘Europeanization of American culture’ and further contribute to the discussion about the dissemination and reception of American mass culture in Europe in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Academic Discussion*

For an understanding of the way in which the American West has been reflected in American literature, one should consider the foundational myth that lies at the root of its popularity in both America and Europe. The idea that American culture could be defined by reading works that focused on the American imagination—works which, sparked a particular way of thinking. In his great literary work *Virgin Land, The American West as Symbol and Myth* (1950), Henry Nash Smith provides a nuanced analysis of the persuasive myths fostered by the European encounter with the American West. His establishment of the Myth and Symbol School reads American culture as a common language in which recurring myths, symbols and motifs, are partly attainable, through reading popular American literature. These myths and symbols were “collective representations rather than the work of a single mind.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, although a collective representation indicates a cohesive line of thought within a group, it does not account for the popularity of this idea. Smith’s Myth and Symbol School underlined the importance and central role myth has in society.

If one wants to compare and contrast the American West to European society, it is essential to understand the myths that are foundational to the perception of the American West. Henry Nash Smith’s theoretic approach exemplified the assumptions of his time.

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<sup>4</sup> Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, xi.

As a result, Smith's foundational *Virgin Land* influenced a new examination of myths about the American West.

In his book *Gunfighter Nation* (1992), Richard Slotkin too attributes the success of an enduring myth like the American frontier to the interplay with symbolism. In his words: “Myths are stories drawn from a society’s history that have acquired through persistent usage of power of symbolizing that society’s ideology of dramatizing its moral consciousness.”<sup>5</sup> Historic allusions such as the American Frontier, Custer’s Last Stand or Buffalo Bill provoke the understanding of a specific ideological narrative that is “metaphorical and suggestive rather than logical and analytical.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, according to Slotkin a myth functions to sustain the status quo in order to exceed possible conflicts in society. In this way, a myth creates a sense of unity in society—a means to escape possible chaos and conflict.

In a response to the existence of a foundational myth in the intense commercial society of the 1870s, publishers and the commercial press flocked into the book trade in order to exploit the explosive desire for simple stories that were “thrilling, interesting, (...) with strong surface appeal.”<sup>7</sup> From a technical perspective, the academic debate focuses on the production that went into creating a commercialized market for popular culture in the form of dime novels. Michael Denning claims in his book *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (1996) that the rise of commercial culture made “the ‘popular arts’ the new center of American culture.”<sup>8</sup> Denning further elaborates that capitalist culture industries focused on profit; that is,

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation, The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ronald A. Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany: The Development of Pamphlet Fiction, 1871-1914,” *Oxford University Press*, 1979, 489.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London & New York: Verso, 1996), 42.

what would sell based on popular taste. As a result, many forms of cultural entertainment drifted off in relation to context, and far from their original venues.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, in his more detailed book where he provides an overview of the dime novel industry, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (1998), Denning specifically looks at the popular or mass-cultural narrative in 19<sup>th</sup>-century America and its ideological function in a specific shaping period of North American modernity. His view on commercial culture corresponds with Slotkin's myth theory, whereas commercial culture in essence builds on the idea of a functional myth, or maintaining societal status quo. Denning is one of the first scholars to attempt to avoid such generalization. He removes dime novels from the labels of nostalgia and returns them to mass fiction, as well as the workers, who actually read it (not the people of the middle class which Denning states was generally assumed by scholars). As a result, one sees a fresh paradigm for the study of mass culture that sheds light on the cultural function of Buffalo Bill's translated dime novels.

The Myth of the Frontier is a dynamic myth. It adapts the demands and needs of the American people, which started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and continued in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which found its way to Europe at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This myth provided the terms by which Americans could understand the catastrophic consequences of the long depression of the 1870s and the resultant crisis of cultural morale. Although the Myth of the Frontier is only one of the myths (or ideological systems) that helped form American culture, it is an extremely important and enduring one.

Just as the Custer legend (further discussed in chapter 2) find its roots in historical reality, so too does the Myth of the Frontier. The frontier, Slotkin explains, was an existing condition of life on the 'edge of civilization,' which helped shape both the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

behavior and the ideas of the colonists and pioneers who moved westwards. Fewer people experienced frontier conditions as the cities and towns grew. Nonetheless, the economic and political consequences of frontier expansion continued throughout the society. Slotkin, thus argues that the Myth of the Frontier was developed by and for an America that was a colonist descendent of Europe; one which had an agrarian economy, local politics, and relatively homogenous in ethnicity, language and religion. However, as the country transitioned towards an urban centered world power, fully industrialized with a more centered government, the Myth of the Frontier became a powerful cultural tool with the potential to unify the country.<sup>10</sup>

Although considered a myth, the American frontier has been subject of serious scholarly study for more than a century. Until fairly recently however, Buffalo Bill, the man and legend, has been more readily accepted as a popular culture icon than serious scholarly material. Nevertheless, the cultural and historical context of Buffalo Bill has become increasingly part of the American frontier discussion and Cody's life and Wild West shows, especially since the appearance of the biography written by Don Russell in 1960, have become legitimate academic research subjects.<sup>11</sup> In his 2012 biography on William F. Cody, John M. Burke highlights why studying popular icon Buffalo Bill is pivotal to the understanding of the American frontier, American identity and American culture. "Cody did not merely represent American culture—he defined it for generations of Europeans."<sup>12</sup> Buffalo Bill as a phenomenon was America's most successful cultural

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<sup>10</sup> Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 15–16.

<sup>11</sup> Multiple biographies about Cody's life and Wild West shows have appeared after 1960, see Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show* (2005); Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (2000); Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna* (2005); Blackstone, *Buckskins, Bullets, and Business: A History of Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (1986); Reddin, *Wild West Shows* (1999).

<sup>12</sup> John M. Burke, *Buffalo Bill from Prairie to Palace* (University of Nebraska Press, 2012), xi.

export product that not only epitomized American culture, but as Burke mentions, also helped define it for Europeans.<sup>13</sup>

In response to these claims, Rob Kroes and Robert W. Rydell look at European responses to American mass culture, specifically Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. They distinguish two types of responses: articulate reflection, which generated various critical views, and selective appropriation in which a reverse effect of American cultural exports takes place, to the extent of even Europeanizing them.<sup>14</sup> Both scholars refer to already existing popular images of the American West in Europe, such as famous Western themed works by Karl May and Mayne Reid.<sup>15</sup> Although Kroes and Rydell focus mostly on the relation between mass culture and Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows, their argumentation is also applicable to the Buffalo Bill dime novels. It is essentially the European translations of original American works that underline the selective appropriation through which Buffalo Bill's novels were adjusted and even adapted to European cultural ideas. For example, Kroes and Rydell point at the portrayal of the American Indian<sup>16</sup> in European literature as "essentially good,"<sup>17</sup> while in the American dime novels they presented as hostile and violent.

In the context of an increasingly close cooperation within Europe, the book *1900: Hoogtij van Burgerlijke Cultuur*, part of the series *Nederlandse Cultuur door de Eeuwen heen*, focuses on the uniqueness and particularity of Dutch culture in the past. In addition it illustrates cultural exchange between the Netherlands, Europe and America. More specifically, the book deals with the bourgeois culture around 1900, a period sometimes

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Robert W. Rydell and Rob Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna, The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 111.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> The usage of the terms American Indian or Indian is applied throughout this paper instead of 'Native American,' since this is the term presently primarily used by Native persons as well as scholars in Montana and Wyoming (and the surrounding area) where much of the non-European focused events discussed in our paper occurred.

<sup>17</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 112.

referred to as the Dutch second Golden Age,<sup>18</sup> and clarifies the Dutch relations to the rest of Europe. Specifically, Bank and Van Buuren pose the question to what extent the western borders of the European cultural community in 1900 had already been extended to the United States.<sup>19</sup> An example of this extended cultural community between Europe and the United States is found in the literary market where the American dime novel had met popular response in Europe. Bank and van Buuren suggest the dime novel industry took off in Germany, a circumstance to which the Netherlands culturally mirrored itself.<sup>20</sup> As a result, the Dutch cultural geographic horizon in the 1900s focused primarily on Germany as their popular culture guideline.

Modern commercial popular culture had taken Germany by storm in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; German publishers were amongst the first to cultivate the mass book market. Kroes and Rydell support the assumption that mass culture is a relatively young phenomenon which finds its origin in a period from 1869 until 1922, though, most likely not in this exact form (i.e., as it is currently defined). Adversative, the term came into common usage in the 1930s.<sup>21</sup> They do regard, throughout their book *Buffalo Bill in Bologna, The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (1992) Buffalo Bill's Wild West show as an accomplished form of mass culture. Hence, their definition of the term mass culture as: "the mobilization of cultural and ideological resources on a scale unimaginable in a preindustrial society lacking mass transportation and communication facilities,"<sup>22</sup> best correlates with the 'mass book market' dime novels had cultivated. Although the myth surrounding Buffalo Bill originated from locally created stories, the systemic production and distribution of Buffalo Bill's dime novels within the United

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<sup>18</sup> Jan Bank and Maarten van Buuren, *Nederlandse Cultuur in Europese Context: 1900 Hoogtij van burgerlijke cultuur*, vol. 3 (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 2000), PAGINA.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 3:19.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 3:14.

<sup>21</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

States and to Europe are valid motives to refer to them as mass culture. Furthermore, Kroes and Rydell differentiate popular culture from mass culture by pointing out that popular culture has; “been used to describe more locally produced cultural formations.”<sup>23</sup> Mass-produced and intended for a mass audience, the application of the term to Buffalo Bill dime novels fails to properly reflect that this is a locally produced cultural formation as the dime novels were, on the contrary, produced by large publishing houses.

In addition, Kroes and Rydell add to the debate the notion that “mass culture played a historically specific role in reconstructing the United States,”<sup>24</sup> while on the European receiving end, mass culture played a specific role in “fictionalizing the American West.”<sup>25</sup> Specifically, Germany has been the clearest example of this fictionalization<sup>26</sup> of the West, which has not only played out in the European translations of Buffalo Bill’s dime novels, but also in the cultural perception of the West by the Dutch. In his article “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” Ronald A. Fullerton specifically highlights that the German publishing house A. Eichler was the first in Europe to buy the rights of Buffalo Bill’s dime novels.<sup>27</sup> German translations were the format on which Dutch translations were based, and therefore serve as the beginning of Buffalo Bill’s cultural influence in the Netherlands. In years prior to the popularization of these novels, however, Buffalo Bill figuratively penetrated the Dutch cultural geographic horizon by touring with his wildly popular Wild West show throughout Germany, Belgium, and France.

Nico Wiltendink points out other surrounding nations which have influenced the Dutch cultural horizon in his discussion of *The Netherlands between the Greater Powers*

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>26</sup> Germany’s long-time infatuation with the American Indian comes to light in their cultural translations of Buffalo Bill’s dime novels. This is argued throughout this research, specifically Chapter 1. For additional information see: Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 112-116.

<sup>27</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 502.

*Expressions of Resistance to Perceived or Feared Foreign Cultural Domination* (1991).

His argument supports the idea of ‘reference cultures’: “primary nations of reference for the Dutch (...) [t]heir perceived (and feared) cultural influence, strongly varying over time, was connected to perceived economic and/or politico-military influence.”<sup>28</sup> The awareness of being a small nation that depends upon others led the Netherlands to shift cultural orientation throughout the centuries. A relative weakness and hidden source of strength, as Wiltendink calls it, the Dutch were able to combine foreign cultural influences with national cultural elements; creating a hybrid culture unique to their own.<sup>29</sup>

It would be uncritical to assume that the European translations of Buffalo Bill’s dime novels were literal translations of the original American works. Hence, the word ‘translation’ as such does not cover the contextual and cultural impact of Buffalo Bill’s translated works. Cultural translations cover historical and cultural contexts that played important roles during the process of translating the dime novels in European languages. The cultural context embodies the fascination that has heavily influenced these translations as opposed to being a mere background explanation of historical- and cultural circumstances during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Methodology*

This paper aims to answer the following research question: In what ways do cultural translations function in the dissemination and reception of American mass culture in Europe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century? We approach this question using a contextual comparative case study of cultural European translations of Buffalo Bill dime novels in Germany and the Netherlands. We use cultural translations to research American mass

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<sup>28</sup> Nico Wiltendink, “The Netherlands between the Greater Powers Expressions of Resistance to Perceived or Feared Foreign Cultural Domination,” in *Within the US Orbit: Small National Cultures Vis-à-Vis the United States*, European Contributions to American Studies (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1991), 15.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.



culture and its impact on Europe. To support this paper's claim that, contrary to the idea that dime novels in Europe were just literal translations, Buffalo Bill dime novels were actually translated in a European cultural context.

In the first chapter, this research focuses on the national Dutch culture's dependence on the surrounding (more powerful) nations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, of which Dutch orientation shifts between various reference cultures. Through narrowing down the foreign cultural influence to specifically the American West and as prime example Buffalo Bill, the second chapter argues how a specific culture could generate such great European fascination for a foreign phenomenon. We further narrow the focus in the third chapter to dime novel literature wherein we evaluate the dissemination of (commercialized) American mass culture. As a result, the research moves to the 'textual,' or 'technical,' aspect of cultural translations by analyzing in the fourth chapter comparative research that has been conducted between original (American) works and their European translations. Subsequently, this chapter analyzes the function of cultural translations and contrasted to the existing claims that no differences in translation exist between the original American works and European versions of the novels. Discussed in fifth chapter, is the reception of these European versions and Buffalo Bill himself. In the final chapter, chapter six, we explore the influence of publishing houses in the spread and distribution of Buffalo Bill's dime novels, making clear the vast modes of dissemination of these novels. Finally this research argues that by demonstrating that differences in cultural and literal translations exists in dime novels, Buffalo Bill's dime novels serve as an example of how American mass culture was adapted to a heterogeneous European audience in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Clearly, this is a broad and fascinating subject that deserves far more attention than we could possibly give in the limited volume of a master thesis. This paper will

therefore not discuss all the Buffalo Bill dime novels in Europe. We have identified select dime novels through research we conducted in the spring of 2015 in the McCracken Research Library (Buffalo Bill Center of the West) in Cody, Wyoming, USA. We only considered the American dime novels that had counterparts in more than one European language, as the various translations could then be compared with each other as well as with the original American versions. Limitations and shortcomings experienced while researching the non-digitalized dime novels in the McCracken Research Library included our dependence on the availability of the physical dime novels at that location. Our selection thus was limited to those novels on hand in Cody. Another limitation concern is the scarcity of scholarly work on cultural translations between European and original American versions of the Buffalo Bill dime novels.

Although this thesis builds on terminology from language studies, it is far more interesting to us as American Studies students to focus on the cultural translations of the Buffalo Bill dime novels through the broader lens of American Studies. Due to his great popularity in the United States and abroad, William F. Cody, his character Buffalo Bill and the Wild West show have been extensively researched: in scholarly publications, amateur historical research, newspaper articles, museums and in various fan websites. Beyond the great complexity of the life of William Cody, scholarly research and analysis may be conducted on the historical background and circumstances of his fantastic stories; that is the diverse and compelling contexts through which his works, and the many works about him, may be explored. As a result, research on this subject can and is conducted through different fields of study, ranging from mass media, race, consumerism and American imperialism. The original dime novels, from the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, are the primary sources of this research.

By using the original dime novels in combination with the existing academic discussion, this thesis will have both a historic and cultural focus. By not only looking technically at the primary texts, but also by putting the text in a cultural context, we will show the cultural translations between the original American dime novels and their European counterparts. In addition, the digitalization of old newspaper articles, reviews and advertisements, done by Delpher of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, creates an exciting new field of research. The field of digital humanities will improve quantitative and qualitative research of rare texts and other documents, and no doubt encourage the (re)reception of Buffalo Bill in the Netherlands.

## CHAPTER 1: THE NETHERLANDS AND ITS REFERENCE CULTURES

The Netherlands a small nation, open towards the rest of the world has always been aware of its relative size. While surrounded by larger nations, the awareness of smallness is directly linked to fear of being threatened and dominated by more powerful nations. This fear of being dominated refers to various different things, such as the loss of autonomy by military conquest or the fear of losing cultural independence. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch national culture depends on other, more powerful surrounding national cultures. Considered a relative weakness, the Dutch openness to foreign cultures enables it to take position of the “international cultural middlemen,” explains historian Johan Huizinga.<sup>30</sup> As international middlemen the Dutch were able to combine foreign influences with national cultural elements in order to create a hybrid culture, containing the best of both worlds. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the ambivalence of Dutch dependence on neighboring cultures and the fear of cultural domination.

For this research project Buffalo Bill is used as a primary tool to demonstrate cultural influence in order to analyze the extent of a (perceived) cultural influence. His popularity in Europe began with his European Wild West shows around 1887,<sup>31</sup> and was further reinforced by the publication of European Buffalo Bill dime novels in 1905.<sup>32</sup> Notable here is the fact that Buffalo Bill’s Wild West never toured the Netherlands, though he did tour France, England and Germany.<sup>33</sup> Thus, Buffalo Bill’s cultural

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<sup>30</sup> J. Huizinga, *De Middelaarsrol Der Nederlanden Tussen West- En Midden-Europa* (Haarlem: De Nederlandse natie, 1960), 19.

<sup>31</sup> Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History*, First (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 65–66.

<sup>32</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 498.

<sup>33</sup> Although writers like Joyce Kassen mention that Buffalo Bill did tour the Netherlands with his *Wild West* show (Kasson, *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*, 65.), this is incorrect as is demonstrated by Burke, *Buffalo*

influence in the Netherlands could not have traveled through the presumed path of his Wild West shows; rather, the Netherlands let other neighboring European countries influence their cultural horizon. It is therefore pivotal for this research to understand the Dutch cultural context leading up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The cultural influence from other nations is defined as ‘reference cultures.’ Not only did these reference cultures pave way for in-direct contact with American cultural export products such as Buffalo Bill, they managed to influence Dutch culture and be cultivated into a selective hybrid form. Throughout this research this is clearly demonstrated via the cultural translations of Buffalo Bill’s dime novels. Moreover, this chapter discusses Dutch reference cultures in chronological order and traits of their cultural influence. The primary reference cultures discussed in this chapter are France, England, Germany and America. In what ways has the Dutch nation continually changed orientation on reference cultures with Buffalo Bill and earlier forms of foreign cultural exports?

### *The Netherlands and Reference Cultures*

In general, ‘small countries’ are thought to encounter less national resistance to foreign cultural influence than larger countries, which would have, in the words of Henry H.H. Remak, make them “more open to influences from all sides.”<sup>34</sup> The Dutch awareness of being a small nation threatened by more powerful neighboring nations originated from the creation of the Dutch nation itself. The Dutch revolt against Spanish domination in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century awakened a conscious independence that legitimized

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*Bill from Prairie to Palace.* that William F. Cody planned on touring the Netherlands, but in the end never did as he already returned to the United States before his planned visit to the Netherlands even started.

<sup>34</sup> Henry H.H. Remak, ‘Trends of Recent Research on West-European Romanticism’, p. 483.

sovereignty of the new state.<sup>35</sup> Spanish domination and influence diminished in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but was replaced by a perceived cultural influence of great powers France, England, Germany and eventually the United States.

Since the 16<sup>th</sup>-century the Netherlands have been exposed to various cultures. These cultures are also referred to as ‘reference cultures.’ Reference cultures are described by Nico Wiltendink as: “primary nations of reference for the Dutch (...) [t]heir perceived (and feared) cultural influence, strongly varying over time, was connected to perceived economic and/or politico-military influence.”<sup>36</sup>

It was not only Buffalo Bill, the successful American export product, that changed the Dutch cultural playground, but other cultural forms managed to reach the Netherlands even before Buffalo Bill; foreign literature, shows, stories, movies, and music. A concrete example of this exposure to foreign cultures became apparent around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Netherlands is characterized by a “translation mania.”<sup>37</sup> A predecessor of the dime novel, the novel is beginning to submerge the Netherlands from England, France and Germany. Profiling of national literature becomes a significant issue. Moreover, the boom in translated literature leads to feelings of uneasiness in Dutch society. The fear of possibly harming Dutch identity by foreign literature, while simultaneously learning from and cultivating foreign influence into own culture remains a recurring Dutch dilemma. Precisely this paradox of fearing, yet respecting the cultural influence of the great power of Dutch perception France, England and Germany varies over time.

In light of the novel, the Dutch failed to keep up with new developments in the literary field while translated German, French and English works managed to seep into

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<sup>35</sup> Wiltendink, “The Netherlands between the Greater Powers Expressions of Resistance to Perceived or Feared Foreign Cultural Domination,” 15.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Frans Grijzenhout and Douwe Fokkema, *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective: Accounting for the Past, 1650-2000* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 242.

Dutch society, especially because Dutch production of literary works did not cater to the desires of the masses. Although in the 1880s translated Dutch works by writers such as Multatuli and Gezelle appear to give way to foreign appreciation of Dutch-language literature, it is not until the 1980s that serious interest in Dutch literature begins to formulate.<sup>38</sup>

A reference culture is a culture used for reference, a culture that is feared to possibly dominate the Netherlands, but yet respected and used as a resource of cultural wealth. Importantly, foreign culture did not only influence, but was also cultivated into a hybrid form; a combination of foreign influential cultures and Dutch culture itself. Therefore, Professor of American Studies Jaap Verheul proposes a different interpretation of reference cultures as: “[Reference cultures] offer or impose a model that others imitate, adapt or resist, creating dimensions in public discourses. It is a transnational, extraterritorial exchange of thoughts and ideas.”<sup>39</sup> Specifically the ability to selectively adapt a foreign culture to a nation’s indigenous culture, is something that is clearly demonstrated throughout this research by using Buffalo Bill’s dime novel translations as a cultural framework for reference. Moreover, the dime novel series, *the Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill’s Adventures*, was issued by a German publisher A. Eichler. In addition, the original American works of Buffalo Bill’s dime novels were first translated in German, which was later used as the standard format for translation into other European languages, including Dutch. However, ‘translation’ in this sentence does not imply a word-for-word translation, but a cultural interpretation that was translated according to pre-existing European popular images of American culture.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>39</sup> Pim Huijnen, “Reference Cultures and Imagined Empires from a Western Perspective, 1850-2000” (Reference Cultures and Imagined Empires from a Western Perspective, 1850-2000, Utrecht: Utrecht University, 2014), 1, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=5565&view=pdf>.

The great powers in Dutch perception France, England, Germany and the United States were both respected and feared. As cultures of reference they have been used by the Netherlands as a source of cultural inspiration, while fearing cultural domination. For these primary nations of reference focus of attention has shifted throughout the centuries, both positive and negative. The development of literature has been an example of cultural reference, while later not only influencing, but adapting to a transnational exchange of cultural products, with as a highlight Buffalo Bill's dime novels.

### *French Cultural Influence*

From a historical perspective French influence has been strong in the Dutch regions of the Low Countries, even before the Dutch nation was founded.<sup>40</sup> Unification of the Dutch mainland in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, between Belgium and the Netherlands, was orchestrated by Burgundian rule, who were subject to French royal authority. Even after the creation of the Dutch republic, the Dutch nobility continued to speak French. Among one of them was founding father William of Orange.<sup>41</sup>

A lasting example of French influence was its language. The Dutch elite in the Northern parts of the Netherlands, such as in cities as The Hague, continued to speak French up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A clear source of inspiration; French culture was viewed, primarily by the upper classes as a testimonial to status, creating “an unsurpassable social distance between themselves and the rest of the population,” Wiltendink explains.<sup>42</sup> In addition, French became the first foreign modern language in secondary schools, which were then mainly attended by the upper-middle classes of society and thus it remained a symbol of stature. As a result, French cultural influence

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<sup>40</sup> Wiltendink, “The Netherlands between the Greater Powers Expressions of Resistance to Perceived or Feared Foreign Cultural Domination,” 15.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 16.



paved the way for a Dutch national high-culture which was institutionalized through the national system of elementary education, only accessible to the higher classes of Dutch society.

It is through education that a lasting French influence is visible, while simultaneously a decline relative to Anglo-Saxon and German influence gradually takes place in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Dutch Education Act of 1863 made French, as well as German and English, mandatory in secondary education.<sup>43</sup> The rise of cultural influence from Germany is noticeable as French and German are considered equally important in the schooling system. By the 1960s only one foreign language is made obligatory and the importance of French as well as German decrease when the choice for a foreign language almost always falls upon English.<sup>44</sup>

A reason for the decline in French influence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the shift in Dutch cultural focus. The older Dutch generations were more stubborn to change their French ways, whilst the younger generations were more prone to fall under newly rising reference cultures. It is in this period that the Netherlands tends to focus more on Germany, which had gained international recognition for its outstanding universities. Furthermore, Germany's rapid development in high education 'rubbed off' on smaller neighboring countries, such as the Netherlands who easily accepted the scientific influence on their universities.<sup>45</sup> However, Germany's growing influence also met with resistance, especially when Germany's rapid expansion and military strategy of 'Weltpolitik' around 1870 was feared to culturally threaten and dominate Dutch society. Hence, by preserving a balance between the cultural influences coming from different nations and resisting to a degree, the Netherlands was able to maintain its independence. Therefore Salverda de Grave points out that "Dutch culture found its identity in its

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 18.

openness to both French and German influences and in combining them to form a unique pattern.”<sup>46</sup>

The French language has been one of the clearest remnants of French influence in the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Viewed by society as a class of stature, French influence was mostly retained by the upper classes in Dutch society. French Burgundian rule unified the Low Countries, but later fell through when the Dutch nation came to existence. In addition, embedded in the Dutch educational system French language slowly witnessed the influence of German as both languages are considered equal by the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Through French language a flow of French literature influenced the Netherlands but was soon surpassed by Germany who rapidly rose as global leader with its *Weltpolitik*. Moreover, French cultural influence was mostly associated with the nobility and used as a tool to create social distance between the upper and lower classes. The ability of the Netherlands to find balance between being the cultural middlemen and depending on more powerful nations, is expressed in a composite culture; which for French influence was expressed in a Dutch national high culture.

#### *Buffalo Bill's first European visit: England as a reference culture*

The Dutch orientation on English high culture, compared to German and French culture appeared relatively minor in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Whereas Germany and France were praised by Dutch intellectuals for being great modern nations of philosophy, art and literature, England was considered a less intellectual reference.<sup>47</sup> Although England shared a distinct class consciousness with France, its cultural influence was more striking in terms of economic doctrines, technology and recreational activities. Particularly the European

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<sup>46</sup> J.J. Salverda de Grave, *Waarom Het Genootschap "Nederland-Frankrijk" Is Opgericht*, 81st ed., De Gids (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen & zoon, 1917), 354–364.

<sup>47</sup> Wiltendink, “The Netherlands between the Greater Powers Expressions of Resistance to Perceived or Feared Foreign Cultural Domination,” 20.

dissemination of competitive spectator sports was accounted for by the English social elites. The British lifestyle of playing sports was eagerly adopted by Dutch upper-middle classes as they perceived this to be a testament to their social stature.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Holland's cultural orientation to the English-speaking world intensified greatly. However, the American impact within this orientation begins to predominate the scope of Anglo-Saxon influences. It is in 1886 that William Cody first performs his Wild West Show across the Atlantic at the London's American Exhibition.<sup>49</sup> With the first public appearance since her husband's passing, Queen Victoria even attended the Buffalo Bill show. Not only did Buffalo Bill's Wild West capitalize on a growing interest in the United States, the presence of a respected royal made headlines and helped facilitate the commercialization of American culture across the Atlantic. Furthermore, it was no surprise that Cody's tour of England proved to be a well-rounded success and media throughout Europe quickly picked up on his presence. By 1889 the Wild West show traveled to Paris and continued to start touring the rest of Europe.<sup>50</sup>

While touring Europe Cody managed to adapt his show to certain national characteristics of the specific country where they performed. However, the essential message of the show remained unaffected as Kroes and Rydell explain: "in the United States white, Anglo-Saxon "civilization" had tamed "savagery," rendering "savages" a source of amusement, ethnographic study, and inspiration for a shared racial consciousness among whites."<sup>51</sup> It is precisely this more primitive side of the American West, the savage or American Indian who attracted the most attention. In France people were fascinated by touching the American Indian, while in Germany the fascination

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>49</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 105–106.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

played on author Karl May's fantasy of reminiscent German ancestry.<sup>52</sup> These pre-existing European fantasies were already influenced by images of the American West before Buffalo Bill set foot in Europe. Subsequently, the love for the American Indian seeps through reference cultures England, France and Germany to the Netherlands. Later, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century this is demonstrated in the translated Dutch Buffalo Bill dime novels.

England was considered a less elevated cultural influence than German and French culture. One of the most successful British export products to Dutch territory was an astute lifestyle of playing sports. True orientation towards English-speaking culture begins in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when American cultural influence makes its appearance in the scope of Anglo-Saxon influence. The first direct European experience with Buffalo Bill occurred in England, where the Wild West cleverly capitalized on a growing interest in the American West. Though the European Wild West tour adapts to the national traits of their tour destinations, the image of civilizing savage American Indians remains unchanged. It was precisely this romanticized idea of civilizing the savage that played off of pre-existing European fantasies. It is via England, France and Germany that the Netherlands is influenced by the popularity of the American Indian and starts to show interest in American mass culture.

*Germany's literary infatuation with the American Indian: Germany as a reference culture*

Germany was a significant literary influence of American culture. By the 1870s, a large market for inexpensive, simply told, yet rousing literary works emerged in Europe. Publishers in Germany systematically exploited pulp story production of England and the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 109–111.

United States—a body of stories (dime novels) which were immensely popular among the middle- and upper class readers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most popular stories in Germany were about the Wild West and American Indians; nearly half of all published pamphlets by 1900 focused on Wild West themes. These stories were mainly simplified versions of their original American works. As a result, explained by Ronald A. Fullerton: “some German Wild West stories were translations of ‘dime novels,’ and many were imitations.”<sup>53</sup> In a time when few Germans had ever traveled to or had seen depictions of the American Wild West, written descriptions of this remarkable foreign place were very appealing and functioned as a means to escape their daily lives.

The American West had been fictionalized in Europe through the Buffalo Bill Wild West show. A European fascination for the American Indian grew popular, which in Germany specifically became apparent via a broadly different interpretation of the Buffalo Bill dime novels than the original American text. The common explanation for this was the nostalgic and romantic affiliation people had with the dime novels because of fear of a rapid change—and modernization of the society in which they lived in, which was no different from countries such as France. However, from a historical perspective this heightened interest in Indians originated from a complex process of German identification. More specifically, original German settlers, the ‘wild men’ of the German forests were considered the ancestors of Germany. Subsequently under the influence of Christianity and Romanticism, Fullerton argues that the wild men of the German forests were effectively transformed into “noble savages of the woods.”<sup>54</sup> As a result the German audiences felt deeply connected to the (American) Indian, who like their German ancestors was seen as a wildling, but under Romantic influences became known in German translations of popular dime novels as ‘noble savages.’

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<sup>53</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 495.

<sup>54</sup> Stetler, “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West in Germany. A Transnational History,” 55.

Germany's industrialization had modernized society and yielded cultural loss. It is therefore not surprising that German novel readers identified with the American Indian who also faced "ruthless materialism."<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, a German publisher A. Eichler is the first European publisher to buy the sole translation rights to the *Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures*. Since Eichler's publishing house controlled the translation of the popular literary Buffalo Bill series it was able to directly influence other countries with their preconceived fantasies on the American West. Because the Buffalo Bill show never traveled to the Netherlands, and Germany's translations of Buffalo Bill dime novels were used as a format for other European translations, Germany's liberal cultural interpretation of these dime novels heavily influenced the Dutch reading experience.

As a country of reference in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Germany capitalized on the overall growing interest in the American West in the Netherlands and equally fictionalized the Dutch image of the American West. Moreover, American Indians referred to in the German dime novel stories were sometimes purely imaginary, while at other times there were references to actual historic figures. In contrast with their common American representation as savages, in the German works, the American Indians were portrayed as dignified, honorable and intelligent people, who German audiences came to love—sometimes more so than the civilized whites with whom they came in contact.<sup>56</sup> Since the Dutch translation of these dime novels followed the set translation format of the German version, Dutch readers were influenced with a predilection of the American Indian.

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<sup>55</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 112.

<sup>56</sup> Otto Berger, *Das Lynchgesetz Oder Der Lohn Des Prairieräubers. Einde Indianergeschichte Aus Dem Fernen Westen*, vol. 447 (Reutlingen: Neue Volksbücher, 1888), 4–5. The book contrasts Comanches as being strong and heroic because they drink firewater and have preserved ancestral customs with a sinister band of white bandits.

The German translation of Buffalo Bill dime novels was a commercial success. Despite influencing Dutch culture, Fullerton points out that neither German publishers nor authors pretended to be progressing culture: “[t]he texts were... manipulated for the mass public; they were commodities without pretensions, vessels or diversion without cultural ideology.”<sup>57</sup> As a result, the German popular literary market was heavily commercialized. After the turn of the century, popularity of the pamphlet format stories (i.e. dime novels) specifically increased when American publishers introduced the American hero as a paradigm for fighting vice and championing virtue. The Buffalo Bill stories showed an “astute commercial sense”<sup>58</sup> in that Buffalo Bill was well known in Germany thanks to his Wild West shows, which originally took place in England. His Wild West shows formed and expanded the many myths and legends that surrounded, which also greatly heightened mass curiosity in Europe.

#### *American cultural influence*

After the introduction of the American Hero in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch cultural focus distinctly shifts towards the United States of America. Any lack of direct American cultural influence had been compensated by pre-existing fantasies and images on the American West from surrounding nations of cultural reference, such as France, England and Germany. At the end and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century America brings itself to the foreground of western European cultural exchange and rapidly dominates the Anglo-Saxon cultural sphere of influence. Though one should definitely acknowledge that less articulated images of America circulated in Dutch society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is only

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<sup>57</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 496.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 498.

from the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Great War onwards that American culture is perceived as an imperative, even dominant influence.<sup>59</sup>

America's growing power and distinct visibility in Europe leads to modernized changes—massification, commercialization, democratization and the creation of a commercialized mass culture.<sup>60</sup> As a culture of reference, American modern influence is noticeable when the European idea of popular culture transforms into mass culture expressed by dime novels, shows, movies and music. Furthermore, mass culture, opposed to popular culture, is defined along the lines of Julia Simone Stetler's definition of "an industrially produced standardized cultural form produced for cheap sale to the 'mass' audiences."<sup>61</sup> In other words, the perceived domination of American culture over European culture came to be because of phenomena such as Wild West shows and dime novels, which facilitated the commercialization of the American West by packaging it for mass transcontinental audiences.<sup>62</sup> The produced narratives in the Buffalo Bill dime novels were intended for mass audiences.

American cultural influence rapidly grows from the 20th-century onwards. Although pre-existing ideas of American images circulated among the Dutch population, it was specifically after the First World War that American culture was perceived as dominant. Moreover, the modernizing changes American culture brings to Europe, is precisely what makes the American cultural export of Buffalo Bill mass culture popular. In addition, the produced narratives in Buffalo Bill facilitated the commercialization of the American West within the Netherlands, which only grew stronger after the Second World War.

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<sup>59</sup> Wiltendink, "The Netherlands between the Greater Powers Expressions of Resistance to Perceived or Feared Foreign Cultural Domination," 21.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>61</sup> Stetler, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Germany. A Transnational History.," 43.

<sup>62</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 10.



## *Conclusion*

This chapter questioned in what ways the Netherlands continually changed orientation on reference cultures with Buffalo Bill and other (earlier) forms of foreign cultural exports. The Dutch dependence on neighboring cultures has been a relative weakness; though there was the fear of cultural domination, this dependence also procreated access to a wealth of foreign culture. Scholars like Verheul and Wiltendink acknowledged this dependence as reference cultures; cultures that are used for cultural orientation, but which can also selectively be adapted to a nation's indigenous culture; fostering a composite culture.

Orientation on reference cultures is evident in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when distinct remnants of French Burgundian rule are visible in Dutch society in the shape of language, literature and class distinction. Moreover, French culture and language was associated with class stature and used as a tool to create social distance. Just as French culture, Anglo-Saxon culture shared this belief in social hierarchy as their culture of sports, played by the higher-middle class was quickly adopted by Dutch society as well. Though Anglo-Saxon cultural influence was less associated with the intellectual virtues which countries like France and Germany were praised for, the Dutch orientation on this Anglo-Saxon sphere became much stronger in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Through reference cultures France, England and Germany pre-existing images and fantasies on the American West were formed and managed to reach the Netherlands. Moreover, Buffalo Bill's first encounter with the European continent occurred in England from which his success began to flourish throughout all of Europe. Though, Buffalo Bill adapted his show to certain customs of his show's destination, the main image of civilizing savage American Indians remained unchanged. Subsequently an increased interest for the savage American Indian arises in countries like France and

Germany. Moreover, it is precisely the correspondence with pre-existing European fantasies that helped increase fascination for aspects of the American West. When in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch cultural orientation is focused on Germany, Germany's literary infatuation with the American Indian rubs off on the Netherlands. The popularity of Buffalo Bill was expressed clearly through his dime novels, of which a German publishing house owned the translation rights. Dutch translation of these dime novels followed a set German format which led to a direct influence of the German predilection of the American West.

Primarily in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and after the Great War, America tended to dominate the Anglo-Saxon hemisphere of cultural influence. Prior to these years, American influences (such as Buffalo Bill) enter Dutch society through countries such as France, England and Germany. For instance the Dutch 'translation mania' and later accounts of visits of the Wild West show to cities such as London and Paris heightened mass curiosity in the Netherlands when pre-existing images and dramatized performances became a real life fantasy.

## CHAPTER 2: BUFFALO BILL IN EUROPE

Apart from being a fictional dime novel hero, Buffalo Bill was also a real person: William Frederick Cody. Multiple biographies have been written about his adventurous and interesting life. Arguably, all scholars who have researched Cody's life have had a hard time discerning the 'truth' about Buffalo Bill. It is interesting how both during his life and even now, as Louis S. Warren argues, this aspect of Buffalo Bill's persona continues to fascinate his audiences (as well as his scholars).<sup>63</sup> The character Buffalo Bill and the person William F. Cody are inextricably intertwined; the man and the myth are almost impossible to separate.<sup>64</sup> As a result, the nickname (and later stage name) "Buffalo Bill", as well as his actual name, William F. Cody, are used in this chapter when discussing the shows in Europe and in the United States. (We use the dime novel hero Buffalo Bill in a different context of which we elaborate in the next chapter). For these reasons, this chapter will address the following question: how did the creation of Buffalo Bill generate fascination for the American West in Europe?

Through his European tours, Cody brought the Myth of the Frontier to Europe. The fascination in Europe for the American West and American Indians resulted in an interesting (and quite vast) market for American entrepreneurs. Cody was one of the first who (successfully) decided to cross the Atlantic Ocean and share his experiences with a European audience. European audiences perceived his show, Buffalo Bill's Wild West, as much more 'authentic' than the (Wild West) shows they had previously experienced.

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<sup>63</sup> Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*, 10–12.

<sup>64</sup> Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 81–82.

Cody's Wild West shows not only created an interesting business opportunity, they served as means to improve the (cultural) value of the United States in the eyes of Europeans. For generations Buffalo Bill represented American history and identity (i.e., Americanness, what it means to be American) for both Americans and Europeans.

To retrace how and why Buffalo Bill generated so much fascination for the American West in Europe, we first look more closely at the Myth of the Frontier because of its close association with the Myth of the Western Hero, as well as why these myths were so important in the United States and abroad.

### *The Myth of the Frontier*

The American West is probably one of the most popular myths of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States. It found its audiences through movies, television shows, novels and advertising. Moreover, clothes, art and music also helped contribute to the spread of the myth across the country, and the globe. Near the turn of the century, Frederick Jackson Turner influenced thousands of scholars by romanticizing and emphasizing the importance of the frontier—the region and the boundary between existing settlements and the yet wild, unsettled land—in the American West. He defined the frontier as “the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization.”<sup>65</sup>

Driven by Manifest Destiny, the American notion of providential, historical and divine election to extend the nation from coast to coast, Americans explored and claimed land westwards since they arrived on the continent. In 1893, Turner first read his paper, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” to nearly 200 historians at the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, IL: “Up to our own day American history has been in large degree the history of colonization of the Great West. The existence of an

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<sup>65</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, The Project Gutenberg eBook (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 1, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm>.

area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.”<sup>66</sup> Turner’s thesis claimed that the United States did not need its European ancestors and traditions because the frontier land was free and for whoever wanted to claim it.

John O’Sullivan, a politician and editor of the *Democratic Review*, coined the phrase of Manifest Destiny in 1845, claiming that America had been chosen to carry out the mission of expansionism in order to drive out the wilderness and bring light, civilization, upon the continent.<sup>67</sup> This idea, of driving out the wilderness and bringing civilization can also be found in Turner’s frontier thesis. However, instead of looking at this as a positive form of progress, he considered the closing of the frontier at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century alarming: “In American thought and speech the term ‘frontier’ has come to mean the edge of settlement, rather than, as in Europe the political boundary;” he also insisted “the American frontier is sharply distinguished from the European frontier – a fortified boundary line running through dense populations.”<sup>68</sup> The frontier was what made the country distinctly American; the further west the frontier was, the less European-like the country and its citizens became; that is, fewer established churches, no standing army and no interfering government. After reading his thesis at the Chicago World’s Columbian Exhibition, it quickly became popular among intellectuals. Importantly, it finally explained why the American people and its government were so different from their European counterparts.

Moreover, as Henry Nash Smith argues in *Virgin Land, The American West as Symbol and Myth*, there were two Wests: “one beyond and one within this all-important line [the frontier].”<sup>69</sup> The Myth of the American Frontier, though far removed from the

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, 1st paperback (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), xi–xii.

<sup>68</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 3.

<sup>69</sup> Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, 251.

historical American West, provided terms in which Americans could understand their identity and their purpose.

After the long depression of the 1890s, the United States was in a state of crisis of cultural morale and was in need of a united national identity. However even before the long depression, the Civil War and the continuing American Indian Wars had caused turmoil in American society. The mythical stories that popularized the American West during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century can be traced back to this period. Images from this period influenced Turner's romantic idea of the frontier, and recalled to Americans pride and pleasure, and created a way to unify the country. General Custer and the Seventh Cavalry in particular provided such proud notions.

In the figure of George Armstrong Custer, the American public had a hero, and a hero's mission to bring light, law, liberty, Christianity, and commerce to the savage places in the United States. George Armstrong Custer (1839-1876), was a United States Army officer and cavalry commander during the Civil War and the American Indian Wars.<sup>70</sup> In *Gunfighter Nation*, Slotkin argues how, it was not until his death Custer achieved the fame he had sought all his years on the battlefield; after he and most of the men of the Seventh Cavalry fell to the hands of rebellious Indians (Lakota, Dakota, Blackfoot Dakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho) during the 1867 Battle of the Little Bighorn. This battle became known in American history as "Custer's Last Stand." The lost battle resulted in his death, and came to overshadow all of his prior military achievements.<sup>71</sup>

After his death, the image of Custer riding out, to battle with the Indians, created a powerful connection between the America of the past and the centuries-long confrontations between the white man and the savages. Slotkin assigns this powerful

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<sup>70</sup> Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 8.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-10.

connection in the meaningful death of Custer. Although Custer himself did not survive this battle with the Indians, he sacrificed himself and proved to be a true frontiersman. For example, poet and journalist Walt Whitman described his death as Christian self-sacrifice, performed in the most traditional of American settings, the Wild West.<sup>72</sup> Though based on complex political and social realities, this image of the white (Christian) man fighting against savages developed into the simple and heroic pattern of a myth. This pattern is further described by Brian W. Dippie in *Custer's Last Stand: The Anatomy of an American Myth* (1994), herein he argues that this myth provided not only a clear enemy with whom the Americans continued fighting over the possession of land, but also showed immigrant laborers, blacks, and criminals how Americans had the will (and capacity) to punish their enemies and enforce the nation's moral authority. The image of Custer, and later Buffalo Bill and others, created the Myth of the Western Hero—the white righteous man who fought the savages of the United States who threatened the moral values of the country.<sup>73</sup>

The Myth of the Frontier explained why the American people and its government were so different from their European counterparts. Central to Slotkin's argument, the Myth of the Western Frontier can be seen as a foundational myth, as it brings to light how Americans view themselves as 'Americans' and in the era of Buffalo Bill, it explained to the Europeans something important about American culture.<sup>74</sup> In addition, though mostly historically incorrect, Buffalo Bill exemplified the Western Hero Myth and the Myth of the Frontier and became a powerful cultural tool to unify the country.<sup>75</sup> These mythical stories popularized the American West for audiences at home and abroad.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>73</sup> Brian W. Dippie, *Custer's Last Stand: The Anatomy of an American Myth* (University of Nebraska Press, 1994), x–xi.

<sup>74</sup> Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 15–16.

## *Buffalo Bill*

The myth and the stories about the frontier may have started with Turner and Custer, but Buffalo Bill popularized them. Originally named William Frederick “Buffalo Bill” Cody, was born in Iowa territory in 1846 (died in 1917). Just as Custer became an icon for fighting against the savages, William F. Cody, possibly even more than Custer, came to be the image of the history of the American West. In one way or another, he was apparently (though he was known to stretch the truth) involved in all the major aspects of westward expansion, such as the gold rush, the Pony Express, the railway construction, cattle herding and the battles against the Indians. Cody was many things; a frontiersman, scout, Pony Express rider and a hunting guide. However, he did not become a public figure until the 1870s when Edward Zane Carroll Judson, more famously known under his pseudonym Ned Buntline, transformed Cody into the legendary hero Buffalo Bill we still remember today. Cody basically lived two lives which gradually merged together; he was the legendary hero of the frontier and he was the star on stage of the Wild West show.

As discussed earlier, biographers of Cody’s life have had trouble separating the facts from the fantasies—and the lies. Warren accentuates this problem in his Cody biography: *Buffalo Bill’s America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*. In *Buffalo Bill’s America* (2005), he stresses on the fact that even Cody himself seemed to mix facts with fiction.<sup>76</sup> We should therefore not look to Cody to either falsify or confirm parts of his life, but rather analyze what aspects of his life generated interest and even fascination for the American West in the United States and in Europe.

Cody’s decision to tour through the States and to cross the Atlantic Ocean to visit Europe with the Wild West show was not based on a hunch, nor was an excuse for a new

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<sup>76</sup> Warren, *Buffalo Bill’s America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*, 117–119.



adventure; rather, it was a business decision that would not have been made if there was not an audience waiting for him. Cody was not the only popularized Wild West hero of his time, but he was the one who could successfully transfer the cowboy and Western hero from his native environment, the Wild West, to a national and international stage. Before we discuss Cody's success, we should also analyze what Cody's Wild West embodied as well as find out (the best we can) what Buffalo Bill was all about.

Cody's life is (and always has been) surrounded by myths. If Cody had merely stayed a colorful figure in dime novel stories, we probably would remember the American West differently today. Cody, however, was an entrepreneur. If someone could sell the American West to a broad audience, it was Cody. He embraced the character of Buffalo Bill and turned himself into a living, breathing icon. Notable scholars, such as Don Russell and Louis S. Warren, who have respectively researched Cody's life, stress the importance of keeping the two personalities, Buffalo Bill and William F. Cody, separate.<sup>77</sup> This is difficult to do, however, when researching his Wild West enterprise as Cody himself deliberately surrounded his character and personality with myths; myths which made him such a popular global personality.

Before breaking through as Buffalo Bill, Cody made his living as a hunting guide and a scout for the United States Army. This period was the inspiration for the stories, fiction and real, which attracted so many admirers. Warren provides an example of such a story, which later became one of the centerpieces of the Wild West: the part Cody played in the infamous Battle of Little Bighorn. In his show, Cody pretended that during the battle he arrived too late to save Custer, though in real life Cody was not even in the area of Little Bighorn.<sup>78</sup> These mythical stories, combined with actual events, served as

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<sup>77</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*; Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*.

<sup>78</sup> Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*, 117–119.

the impetus for the creation of Cody's nickname, Buffalo Bill. The character of Buffalo Bill became the ideal frontiersman—it did not really matter if the stories were real.

For many, Buffalo Bill came to represent the Wild West. Cody cleverly capitalized upon these myths as well as the image of the ideal frontiersman. Rydell and Kroes, in *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, describe a myth that relates to the above: the infamous scene: “The scalping of Yellow Hand”. According to the tale that surrounds this myth, Cody fought against the famous Cheyenne warrior Yellow Hand, and scalped him while shouting out: “The first scalp for Custer!,” referring to the tragic death of Major General Custer. This story became an important part of Cody's productions and reappeared in dime novels as well as in his autobiography.<sup>79</sup> Whether or not Cody actually scalped Yellow Hand is not what makes this myth interesting, or important; what does, is that by telling this story, Cody introduced himself as an ‘Indian Fighter’ to his public. This particular image created by Cody, aligned with the picture of a Western frontier man, who next to scouting and hunting also fought the savages. Interestingly, Warren describes how this myth also generated another nickname for Cody: ‘the white Indian’. This may sound like a strange name, for a man who himself fought Indians, but it was common for scouts to Indian-like fighting and other skills deemed necessary for survival in the Wild West.<sup>80</sup>

In order to understand Cody, and even more importantly, the success of Buffalo Bill, one must also understand the complexity of the time in which he lived. After the 1850s, there was great racial tension in the United States. Reginald Horsman describes in his article “Scientific Racism and the American Indian in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” how the ideal of the Anglo-Saxon race was rooted in American society.<sup>81</sup> This ideal also

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<sup>79</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 29–30.

<sup>80</sup> Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*, 120.

<sup>81</sup> Reginald Horsman, “Scientific Racism and the American Indian in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” *American Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (May 1, 1975): 152–153, doi:10.2307/2712339.

influenced the United States military and frontier life, as the popular opinion of the time was that the Army consisted mainly of Anglo-Saxon heroes. The reality, however, was different. In his biography on Cody, Warren describes how over 50 percent of the Army existed out of newly arrived immigrants.<sup>82</sup> Although most of these immigrants had white skin there was a big difference between having white skin and being 'white' during this time. Being 'white' meant being of the Anglo-Saxon race, born on American soil, speaking the English language and being a Protestant. Blacks and other non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants were often ridiculed and were seen as inferior.<sup>83</sup>

This persistent ideal of whiteness created tensions in the Army.<sup>84</sup> Cody himself was a 'true' Anglo-Saxon soldier. This may explain his popularity among many Army commanders who were also Anglo-Saxon. Although Cody, who spent time serving in and scouting for the Army, was well aware of it being multiracial, despite the fact that all of the soldiers in his shows were white. When, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cody exchanged his life as a scout for that of an entertainer, the tensions in society about (European) immigrants and multiracialism were even greater than they had been halfway through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As the Western frontier was closing, and the country was in a long economic depression, the spread and superiority of the Anglo-Saxon was perceived to be in danger. By using solely white soldiers in the Wild West show, Cody responded to and reflected the national ideal of whiteness, and thereby helped maintain the myth that the heroes of the Western frontier were white Anglo-Saxon males.<sup>85</sup> Turner's frontier thesis and the Myth of the Frontier created the ideal background for Cody's Wild West. Cody understood that through depicting racial tensions and presenting violent encounters with Indians and whites he would not be able to reach a broad audience.

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<sup>82</sup> Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*, 120.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 359.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 97–98.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 94–102, 210–218.

Instead he responded to the nostalgic desires of an Anglo-Saxon society, and by doing so, he found a way to entertain his public: middle class men, women and children.

William F. Cody, and more importantly his character Buffalo Bill, became an icon for fighting the savages and the representation of the history of the American West. His personality was surrounded by myths, which make it hard to confirm or falsify parts of his life. These myths about his adventures as a scout and hunting guide, were what made him the ideal frontiersman, and for that primary reason he became such a popular personality. Moreover, the success of Buffalo Bill cannot be separated from the time in which he lived. The nostalgic ideal of the Anglo-Saxon race was rooted in American society, which influenced the United States Army and frontiers life. Cody responded to and reflected this ideal; an ideal through which he was able to reach and entertain a broad audience.<sup>86</sup>

### *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*

The Wild West show has intrinsically been (and continues to be) associated with Buffalo Bill. Despite this, Cody was not the one who invented it. The show—though Cody himself never referred to it as a show—is closely associated with the sport of rodeo and was an original and distinctively American form of entertainment. It showcased open spaces, epic heroic struggles on the frontier, exotic animals, adventure, and the expression of individualism. In contrast with other American forms of culture and entertainment Wild West shows, or as Cody liked to call them Wild West exhibitions, were distinctively American and had no equivalent in Europe.

The general idea for this form of entertainment can be traced back to halfway through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the legendary show- and businessman Phineas T. Barnum

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<sup>86</sup> Paul Reddin, *Wild West Shows* (University of Illinois Press, 1999), 51.

bought fifteen calf buffalo, to exhibit at the Bunker Hill celebration in 1843.

Unfortunately, for Barnum, this exhibition failed when the calves crashed through a fence and fled into a nearby swamp.<sup>87</sup> In his autobiography, *The Life of P.T. Barnum*, Barnum describes how he introduced American Indians to the general public on the stage of his 'American Museum.' Although the museum's public received the Indians enthusiastically, just as with the buffalo exhibition, Barnum's encounter with Indians ended in failure. This is illustrated by an observation from a visitor of the museum, at the moment the Indians found out the public was paying an entrance fee to see them:

Their eyes [of the Native Americans] were opened, and no power could induce them to appear again upon the stage. Their dignity had been offended, and their wild, flashing eyes were anything but agreeable. Indeed, I hardly felt safe in their presence, and it was with a feeling of relief that I witness their departure for Washington the next morning.<sup>88</sup>

As a result, Barnum's efforts to make a profit off the myths of the West cannot be considered as successful. Moreover, in 1856, the Mabie Brothers Menagerie and Don Stone's Circus attempted it as well, when they combined their efforts with Tyler's Indian Exhibition. Though these efforts to capitalize on the myths of the frontier, evidence elements of the more successful Wild West show, they were not nearly as comprehensive as Buffalo Bill's show proved to be.<sup>89</sup>

William Cody worked with a team to ensure the success of the Wild West show. Nate Salsbury, who later became Cody's partner, claimed he came up with the idea for Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Cody teamed up with Salsbury and John Burke, because as established actors, both were already familiar with show business and had experience in theater management and productions. All they needed to turn the show into a success was

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<sup>87</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 287–288.

<sup>88</sup> P. T. (Phineas Taylor) Barnum, *The Life of P.T. Barnum* (Buffalo : Courier Co., 1888), 216, <http://archive.org/details/lifeofptbarnum00barn>.

<sup>89</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 288.

a star. This is where Cody came in.<sup>90</sup> Initially, Salsbury wanted Cody as a figurehead—a puppet, easily controlled and staged by Salsbury. However, Cody wanted more and insisted he be part of show management, and more specifically, he wanted to maintain control of his public persona and make his own choices about what the shows would include and how the character of Buffalo Bill would be depicted. According to Russell, this, and the fame Cody received because of the show, created feelings of resentment on Salsbury's end, though it never caused conflict between the two.<sup>91</sup>

The Wild West continued for almost 45 years, in very different forms and with different features. Because of this it is almost impossible to discuss all the various aspects that were part of the show. There are, however, two elements that resulted in the enormous success and that made the show distinctive from other shows.

The first element is the use of Indians. The result of Cody's determination to maintain influence the personnel choices, resulted in hiring not just actors, but 'real' American Indians. This resulted in a more authentic and genuine reflection of the 'real' West, and thereby, became an extension of the myths of the frontier that already existed in the minds of his audience. In "Through Their Eyes: Buffalo Bill's Wild West as a Drawing Table for American Identity," Katherine White distinguishes two forms of representation of Indians in Buffalo Bill's Wild West. First, the American Indians were used to illustrate the clash between "Anglo-Saxon attributes and non-Anglo-Saxon attributes, or civilization vs savagery."<sup>92</sup> She argues however that it would be a mistake to see the involvement of Indians in the Wild West as just a representation of good versus evil. The Indians, especially in the later shows, were not just representing this clash; they themselves became an object of interest. The daily lives of 'real' Indians

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<sup>90</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 29–30.

<sup>91</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 298–303.

<sup>92</sup> Kathryn White, "Through Their Eyes': Buffalo Bill's Wild West as a Drawing Table for American Identity," *Constructing the Past* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 35, <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/constructing/vol7/iss1/8>.

became a popular attraction and fascination for many visitors, as they became less threatening to the lives of ‘civilized’ American people and their culture.<sup>93</sup> This development from a clash between civilization and savagery to an interest in the daily lives of Indians; represented what Louis C. Warren describes as “domesticating of the Wild West.”<sup>94</sup>

The second element of the Wild West show is the use of violence. For example, the sharpshooting acts in the show thrilled many visitors. Apart from mere entertainment, the violence also illustrated what kinds of skills were necessary to survive on the frontier. The frontiersmen were represented as heroes who had to defend themselves, and who could not be seen separate from their adventures; adventures where violence was unavoidable. In addition, after the Civil War, the use of guns and violence became an important part of the national identity. As argued by Slotkin, nostalgic memories about this era caused the idealization of ‘military efficiency,’ industrial achievements, such as the transcontinental railroad building, during the Gilded Age, were credited to this ‘military efficiency’.<sup>95</sup>

Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show may have been based on Buffalo Bill’s adventures but it was not only Cody’s accomplishment. With help from Nate Salsbury and John Burke the show became a commercial success. Because the central elements of the show, Indians and violence, accentuated the Myth of the Frontier, the show appealed to a mass audience.

### *Buffalo Bill in Europe*

Without an international perspective, Buffalo Bill would not have been able to exist and succeed to reach a broad and mass audience. After 1883, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>94</sup> Warren, *Buffalo Bill’s America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*, 211.

<sup>95</sup> Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 89–91.

broadened its scope; even more American Indians, animals and cowboys were hired. The show also introduced a diverse mixture of international performers, including Mexican Gauchos, African tribes, Cossacks from East Europe, military groups from England and Germany, and many others. Rather than focusing primarily on the frontier of the American West, the show now also included representations of frontier life from other continents, which resulted in a more international show identity.<sup>96</sup> In addition, instead of touring only throughout the United States, Salsbury, Burke and Cody took the Wild West, with all its animals, performers and equipment, across the Atlantic, on a European tour. The popularity was immense, as Cody and his show drew enormous crowds, first in England, and later in France, Italy, Austria, Germany and many more European countries.<sup>97</sup>

By using the framework of the American myths of the frontier, Cody highlighted American values for a European public. He did not just represent the American experience and American culture for Europeans; he defined it for them, and thereby framed an image (real or fictional) of the American West, which still resonates in Europe today. Buffalo Bill represented the frontier, and the frontier came to represent America. This all started with his first cross-Atlantic tour in 1887, which started in London. In *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (2000) Joy S. Kasson describes how this tour was the stage of his first European adventure, where Cody performed the drama of the frontier settlement to millions. Although the images of the Wild West were selective and highly romanticized, Cody's European audience experienced the show as an authentic representation of the American frontier.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque, N.M.: UNM Press, 1999), 3–4.

<sup>97</sup> Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 65.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.



Cody's first tour in Europe (1887-88) was a turning point for Buffalo Bill's Wild West, as the show entered a new arena in the world of travelling entertainments. *The Wild West in England*, Cody's, supposed<sup>99</sup> travel narrative of the tour, describes how the English audience had high expectations of the Wild West: "The press were generous to us to an extent possible never before known. Its columns were teeming daily with information about us, so eulogistic that I almost feared we would not come up to expectations."<sup>100</sup> There were definitely people who were eager to see the Wild West, though Cody's narrative does not entirely represent the reality of the time. His publicist, John Burke, was using modern techniques to promote the show in Europe. Part of these techniques was planting newspaper stories about the show in local newspapers by sending pre-issued packs of information to the press. For example, in *Buffalo Bill's America*, Warren claims that:

The Wild West show sharpened older concerns about the danger of a war with Americans, a preoccupation of English politicians for much of the nineteenth century, when the British and Americans clashed over the Oregon question, the Southern secession, fishing rights, and a host of other issues.<sup>101</sup>

The Wild West appeared in an England that was in decline. Although still considered a world power, Britain was by then confronted with the fact that the United States had become a strong industrial power. Despite the belief that the Wild West celebrated the Anglo-Saxon race, the frontier had effectively changed the American man. The British could learn from these cowboys.<sup>102</sup> By the end of the London season of Wild West in October 1887, over a million people had seen the show. Cody had become a superstar in England. After London, the Wild West traveled to other British cities, Birmingham,

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<sup>99</sup> Although this autobiography appears to be Cody's own work, it is highly doubtful Cody himself wrote, or even edited it. Just as with the dime novels, these works were part of the Cody enterprise, but are (probably) not written by him. According to the editor of *The Wild West in England*, Frank Christianson, it is likely that John Burke, Cody's public relation manager, had a hand in developing this work.

<sup>100</sup> William F. Cody, *The Wild West in England*, ed. Frank Christianson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 44.

<sup>101</sup> Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*, 421–422.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 424.

Manchester, and Hull, where it was received enthusiastically.<sup>103</sup>

The second transatlantic tour, in the spring of 1889, evidences how important an international perspective was for Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. During the opening show in France, which was part of the Exposition Universelle, more than 10,000 people gathered at the show grounds in Neuilly, a suburb of Paris. In *Wild West Shows* Paul Reddin argues that to popularize the Wild West in France, the show was slightly changed. Because the Wild West did not have a homogeneous audience, this strategy of changing parts of the show depending on the culture and country it visited became standard from this time onward. By doing this, the audience could more easily identify with the content and the shows were more relevant. The American Indians were particularly popular in France. Everything they did made it into the newspapers, such as for example, when they climbed the Eiffel Tower (which flattered the French).<sup>104</sup>

Similar responses from Indians can be seen in Germany, such as when Buffalo Bill arrived in Munich in April of 1890. Even more than in France, the Indians fascinated the Germans. The enormous success of the Wild West in Germany resulted in the show returning to play different German cities for the rest of the year after performing in Munich and later Vienna. Different scholars<sup>105</sup> stress this fascination in Germany with the Wild West, and more specifically with the American Indians. Kroes and Rydell, for instance, argue that this interest may have something to do with the romantic connection the Germans experienced in a time of rapid change and modernization, and in this era of modernization they may have felt a cultural loss. The Indians were a connection to nature for the Germans, and this, more than any other European nation, linked them with their

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<sup>103</sup> Burke, *Buffalo Bill from Prairie to Palace*, 243–246.

<sup>104</sup> Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 100.

<sup>105</sup> See: Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America, William Cody and the Wild West Show*; Stetler, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Germany. A Transnational History."; Reddin, *Wild West Shows*; Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*.

own traditional attraction to nature and romanticism.<sup>106</sup> We could therefore argue that the Wild West presented something unique for the Germans. It was, however, also the new level of entertainment, as well as, the element of authenticity, that distinguished the Wild West from other shows –it was not just a circus show, it was history. The show confirmed the ideas Germans already imagined about the American West–Buffalo Bill presented the real thing, real animals and real Indians, not just white actors representing them. Moreover, as Julia Stetler argues in “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West in Germany. A Transnational History,” Cody enriched the “mind map of the American West [of Germans] with the drama of struggle.”<sup>107</sup> Consequently, Cody’s version of the American West became the dominant way of thinking about this region.

Buffalo Bill’s tour through Europe made clear how much the European world differed from the United States, and Cody therefore had to change different elements of Wild West, in different countries, in order to attract visitors. His American audiences were, compared to Europeans, more informed and aware of developments in the West; and some even had personal experiences from, or had heard personal stories about, traveling and living on the frontier. To the Europeans, the seemingly authentic show seemed exotic, though they had no ‘real’ experiences with which to compare the show. The show fed their imaginations, and the attractive notions of heroism and frontiers life resulted in a fascination for Cowboys and Indians. The Wild West came to Europe during a time in which the countries had reached the ‘frontiers’ of their empires (abroad). As Rydell and Kroes argue, the Wild West merged the American frontier with the European one, “European audiences may have been aware of this larger connection and may have

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<sup>106</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 112.

<sup>107</sup> Stetler, “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West in Germany. A Transnational History.,” 32–35.

seen the show as confirming views of Western superiority and the White Man's civilizing mission."<sup>108</sup>

Buffalo Bill was not the first American to dazzle the Europeans; there had been multiple previous exhibitions and world fairs. These however only confirmed the ideas of Europeans about America. The Europeans were still convinced that the United States was not able to create their own (high) art and culture.<sup>109</sup> Cody served as an informal cultural ambassador of sorts. Not formal, because he was not sponsored by the American government; rather, he went on his own. He was therefore received with less (versus no) skepticism than any openly political message during this time.<sup>110</sup> His tour was nonetheless supported by multiple sources in the United States. A telling example is the open letter of Mark Twain in the *New York Dispatch* in 1886: "It is often said on the other side of the water that none of the exhibitions we send are purely and distinctively American. If you will take the Wild West show over there you can remove that reproach."<sup>111</sup>

Buffalo Bill's European tours evidence the importance of an international perspective for the show. The ability to adjust the show to its audiences is an important factor in the success of the Buffalo Bull enterprise. Because the show did not have a homogeneous audience, it related to the culture of its different European audiences. By using the myths of the American frontier, it was not only to present the American culture to its international audiences but also to frame it as an 'authentic' image of the American West.

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<sup>108</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 111.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 149–163.

<sup>111</sup> Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 85.

## *Conclusion*

This chapter showed how Buffalo Bill's Wild West generated fascination for the American West in Europe. The Myth of the Frontier illustrated that the Wild West was different, almost the opposite of the European elite aristocracy-based culture. It gave the Europeans a different perspective on the United States, one that was raw, authentic, democratic and heroic; a United States that found its identity in the Myth of the Frontier.

Cody and his partners used the myths and stories about the American West in their show Buffalo Bill's Wild West. The success of this show, at home and abroad, can be credited to two central elements of the show: Indians and violence. These elements accentuated the Myth of the Frontier and were factors that made to show appealing to a broad audience. However, without an international perspective, Buffalo Bill's European tours would not have succeeded. The ability to adjust the show to its different audiences resulted in fame and commercial success far away from the American frontier. Because of these abilities, the creation of the character Buffalo Bill, and the myths that surrounded him, generated an interest for the American West in Europe.

Nonetheless, as Daryl E. Jones argues in his article "Of Few Days and Full of Trouble: The Evolution of the Western Hero in the Dime Novel," the show was not alone in doing this: "The importance of Buffalo Bill's theatrical career lies in the degree to which it influenced the dime novel, and ultimately the image of the Western hero in general."<sup>112</sup> Therefore, the next chapter looks more closely into the romanticization of the American West in, and the popularity of, the dime novel (hero).

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<sup>112</sup> Daryl E. Jones, "Of Few Days and Full of Trouble: The Evolution of the Western Hero in the Dime Novel," in *New Dimensions in Popular Culture*, ed. Russel B. Nye (Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1972), 118.

## CHAPTER 3: DIME NOVELS: AMERICAN STORIES IN EUROPE

Dime novels were very successful literature in both America and Europe. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century pulp-fiction literature took the literary market by storm. The great success of pulp fiction, including dime novels, among the working classes may be ascribed to various factors. For example, not only did their construction of over-romanticized storylines win people's hearts, the formation of a commercialized popular culture spread them across America, and even overseas to Europe. The working-classes were eager for the seemingly endless supply of dime novels, especially because each novel was part of a series.<sup>113</sup> The dime novels were commercial successes, which played off- of existing myths within a process of American identification between their imagined Western self—a Western self formally unknown to European audiences who were instantly taken by created images so culturally different—and, representative of the other. In addition, Western heroes like Buffalo Bill exploited these circumstances and presented 'authentic' tales of Western adventures—or did they?

This chapter analyzes the cultural circumstances in both the United States and Europe that made Western dime novels a literary success. Specifically, this chapter addresses the question: what was the function of the Western hero in dime novels, and how did these novels become so popular? For the commercial success of the dime novel, it is pivotal to understand the formation of the popular culture genre and how this was controlled by small groups of intellectuals, while simultaneously loved and embraced by the masses. Popular culture explains the popularity of dime novels from a perspective within society that sustained the division of social classes and a hierarchical structure in

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<sup>113</sup> Elizabeth G. Traube, "'The Popular' in American Culture," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25 (1996): 130.

society. In the same way, the popularity of dime novels was later imposed from above by industrialized institutions that facilitated mass production, which in turn, exploited the idea of popular culture as a commodity. This transition from popular culture, originating from within society, to a commercialized form of popular culture designed for the masses provides the historical context that helps explain how eventually industrialization made dime novels part of mass culture. For it is essential to understand in what ways mass production (i.e., the availability of more dime novels in more places) contributed to the popularity of dime novels. In addition to providing historical context, this chapter critically examines the content of particular Western dime novels. Specifically, the formation of the Western Hero Myth exemplified by Buffalo Bill is questioned in regard to its authenticity. It is important to understand the level of fiction that went into a dime novel in order to make it more appealing for the masses.

#### *Historical context; from Popular Culture to Mass Culture*

Popular culture was a concept formed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, which Janice Radway points out, highlighted the existence of a distinction between ‘high’ elitist culture and ‘low’ culture intended for the ‘ordinary people’ in both America and Europe.<sup>114</sup> This distinction between ‘low’ and ‘high’ culture implied a difference in social classes. Low culture referred to “culture of the people,” and high culture referred to a “learned culture.”<sup>115</sup> European elitists have used the term ‘popular’ to distance and exclude themselves from particular practices and beliefs of the lower classes. Popular culture, coined by the masses to represent expressive, popular forms, did not require great intellect. It was created within society, by the lower classes among whom it found great

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<sup>114</sup> Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*, Second (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 62– 79. Quoted from: Traube, “‘The Popular’ in American Culture,” 130.

<sup>115</sup> Traube, “‘The Popular’ in American Culture,” 130.

support. As a result, popular culture was categorized as ‘low’ culture, as it was considered primitive and associated by intellectuals with “irrationality, emotionality, traditionalism, communality—everything that the intellectuals who invented it thought they themselves were not.”<sup>116</sup> In essence, popular culture in the United States was not made by its consumers, but rather was created by marginal intellectual groups in order to reinforce a distinction in social classes. Intellectuals viewed themselves superior to the uneducated masses.<sup>117</sup> Subsequently, small intellectual marginal groups were viewed as rich in culture, while further emphasizing a correlation between cultural visibility and underprivileged cultural status for the masses.<sup>118</sup> Through furthering the idea of identification by defining the ‘popular,’ intellectuals were able to distinguish what they were not and could therefore be set apart from the largest societal groups: the lower classes. Hence, it is relevant to discuss the transformation of popular culture to mass culture because it was essentially the capitalization of the idea behind popular culture that sustained the popularity of Buffalo Bill dime novels.

Unlike popular culture, ‘commercialized’ mass culture was not made by its consumers, but was produced in centralized industries and distributed throughout the United States, and later even traveled overseas to Europe. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, traditional ‘folk’<sup>119</sup> popular culture underwent a transformation as industrialization and capitalism exploited the idea of popular culture as a commodity. Under these circumstances, mass culture took form.

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Renato Rosaldo, *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 196–217.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Folk’ culture is in this regard another definition of popular culture that emphasizes that popular culture was formed from (lower) groups in society, a bottom-up structure so to speak. As opposed to mass culture that has a more top-down structure. See Renato Rosaldo, *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).



Mass culture was significant not only for the American people, but for European people too, in defining the way they perceived the United States. After a bloody period in American history, the Civil War had deteriorated moral and identity in the United States. Kroes and Rydell remind us in their book *Buffalo Bill in Bologna* that it was precisely the Civil War that had constructed a mass culture out of, mythic locally construed beliefs on the American West (popular culture), which created a new national identity.<sup>120</sup> Specifically, the commercialization of popular culture had transformed popular culture into mass production where the individual lost its cultural influence. Consequently, small intellectual groups were, through the production of mass culture, able to exert a form of social control which undermined individuals and regarded them as masses. The importance of the word 'control' is most apparent when discussing immense production and distribution especially in association with the words 'mass culture'. Kroes and Rydell's definition of mass culture best reflects the enormity behind the definition: "[m]ass culture means the mobilization of cultural and ideological resources on a scale unimaginable in a preindustrial society lacking mass transportation and communication facilities."<sup>121</sup> Thus, it is important to consider the vast reach mass culture had, and the popular success with reconstructing the American identity after the Civil War in order to fully grasp how this culture was accepted by the masses.

The aftermath of the Civil War, in addition to other historical shifts in society, primarily the industrialization of society, helped further breed mass culture. While traditional popular culture in its formation was essentially held together by the idea of folk cultural practices and beliefs (i.e. beliefs originating from the intentional exclusion of elitist cultural institutions), it shifted from a culture made by the rural people to one made for and consumed by the urban masses. An artificial commercially produced

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<sup>120</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 3.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

culture, consumed by the urban working classes, was imposed from the outside. In her article “American ‘Popular Culture,’” Elizabeth G. Traube discusses the effects of a rationalized process of commercial commodity production: “the primary axis constructs a mass-produced low culture as Other to high culture that supposedly transcends commodity production.”<sup>122</sup> The elitist American culture industry transformed culture from a means of identifying the self versus the Other to a tool of social control preventing individualism, heterogeneity and class-consciousness. Respectively, commercialized mass culture thrived on capitalist motives and social control and “assimilated passive receivers to the homogeneous mass” Traube underlines.<sup>123</sup> Thus, in essence, the creation of popular culture, or commercialized popular culture was merely a means to separate classes. A system of hierarchical social order, controlled by the few and followed by the masses.

Between the 1830s and the 1890s the American cultural field was not only characterized by hierarchical structure, but also by new organizational forms of culture production. This period (referred to by historians as the Great Divide; the separation of high culture from popular culture) saw the rise of industrially produced forms of culture.<sup>124</sup> It is in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States that the commercial culture industry is joined by the non-profit cultural institution.<sup>125</sup> The mechanism of isolation and restriction that prevented the working classes from enjoying high-culture remained in place, only now the organizational structure had changed. Not only were many high-end cultural organizations privately controlled in the hands of small elitist groups such as publishers, institutions that were open to the public had high admissions that the working classes could not afford. Hence, industrially produced forms

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<sup>122</sup> Traube, “‘The Popular’ in American Culture,” 131.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

<sup>125</sup> Traube, “‘The Popular’ in American Culture,” 137.

of culture were the answer for the working class in search for amusement and entertainment.

Mass culture- and high culture have not always been two separate entities. Even before high culture was considered an autonomous cultural entity, mass culture was split into a high-cultural form 'genteel' and low-cultural form 'sensational.' Dime novels were specifically written as sensational stories because the elites, for example, publishers, were led by the idea that this would appeal most to the masses (i.e. the largest social group the working class). On the one hand, genteel popular culture was primarily consumed by the middle-class and included sentimental fiction, theater and magazines. What perhaps is the most important characteristic of genteel popular culture was its domestic mode of consumption, which was associated with values of disciplined self-restraint.<sup>126</sup> On the other hand, 'sensational' popular culture, spanning the penny press, blackface minstrelsy, Barnum's American Museum, melodramatic theater and dime novels was primarily consumed by the growing urban working class. These forms of 'sensational' and commercial amusement were very popular among the working class. This popularity is explained by Traube, who states that these forms of amusement "constructed an urban public sphere, where a rowdy style of consumption and the forms consumed gave expression to a version of working-class identity."<sup>127</sup> Thus, from the commercial perspective of the dime novel it was clever to write sensational storylines that best corresponded to the largest population group' cultural identity.

Mass culture did not just evolve because it exploited an existing cultural hierarchy in society, industrialization within society had numerous consequences. The development of 'leisure' time had an important impact on the production of culture. Between 1860 and 1920, American workers managed to reduce the number of work

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

hours per week, significantly altering their availability of time for leisure. Kroes and Rydell elaborate by stating that industrialization brought with it imposed standardization of time schedules, which routinized work combined with the use of heavy machinery, which not only sped up the work but also sanctioned earlier allowed forms of recreation like drinking on the job.<sup>128</sup> This historical context helps further explain how the mass production of dime novels came to be. Specifically, the simple fact that people had more time on their hands led them to pursue forms of entertainment that would fill up this available free time, whereas before, recreation and work were viewed as the same. Previously, there existed no leisure time, but now workers needed to find means of recreation outside of the work place. As a result, a growing group of working people was increasingly in search of entertainment in the form of, for example, dime novels, which provided an escape from working life. These economic shifts led to a growing group of people and an increased demand for amusement. This increased demand was answered by industrialized institutions by means of mass production of, in this context, literary entertainment.

The transition from popular culture to commercialized mass culture is essential in understanding the motives foundational to the popularity of cultural entertainment, such as dime novels. It is important to understand the historical context of socially structured classes, whereby culture was used as a tool to achieve a stricter social hierarchy. Specifically industrialization made elitist groups shift from cultural motives aimed at reinforcing class distinction to economic motives which commercialized imposed culture and exploited popular cultural demand. This economic shift made mass production of popular culture possible and was in turn reinforced by the availability of leisure time by its readership the working classes. The great commercial success of the dime novel was

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<sup>128</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 53.

not only the result of shifts in society, however. The content of dime novels proved to also be of social significance.

#### *The development of the dime novel*

Originally the term ‘dime novel’ used to be part of a brand called *Beadle’s Dime Novels* (1860-1874) which produced numbered series of paper-covered booklets, about a 100 pages long, and issued at regular intervals.<sup>129</sup> The publisher Beadle & Adams managed to publish a new title every two weeks for 14 years. The dime novel itself, as the name implies, sold for 10 cents. Though Beadle & Adams originally cornered the dime novel market, it was not long until other publishing houses picked up on its growing popularity. Competition in the literary market eventually led to the proliferation of paper-covered fiction at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, subsequently turning the brand name of ‘dime novel’ by publisher Erastus Beadle into a generic term applied to any work of fiction in paper covers irrespective of the cover price.<sup>130</sup>

By the 1870s, a potential large market for inexpensive, simply-told, and exciting fictional reading arose due to the exploitation of entrepreneurs’ intent on commercializing popular culture. In addition, the advancements of printing and papermaking technology had given entrepreneurs the tools to produce large amounts of reading matter, which catered to the masses for a relatively cheap price.<sup>131</sup> The format of the dime novel, a pamphlet approximately 4 by 6 inches with a paper cover, kept prices low. However, by the 1870s, modernized versions of these story pamphlets (i.e., with bright colored covers and issued in series), were enormously popular in the United States among both the urban lower classes and children of all classes.<sup>132</sup> Although during this period many countries produced cheap pamphlet sized stories, the American pamphlets

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<sup>129</sup> J. Randolph Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book* (Westport: Greenwood, 2000), XIII.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV.

<sup>131</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 489–490.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 490.

were considered most spectacular of all. Since their introduction by Erastus Beadle in 1860, American pamphlets, or dime novels, sold by the millions. Beadle's market formula was immensely successful. With loud and sizzling titles, extravagant adventurous story lines, inviting cover illustrations and an appealing pocketable size, the dime novels were a concept of great public attraction as well as for publishers and entrepreneurs.<sup>133</sup>

The great commercial success of dime novels was due partly to the choice of storyline. The dime novels offered a vast variety of tales all dealing with popular themes such as love, war and crime, and were written in a language easy to follow by the lower-educated masses. The original dime novels were tales of a pre-industrial America, the frontier and the West. However, not all dime novels were written on these topics. For example, piracy was depicted in "Tom Sawyer the Pirate—The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main!" published in 1876.<sup>134</sup> In spite of a wide variety of themes, the overwhelming quantity of popular frontier and American West themed novels tended to define the overall genre of dime novels. As dime novel researcher Randolph Cox explains: "for some readers a dime novel was by definition a western."<sup>135</sup> Although western-themed dime novels remained popular, urbanization and industrialization changed society, which in turn changed the subjects of dime novels. Urban spaces replaced the vast plains, and detectives replaced dime novel frontier heroes. It appears that dime novels were also influenced by (as well as reflected) current news events. An example of this is the historical event of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898, which was followed by published series of fictional reading matter on the quest for gold.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book*, xiii.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

In addition to the use of a Western Hero Myth the commercial success of dime novels also had to do with the way they were published. Namely, the novels were issued as a *series* of which each novel was part of an overarching collective identity that increased the likelihood consumers would purchase more than one issue.<sup>137</sup> To customers, knowing that a dime novel was a part of a series seemed to assure many that it would be good (i.e., the assumption that all tales were carefully selected).<sup>138</sup>

The tales invoked certain meaning to their readers. Denning argues that dime novels were a contradictory formation of meaning; a site where the “signs of class were spoken in multiple, conflicting, ambiguous “accents.”<sup>139</sup> These “accents” derived from subordinate, as well as dominant, social dialogues and included the ‘mechanic accents’ of the dime novels’ primary readers. Thus, while reading the novels, people were continuously trying to make sense of stories, which in turn produce a certain meaning to them. Although it is relatively easy to generalize the intended audience of dime novel readers (i.e. the blue collar workers), it is inaccurate to do so. It is, however, impossible to take into consideration each individual who had read a dime novel and what type of meaning was invoked within them. Hence, general conclusions on the effects of dime novels are drawn with the help of particular analytical strategies that by and large mobilize the audience in ways that maintained a subordinated conception of the social world.

The appealing look of a dime novel and low cost made it by far the easiest attainable form of entertainment by the working class. Cheap, sensational stories precisely matched the preferences of the so-called masses. The inclusion of news and important events in society such as the 1898 Gold Rush, and the issuing of series increased the likelihood that readers would buy and consequently recognize their daily

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<sup>137</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 490.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 490–491.

<sup>139</sup> Traube, “‘The Popular’ in American Culture,” 138.

life within a novel. The realization of industrialized institutions that dime novels invoked social meaning to the lower urban classes, was further exploited by the inclusion of existing foundational myths in American society.

### *The dime novel hero*

After the long depression of the 1890s, America was in a crisis of cultural morale, and in need of a unified national identity. Even before the long depression, the Civil War and continuing American Indian War had torn the country apart.<sup>140</sup> American society was anything but unified, turmoil and independent fronts had de-unified what once was the American identity. Prior to the Civil War, the individual American had known almost unlimited freedom; it is primarily after the Civil War this idea of freedom changed dramatically.<sup>141</sup> In this specific period, one finds the origin of mythical stories that popularized the American West. Turner's romantic idea of the American frontier was heavily influenced by the need for one American identity that would unify the people. In his eyes, the frontier was what made the land "American." The further the frontier went, the less European it became. In Turner's words, "the American frontier is sharply distinguished from the European frontier—a fortified boundary line running through dense populations."<sup>142</sup>

The idea of the frontier gave Americans a sense of pride and belonging. It was General Custer who provided the basis of a myth creating a sense of belonging. Although in essence the myth was based on complex realities, the newly created image of the white

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<sup>140</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 3.

<sup>141</sup> Russel B. Nye, ed., *New Dimensions in Popular Culture* (Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1972), 109–110.

<sup>142</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 3.



(Christian) man fighting off savages became part of a simple and predominantly heroic pattern of a myth.<sup>143</sup>

The Myth of the Western Frontier, as a foundational myth, emphasizes how Americans viewed themselves, and later invoked meaning for Europeans in regard to American culture. The Myth of the Western Hero, however, functioned differently. The dime novel Western and particularly the character of the Western hero was not innovative, but rather served as a “continuation of the traditional Eastern response to the West.”<sup>144</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the world was portrayed in literature in many ways. For example, the image of the world juxtaposed the Wilderness West against the Civilized East. The American experience illustrated the West as a domain entirely separate from eastern social order, and in that setting, a character representative of that domain: the Western dime novel hero.<sup>145</sup>

The image of the Western dime novel hero has not been consistent through time. One of the foundational theorists of American Studies, Henry Nash Smith, extensively discusses the development of the dime novel hero in his book *Virgin Land*.<sup>146</sup> In this extensive study, Smith analyzes various stereotypes of Western dime novel heroes: the trapper, the plainsman, the cowboy and semi-bandit or outlaw. While tracing the evolution of the Western hero in the dime novel through time, Smith notices a deterioration of the fictional image. The hero character gradually abandons traditional social and moral codes of behavior. He is a figure who embodies self-reliance and genteel or sensationalism, as well as moral viciousness difficult to distinguish from a true

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<sup>143</sup> In chapter 2 (Buffalo Bill in Europe) it is explained that General Custer brought the American public a hero with his specific mission of bringing Christianity, commerce, liberty, light and law to savage places in the United States. It was not until after his death that the image of Custer riding out, to fight Indians, took on mythical forms.

<sup>144</sup> Nye, *New Dimensions in Popular Culture*, 107.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>146</sup> *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York: Vintage Books, 1950), Chapter XI, “The Western Hero in the Dime Novel,” 99-125, and Chapter X, “The Dime Novel Heroine,” 126-135.

villain.<sup>147</sup> The evolution of the dime novel hero corresponds with the industrialization of society, through which people found recognition in their own situation. Smith, however, suggests that these changes in character had a negative effect on the Western story genre as a whole—where the choice for an outcast as a hero representing an evolving industrialized society “doomed the dime novel western to ethical and social irrelevance.”<sup>148</sup>

Stating that dime novel heroes were devoid of social and ethical meaning would be the same as stating that the dime novels invoked no social response or meaning whatsoever in its readers. Smith’s initial remark on the evolution of the dime novel hero is pivotal for understanding the social significance, though he fails to clarify the immense popularity of a dime novel that supposedly “could not establish any real contact with society.”<sup>149</sup> Popularity of the dime novels alone strongly suggests that readers found social significance in the stories. It would be inaccurate to assume that all dime novels lacked social significance merely because their hero characters lived an immoral life, apart from society. Thus, it is important to take the historical context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in which these novels were written into consideration in order to understand the circumstances that made these stories so popular.

The historical context of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by a paradoxical attitude towards the machine that was subsequently incorporated in the dime novel. Society sought ways to deal with the coming of the machine (i.e., industrialization in 1840). Ironically, society not only feared the machine and subsequent changes, it also happened to love it. As a result, the hero figures in Western dime novels represented that paradoxical attitude. Russel Nye reveals that the popularity of the Western hero, a rebel and fugitive from civilization, was related to America’s growing rejection of a

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<sup>147</sup> Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, 133–134.

<sup>148</sup> Nye, *New Dimensions in Popular Culture*, 108–109.

<sup>149</sup> Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, 135.

civilization which seemingly undermined the individual and imposed materialism, industrialization and a structured sociological economy.<sup>150</sup> This discontent, caused by for instance a dehumanized factory system, labor strife and hazardous working conditions, was expressed not by the public's need for a hero, but for a hero who would reject and condemn society.<sup>151</sup> In words of Russel Nye: "the self-reliant hero, fleeing the restraints of civilization, embodied the individual American's desire to flee these same restraints."<sup>152</sup> Thus, the dime novel's social significance does not become evident in the fact that it expressed a society yearning for progress and materialism—as it did not—it rather expressed suppressed fears of that society. The trend of an increasingly rebellious hero in the dime novels over the years, as Smith emphasized, was actually a reflection of society's growing discontent with the structure of life.

One could say that society found a way to escape daily life, by reading about a Western hero who did not fear society and who was able to break free from the tentacles of industrialization. This specific writing trend of an increasingly rebellious hero in the dime novel Western corresponded with society's increasing disapproval of societal trends. For instance, the Western hero, such as cowboy Buffalo Bill, was often characterized by his use of violence (i.e., adhering to the Western code of honor), when the established systems of society failed him.<sup>153</sup> The conflict between violence—the code of the West—and law, society's cornerstone of middle-class social values, mirrored a profound reasoning in the popular, imagination in both Europe and America.<sup>154</sup> In other words, the popularity of Buffalo Bill was a direct reaction of the readers to their frustration with a rigid, controlled society, in which Buffalo Bill was the embodiment of their final grasp to individual freedom. Buffalo Bill's violence was thus "the ultimate

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<sup>150</sup> Nye, *New Dimensions in Popular Culture*, 110.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 125–126.

expression of law-abiding rebellion against social restraint,” which justified his use of violence.<sup>155</sup> Despite the fact that Cody was often viewed as ‘law-abiding,’ because he wore a badge and worked for the U.S. army, this statement is focused more on Buffalo Bill’s image as an individual and not just a puppet of society and the law.

Buffalo Bill like many other fictional Western heroes, became a hero in the dime novels primarily because of social restraint, or as Nye defines it “anarchic tendencies” in society.<sup>156</sup> In an age of widespread discontentment and alienation, the Western hero reflected fears of society and let the reader be able to purge their repellent sentiments of dissatisfaction. Therefore, children, and even more so adults, idealized the rebellious heroes in dime novels. The trend of an increasingly rebellious Western hero character was thus a reaction to growing anxieties of modern life; specifically, anxieties that originated out of fear of growing industrialization, urbanization and a restricted individual freedom in the period after the Civil War.

#### *Buffalo Bill’s representation, romanticized?*

Buffalo Bill’s rise to national- and international fame began when Ned Buntline first introduced Buffalo Bill to the world. Interestingly, Buntline’s life rather resembled that of a hero. In addition to a lot of experience with writing, he participated in adventurous military operations, campaigned for the Know-Nothing party, and was married six times—one could say this man was experienced in life.<sup>157</sup> Initially, Ned Buntline’s idea was to create a dime novel hero out of Major Frank North, commander of three companies of Pawnee scouts who repeatedly fought the Sioux Indians. The major refused but referred Buntline to William F. Cody. Apparently, after having joined multiple scouting operations and engaging in long conversations with Buffalo Bill, Ned Buntline

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 125–126, 130–131.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 117.

had gathered enough material for a literary project which evolved around his “newly-discovered hero.”<sup>158</sup> On December 23, 1869 the *Buffalo Bill, the King of the Border Men* was launched as a returning series in the *New York Weekly* up until March 17, 1870.<sup>159</sup>

Ned Buntline was instrumental in introducing Buffalo Bill as a ‘hero’ to a large urban readership. Buntline often featured Cody as co-writer on his Buffalo Bill novels. Other writers of dime novels, however, who also wrote about the character of Buffalo Bill, likewise, took the liberty of signing Cody’s name as author.<sup>160</sup> During this time, many dime novels were written by ghost-writers instead of by the main character of that particular novel (as was often advertised). Simply, the name on the story sold the reader on buying it. Although much of the ghost-writing about Buffalo Bill is ascribed to Ned Buntline, Buntline never wrote a series on Buffalo Bill; rather, he wrote only four Buffalo Bill dime novels.<sup>161</sup> Initially, his published 1869 story *King of the Border Men* was not about the postwar frontier, but about border fighting in the Civil War.<sup>162</sup> The effect this story had on society, and the creation of the idea of a Western hero, was thus more coincidental than intentionally constructed. As a result, writers and publishers discovered the positive effect a dime novel hero had on increasing the popularity of the dime novel in general. In the end, about 550 dime novels about Cody eventually appeared on the market.<sup>163</sup>

Separation of the two (heroic) characters of William F. Cody and Buffalo Bill is essential in understanding the popularity of the American West in both the United States and Europe.<sup>164</sup> In relation, the commercialized literary market benefited from an entrepreneur like William F. Cody who had surrounded his character of Buffalo Bill with

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> *New York Weekly* (XXV, No. 6, Dec. 23, 1869 – XXV, No. 17, Mar. 10, 1870.)

<sup>160</sup> Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 45.

<sup>161</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 151.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 45.

<sup>164</sup> Chapter 2 addresses why the separation of William F. Cody and Buffalo Bill is essential.

myths that played on the idea of a Western hero. In the research on Cody himself, however, it is more difficult to draw a distinctive line between the two characters. The myths that surrounded Cody were created intentionally in order to increase the popularity of dime novel hero character. Thus, it was not the authentic William F. Cody represented in the dime novels; rather, it was his fictional character Buffalo Bill depicted in the romanticized stories. Though these stories may have had an essence of truth in them, they clearly exploited existing myths on the Wild West.

The fictional character of Buffalo Bill underwent a dramatic change from its original first publishing in 1869 to the character written about in 1879. When Buntline first introduced Buffalo Bill to the public in 1869 in the dime novel *Buffalo Bill, King of Border Men*, he was portrayed as a rather rough looking man. Initially, the dime novel was meant to promote the Wild West shows, which helps explain the theatricality that surrounded Buffalo Bill. The plainsman had a rugged demeanor. He was depicted as bearded and long haired, dressed in shaggily fringed buckskin and spoke ungrammatical English.<sup>165</sup> This version of Buffalo Bill was a self-reliant, naturally civilized, and an independent prairie scout, but could also be a wild, violent Indian killing adventurer.<sup>166</sup> The uncertainty of these two almost opposite characters endowed Buffalo Bill's character with ambiguity, which could be exploited in order to maintain suspense and surprise endings in a story line.

As the dime novel progressed in the 1870s and 1880s, the notion of an elderly, imperfect grammatical English speaking rough-looking Buffalo Bill changed. As society progressed, the audience wanted to see Buffalo Bill progress along with them. Buffalo Bill's age and marriage in real-life prevented him from having a literary love interest,

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<sup>165</sup> Nye, *New Dimensions in Popular Culture*, 118–119.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

which in the 1870's, the high-time of the novel, was demanded by the audience.<sup>167</sup>

Buffalo Bill's lower class distinction also should have led him marry an upper class heroine, even if it would be considered a social indecency. His audience also wanted him to maintain that rugged plainsman of lower-class appearance, while in reality he was able to eloquently talk and act civilized. These contradictions between reality-and fiction, and popular demand eventually led to the change in Buffalo Bill's character.

In order to satisfy these changing demands, a slow trend toward a younger, naturally noble, inherently superior hero appeared. When the Buffalo Bill dime novels were written by ghost-writer Prentiss Ingraham between 1879 and 1904, Buffalo Bill was no longer a crude plainsman. For example, he had a flair for the theatrical, changed costumes multiple times throughout the stories and said goodbye to his ungrammatical accent. However, as mentioned previously in this chapter, Buffalo Bill's justification of violence led him to believe that his individual concept of justice was above the law: "substituting his personal moral code for society's, in a way that would soon become characteristic to the Western hero."<sup>168</sup>

The increasingly rebellious character of Buffalo Bill throughout the dime novels, even his participation in illegal conduct, was cleverly outbalanced by a growing emphasis on courtesy manners and social polish. The essence of Buffalo Bill's character still needed to reflect the battle of society's social restraint, however, while also answering to the demands for more romance. Russel Nye concludes the changing character of Buffalo Bill as:

"The movement of the Western hero away from the restraints of an artificial social order based upon birth and wealth, toward the unrestrained freedom of a more open order based upon the individual's innate worth as a person, reflects the trends of social change during the latter half of the nineteenth century."<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 116.

It is evident that maintaining historical accuracy was not the dime novel writer's main purpose. Answering the demands of the readership was perceived more valuable, as this resulted in more sales. Not only did writers contribute to Buffalo Bill's success, the rise of the penny press in the 1830s, and the availability of free promotional advertisements, created the opportunity for Buffalo Bill's dime novels to reach vast new audiences without having to pay for the opportunity.<sup>170</sup> John M. Burke, Buffalo Bill's press agent, was motivated to generate as much press coverage as possible, which did not always need to be based on the truth. "[P]romoters developed a talent for making the news. The object was simply to break into print often at the expense of truth or dignity."<sup>171</sup> Moreover the press promotion was often instantaneous so that John M. Burke practically spent no time verifying the truthfulness or value of the promotional content.<sup>172</sup> Cody's press agents often took available material and found ways to rearrange it in order to make it look new and to increase sales.<sup>173</sup> For example, mixing up chapters in order to present a Buffalo Bill story as new, highlights how little attention was given to presenting a factual story, or whether or not a story was in essence based on facts.

All of the press agents' efforts in promoting Buffalo Bill went into exploiting the idea of a Western hero instead of detailing his historical career. Inherently, all of the literature by and about Buffalo Bill was designed to promote the Wild West shows, despite the absence of deliberately mentioning them in the dime novels. Don Russell points out that: "Cody and his press agents may have done a poor job for history, but

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<sup>170</sup> Jason Berger, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West and John M. Burke: Exploring the Origins of Celebrity Brand Management," *Journal of Promotion Management*, 2009, 226.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 284.



they were tremendous in their creation of a tradition.”<sup>174</sup> The creation that Russel refers to is a direct insinuation that a romanticized picture was painted of Buffalo Bill.

Interestingly, Buffalo almost never referred to the dime novels. His attitude toward the texts that had basically launched his career was largely ambivalent. Paradoxically, he wished to not be associated too much with the dime novels which made him a phenomenon as dime novels were associated with the ideals of the working class, which, incidentally, Cody wished not to be compared to in his personal quest for upward mobility.<sup>175</sup>

Buffalo Bill’s character has been the product of mixing up reality with fiction while emphasizing the Western hero myth through his demeanor and self-reliance. Buffalo Bill’s changing character aligns with a changing societal demand for more romanticism, while paradoxically maintaining his rugged look and seclusion from society that corresponded with the rapidly evolving 19<sup>th</sup>-century society readers could no longer identify with. Additionally, Buffalo Bill’s changing character indicated a change in the social hierarchy of society that moved away from a system based on primarily social order of wealth and birth, to a more open order based on the individual’s worth as a person.

### *Buffalo Bill, popular literature*

The popularity of the dime novel in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century should not be underestimated. Since the 1870s dime novels have been a major part of the reading matter of the adult masses as well as children: only newspapers found a wider

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (London: Verso, 1998), page.

audience.<sup>176</sup> In addition, the Education Act of 1863 led to compulsory education, which increased the literacy rate and created new readerships for dime novels.<sup>177</sup>

The dime novel heroes were frontiersmen, bandits, American Indians, firefighters and detectives. These heroic figures were chosen because they were easy to read about and recognize on a book cover, as well as likely to be remembered after having read the book.<sup>178</sup> In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, copyrights were not standard. Subsequently, many stories were easily parodied and imitated, which demands deeper questioning about how serious original works were taken. Later in this paper the differences in translation, as well as in cultural translation are highlighted in addition to the effects different translations invoked from its audience.

Many heroes returned story after story. For example, Buffalo Bill, would not have had a dime novel series if it were not for his continuous return in every story. As a result, writers did alter the characterizations of heroes, but not to the extent they were unrecognizable in comparison with their previous descriptions.<sup>179</sup> From a commercial perspective, this was clever, as the reader would instantly recognize the hero in spite of which number he/she chose to read out of the series. Specifically John Burke, excessively used hype as a means to popularize Buffalo Bill. According to Sarah J. Blackstone, Burke wrote: “reams of copy (all extremely florid and containing many exaggerations and inconsistencies) for programs, fliers, newspapers, and magazines.”<sup>180</sup> Buffalo Bill was blatantly present in media, both national as well as international. As a London reporter wrote on the arrival of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show to London in 1895:

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<sup>176</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 489.

<sup>177</sup> Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book*, xx.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> Sarah J Blackstone, *The Business of Being Buffalo Bill: The Selected Letters of William F. Cody, 1879-1917* (New York: Prager, 1986), 18.

I may walk it, or bus it, or hanson still  
I am faced by the features of Buffalo Bill;  
Every boarding is plastered, from East-End to West.  
With his hat, coat and countenance, lovelocks and vest.<sup>181</sup>

The publication of Buffalo Bill dime novels in series instead of individual novels also enhanced its popularity. Although the final chapter of this research further elaborates on this, knowing that a dime novel was part of a series almost assured the reader that it was good material. Moreover, building on the idea of creating hype around Buffalo Bill, people looked forward to the next issue since most novels had unexpected endings and a sense of suspense, which would automatically encourage them to buy the next issue.

Buffalo Bill was one of the best examples of a successful dime novel, as demonstrated by multiple published series. The continuous return of his character in every story and the changes in his character which catered to the desires of the masses, but maintained his image, prolonged his popularity. Hence, despite the changes he underwent, it was easy for the masses to instantly recognize Buffalo Bill. Finally, the excessive promotion of Buffalo Bill in the media and subsequent hype further enhanced his popularity.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has provided insight into the questions; what was the function of the Western hero in dime novels, and how did these novels become so popular? As for the popularity of the novels their transition from folk stories to dime novels had a large impact on society. Though originally created by and for society's lower classes, the popular myths on the American West furthered a hierarchic structure in society, in which the intellectuals aimed to be separated societally from the largest group: the lower

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<sup>181</sup> Elizabeth Jane Leonard and Julia Cody Goodman, *Buffalo Bill: King of the Old West* (New York: Library Publishers, 1955), 249.

(urban) classes. Specifically, industrialization shifted intellectuals from cultural motives to economic motives, in their quest for social hierarchy. As a result, capitalization of the cultural myths took place which exploited the idea of American re-unification and European identification of the American West. Subsequently, the mass production of dime novels had little regard for the social meaning it inferred on the lower urban classes, but managed to maintain its popularity by implementing current news events, and by issuing multiple boldly colored series. In addition, the vast amount of production and competition in the literary market kept prices low, which made dime novels part of a small amount of literature accessible to the lower urban classes.

The heroes in dime novels were rugged and patriotic individuals not held down by the restraints of society, and who represented contemporary popular concepts of the nation. Moreover, these concepts were not positive per se, as society had been swept up by the fears of modern life. The Buffalo Bill dime novels would not have sold and been read by so many if they had not adhered to prevailing beliefs embodied by a mythical Western hero character. In the end, by reading dime novels, supporting the idea behind them, and increasing their popularity, was a means through which society's lower classes had to express themselves in a time where this was very difficult. The choice for an outcast as a hero, who had abandoned all social and moral codes, was a representation of a rapidly evolving industrialized society, which existed far from the romanticized image people had of pre-industrial society. Thus, the image of a Western dime novel hero expressed suppressed fears of a society, which further increased the popularity of a dime novel in that it allowed people (i.e. primarily the lower urban classes) to temporarily abandon their feelings of dissatisfaction and escape their daily lives through reading.



## CHAPTER 4: TECHNICAL ANALYSIS AND TRANSLATION OF AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN BUFFALO BILL DIME NOVELS

Although many scholars<sup>182</sup> assume that the American Buffalo Bill dime novels in Europe were straight translation, or were original dime novels with entirely new stories, this paper argues that there in fact is a middle ground. While the novels seem similar (i.e., primarily straight translations), there are indeed differences. Only through close reading the texts can one find these differences. It is, therefore, easy to assume that in Europe the Buffalo Bill dime novels were: “reprints and translations.”<sup>183</sup> The question raised and answered in this chapter is: how do differences in (European) dime novel translation highlight in what way in Europe the Wild West was translated, explained, and sold?

This chapter will focus on a small selection of dime novels from the series *Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures*. The selection was based on whether or not the American dime novels available had a counterpart in more than one European language, as they then could be compared with each other as well as the American version. The focus of attention for this project has been placed on the Dutch novels, though the Dutch novels discussed in this paper have been double-checked against other European versions, such as German, French, Italian and, several Scandinavian versions. In addition, the selected works had to be in the physical possession of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming, USA, in order to be analyzed. While they have an amazing remarkable collection in Cody, not all the dime

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<sup>182</sup> Such as L. Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany”; Irene Lottini, “When Buffalo Bill Crossed the Ocean: Native American Scenes in Early Twentieth Century European Culture,” *European Journal of American Culture* 31, no. 3 (2012): 187–203; Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*; Roger Nichols, “Western Attractions: Europeans and America,” *Pacific Historical Review* 74, no. 1 (February 2005): 1–18.

<sup>183</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 388.

novels were available (see Appendix 1 for the complete list with notes of available Dutch dime novels). Furthermore, some dime novels were fairly straight translations of the American versions. These novels were excluded from this research project, as they do not provide us with any information on how they were translated in their cultural context. They do however help explain the assumptions that the novels were mere translations of their American originals.

Unfortunately, most of the European Buffalo Bill dime novels from the McCracken Library are missing a publishing date, and it is therefore hard to say when exactly they were published. According to Randolph Cox's extensive research *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book* (2000), however, the American version of the series *Buffalo Bill Stories* can be dated between May 1901 and September 1912.<sup>184</sup> The Dutch dime novels from this series were dated and mentioned in a reprint of the original Dutch dime novels, which claims they were published in the Netherlands only after Cody's death, between 1916 and 1925.<sup>185</sup>

#### *Cover Comparison Buffalo Bill Dime Novels*

The dime novels from the series *Buffalo Bill Stories*, *Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures* are easy to recognize. The bold red letters and the yellow(ish) banner on top are not unusual in dime novels, nor is the use of a big illustration of the story on the front cover.<sup>186</sup> The bold letters stating 'Buffalo Bill' and the use of the name of William F. Cody, however, were what made these novels stand out from other dime novel (Wild

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<sup>184</sup> Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book*, 44–45.

<sup>185</sup> William F. Cody, *De Avonturen van Buffalo Bill: Vijf Spannende Avonturen Uit Het Oude, Wilde Westen*, reprint from dime novels from 1916 (Laren: Uitgeverij Skarabee, n.d.), 7.

<sup>186</sup> Unfortunately, the artists who created the cover image were most of the time not credited for their work, so it is impossible to trace back who were responsible for these images.

West) series. All the dime novels published in this series claim that they are “the only publication authorized by Col. W. Cody gen. Buffalo Bill” (see figure 4-1).

As discussed in chapter 3, during this period it was common to publish dime novels under the name of well-known authors. Because of this practice, all the dime novels from this series were published under the name of William F. Cody. It is not likely that Cody himself wrote any of these novels. However, in *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, Don Russell identifies twenty-seven novels that are, at least partially, Cody’s work. None of these novels are part of the *Buffalo Bill Stories* series, though, Cody wrote his last dime novel in 1897 (and are therefore not discussed in this paper).<sup>187</sup> Moreover, Russell argues that Cody probably did not even read the dime novels, as “he [Cody] says he read the Bible and ‘a few other books’ when as he was a boy he was marooned with a broken leg...”<sup>188</sup> Some Buffalo Bill series use the name of Ned Buntline,<sup>189</sup> and it is more likely that he was more involved in the creation of the Buffalo Bill dime novels than Cody himself. It is, however, unlikely that he wrote all of them, as the series discussed in this paper, signed with the name Buffalo Bill were published after Ned Buntline and Cody had parted ways.<sup>190</sup>

At first glance, the European versions do not differ much from their American counterparts. For example, if we compare figure 4-2 (an American version) and 4-3 (a Dutch version), both from the same dime novel story, the same image is used and the English title is still on the cover of the Dutch version. Figure 4-1 gives an impression of how the Dutch edition would have looked in color. Here we can clearly see the yellow banner on top, and the Dutch title added: *De bereden Scherpschutters*. This title is a rough translation of the American title *Buffalo Bill’s Rifle Rangers: A story of rough*

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<sup>187</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 265–282.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>189</sup> Pseudonym of Edward Zane Carroll Judson

<sup>190</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 265.



*riding rescues*. The title, however, is shortened. The American dime novel has two titles: one in red and one in black. The Dutch (and other European versions) only have one translated title. This method of using the same image (i.e. keeping the American title on the cover and a shortened translated title) is repeated in the other novels in this series. Another example of this can be found in the translated edition of the dime novel *Buffalo Bill's Boy Bravo Pard or On the trail of the terror of Texas*. The title of the Dutch edition of this novel *Op het Spoor van den Schrik van Texas* is very similar, but shorter.

It is important to note the sentence on the bottom of the dime novel covers. All the editions of the *Buffalo Bill Stories* series, the American and the European, have a caption sentence underneath the illustration that *should* describe the events on the illustration. As in the American versions, they should, use this caption sentence to describe the image. Interestingly, though, the European versions often seem to describe an entirely different event. For example, on the front cover of the American dime novel *Buffalo Bill's Boy Bravo Pard or On the Texan Terror's Trail*, the caption underneath the illustration reads: "I accept your challenge, and will play you, the stakes being for your life or mine, and you are a coward if you refuse, was Buffalo Bill's cool retort."<sup>191</sup> This is entirely different from the Dutch version, in which the caption of the illustration is translated, or changed, into: "Als jij verliest en ik win, dan wil ik iets anders van je hebben dan je leven! Riep Buffalo Bill,"<sup>192</sup> which implies a different setting of the storyline. In the Dutch version, the implication of a so-called proposed 'challenge' is missing.

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<sup>191</sup> William F. Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Boy Bravo Pard or On the Texan Terror's Trail*, vol. 13, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures, 1901, front cover.

<sup>192</sup> William F. Cody, *Op Het Spoor van Den Schrik van Texas. Buffalo Bill's Boy Bravo Pard*, vol. 4, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures (Amsterdam: A. Eichler, n.d.), front cover. "If you lose, and I win, then I would want something else from you than your life! Shouted Buffalo Bill" Translation mine.

Another example of a difference in the caption of the front cover illustration can be found on the cover of *Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers or A story of Rough Riding Rescues*. Where the American version uses: “Buffalo Bill and Ponca Patty, at a breakneck gallop, send shot after shot among the Indians with fearful rapidity,”<sup>193</sup> the Dutch version reads: “Twee vuurstralen kwamen uit de buksen van Buffalo Bill en Alice en twee reusachtige Cheyennes vielen ontzield van hun paarden.”<sup>194</sup> Although these captions seem to be referring to the same part of the story it is done slightly different. Moreover, it shows that a different name is used for the same character. These differences in captions suggest that the covers were not just copied but altered, and that this was done with little consideration and attention for the story inside them.

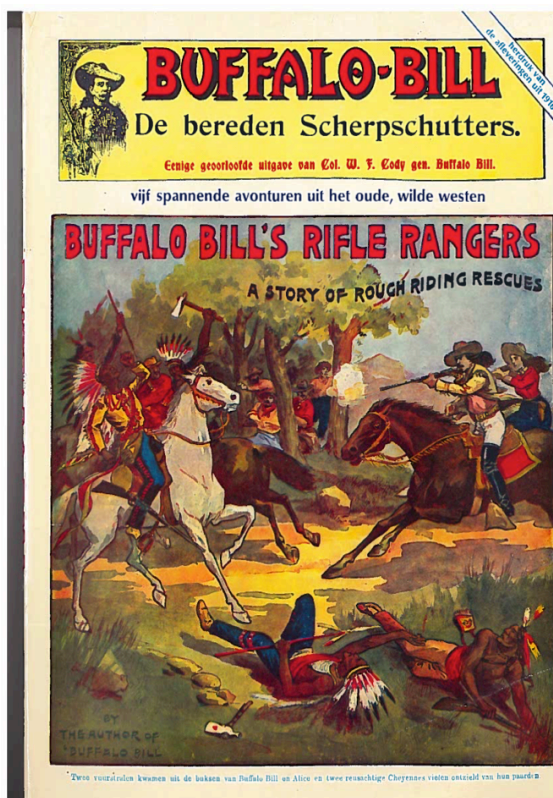


Figure 4-1 Front cover Dutch edition: vijf spannende avonturen uit het oude, wilde westen. Courtesy of the McCracken Library

<sup>193</sup> William F. Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers or A Story of Rough Riding Rescues*, vol. 4, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures, 1901, front cover.

<sup>194</sup> William F. Cody, *De Bereden Scherpschutters. Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers*, vol. 3, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures (Amsterdam: A. Eichler, n.d.), front cover. “Two fire rays came from the rifles of Buffalo Bill and Alice, and two enormous Cheyennes fell lifeless down from their horses.” Translation mine.



Figure 4-2 Front cover American edition: Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers or A Story of Rough Riding Rescues. Courtesy of the McCracken Library



Figure 4-3 Front cover Dutch edition: De bereden Scherpschutters. Courtesy of the McCracken Library

Even more interesting than the front covers of the Buffalo Bill dime novels, are the back covers of the European editions. Most novels have a promotional text on the back that aims to promote the (next editions of the) series. Most telling, and maybe even the most ‘propagandistic’ of all the covers researched at the McCracken Library, is the (translated) back cover of the earlier discussed *Buffalo Bill’s Boy Bravo Pard or On the trail of the terror of Texas* (illustrated in figure 4-4). To show how Buffalo Bill was promoted, the cover is a literal (word for word) translation from older Dutch and is therefore more difficult to translate and interpret:

When a while ago, the American press reported that Buffalo Bill wanted to write down his adventures, this announcement generated great sensation, since all of America anticipated this happening with the greatest excitement. The most beloved national hero of the Union would share his stories with the world!

And the message was true: Buffalo Bill has been telling his Wild West adventures! One of his old, loyal comrades has written these adventures down. He speaks in his hefty language of the border hunters. In the Dutch translation this way of expression is represented to the best of possibilities. Never before has a book been received with this much enthusiasm. In every house in the United States the adventures of Buffalo Bill can be found. And truly, if ever a human told something important, which he experienced himself and therefore is the truth, then it is this famous fighter of the Wild West, the man, who conquered the Indians in more than a hundred battles accompanied by the presence of spirit, courage and valor, the man, who is yet long worldly known in the civilized world as the best sharpshooter and bravest rider, then it is Buffalo Bill.

The national hero of America- the pride of the United States

What makes these memories of Buffalo Bill so incomparably appealing?

At first, the assurance, that these histories, so rich in suspense and sensational variance, paint true pictures, but then also the picture of the hero himself, loved by his friends, feared by his enemies, whom never saw anyone trembling in the danger, who himself in combat was always magnanimous, so he could only be compared with the lion, who knows its strength and more often does not use it.

Buffalo Bill also tells the Dutch people his adventures.

Because the below mentioned publisher has succeeded to gain sole rights to the translating and spreading of all Buffalo Bill stories in the Netherlands. This succeeded success is due to the making of large sacrifices.

Still, Buffalo Bill is already a friend of the Dutch people, and an old acquaintance. Is he not in all great cities enthusiastically met, if he appeared there with his famous Wild West clan?

As too are the translations of the stories of Buffalo Bill in the Netherlands the biggest event of the day. Young and old call out joyous:

“Wonderful! Sensational!”

“Buffalo Bill tells his adventures!”

Every week a single episode of this very interesting Buffalo Bill stories will appear.<sup>195</sup>

Throughout this clearly ‘propagandist’ back cover, a certain image of Buffalo Bill is painted and perceived as the truth. Whilst these stories contain an overabundance of drama, fiction and exaggeration, the Dutch press is widely enthusiastic about them. The underlined phrases refer to arguments that may help explain why these particular novels resonated so well with the Dutch audience.

Strikingly, this back cover refers to Buffalo Bill as being one of the most famous people in the “civilized world.” This could be perceived as a direct reference to the Indians, who were then still considered uncivilized; or this might refer to other parts of the world such as the Philippines, which were also regarded by the Americans as being ‘uncivilized’ during and after the Spanish-American War.<sup>196</sup> Furthermore, Buffalo Bill is generalized as being America’s “most beloved national hero of the Union,” though one may doubt this, as this could not have accounted for all different aspects of America’s society (e.g. think of the Indians themselves, Mexicans, and even European immigrants). Moreover, sentences such as “therefore is the truth” and “paint true pictures” show how the adventures of Buffalo Bill, as described in the dime novels, were perceived as authentic by Europeans.

Interestingly, this back cover also claims that Buffalo Bill’s popularity was immense in the Netherlands despite the fact that the show never actually traveled to the Netherlands: “Still, Buffalo Bill is already a friend of the Dutch people, and an old acquaintance. Is he not in all great cities enthusiastically met, if he appeared there with his famous Wild West clan?” It is hard to make the assumption here that Buffalo Bill is already an “old acquaintance” of the Netherlands because of him visiting Dutch cities

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<sup>195</sup> Cody, *Op Het Spoor van Den Schrik van Texas. Buffalo Bill’s Boy Bravo Pard.* Translation ours.

<sup>196</sup> David Brody, *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago ; London: University Of Chicago Press, 2010), 63–67.

with his Wild West show, as it never occurred. However, the enthusiasm for Buffalo Bill was influenced by the enthusiasm from neighboring countries like Germany and Belgium, which Cody did visit. Neighboring enthusiasm could have sparked interest in Dutch society or might have even made Dutch people travel to his shows.

Lastly, the final sentence of the back cover “the translations of the stories of Buffalo Bill in the Netherlands,” is interesting because it makes the assumption that the novels were indeed mere translations and not altered for the Dutch, or even a European, public.



**BUFFALO BILL**  
vertelt zijn avonturen.

Toen een poosje geleden, de Amerikaansche pers meedeelde, dat Buffalo Bill zijn avonturen wilde schrijven, verwekte deze tijding grootte sensatie, want geheel Amerika zag met de grootste spanning deze gebeurtenis tegemoet. De meest geliefde nationale held van de Unie toch zou dan zijn geschiedenis wereldkundig maken!

En het bericht was waar: Buffalo Bill heeft zijn avonturen in het wilde westen verteld! Een van zijn oude, trouwe makkers heeft die verhalen meer geschreven. Hij spreekt in zijn flinke taal van de grensjagers. In de Nederlandsche vertaling is deze wijze van uitdrukken zoo goed mogelijk weergegeven. Nooit tevoren is een boek met zooveel geestdrift ontvangen. In alle luizen van de Vereenigde Staten zijn de vertellingen van Buffalo Bill te vinden. En werkelijk, wanneer ooit een mensch iets belangrijks vertelde, dat hij zelf beleefde en dus waar is, dan is het deze beroemde strijder van het wilde westen, de man, die de Indianen door tegenwoordigheid van geest, dapperheid en leeuwenmoed in meer dan honderd gevechten wist te overdwinnen, de man, die reeds lang in de beschaafde wereld bekend is als de beste schutter en de koenste ruiter, dan is het

**Buffalo Bill**  
o de nationale held van Amerika o  
de trots van de Vereenigde Staten.

Wat geeft de herinneringen van Buffalo Bill deze onvergelijkelijke aantrekkingskracht?

In de eerste plaats de zekerheid, dat deze geschiedenissen, zoo rijk aan spanning en sensationele afwisseling, werkelijke gebeurtenissen schilderen, maar dan ook het figur van den held zelf, bemind door zijn vrienden, gevreesd door zijn vijanden, dien nooit iemand in het gevaar zag beven, die zelf in den strijd steeds edelmoedig was, zoodat hij alleen vergeleken kon worden bij den leeuw, die zijn kracht kent en dikwijls er geen gebruik van maakt.

**Buffalo Bill vertelt ook het Nederlandsche volk zijn avonturen.**

Want den lager genoemden uitgever is het gelukt, dank zij groote offers alleen het recht verworven te hebben tot het vertalen en verspreiden van alle Buffalo Bill verhalen in Nederland.

Doch Buffalo Bill is reeds een vriend van het Nederlandsche volk, en een onte bekende. Is hij niet in alle groote steden roestdriftig ontvangen, als hij er met zijn beroemden Wild West troep verscheen?

Zoo zijn dus ook de vertellingen van Buffalo Bill in Nederland de groote gebeurtenis van den dag. Jong en oud roepen verheugd uit:

**Prachtig! Sensationeel!**  
**Buffalo Bill vertelt zijn avonturen!**

**A. Eichler, Uitgever**  
Amsterdam, Spuistraat bij de Molsteeg 119.  
Dresden, Rosenstrasse 107.  
New York, 33 First Street. Londen E. C., 290 Old Street.

Elke week verschijnt een op zichzelf staande aflevering van deze zeer interessante Buffalo Bill verhalen.

Buffalo Bill als chef van de verkenners en padvindders van het leger der Vereenigde Staten.

Figure 4-4 Back cover Dutch edition: *Op het Spoor van Den Schrik van Texas*. Courtesy of the McCracken Library

Different European back covers from various editions show how publishers sold the dime novels to a European audience, because they all refer to the popularity of Buffalo Bill's Wild West and his adventures in their own country. An example of such a reference is on the Italian (translated) back cover:

Buffalo Bill is known throughout the civilized world  
In these stories, the Italian public will have the opportunity to better know that man who so enthusiastically rose with his famous company of Rough Riders and warrior Indians, when he gave his extraordinary performances in Rome and in other cities of the peninsula. As too in the Italian translation of the stories mark Buffalo Bill, without a doubt, as a significant literary event, and young and old will be happy to fortify the spirit to contact this life of a hero bold and chivalrous. The event of the day!  
Buffalo Bill and his adventures.<sup>197</sup>

As this text makes clear, Buffalo Bill had already visited Rome and other cities in Italy, and the dime novels are a way to better get to know the 'hero' and his adventures. The German back cover (figure 4-5), however, does not refer to the popularity of Buffalo Bill's Wild West show in that country. It does, however, refer to the enormous success of the dime novels in the United States. As it is likely that the European versions of American Buffalo Bill dime novels were first translated in German,<sup>198</sup> it would make sense to refer to the success of this series abroad:

Who is Buffalo Bill?

Buffalo Bill is the national hero of the United States of North America. –In all countries of the world still live millions of people, who have seen him face to face, when he passed years ago with a never before seen original troupe, consisting of hundreds of Indians and 'trappers', traversed through the countries of the old and the new world."

Col. W. F. Cody named Buffalo Bill

has, as expert on the Wild West in service of the United States, for many years led bitter fights against the Indians. Buffalo Bill was probably the best shooter and adroit rider, who ever lived; he was a fearless and courageous man of altruistic, heroic character. When, after defeating the Indian tribes the American newspapers spread the message, Col. W.F. Cody, named Buffalo Bill, will publish his experiences, the whole of America was seized by an indescribable jubilation.

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<sup>197</sup> William F. Cody, *Buffalo Bill I Tiratori Scelti a Cavallo*, vol. 3, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures (Milano: Casa Editrice Americana, n.d.). Translation ours.

<sup>198</sup> As the publisher is German (see chapter 6).

80 million booklets of his experiences were sold in America. Translated in all the languages of the civilized world, his tales find yet with first time appearing also in all remaining countries a never before seen success.

What has led Buffalo Bill to this unique standing success?

At first it is the credibility of his extraordinarily exciting narratives; the nobleness and fearless bravery of the hero himself. On initial appearance the Buffalo-Bill-Series has put our fathers, when they were still younglings, in the highest state of suspense. The second, present, only authorized edition is dedicated to the current generation; they will also be this good light reading and certainly make for unforgettable hours 'of reading'.<sup>199</sup>

Clearly, these back covers express the popularity of Buffalo Bill's stories in different countries and could thus be viewed as examples of the dissemination of American mass culture in Europe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The American dime novels were published in a different order than the European versions, and therefore have a different sequel number. As a result, it is hard to find the European counterparts of American versions. Moreover, it appears that some stories were mixed up. The Dutch titles are almost the same as the English titles and the covers of both editions correspond, but the stories themselves seem totally different and correspond to a different title and cover (see appendix 1). Errors like these tell something about the process of production of the dime novels. Because the dime novels were mass-produced, the covers were probably printed and added after the dime novels themselves were produced. This may have resulted in errors. Moreover, the people who were producing these novels probably had no interest in or access to the original American novels and could therefore not know which cover responded to which story. All the stories are similar, as they all involve American Indians, Cowboys, Buffalo Bill, guns and, horses and are all set in the Myth of the Frontier. Errors would therefore only be detectible when comparing the novels (i.e., are were uncovered through this research project), and would therefore probably not even be noticed by the Dutch readers.

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<sup>199</sup> William F. Cody, *Buffalo Bill Ein Unbekannter Verbündeter or the Brand of the Red Arrow*, vol. 2, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures (Leipzig: Gustav Kühn Verlag, n.d.). Translation mine



Comparing the covers evidences the freedom of the translators, and exposes the differences between the American and European versions of the *Buffalo Bill Stories* series. The cover images of the Dutch and American versions are similar but the titles and captions of the images suggest errors in the copying and translation of dime novel covers. Moreover, the fact that some covers have entirely different stories than the covers seems to indicate that the covers were not just copied but altered, and that this was done with little consideration of or attention to the story. For this reason, this paper not only compares the covers of the dime novels but also the stories themselves.

# Wer ist Buffalo Bill?

Buffalo Bill ist der Nationalheld der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika. — In allen Ländern der Welt leben noch Millionen von Menschen, die ihn von Angesicht zu Angesicht geschaut haben, als er vor Jahren mit einer nie wieder gesehenen Original-Truppe, bestehend aus Hunderten von Indianern und Trappern, die Länder der alten und der neuen Welt durchzog.

## Col. W. F. Cody genannt Buffalo Bill

hat als bester Kenner des Wilden Westens im Dienste der Vereinigten Staaten jahrelang erbitterte Kämpfe gegen die Indianer geführt. **Buffalo Bill** war der beste Schütze und gewandteste Reiter, der wohl jemals gelebt hat; er war ein unerschrockener und mutiger Mann von edelmütigem, heldenhaftem Charakter. Als nach Niederwerfung der Indianerstämme die amerikanischen Zeitungen die Nachricht verbreiteten, **Col. W. F. Cody**, gen. **Buffalo Bill**, werde seine Erlebnisse veröffentlichen, da bemächtigte sich ganz Amerikas ein unbeschreiblicher Jubel. 80 Millionen Hefte seiner Erzählungen wurden in Amerika verkauft. In alle Sprachen der zivilisierten Welt übersetzt, fanden seine Erzählungen schon beim erstmaligen Erscheinen auch in allen übrigen Ländern einen nie wieder dagewesenen Erfolg.

## Was hat Buffalo Bill zu diesem einzig dastehenden Erfolg verholfen?

In erster Linie ist es die Glaubwürdigkeit seiner außerordentlich spannenden Erzählungen; ferner der Edelmut und die unerschrockene Tapferkeit des Helden selbst. Beim erstmaligen Erscheinen hat die **Buffalo-Bill-Serie** unsere Väter, als sie noch Jünglinge waren, in höchste Spannung versetzt. Die zweite, vorliegende, einzig autorisierte Ausgabe sei der jetzigen Generation gewidmet; sie wird auch dieser eine gute Unterhaltungslektüre sein und ihr sicherlich unvergeßliche Stunden bereiten.

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**Gustav Kühn Verlag, Leipzig C 1, Lange Str. 8**

Postscheck-Konto: Leipzig 595 69

In Österreich f. Herausgabe u. Redaktion verantwortlich: Otto Fischer, Wien XVI. Auslieferung: Derflinger & Fischer, Wien XVI, Neulerchenfelder Str. 8.

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**Jede Woche wird ein in sich abgeschlossener Band erscheinen!**

Figure 4-5 Back cover German edition: *Buffalo Bill Ein Unbekannter Verbündeter*. Courtesy of the McCracken Library

### *Text Comparison Dutch and American Buffalo Bill dime novels*

One of the most interesting aspects, that become evident when comparing the dime novels, is how certain events, objects and people are described differently. As discussed above, just as their titles and cover images, the storylines of the compared dime novels overall are very similar. The European versions were initially based on the American dime novels. There are, however, just as with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, differences between the European versions and the American editions. This makes sense, of course, as the European audience of the novels were not used to certain American events and customs. In contrast with the American dime novel, some characters in the European Buffalo Bill dime novels have a European background. For example, the characters may be depicted as visitors to the United States or are European immigrants in America. These adjustments make the texts a more interesting and attractive read for its European public.

For example, a character with a European background is found in the Dutch translated dime novel *De Bereden Scherpschutters* (based on the original American dime novel *Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers or a Story of Rough Riding Rescues*). In the Dutch version of the dime novel, Alice Enfield is the female lead. Throughout the story in the American version, however, she is called Ponca Patty or Patty Enfield. In the same dime novel, more differences in translation are exposed which provide examples of how in the Dutch versions a more extensive description of the characters is given. For instance, Buffalo Bill is described as a Kansas warrior with a sharp face and a blond beard, but these descriptions do not appear in the American version:

Hij was geheel gekleed als een Kansas-jager; zijn scherp gesneden gezicht, omlijst door een blonden baard, was door de zon van het westelijke Amerika gebruind; zijn oogen waren thans gesloten en de ruiter scheen, na een vermoeienden rit, te genieten van een verkwikkende slaap. Doch deze Arkansasmannen kunnen tegelijk slapen en wakker zijn, en zoo gingen ook bij hem af en

toe de lange, donkere wimpers van één, opende hij de oogen, om ze dadelijk daarna te sluiten.<sup>200</sup>

Because they are not American and therefore less familiar with life on the American frontier, such backstories offer the European audience a clearer picture of the Wild West. Some differences in translations, however, seem to be random and not influenced by a different audience. An example of such a translation in the same dime novel, *Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers*, is where the American story starts:

At noon of a cloudy autumn day, a frontiersman was sleeping off the effects of a long and hard ride in a small clump of cottonwoods on Dry Creek, a small South Kansas tributary of the Arkansas River, as dry as its name.<sup>201</sup>

The Dutch story almost starts the same way, except in placed in a different season:

Het was op den middag van een voorjaarsdag- de zon had moeite door de wolken te breken- dat, in de onmiddelijke nabijheid van katoen-aanplantingen, een man lag te slapen, wien men het dadelijk aanzag, dat hij het gewoon was, weer of geen weer, de onmetelijke grasvlakten van Arkansas op zijn paard door te kruisen.<sup>202</sup>

This difference in translation demonstrates how some of the translations were produced. In a time of industrialization and mass production less attention was given to the original dime novel story. Small differences such as changes in seasons, which greatly shifted the settings of stories from the original text, do not appear to be of great importance and could therefore easily be mistranslated.

Similarly, other instances of differences in translation are found in *Buffalo Bill the Grave Yard Gap or the Domed Drivers of the Overland*. In the Dutch (*In den Dooden Pas*), Danish (*I Dødshulen*) and Swedish (*I Dodsklyftan*) editions. For example,

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<sup>200</sup> Cody, *De Bereden Scherpschutters. Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers*, 3:1. "He was entirely dressed as a Kansas-hunter; his clean cut face, framed by a blonde beard, tanned by the Western American sun; his eyes presently closed and the rider seemed, after a tiring journey, to be enjoying a refreshing sleep. Yet these Arkansas-men can simultaneously be awake as sleeping, and so went occasionally the long, dark lashes of one of his eyes open, to close them immediately afterwards." Translation mine.

<sup>201</sup> Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers or A Story of Rough Riding Rescues*, 4:1.

<sup>202</sup> Cody, *De Bereden Scherpschutters. Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers*, 3:1. "It was on a spring afternoon- the sun struggled to break through the clouds- that, in the immediate vicinity of cotton plantations, a man lay sleeping, whom was mistaken, that he was just it, rain or shine, traversing the vast grasslands of Arkansas on his horse." Translation mine.

explanations about American life are included in the Dutch version which cannot be found in the American version, such as: “Hij zette een half gevulde flesch brandy en een kan met ijswater, waarmee men in Amerika de brandy verdunt.” and “Men leeft vlug op deze wereld en het vlugst in het wilde westen van Amerika.”<sup>203</sup> This description also illustrates the differences between European translations. For example, the Dutch translation refers to Europeans in the text while the Swedish translation instead mentions Swedes, and the Danish edition mentions Danes instead of Europeans. Furthermore, in this dime novel, there is a comprehensive and detailed description of an American tavern (see appendix 2 for the entire description). This description not only introduces the European public to the American way of living on the frontier, but also tries to invalidate stories that existed in Europe about life in the Wild West:

Er is reeds veel geschreven over de Amerikaansche herbergen, en toch weinig waars. Vooral in Europa bestaan veel verkeerde meeningen over het Amerikaansche restauratieleven, niettegenstaande er weinig Europeanen zijn, die geen bloedverwanten of familie in de nieuwe wereld hebben. Vooral over de zoogenaamde <free lunch> (kosteloos ontbijt) zijn de ongelooflijkste geschiedenissen verteld.<sup>204</sup>

An interesting example in this description of the American tavern is the notion of a ‘free breakfast’ or ‘free lunch.’ According to the text, a free breakfast is an American tradition and deserves, according to the European translators and publishers, an extensive description:

De free lunch is dus een kosteloos ontbijt waarvan iedere gast gebruik kan maken. Naar gelang de concurrentie en de inrichting van de herberg is, is dit ontbijt meer of minder rijk.

Voor tien jaar, toen de matigheidsbeweging nog niet zulke goede gevolgen had als thans, en de belasting op vergunningen nog niet zoo enorm hoog was,

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<sup>203</sup> William F. Cody, *In Den Dooden-Pas. Buffalo Bill at Graveyard Gap*, vol. 17, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures (Amsterdam: A. Eichler, n.d.), 24. “He put down a half filled bottle of brandy and a jug of ice water, which was used, in America, to dilute the brandy” and “People live a fast life on this world, and the fastest in the Wild West of America.” Translation ours.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. “There has been written a lot about American taverns, and yet little is true. Especially in Europe there are many wrong opinions about American restaurants. Even if there are a lot of Europeans with family in the New World. Incredible stories are told, especially, about the free breakfast” Translation ours.

waren er veel herbergen, waarin een vrij ontbijt gegeven werd, dat een mensch het water uit den mond deed lopen.<sup>205</sup>

This novel also compares the European situation with the American, and thereby tries to explain how a tradition such as the free breakfast could survive in the ‘Wild West’:

In Europe zegt men steeds, wanneer over deze instelling gesproken wordt; ja, maar hoe kan de waard dit doen? Dan moet hij toch bankroet gaan, zijn eten hem toch de oren van het hoofd, enz...

Ja, de toestanden zijn nu anders, dan in Europa, waar iedereen gewend is, voor zich zelf te betalen, (wat ook wel het beste is) en iemand niet spoedig op de gedachte komt, vrijwillig een rondje te bestellen.

In Amerika daarentegen gebeurt het dikwijls, dat een wildvreemd mensch in een herberg komt en, zooals in dit geval de stocktender Rollin, iedereen uitnoodigt met hem te drinken en te roken en rondje na rondje bestelt, zonder er aan te denken dat een ander op zijn beurt dit zal doen.

Integendeel, wanneer men weigert zich te laten trakteren door een goedgeefschen man, dan voelt deze zich zwaar beleedigd, en gaat men niet politiek te werk, dan moet men dadelijk rekeken op een verchtpartij.

Er zijn namelijk in het westen van Amerika een massa menschen, die dikwijls maanden lang in de meest afgelegen streken wonen, in mijnen, groote fokkerijen bij den aanleg van spoortwegen als houthakkers en jagers. enz, die daar geen gelegenheid hebben, hun geld kwijt te raken.

Komt zoo'n man weer onder de menschen met de zakken vol geld, dan werpt hij het zuur en dikwijls gevaarlijk verdiende geld met volle handen weg en rust niet, voor de laatste cent verkwist is.

Dan gaat hij weer kalm aan het werk, om een paar maanden later dezelfde domheid uit te halen.

Deze onzinnige trakteerwoede stelt den waard in staat zijn gasten de lunch voor niets te geven en toch nog zijn kosten goed te maken.

Bij deze lunch geven de gasten dikwijls jenever enz. weg.

Vele menschen eten natuurlijk niet en drinken wel, en dan komt de zaak weer overeen uit.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid. “The free lunch is a free breakfast [probably a wrong translation of lunch] that every guest of the tavern could use. Depending on the competition and the establishment of the tavern, the breakfast would be less or more fancy. For a period of ten years, when the taxes were low and it was still cheap to get a permit, there where a lot of taverns that provided this free breakfast.” Translation ours.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 17:24–25. “In Europe people can’t believe how a tradition, such as the free breakfast, could exist, how can the innkeeper keep doing this? He must be broke, if we’re eating for free etc. However, the situation in Europe, now, is different, everyone is used to pay for themselves. No one pays for someone else. In America, on the contrary, it happens often that some stranger enters the tavern and pays for everyone’s drinks. In the American West a lot of people live and work in the most remote areas, and do not have an opportunity to spend their money. If a man like that enters a tavern he spends all his money. This absurd eager to pay for everyone, results in the opportunity for the innkeeper to provide the free breakfast. And, a lot of people, of course, do not eat, and do drink, which provided income for the tavern” Translation and summary ours.

This text illustrates how publishers introduced the Dutch (and European) public to American ways of life. Important is how the European situation is compared with the American one, as this evidences differences in cultures which were in need of additional explanation. The European versions of “Buffalo Bill the Grave Yard Gap” even refer to the cover of another dime novel (*Op het Spoor van den Schrik van Texas* or *Buffalo Bill's Boy Bravo Pard*, figure 4-6) in order to show the European audience what an American tavern looked like:

De <saloon> van vroeger is precies afgebeeld op den omslag van aflevering vier. [no. 4 *Op het Spoor van den Schrik van Texas*. *BB's Boy Bravo Pard*] Toen gaf men ook niet veel om een elegante inrichting, en bij de primitieve verkeersmiddelen van die dagen zou het ook alleen met grote offers mogelijk geweest zijn, zulke eleganten inrichtingen te maken. Bovendien zou het niet veel nut gehad hebben, mooie meubels en prachtig spiegelglas aan te brengen in een lokaal, waar elken dag geschoten en gevochten werd!<sup>207</sup>

If the story about the free breakfast (or lunch) is true, it is not important in this context. What is important, however, is that in this dime novel story, additional information was included in the translated text to give its European audience more background information. Even if its readers were aware of the American frontier, they, according to the writer of these texts, were largely miss- or insufficiently informed. Sentences such as “en toch weinig waars” [and yet little true] and “verkeerde meningen” [wrong opinions] evidence the educational and authoritarian role taken by the dime novel publisher/translator. The above phrases accentuate the truth and authenticity of the story.

In the same dime novel, “Buffalo Bill the Grave Yard Gap,” the character Charles Christopher (the driver of the mail coach) is described as German. This reference is not found in the American novel. Instead, he is described simply as a brave man. This

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 17:25. “The saloon, from the past, is precisely portrayed on the cover of volume four. When they did not care much about an elegant decoration, and with the primitive means of transportation it would take big sacrifices to create such elegant decorations. Moreover, it would not have been much use, to add beautiful furniture and precious mirrors, in a place where there were shootings and fights every day!” Translation and summary ours.

reference to a German character is not unique in the European translations of Buffalo Bill. For example, in the translations of *Buffalo Bill's Bravo pard or on the Texan terror's trail*, the character Henry Dalberg is described by the character Duncan as German; and, according to Duncan, Germans are brave men:

Wat, zal ik niet met U meegaan? vroeg Dalberg iets gekrenkt. Meent hij misschien, dat ik als Duitscher minder moedig zal zijn? [Cody replies:] Juist omdat hij een Duitscher zijt, houd ik U voor moedig. Waar ik in de Staten Duitscher ontmoette, waren zij dappere mannen, die in den strijd kalm bleven. Wanneer ik in het gevaar een bondgenoot wensch, dan is het een Duitscher...<sup>208</sup>

Unfortunately, there were no German editions of these novels, which refer to Germans as strong and brave men, in the McCracken Library. Nevertheless, all three European dime novel versions, Dutch, Danish and Swedish, have a German publisher: A. Eichler. It is therefore likely that this series was first published in Germany.

These descriptions created an image of the American frontier in the European audiences minds. In the European versions, not just the names were altered, but entirely new paragraphs were added. Such additions are also found in the Dutch translation of the American dime novel *Buffalo Bill's Bravos or Trailing through the land of death*. The Dutch translation, *De Padvinders in het Land van der Dood*, at first seems just a straight translation; however, halfway through the story, a description of the American Army is added. This extensive addition (see Appendix 3 for the entire description) was obviously written for a European/German audience:

Het is een bekend feit, dat in het leger van de Vereenigde Staten, dat alleen uit aangeworven vrijwilligers bestaat, vele Duitschers dienen, die in het nieuwe vaderland geen positie konden krijgen naar hun zin. Wanneer dan alle hulpmiddelen zijn uitgeput en in de dikwijls terugkeerende tijden van industriële en economische crises geen werk te vinden is, dan gaan zij in hun wanhoop naar

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<sup>208</sup> Cody, *Op Het Spoor van Den Schrik van Texas. Buffalo Bill's Boy Bravo Pard*, 4:12. "What, I won't come with you? Replied Dalberg, somewhat hurt. Do you mean that, I as a German, will be less brave? [Cody replies:] Just because you are a German, I think of you as brave. Everywhere in the States, when I met a German, they were brave men who stayed calm in battle. When I am in danger and want an ally, it would be a German.." Translation ours.



het eerste het beste werf-kantoor, om zich voor vijf jaar te verbinden met Uncle Sam.<sup>209</sup>

The reference to German soldiers confirms that the European dime novels were first translated in Germany. As the description in the dime novel continues, more evidence of a cultural translation appears:

Zoo streng de discipline is tijdens den dienst, zoo ongedwongen en vergenoegd is het in het kamp. Duitschers, Ieren, Noren, Engelschen, Franschen, Italianen, en nog andere nationaliteiten zijn er in het Amerikaansche leger vertegenwoordigd. Dus kan ieder zich voorstellen, dat het vermaak in zoo'n kamp zeer veelzijdig is.

Elk volk heeft zijn eigenaardigheden en zijn bijzondere hoedanigheden. Zorgen kennen deze menschen niet en een ieder tracht zoo onderhoudend mogelijk te zijn.

De veelzijdigheid van de menschen die naar Amerika trekken, de vermenging van de rassen, en de stalen wilskracht, welke den onbemiddelden inwoner dwingt, zijn best te doen, en het algemeen belang te dienen, hebben dit land in zoo'n korte tijd tot dien grooten bloei gebracht.<sup>210</sup>

This paragraph illustrates how dime novels were altered by for example, referring to Europeans, in order to make them more suitable for a European audience. Moreover, in some dime novels paragraphs were altered, not just added. An example of such an alternation can be found in comparing the American novel *Buffalo Bill's Pardes in Gray or On the Death Trails of the Wild West* with the Dutch dime novel *De Paden des Doods van het Wilde Westen*. Just as in the American version, the Dutch version describes the end of the Civil War. Each version however does so differently. For example, the American version states:

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<sup>209</sup> William F. Cody, *De Padvinders in het Land van der Dood or Buffalo Bill Bravos*, vol. 5, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures, n.d., 31. "It is a well known fact that in the army of the United States, many Germans served, as they could not find a position to their liking in their new home country." Translation and summary ours.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:32. "How strict the discipline was during their service, so relaxed was it in the camp. Germans, Irish, Norwegian, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians and other nationalities, were represented in the army. So one can imagine that the camps were very entertaining. Every nation has its peculiarities, and its particular qualities. These people had no concerns, and everyone tried to be as entertaining as possible. The variety of people who migrate to America, the mixing of races, and the steel willpower, brought this country great prosperity." Translation and summary ours.

When the Civil War came to a close, and the country, North and South, was at peace once more, there was still more fighting to be done in the far Borderland for the gallant Boys in Blue.<sup>211</sup>

The Dutch version of this story gives a far more extensive description:

De Amerikaansche burgeroorlog, die de wereld het zeer onaangename schouwspel vertoonde van een broedertwist, was geëindigd.

De zuidelijke staten hadden de nederlaag geleden en de wil van den president in het Witte Huis en van het congres in Washington gold van de Stillen Oceaan, van Britisch Columbia tot de golf van Mexico.

Het zwarte ras zou niet langer slavendiensten verrichten, en de neger niet langer de knecht zijn van den blanke. Het zwarte ras zou met liefde genomen worden in de armen van de beschaafden, opdat het zich versterken zou aan haar borst. Er heerschte dus vrede in Amerika. Maar nog niet in het geheele land.<sup>212</sup>

Although both versions describe the same event, they were written for different audiences. It is interesting to see how the Dutch version refers to the American Civil War, as the American version, clearly written for an American audience, does not need to refer to the Civil War as an American event. Moreover, the Dutch version gives a clear critical judgment about the Civil War being “onaangenaam” [unpleasant], a statement that does not have to be clarified for its American audience. Another difference in the Dutch description of the consequences of the Civil War in the United States, such as the abolition of slavery, is not mentioned in the American version. These differences highlight how pivotal events understood by the American public, needed, and were thus given, an explanation in Europe.

Just as in the previously discussed dime novels, in *Buffalo Bill's Pardes in Grey* there are not just paragraphs that were added or altered, but names and backstories of the characters were changed to satisfy their audiences. For example, in the American

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<sup>211</sup> William F. Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Pardes in Gray or On the Death Trails of the Wild West*, vol. 16, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures, 1901, 1.

<sup>212</sup> William F. Cody, *De Paden Des Doods van Het Wilde Westen. Buffalo Bill's Pardes in Grey*, vol. 15, Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures (Amsterdam: A. Eichler, n.d.), 1. “The American Civil War, that had showed the world an unpleasant spectacle of fraternal strife, had come to an end. The southern states were defeated and the will of the president was imposed from the Pacific Ocean, from British Columbia to the Gulf of Mexico. The black race would no longer perform slave services, and the Negro was no longer the servant of the white man. The black race would be embraced by the civilized that would strengthen it. Thus peace reigned in the United States. But not yet in the entire country.” Translation ours.

version, the character Dick Dashwood runs into a dying man called Varney Beal,<sup>213</sup> but in the Dutch version he runs into Charles Diel, who is a German descendant.<sup>214</sup> Later in the story, a similar event happens when in the American version we find out that Dick Dashwood's real name is Colonel Richard Seldon,<sup>215</sup> however, in the Dutch version, Dick Dashwood's real name is Lord Robert Seldom, and the fact that he is born in London is accentuated in the storyline.<sup>216</sup>

Discussed in previous chapters, Germans were fascinated with Indians. Although most of the European and American dime novels do describe the fights and struggles between Buffalo Bill and his friends (the heroes) and Indians (the villains) there are some differences in translation:

Toen ter tijde was Arkansas een verzamelplaats van veel uitschot, dat voor de eerlijke bewoners van het land een bijna nog grooter gevaar opleverde, dan de Indianen zelfs, met wie de farmers voortdurend te kampen hadden. De strijdwijze van de roode mannen echter, ofschoon ook niet vrij van streken en listen, was in elk geval nog eerlijker dan de laagheid, waarmee blanke roovers hun doel nastreefden.<sup>217</sup>

This paragraph above did not appear in the American version of this story and shows how the Indians may be seen as the villains of the story, though there were greater villains to be found on the frontier. Moreover, in some of the European translated stories, Indians fight alongside and help Buffalo Bill. This however, is always described as an exception, and the heroic Indians are always a direct result of the influence of a white leader: "Allannah, de blanke koningin der Ogallalla's, heerste nog twee jaren over haar volk. (...) De Ogallalla's zeggen, dat zij tot de grote Geest is teruggekeerd nadat zij het

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<sup>213</sup> Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Pards in Gray or On the Death Trails of the Wild West*, 16:25.

<sup>214</sup> Cody, *De Paden Des Doods van Het Wilde Westen. Buffalo Bill's Pards in Grey*, 15:18.

<sup>215</sup> Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Pards in Gray or On the Death Trails of the Wild West*, 16:28–29.

<sup>216</sup> Cody, *De Paden Des Doods van Het Wilde Westen. Buffalo Bill's Pards in Grey*, 15:20.

<sup>217</sup> Cody, *De Bereden Scherpschutters. Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers*, 3:2. "When in time Arkansas was a gathering place for scum that, posed an almost greater threat to the honest inhabitants of the land, than the Indians even, whom the farmers had to face continuously. The battle mode of the Red men, although not free of tricks and pranks, were certainly more honest than the lowness, with which white robbers pursued their goal." Translation ours.

rode volk op het rechte pad geleid had.”<sup>218</sup> In contrast with the Wild West shows in Germany, it is not likely that the dime novels of this series were altered to paint a more positive picture of American Indians.

Text comparison of Dutch and American Buffalo Bill dime novels evidences the differences in literal as well as, more importantly to this research project, cultural translation. These added explanations and alterations about American life in the European novels made the Buffalo Bill dime novels more accessible to the European public, as they did not have firsthand knowledge of the American frontier, as did Americans. It was almost as if publishers and dime novel writers had taken it upon themselves to educate European masses on the American West. This could therefore be seen as a sale strategy (i.e., to sell more dime novels), wherein the publishers and writers claimed to be the authority on knowledge about the American West. The differences in literal translation illustrate, however, the inconsiderateness for the storyline and setting, and the industrialization and mass production in the dime novel industry.

### *Conclusion*

Although the focus of this research has been on comparing the Dutch translations with the original American dime novels, we also looked at other European versions. Researching the different versions, including Hungarian, Scandinavian, German, Dutch, and Italian, resulted the conclusion that the dime novels from the *Buffalo Bill Stories* series seem to be written and translated by the same person or group. Therefore, the novels translated from German (from this series) can all be dated in the same timeframe

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 3:30.”Allannah, the white queen of the Ogallalla’s, ruled for another two years. (...) The Ogallalla’s say that she returned to the Great Spirit after she led the red people on the right track.” Translation ours.

as the Dutch novels: between 1916 and 1925.<sup>219</sup> In some of these associated European versions of the *Buffalo Bill Stories* series, Germans appear to have a more prominent role. German characters are often referred to as strong and masculine. They are heroes in the stories and are always on the same side as Buffalo Bill. Taken into consideration that the European dime novels seem to have had a connection with a German publisher (A. Eichler), we conclude that the *Buffalo Bill Stories* series were first translated and transformed in German(y). However, there were also references made to their own culture and country, in various European versions. It is therefore likely that publishers adjusted dime novel stories for each country/audience.

This chapter has highlighted some of the differences between the American and the Dutch versions of the dime novel series *Buffalo Bill Stories*, *Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures*. Comparing not only the covers but also the stories inside them shows how the dime novels were not just translated into different languages, but that the dime novels were also translated into specific cultural contexts. The European public was educated in particular American historical events and myths of the American West, and thus received more background information about life on the frontier. The overall tone of voice in the European novels seem to try to educate its audience about the American West, by emphasizing on typical elements like landscapes, clothing and Indians, instead of merely entertaining them.

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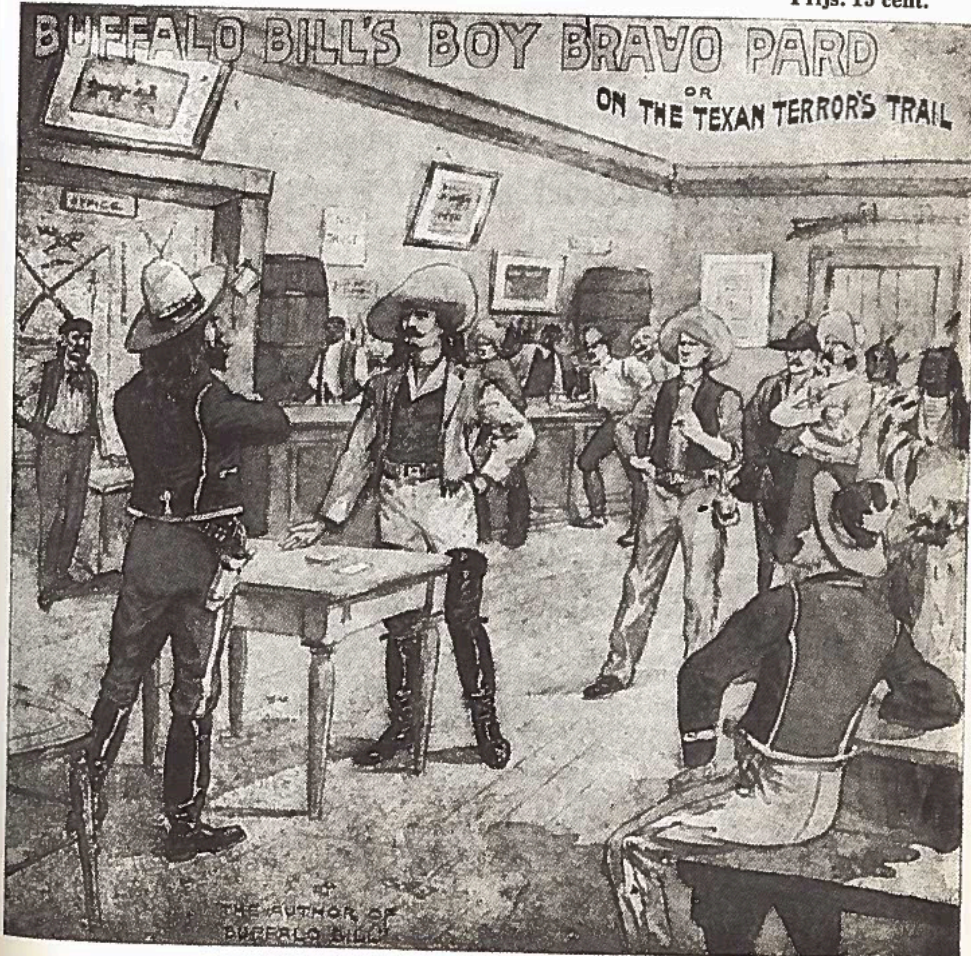
<sup>219</sup> Cody, *De Avonturen van Buffalo Bill: Vijf Spannende Avonturen Uit Het Oude, Wilde Westen*, 7.

Elk boek bevat een aparte geschiedenis.

 **BUFFALO BILL**  
**Op het Spoor van den Schrik van Texas.**  
Eenige geoorloofde uitgave van Col. W. F. Cody gen. Buffalo Bill.

No. 4.

Prijs: 15 cent.



Als jij verliest en ik win, dan wil ik iets anders van je hebben, dan je leven! riep Buffalo Bill

Figure 4-6 Front cover Dutch edition: Op het Spoor van den Schrik van Texas.  
Courtesy of the McCracken Library

## CHAPTER 5: RECEPTION OF BUFFALO BILL IN DUTCH MEDIA

‘Big data’ and ‘Digital humanities’ are two of the hot terms in academics today. These terms introduce us to a variety of projects happening in the field of humanities, such as preserving archives by digitalizing them and providing large amounts of data, which enables new research methods in humanities: visualizing and mapping. Although these projects are just starting, and the digital humanities is still in its infancy, it is becoming increasingly an interesting (and valuable) tool through which to look at historic texts and to highlight different trends in the field. This research project uses these new tools to access data on the reception of Buffalo Bill in the Netherlands. While keeping the central question of this paper in mind, this chapter analyzes how the Netherlands received Buffalo Bill in order to gain a better understanding of the translated dime novels. By using techniques such as ngram<sup>220</sup> the impact of Buffalo Bill is clearly visualized. It also provides access to a vast amount of new digitalized and searchable texts.

Its proponents call this new field of research ‘culturomics’ or ‘humanities 2.0.’ This form of computational lexicology studies cultural trends and human behavior through a quantitative analysis of digitalized texts.<sup>221</sup> The term ‘culturomics’ was first coined and described by Harvard researchers Jean-Baptiste Michel and Erez Lieberman Aiden in their co-authored article “Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books.” Michel and Aiden describe it as: “the application of high data collection and analysis to the study of human culture.”<sup>222</sup> They used the large Google Books database and created along with Google, the Google n-gram database. At the time

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<sup>220</sup> Uitleg ngram

<sup>221</sup> Brian Hayes, “Bit Lit,” *American Scientist* 99, no. 3 (2011): 190, doi:10.1511/2011.90.190.

<sup>222</sup> Jean-Baptiste Michel et al., “Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books,” *Science* 331, no. 6014 (January 14, 2011): 181, doi:10.1126/science.1199644.

of writing, the database consisted of 5,195,769 books, which is roughly 4 percent of all the books ever printed.<sup>223</sup> This might seem like a small percentage but the Google library is growing, and thereby the data becomes all the more interesting (and viable) for scholars in the field of cultural studies, linguistics and history.

However, even as more and more scholars are now exploring Big Data and interesting results are being published,<sup>224</sup> there are some risks associated with using these techniques and programs (e.g., such as Google Ngram Viewer and Delpher/ Historische Kranten ngramviewer). For example, there are noted methodological issues. For instance, which books or texts are used? As argued by professor of sociology at Berkeley, Claude S. Fischer, today it is much cheaper to publish books and therefore the amount of books that have been published in a given timeframe has changed over time. Further, just as the amount of books published fluctuates, the amount of books bought and the amount of words printed also differ over time.<sup>225</sup> Programs such as ngram, which searches for the amount of words in texts, can therefore give false outcomes, which may result in incorrect conclusions being drawn. Next to the amount of books published, one should also question which books were digitalized. Google's digitizing project, for example, collects its books from university libraries.<sup>226</sup> As a result, these libraries based on their decisions in the past to collect and add books or to extract them from their collection, influence which books are digitized. Additionally, words change over time (i.e., semantic progression). Not only are words spelled differently, they sometimes take on different

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<sup>223</sup> Hayes, "Bit Lit."

<sup>224</sup> Examples of interesting publications on the topic of culturomics: Alexander M. Petersen et al., "Statistical Laws Governing Fluctuations in Word Use from Word Birth to Word Death," *Scientific Reports* 2 (March 15, 2012): 313. And: Kalev Leetaru, "Culturomics 2.0: Forecasting Large-Scale Human Behavior Using Global News Media Tone in Time and Space," *First Monday* 16, no. 9 (August 17, 2011), <http://journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3663>.

<sup>225</sup> Claude S. Fischer, "Digital Humanities, Big Data, and Ngrams," *Boston Review*, June 20, 2013, <http://bostonreview.net/blog/digital-humanities-big-data-and-ngrams>.

<sup>226</sup> Michel et al., "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books," 176.



meanings.<sup>227</sup> It is therefore important to remain critical and keep questioning the results from these sources.

Fortunately, this research focuses on a single person, a character: Buffalo Bill. As there are of course different ways of referencing to the Wild West hero, his name did not change over time and can therefore be used to search through news articles and texts. A difficulty occurs, however, when searching for Buffalo Bill in relation to his dime novels. As discussed earlier (in chapter 3), the term “dime novel” was/is not used exclusively when referring to the stories of Buffalo Bill. Other terms such as “pamphlet stories” or just “pamphlets” were, and are still, used in this context as well. Moreover, in European countries, such as the Netherlands, different words are used when referring to these stories. For example, in the Netherlands alone, more than one translation of the word dime novel exists: ‘stuiverromans,’ ‘dubbeltjesroman’ or ‘tien cent verhalen.’

Because in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the English language and American culture was not as integrated into the Dutch language and culture as it is today, it is, for instance, difficult to search for English terms in publications such as Dutch newspapers. As a result, we have determined that researchers should be cautious when using Big Data. Fischer argues in his article “Digital Humanities, Big Data, and Ngrams:” “we have to think hard about the connection between the words writers use and American culture, whether it is literary culture or the wider culture.”<sup>228</sup> For this reason, we should always keep in mind (and question) when doing quantitative research on cultural trends, why certain words or themes are used in the texts. We should also question if the writers of these texts are a representation of the culture and time they live in, or if they are part of a separate world of literature, far away from the society they seem to write about.<sup>229</sup> For

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<sup>227</sup> Fischer, “Digital Humanities, Big Data, and Ngrams.”

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

this reason, culturomics should always be used in combination with more qualitative techniques, which place the quantitative results in a cultural and historic perspective.

This chapter applies a critical eye to these techniques in order to answer the question: how was Buffalo Bill received in the Netherlands? First, the chapter focuses on the use of ‘culturomics’ in researching Buffalo Bill. Second, we discuss the reception of the person behind the character: what did Dutch literature and newspapers have to say about Buffalo Bill? The focus then moves to the question of the reception of the Buffalo Bill shows: even if the Wild West shows did not come to the Netherlands, did news from for example Germany, Belgium or the United Kingdom, about these shows reach the Netherlands? Finally, the reception of the dime novels and later movies, which were based on these stories, will be given a closer look. In conclusion, this chapter provides an observation on how Buffalo Bill was received in the Netherlands.

### *‘Culturomics’ and Buffalo Bill*

For this project, two elements are crucial: the reliability (and thereby the transparency) of the information and the usefulness (and i.e., the value) of the information provided by the databases. Figure 5- 1 shows how often ‘Buffalo Bill’ is mentioned in the Google Books English language archive. By using a case-insensitive search, anomalies are included in the results. For example, differences in the use of capital letters are also included (‘BUFFALO BILL,’ ‘Buffalo Bill’ and ‘buffalo bill’) and illustrated in Figure 5-2. However, spelling mistakes and errors are not in these search results, which results in a less reliable outcome. The results of the ngram are thus not conclusive in saying something about the mentioning of the ngram Buffalo Bill in the Google Books archive.

The graphs, illustrated in figure 5-1 and 5-2, show that there are five different peaks visible, which evidences a higher amount of texts mentioning Buffalo Bill (published in different time frames). Because we are specifically looking for the reflection of Buffalo Bill in the Netherlands, and not the occurrence, databases such as Google books are a less interesting source than the digitalized archive of Dutch newspapers, Delpher or the digital library of Dutch literature, DBNL. Though the enormous database of Google Books provides more insight into the popularity of Buffalo Bill in certain periods of particular book publications, it is not able, for instance, to show how often the term ‘Buffalo Bill’ is mentioned in Dutch books and newspapers.



Figure 5-1 Google Ngram Viewer: ngram graph: Buffalo Bill. Courtesy of The Google Books Ngram Viewer.



Figure 5-2 Google Ngram Viewer: ngram: Buffalo Bill (all). Courtesy of The Google Books Ngram Viewer.

Another advantage of using the ngramviewers of Dutch databases is the transparency they offer, in comparison with the Google Books ngramviewer. The Delpher database offers a user-friendlier ngramviewer, which allows for immediate switching between the archive and the ngramviewer (e.g., all the dots visible in the graph of figure 5-3 link direct to the Delpher archive). Something the Google version does not offer. If the user, for example, wants to know where Buffalo Bill was mentioned most often in a specific time period, say in the 1950s, a separate search query is necessary in the Google Books archive for data specific searches. It is therefore less transparent, as it is not clear upon what the results of the ngram are directly based. This chapter therefore focuses on the Dutch database and its corresponding ngramviewer in order to learn more about the reception of Buffalo Bill in the Netherlands.

Just as with books, the distribution of newspapers is not consistent. There are many more articles (and words) published, and therefore available, from the World War II period. In order to prevent each ngram from looking the same (with a peak around 1945), Delpher's 'Historische Kranten' ngramviewer shows on the y-axis the relative

frequency of an ngram (here Buffalo Bill) in a year, instead of the absolute frequency. The y-axis shows the percentage of the ngram (Buffalo Bill) compared to all the ngrams of that specific year.<sup>230</sup> Even so, we see an increase of the ngram Buffalo Bill around 1950, illustrated in figure 5- 3. This peak is explained with the release of the movie “Buffalo Bill de held van het Wilde Westen.” Most newspapers in this archive have a cinema section and mention this movie about Buffalo Bill therein. The ngram, illustrated in figure 5- 4, shows how the peaks of the ngram Buffalo Bill relate to the movie “Buffalo Bill de held van het Wilde Westen.” However, the ngram Buffalo Bill does not only appear when the movie is mentioned, and therefore the reception in newspapers before 1950 is worth reviewing.

The two crucial elements of reliability and the usefulness show how the Google Books archive and ngramviewer are not applicable in this case study about the reception of Buffalo Bill in the Netherlands. Because there is no direct link between the ngram graph and the Google Books archive, the basis of the results is not clear. Moreover, there is no way of secluding the corpus of Dutch books and publications from the rest of the results, which make the results of the Google ngramviewer not valuable to this project.

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<sup>230</sup> B. de Goede, J. van Wees, and M. Marx, “PoliticalMashup Ngramviewer,” *Proceedings of the 13th Dutch-Belgian Workshop on Information Retrieval*, 2013, 54–55.

# KB Historische Kranten ngramviewer

Typ één of meer frases

× buffalo bill

Share! 

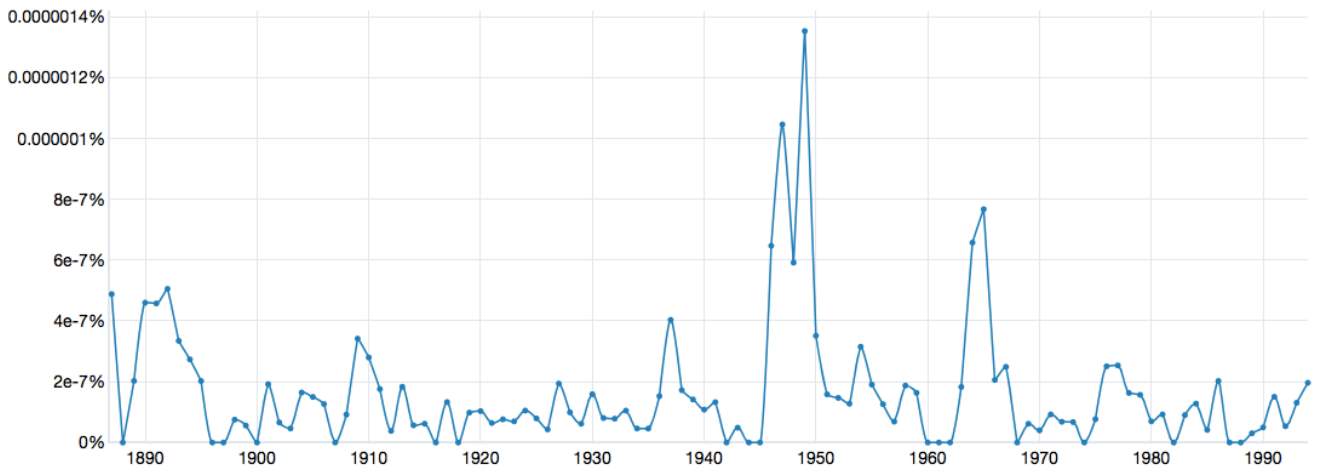


Figure 5-3 Historische Kranten ngramviewer. Ngram: Buffalo Bill. Courtesy of the KB Historische Kranten ngramviewer/ Delpher

# KB Historische Kranten ngramviewer

Typ één of meer frases

× buffalo bill

× buffalo bill de held van

Share! 

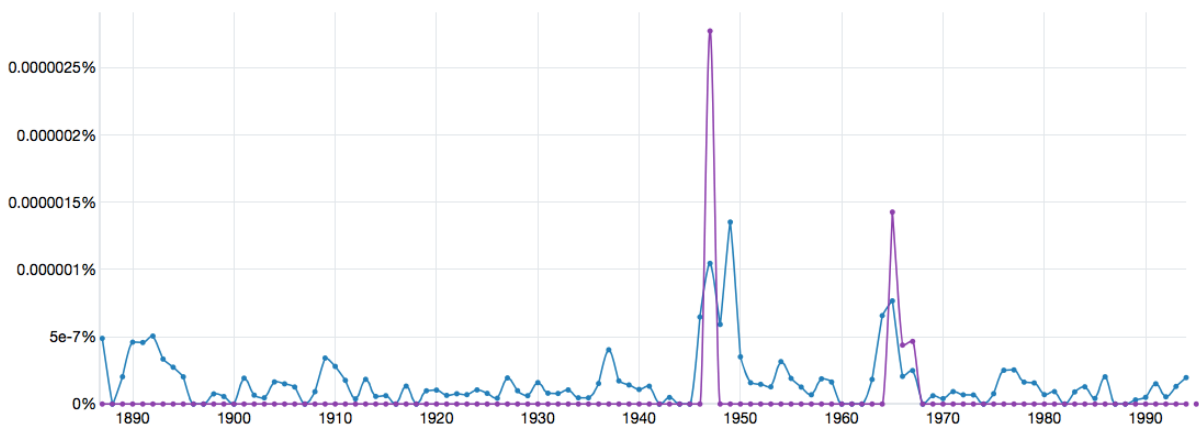


Figure 5-4 Historische Kranten ngramviewer. Ngram: Buffalo Bill & buffalo bill de held van. Courtesy of the KB Historische Kranten ngramviewer/ Delpher

### *Reception William F. Cody*

We established that the greatest increase in the mention of the ngram ‘Buffalo Bill,’ in the KB Historische Kranten/ Delpher database, was influenced by the release of a Buffalo Bill film. However, long before this, Buffalo Bill was mentioned a great deal in the Dutch newspapers. Even if Cody did not visit the Netherlands with his show, news about him made it into the Dutch press. Unfortunately, the ngrams ‘William Cody,’ ‘William F. Cody’ and ‘William Frederick Cody,’ do not offer sufficient results (presented in a graph). If, however, Buffalo Bill’s birth name is mentioned, there is always a reference made to his stage name. Therefore, it is unnecessary to look into the separate results of William Cody. When researching Cody’s personal references in Dutch newspapers, we should keep in mind that his stage and personal life were so intertwined that there is no real possible distinction. There are, however, a few references in the Dutch newspapers that are interesting and give an impression of the reception of Cody as a ‘real’ person in the Netherlands and these references are therefore discussed in this chapter. The articles all relate to important events, which happened in Cody’s life, such as his work for the United States as an army scout, running for Arizona state senate, falling ill, his financial troubles in 1913, and his dying in 1917. Even after his death in 1917, articles appeared in Dutch newspapers, which reflected on his life.

The first news article about William F. Cody (in the digitalized Dutch newspaper archive KB Historische Kranten/ Delpher), not connected to his showiness life, was in 1898, in the newspaper *Het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant*:

Kolonel Cody (Buffalo Bill) wordt morgen, Vrijdag, te Key-West verwacht, met zijn troep Indianen en *cowboys*.  
Hij zal deel uitmaken van de expeditie, welke trachten zal de Cubaansche opstandelingen van levensmiddelen te voorzien.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> “Vervolg Buitonlansch Nieuws,” *Het Nieuws van Den Dag: Kleine Courant*, April 29, 1898, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010125903:mpeg21:a0152>. “Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill) will be

Although there is a reference made here to Buffalo Bill, this news article is solely informing the Dutch public about Cody's involvement in providing Cuban rebels with supplies. This article is one of the few in the Dutch newspaper archive that mentions Cody as a colonel, as illustrated in figure 5-5. The ngram 'Kolonel Cody,' shows how Cody's actions, in conflicts with American Indians in the United States, were newsworthy to the Dutch public. An article in *Algemeen Handelsblad* from 1890 illustrates this:

De regering te Washington heeft generaal Brookes gelast eerst tot vijandelijkheden over te gaan, indien de Indianen niet voor overreding vatbaar zijn en weigeren den opmarsch te staken, en bovendien is Buffalo-Bill (de bekende kolonel Cody) als buitengewoon afgezant naar Dakota gezonden.<sup>232</sup>

Moreover, the same newspapers reports a day later:

Buffalo Bill (kolonel Cody), die door de regering is gezonden om de fanatieke opwinding der Roodhuiden te onderzoeken, zal onmiddellijk naar het kamp van Sitting Bull begeven, den aanvoerder der Sioux en de ziel der geheele beweging.<sup>233</sup>

These articles illustrate how even when Buffalo Bill was not in Europe, the Dutch newspapers were still reporting on Cody's adventures. Because most of Cody's adventures were featured and exaggerated upon the Wild West shows, stories describing Cody's life across the Atlantic Ocean were interesting to the Dutch audience. In a 1904

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expected tomorrow, Friday, at Key West, with his Indians and *cowboys*. He will be part of the expedition that will try to provide the Cuban rebels with necessary supplies." Translation mine.

<sup>232</sup> "Buitenlansch Overzicht," *Algemeen Handelsblad*, November 29, 1890, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010144548:mpeg21:a0001>. "The government, at Washington, has ordered General Brookes to use violent force if the Indians are not susceptible to persuasion and refuse to stop their march, and in addition Buffalo Bill (the famous Colonel Cody) was sent as a special ambassador to Dakota." Translation ours.

<sup>233</sup> "Gemengde Buitenlansche Berichten," *Algemeen Handelsblad*, November 30, 1890, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010144549:mpeg21:a0004>. "Buffalo Bill (Colonel Cody), who has been sent by the government to investigate the fanatical arousal of the Redskins, will immediately proceed to the camp of Sitting Bull, the leader of the Sioux and the center of the whole movement." Translation ours.



article in the Dutch newspaper *De Tijd: Godsdienstig-Staatkundig Dagblad*, this is again illustrated, as it reports on Cody pursuing a group of bank robbers in Wyoming:

Naar uit Chicago wordt gemeld, bevindt zich de welbekende cowboy Buffalo Bill, wiens naam Bill Cody is, onlangs op het oorlogspad. Hij had namelijk op zich genomen de vervolging van een vier man sterke rooverbende, die vóóreenigen dagen inbraak pleegde in de hem behorende Bank te Cody, in Wyoming, den kassier doodschoot, de Bank plundered en met den buit naar het gebergte vluchtte.<sup>234</sup>

All three articles mention the name Cody *and* the name Buffalo Bill. This confirms that even if Buffalo Bill's birth name is mentioned in an article, there is also reference made to his stage name. Because his stage name was more famous, the Dutch audience of the newspapers often did not know Cody's real name. In order to inform them properly, a reference to Buffalo Bill was necessary.

In addition to providing an impression on how the Dutch newspapers informed the Dutch public on Cody's actions in the Wild West, news articles also had to show how, even when not related to his life on stage, Cody was perceived as an interesting and sometimes even mythical figure. This is illustrated in an article from *Het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant*:

Buffalo Bill, die eigenlijk Kolonel Cody van Wyoming heet, schijnt een echte Don Juan te wezen. Hij had een eisch tot echtschending tegen zijne vrouw ingediend en Mevr. Cody diende nu op haar beurt een tegenaanklacht in. Volgens die aanklacht zou Buffalo Bill, naar de New-Yorksche berichtgever van het „Berliner Tageblatt” schrijft, verreweg de schuldigste der beide partijen wezen. Er wordt daarin een lange lijst „vriendinnen” van Kolonel Cody opgesomd – in Amerika minstens 1003, alsmede nog velen in andere landen, waaronder zelfs een paar gekroonde hoofden moeten zijn, naar Mevr. Cody beweert.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> “Buffalo Bill Op Het Oorlogspad,” *De Tijd: Godsdienstig-Staatkundig Dagblad*, November 7, 1904, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010408302:mpeg21:a0006>. “From Chicago it is reported that the well-known cowboy Buffalo Bill, whose real real name is Bill Cody, recently went on the path of war. He is prosecuting a four strong group of robbers, who committed a burglary at the Bank of Cody, in Wyoming, the cashier was shot dead, and the robbers fled the bank and went into the mountains.” Translation ours

<sup>235</sup> “Buitenlansch Nieuws,” *Het Nieuws van Den Dag: Kleine Courant*, March 16, 1905, sec. 4, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010163433:mpeg21:a0098>. “Buffalo Bill, who is actually called Colonel Cody of Wyoming, seems to be a real Don Juan. He had submitted a claim for divorce to his wife, and Mrs Cody has in turn made a counter-accustation. According to the indictment Buffalo Bill, as reported by the reporter of the Berliner Tageblatt, is by far the most guilty of the parties. There is a long list of

This very gossip-like article from 1905 is one of the many articles mentioning Cody in this period, illustrated in figure 5- 4. It is even more interesting because it refers to a German newspaper. This reference evidences how newspapers in the Netherlands during this period were looking at the German press and often copied and translated their articles. This accentuates Germany's (cultural) influence on the Netherlands.

Even when the mentioned articles show that the ngram does indeed reflect the amount of news about Cody in this period, it does not always represent this. The ngram graph of 'Kolonel Cody' in figure 5-5 shows how in addition to 1890 and 1905, there is also a peak of this ngram in 1913. This peak illustrates why the use of ngramviewers should always be combined with critical research. At first glance one would assume that the peak of the ngram in 1913 is related to Cody's illness or his bankruptcy, as both happened around that time. However, when the articles that mention this ngram are given a closer look, they appear to refer to an entirely different 'Kolonel Cody,' an English-American pilot who in 1913 had a fatal accident in England.<sup>236</sup> This demonstrates how a critical eye is required when researching with Big Data.

There was, however, a small increase related to Cody in 1913. As illustrated in figure 5-3, a small increase in the mention of Buffalo Bill in 1913 becomes visible. This increase was influenced by two main events in Cody's life. The first event happened in the summer of 1913, when Buffalo Bill was seriously ill:

Kolonel Cody, de eertijds wereldvermaarde Buffalo Bill, moet zwaar ziek liggen te Knoxville, Tennessee, waar hij en zijn troep de bekende voorstellingen geven van het leven in het „ Wild West”. Hij lijdt aan zenuwuitputting, het gevolg van een darmkwaal, en moest dezer dagen van de show naar het huis van een bloedverwant worden vervoerd.

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girlfriends, only in American 1003, and probably still a lot more in many other countries, including even a few crowned heads, claims Mrs Cody.” Translation ours

<sup>236</sup> “Doodgevallen,” *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, August 8, 1913, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010295707:mpeg21:a0161>.

De nu spierwitte veteraan der woudloopers gaat blijkbaar zijn eind tegemoet. Hij reed ditmaal in een ossenwagen de arena rond, in plaats van op zijn geliefkoosden witten hengst, zooals hij steeds placht te doen.<sup>237</sup>

A few months later, newspapers reported on the second main event in Cody's life that year, Buffalo Bill's bankruptcy:

Buffalo Bill is een bankroetier. Maar desniettenstaande paradeert de lustige zwarte sombrero, het Mexikaansche breedrandige hoofddekseel, even lustig als altijd op het grijze hoofd van den bejaarden sportman en is de veerkachtige gang van den Kolonel even veerkrachtig als in de dagen toen hij evenmin om dollars als om gevechten met Roodhuiden gaf.

“Ja”, zei hij, “ik ben bankroet, dat wil zeggen voor zoover mijn geldbeurs betreft; maar aangaande mijn geest, dat zal nog vele dagen duren eer ik in dat opzicht ‘op’ en ‘uit’ ben.<sup>238</sup>

These articles illustrate how not only Cody's adventures were covered in the Dutch press, but so too were his miseries. The final terrible event was of course, Cody's death in 1917. An increase in the mention of ngram 'Buffalo Bill' in 1917 illustrates the coverage of William F. Cody's death in Dutch newspapers. National Dutch newspapers such as *Algemeen Handelsblad* reported on his death:

Buffalo Bill, de groote strijder tegen de Indianen, de held van zoovele verhalen van durf, van slimheid en scherpzinnigheid, van vermetelen mannenmoed, is dood. En al mogen er onder die verhalen velen wat sterk gekleurd en... gecompleteerd zijn, grootendeels zijn zij toch waar. Want deze merkwaardige figuur, die velen slechts voor een mythe of voor een gerschikten circusbaas houden, heeft in de geschiedenis van Noord-Amerika inderdaad een zeer belangrijken rol gespeeld.

Kapitein Cody, zoo is zijn eigenlijke naam is 70 jaar oud geworden.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> “Buffalo Bill Zwaar Ziek,” *De Telegraaf*, June 10, 1913, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110547252:mpeg21:a0076>. “Colonel Cody, the once world famous Buffalo Bill, is very ill in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he and his troops performed the famous scenes of the Wild West. He suffers from nerve exhaustion, the result of an intestinal disease, and he had to be transported to the home of a relative. The now bright white veteran is apparently going to meet his end. At the shows he was rode around in an ox wagon in the arena, instead of riding his favorite stallion.” Translation ours.

<sup>238</sup> “BANKROET, MAAR VOL LEVENSVUUR Kol. Cody, Beter Bekend Als ‘Buffalo Bill,’” *De Grondwet*, September 9, 1913, Delpher, 2015, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110621412:mpeg21:a0002>. “Buffalo Bill is a broke man. Nevertheless the aged sportsman parades with his black sombrero, the Mexican hat, on his grey head, and he is as resilient as in the days when he had dollars and battled the Redskins. “Yes,” he said. “I am bankrupt, as it concerns my money. But as for my soul, that will last for many days to come.” Translation ours.

<sup>239</sup> “Buffalo Bill †,” *Algemeen Handelsblad*, January 16, 1917, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010653849:mpeg21:a0087>. “Buffalo Bill, the great warrior against the Indians, the hero of so many tales of courage, cleverness and shrewdness, bold men of courage, is dead.

This extensive news article about Cody's death describes key events in Cody's life, from his successes to his failures. Moreover, even smaller local Dutch newspapers such as *Nieuwsblad van Friesland: Hepkema's Courant*, covered the event:

Buffalo-Bill, de Amerikaansche heldenfiguur in jongensboeken, de weergalooze ruiter en schuuter, die zich ook in menig circus heeft laten bewonderen, is overleden, 70 jaren oud. Men wil hem een rustplaats geven, zijner waardig. Zijn stoffelijk overschot zal worden bijgezet in een in de rots uitgehouwen graf op den top van Lookout Mountain bij de stad Denver. Van dien berg heeft men het uitzicht op wijde vlakten waar Buffalo-Bill eertijds den buffel jaagde.<sup>240</sup>

Concluding from the coverage of Cody's life, there was indeed, besides his life as a character/showman, much attention given in the Dutch press to William F. Cody, the man. Not only the exciting Wild West stories found their way into the Dutch newspapers in the Netherlands, but so too did information about Cody's difficulties as well as his political ambitions. Though the ngramviewers provide an interesting and visual representation of Cody's life in the Dutch press, they are, however, not conclusive.

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And even if the stories about him are greatly exaggerated and filled in, for the most part they are still true. This remarkable figure, who many only believe is a myth or a circus boss, he indeed played a very important role in the history of North-America. Captain Cody, which was his real name, has become 70 years old." Translation ours.

<sup>240</sup> "Buffalo-Bill," *Nieuwsblad van Friesland: Hepkema's Courant*, January 16, 1917, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010762570:mpeg21:a0107>. "Buffalo Bill, the American hero from boys' books, the fearless horseman and sharpshooter, that was admired in many circuses is deceased, 70 years old. They want to give him a worthy resting place. His remains will be buried in a rock-hewn tomb at the top of Lookout Mountain, close to the city of Denver. From this mountain one can see the wide plains where Buffalo Bill once hunted the buffalo." Translation ours.

Typ één of meer frases

\* kolonel cody

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Figure 5-5 Historische Kranten ngramviewer. Ngram: kolonel Cody. Courtesy of the KB Historische Kranten ngramviewer/ Delpher

### *Reception Buffalo Bill shows*

When, in 1887, Cody first visited the continent of Europe, it did not go unnoticed by the Dutch press. As illustrated in the ngram of figure 5-3, the first reference to Buffalo Bill in the KB Historische Kranten archive is from this precise period. A frequency of 39 ngrams in 1887 represents the first time Buffalo Bill was mentioned in the Dutch press.

*Het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant*, provides the first article in the database and announces Buffalo Bill's Wild West coming to Europe. This article introduces Buffalo Bill and his show to the Dutch public, and informs them that Buffalo Bill will soon come to Europe—which he did later that year.<sup>241</sup>

<sup>241</sup> “Gemengd Nieuws,” *Het Nieuws van Den Dag: Kleine Courant*, January 31, 1887, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010086638:mpeg21:a0136>. “The famous prairie hunter or trapper

When Buffalo Bill's Wild West was confirmed to play at the American fair in London, advertisements started to appear in Dutch newspapers. For example, the advertisement, illustrated in figure 5-6, in *het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant* on July 1887, offers a trip (for the amount of 63 Dutch guilders) to London to visit the American fair, including Buffalo Bill's Wild West. This evidences that the Dutch public was a market for the London Buffalo Bill show and, travel agencies were providing possibilities for the Dutch audience to actually visit the show.

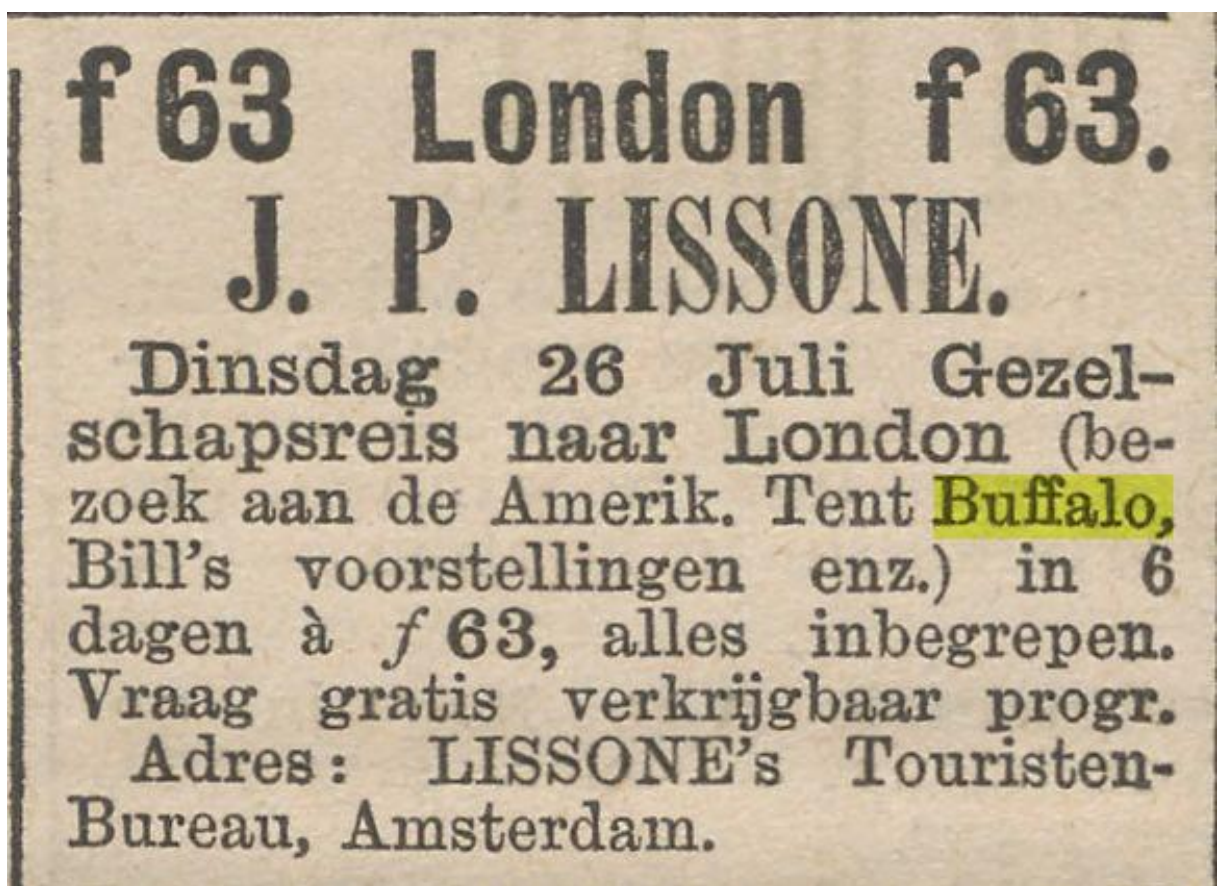


Figure 5-6 Advertisement 'Gezelschapsreis' in *het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant*. July 1887. Courtesy of the KB Historische Kranten ngramviewer/ Delpher

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Buffalo Bill has formed a troop with which he visits cities in the civilized east of the United States and represent there the life of the Wild West. He enlisted in Texas, Arizona and DAKOTA about a hundred of the boldest Rancheros and Vaqueros, and asked the government permission to bring a hundred Indian to the cities of the east. Buffalo Bill is now with his exhibition in New York. One can there, for an entrance fee of two dollars, see the Redskins, with their ornaments of feathers, animals, war dances and fights between soldiers and Redskins. This all provides a very interesting spectacle. This all we be visible in Europe soon too, as Buffalo Bill is planning to come over to London and the big cities in the mainland of Europe." Translation ours.

The Dutch newspapers described Cody's show at the American exposition in London in great detail:

*Buffalo Bill's* troep, die zich op de Amerikaansche tentoonstelling te Londen zal vertoonen, is te Londen aangekomen. De troep bestaat uit Indianen, Mexicanen, Texanen en een aantal *Cowboys*, voorts uit 160 paarden, herten, en andere dieren, waaronder ook 8 stieren. Met de laatsten had *Buffalo Bill* al dadelijk last. De invoer van vee uit Amerika is namelijk verboden en al het vee moet aan de losplaats geslacht worden. De stieren zouden dus afgemaakt moeten worden, maar door officieele tusschenkomst werd eene plaats in het *Albert Dock* te Londen als quarantainestation ingericht. De beesten zullen daar dus eenigen tijd moeten vertoeven. Eene bijzondere verordening van de *Privy Council* was nodig om daartoe vergunning te verleen. <sup>242</sup>

This article describes the large amounts of animals Cody transported to Europe and the difficulties this caused. This illustrates the curiosity of the Dutch public for the London show. Not only did the show in London grab the attention of the Dutch press, events that were happening in connection with Cody's first European tour were considered news events worth mentioning to the Dutch public. An example of such an event is Buffalo Bill's visit to the Vatican:

Een zeer eigenaardige audiëntie vond gisteren in het Vaticaan plaats, en wel van een Indiaansch gezelschap, onder leiding van den Amerikaan Buffalo Bill, bij de bezoekers van de Parijsche tentoonstelling zeker niet onbekend. Buffalo Bill, met zijn circus, doet nu de ronde door Italië, en in Rome komende, heeft hij voor zich en zijn roodhuidig gezelschap dadelijk audiëntie aangevraagd bij den Heiligen Vader. Booze tongen zeggen, dat dit een Amerikaansche reclame is, maar anderen verzekeren, dat Buffalo uit vaderlijke zorg den zijnen den Pauselijken aanblik en zegen wilde verschaffen. Hoe het zij, de Paus was zoo vriendelijk den 3den Maart, den dag, waarop hij twaalf jaar geleden tot Paus gekroond werd, de gevraagde audiëntie te verleen en de roodhuiden in alle pracht te ontvangen. De Indianen waren hoogst verrukt bij het zien van den Paus en stotten woeste, echt Indiaansche kreten uit, die den overigen aanwezigen een oogenblik van ontsteltenis aanjoegen; het gelaat van den Paus betrok eenigszins en hij gaf hun, met zijn van edelgesteenten vonkelende hand, aanstonds zijn zegen en heel

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<sup>242</sup> "Gemengd Nieuws," *Het Nieuws van Den Dag: Kleine Courant*, April 22, 1887, sec. 4, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010086865:mpeg21:a0050>. Buffalo Bill and his troops, who will have a show at the London exhibit, have arrived in London. The gang consists of Indians, Mexicans, Texans and cowboys, about 160 horses, deer and other animals, including eight bulls. The latter became a problem for Buffalo Bill as the import of cattle from the US is forbidden and all cattle must be slaughtered at arrival. However, a special quarantine station was placed in the Albert Dock in London. The animals will have to stay there for some time. " Translation ours.

speedig hun afscheid. Zeer talrijk was de menigte, die hen buiten het Vaticaan opwachtte en toejuichte.<sup>243</sup>

This article is interesting because it shows how the popularity of Buffalo Bill in Italy was described to the Dutch public, which evidences the demand for news about Buffalo Bill in the Netherlands. It also mentions the controversy surrounding Cody's American show in Europe. Though the United States government did not sponsor Buffalo Bill in Europe, because he was one of the first major exports of American culture, as demonstrated in this article, he was received as a (informal) cultural U.S. ambassador and the show was interpreted by many as an advertisement for America.<sup>244</sup>

The articles mentioning the Buffalo Bill shows illustrate that the European tour did not go unnoticed in the Netherlands. Most attention was on the Paris show, as it was part of the 1889 World Fair. Later European Buffalo Bill shows were consequently compared with the famous Paris show:

Daar hebt gij de Buffalo Bill's wild west-troep die sedert gisteren en voor een achttal dagen, 's namiddags om 3 en 's avonds om 8 uur in den ruimen hof van 't Nijverheidspaleis, met een talrijk gezelschap van 250 roodhuiden en cow-boys, benevens paarden, muilezels, enz., onder de leiding van colonel Cody, den welbekenden knappen Buffalo Bill, de aantrekkelijkste voorstelling van het wildemansleven der Amerikaansche far-west voor den geringen prijs van 5,4,3 en 2 frs. ten beste geeft. Deze voorstellingen zijn zoo frisch en volledig als zij te Parijs gegeven werden en verdienen de meeste belangstelling. Bijzondere treinen zijn uit Noord-Nederland hierheen gericht, en alles voorspelt, dat velen uwer landgenooten deze eenige gelegenheid zullen te baat nemen om iets degelijks en boeiends in natuurlijke volkenkunde te aanschouwen. Woeste gevechten, het vangen van wilde paarden met lasso's, het overrompelen eener diligence in volle

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<sup>243</sup> "Brieven Uit Rome," *Het Nieuws van Den Dag: Kleine Courant*, March 12, 1890, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010138765:mpeg21:a0002>. "A very peculiar visit took place at the Vatican yesterday, an Indian group under the leadership of the American Buffalo Bill, with visitors of the Paris Exhibition certainly not unknown. Buffalo Bill, with his circus, is giving shows in Italy and requested a visitation with the Holy Father. Evil tongues say that this is an American advertisement, but others argue that this is just a way to receive the Papal blessing. Whatever the case, the pope was so friendly the grant the request and receive Buffalo Bill and his troops on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March. The Indians were highly delighted at seeing the Pope. An enormous crowd was waiting outside of the Vatican and cheered for Buffalo Bill." Translation ours.

<sup>244</sup> Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (Macmillan, 2011), 35–37.



wildernis, niet ontbreekt, minst nog de ernst en de bewonderenswaardige vlugheid, welke de vertooning tot eene aangrijpende werkelijkheid verheffen.<sup>245</sup>

This article, describing the show in Antwerp, Belgium, promotes the show to the Dutch public by comparing it with the Paris show, stating it was just as fresh and wide-ranging. Moreover, this article mentions special trains leaving from the northern Netherlands to Antwerp for the Dutch who wanted to see the show. It also predicts that masses of Dutch people will indeed try to visit Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Here again, newspaper articles illustrate how the Dutch people, even when there was no show in the Netherlands, could visit Buffalo Bill's Wild West and were informed about different features of the show.

Already discussed in chapter 1, the Wild West show did not visit the Netherlands. It is, however, understandable that some scholars refer to a Buffalo Bill show in Holland,<sup>246</sup> as there were indeed plans for the show to visit different towns and cities in the Netherlands for multiple appearances: plans that were well mentioned in the Dutch newspapers. In March 1891, for example, the newspaper *De Tijd: Godsdiens- en Staatkundig Dagblad* informed its readers of a show in Arnhem, the Netherlands:

Te Arnhem zal het bekende gezelschap Amerikanen en Indianen van Buffalo Bill op het sport- en tentoonstellingsterrein aan den Velperweg vertooningen geven geheel in den trant van die welke in den zomer van 1889 te Parijs plaats vonden. In het laatst van Mei zullen de voorstellingen beginn. De ondernemers hebben het terrein uitmuntend geschikt voor hun doel gekeurd.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> "Brieven Uit Antwerpen," *Het Nieuws van Den Dag: Kleine Courant*, June 7, 1891, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010139881:mpeg21:a0135>. "There is the Buffalo Bill Wild West gang, with 2 shows a day for eight days is staying at the Nijverheidspaleis, with 250 redskins and cowboys, horses mules ertc. Under the leadership of Colonel Cody, the well known Buffalo Bill, they give a presentation of the savage life of the American far-west for only 5,4,3 and 2 fr. These performances are as fresh and complete as they were in Paris, and earn the most interest. Special trains from the Northern Netherlands are coming here and everything predicts that many men will take the opportunity to see something as solid and fascinating." Translation ours.

<sup>246</sup> Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 65.

<sup>247</sup> "ALLERLEI," *De Tijd: Godsdiens- en Staatkundig Dagblad*, March 2, 1891, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010384637:mpeg21:a0068>. "In Arnhem, the famous party of American and Indians of Buffalo Bill will give a show at the sport and exhibition grounds on the Velperweg. Performances will be comparable with the shows of the 1889 Paris summer shows. In May the shows will start, the terrain is an excellent fit for this purpose." Translation ours.

In the same newspaper, a possible show in Utrecht is mentioned as well, “Het gezelschap van Buffalo Bill is voornemens, wanneer daartoe vergunning wordt verleend, in Mei of Juni a.s. ook vertooningen in het Sterrenbosch te Utrecht te geven.”<sup>248</sup> Other newspapers announced plans for shows in various cities, *Algemeen Handelsblad* mentions a possible show in Amsterdam: “Het bestuur der Amsterdamsche Sportclub onderhandelt met Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, om op het sportterrein achter het Museum voorstellingen te geven.”<sup>249</sup> And the Rotterdam-based newspaper *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* discusses a possible show in Rotterdam: “Buffalo Bill met den Amerikaanschen circus „Wild West” met Indianen en zoo meer, denk van hier [Wenen] naar Nederland te reizen, Amsterdam of Rotterdam.”<sup>250</sup> None of these shows actually happened, however, as Buffalo Bill and his troops instead returned to the United States because “the management decided to close temporarily this extraordinary tour and winter the company.”<sup>251</sup>

A few years later, in 1903, Buffalo Bill was again touring through Europe and was, as before, discussed extensively in the Dutch press:

De wereldberoemde „Show” van Buffalo Bill, die sedert vijftien jaar niet in Europa te zien is geweest bevindt zich tegenwoordig weer in Engeland en kolonel Cody – zo heet Buffalo Bill eigenlijk – ziet er nog even schilderachtig uit als tevoren met zijn fladderende haren, zijn puntbaard en zijn zeventiende-eeuwsch costuum. Als men het arena ziet binnenrijden en het publiek groeten aan het hoofd van zijn ruitertroep, is het of een overlevende uit vroeger eeuwen ten bezoek komt. Buffalo Bill is namelijk een pittoreske persoonlijkheid die zelf een groote attractie is van de „show”. En het eigenaardigst is dat de voorstellingen zelf reproducties zijn van toneelen uit zijn vroeger leven als van de helden uit de boeken van Aimard en Mayne Reid.

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid. “The party of Buffalo Bill plan, if there will be given a permit to do so, to also perform in the Sterrenbosch in Utrecht in May or June.” Translation ours.

<sup>249</sup> “ALLERLEI,” *Algemeen Handelsblad*, March 1, 1891, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010145112:mpeg21:a0021>. “The board of the Amsterdam Sport Club is negotiating with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West to use the sports grounds behind the museum.” Translation ours.

<sup>250</sup> “Telegrammen,” *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, May 20, 1890, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:011010186:mpeg21:a0019>. “Buffalo Bill, with his American circus “Wild West” with Indians and more, will be travelling from Vienna to the Netherlands at visit Rotterdam or Amsterdam.” Translation ours.

<sup>251</sup> Burke, *Buffalo Bill from Prairie to Palace*, 266.

Men ziet in de „show” met de lasso werpen door roodhuiden en spoorzoekers mustangs dresseeren en berijden, Indianen met mocassins en tomahawk, aanvallen op reizigers in de prairie enz.<sup>252</sup>

This front-page article in *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* describes the main events of the show, this time in England, and even prints half a page illustration with the article (figure 5-7). Buffalo Bill’s return to Europe again created speculation in newspapers about the Wild West show coming to the Netherlands:

B. en W. van ‘s Gravenhage stellen den Raad voor, tegen een huur van f 1000 en onder een viertal voorwaarden, aan de Maatschappij Buffalo Bill’s Wild West te Weenen, gedurende eenige dagen de beschikking te geven over het Alexanderveld, teneinde aldaar in de maand October a.s. voorstellingen te geven.<sup>253</sup>

However, a month later the same newspaper sadly announced that again Cody would not visit the Netherlands:

De maatschappij „ Buffalo Bill’s Wild West” te Weenen heeft aan B. en W. van ‘s-Gravenhage te kennen gegeven, dat zij wegens vervroegd vertrek naar Amerika, afziet van het haar bij raadsbesluit van 24 Sept. jl. verleend gebruik van het Alexanderveld op enkele dagen in October.<sup>254</sup>

These are just a few examples from the coverage in Dutch newspapers of news about the Buffalo Bill shows in Europe. Based on the extensive and frequent news reports on Buffalo Bill’s European tours, it is determined that even in the end when the

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<sup>252</sup> “BUFFALO BILL,” *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, September 26, 1903, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010179246:mpeg21:a0061>. “The world famous show of Buffalo Bill has not been to Europe for fifteen years in Europe, is now back in England and Colonel Cody – as Buffalo Bill is actually called – still looks as picturesque as before, with his fluttering hair, his pointed beard and his seventeenth century costume. If he enters the arena, it is like a visitor from the past era has come to visit us, Buffalo Bill is, in fact, the main character of the show. And interestingly, the performances are reproductions of the early life of the hero. People can see in the show, throwing lasso by redskins with moccasins and tomahawk, who attack travelers on the prairie etc.” Translation ours.

<sup>253</sup> “Buffalo Bill,” *De Telegraaf*, September 20, 1906, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110559051:mpeg21:a0122>. “B. and W. of The Hague ask the council, at a rent of f1000 and four conditions, to make the Alexanderveld available for the company Buffalo Bill’s Wild West. So it could give performances here in the month October.” Translation ours.

<sup>254</sup> “Geen Buffalo Bill,” *De Telegraaf*, October 23, 1906, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110559714:mpeg21:a0051>. “The company Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, in Vienna, has informed the B. and W. of the Hague that because of an early departure to America, they will not use the Alexanderveld in October.” Translation ours.

show did not visit the Netherlands, the Dutch public was still fascinated by the shows, and if they could afford it, they would visit them abroad.

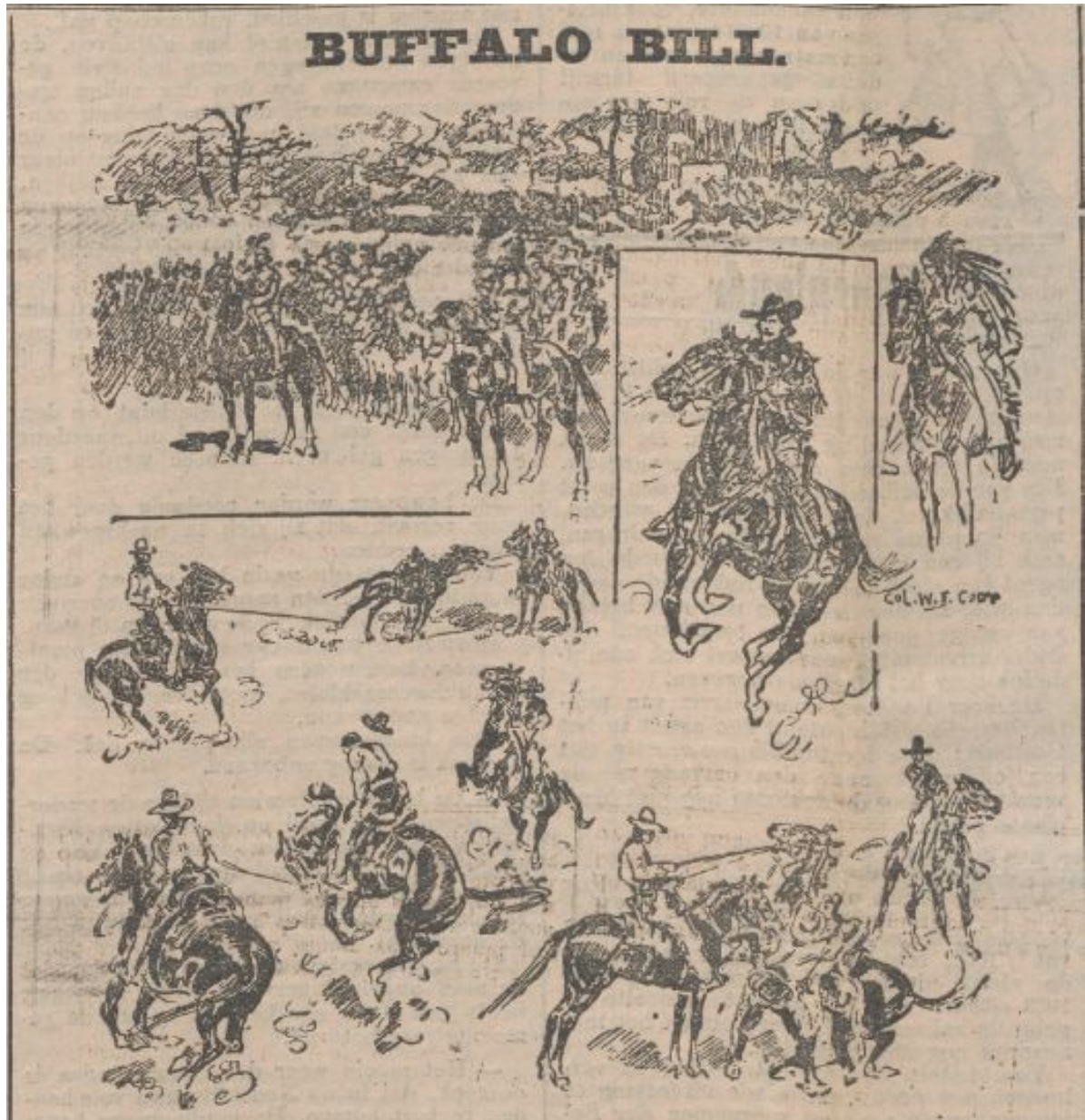


Figure 5-7 Buffalo Bill in *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*. September 1903. Courtesy of the KB Historische Kranten ngramviewer/ Delpher

*Reception Buffalo Bill advertisements*

Because Buffalo Bill never visited the Netherlands, he did not become a real household name until after his European tours, when his dime novels and movies were introduced in the Netherlands. This is demonstrated by the increased mention of the ngram 'Buffalo Bill' during this period, when advertisements of movies and dime novels started appearing in Dutch newspapers, illustrated in figures 5-8, 5-9.

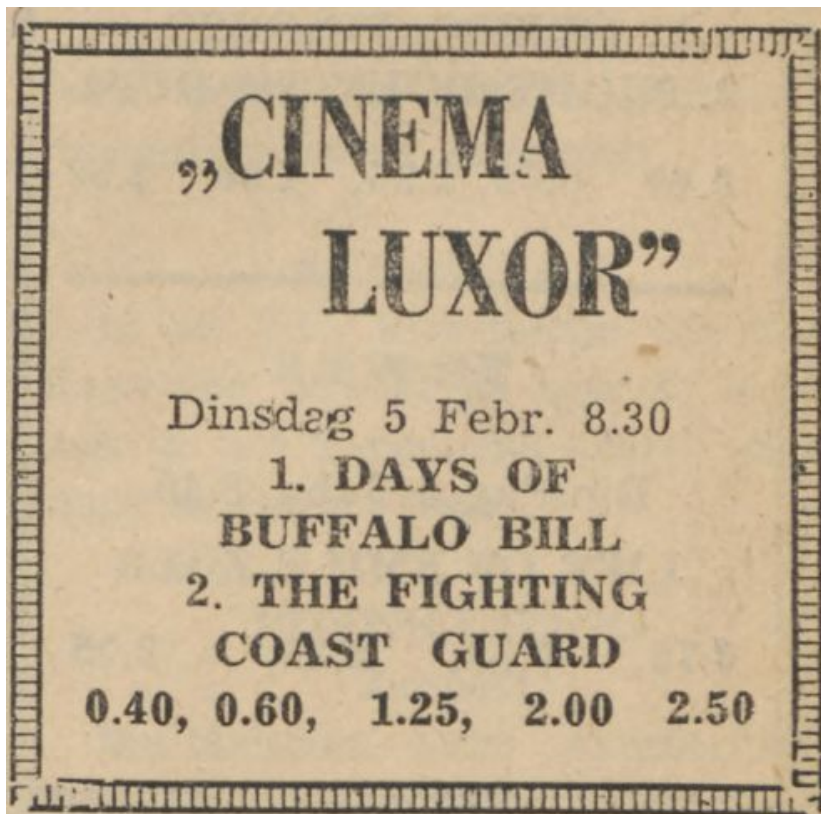


Figure 5-8 Advertisement in *Het nieuws: algemeen dagblad*. February 5, 1952. Courtesy of the KB Historische Kranten ngramviewer/ Delpher

33970.75

**CINEMA ROYAL**

Vrijdag 17 Juni weder een eerste rangs Royal-programma. — Als hoofdfilm:

**De avonturen van Buffalo Bill**

Sensationeele helden-roman in 8 acten, waarin de hoofdrol gespeeld wordt door den beroemden

**JACK HOXIE**

**Spanning - Emotie - Sensatie - Attractie**

Schitterend en amusant bijprogramma. — Toegang voor personen van elken leeftijd.

Figure 5-9 Advertisement in *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*. June 16, 1927. Courtesy of the KB Historische Kranten ngramviewer/ Delpher

The increase of the ngram ‘Buffalo Bill’ after Cody’s death is due to these advertisements about dime novels, and later on, movies. The reason for the enormous increase of the ngram in the 1950s, compared with earlier times, illustrated in figure 5-3 and 5-4, is not primarily because Buffalo Bill became more popular than before, but also because newspapers introduced cinema sections. These mostly weekly news bulletins and advertisements mentioned films that were in theaters that week. This resulted in a higher frequency of the ngram ‘Buffalo Bill’ because many movies carried his name in the title.

Just as with the shows, the dime novels and movies were advertised in the Dutch newspaper, which resulted in increased visibility and wide dissemination of the name Buffalo Bill.

## *Buffalo Bill and “prikkellectuur”*

Although popular, the mass production of Buffalo Bill’s adventures was not received uncritically, which is also reflected in the Dutch press. Buffalo Bill dime novels, among others, were categorized as ‘prikkellectuur’; literature that would make readers participate in illegal and dangerous activities. This idea that popular culture can influence someone’s actions in daily life can be compared with modern day concerns over violent videogames.<sup>255</sup> A news article in *Rotterdamsch nieuwsblad*, for example, illustrates a connection made between murders in France and the books of Buffalo Bill:

In verband met de moorden, door een paar Zwitsersche bengels in Frankrijk gepleegd, en waarbij gebleken is, dat het hoofd der jongens op hol was gebracht door het lezen van avontuurlijke verhalen, hebben verschillende gemeentebesturen in Zwitserland den boekhandelaars verboden boeken in het genre van Buffalo Bill en Nick Carter voor hun ramen uit te stallen.<sup>256</sup>

This article illustrates how anxiety over the influence of Wild West and other adventure stories, resulted in (local) government interference in the sales of Buffalo Bill books and dime novels. Besides reporting on international incidents connected to Buffalo Bill and criminal offences, Dutch newspaper also reported on incidents in the Netherlands:

Te Helmond zijn eenige fabrieks- en kantoorjongens, van 12 tot 14 jaar, door het lezen van Nick Carteriana, Buffalo Bill’s, enz., er, naar „ de Telegraaf” mededeelt, toe gekomen om het volgende plan ten uitvoer te brengen:

Zij wisten, dat de boekhouder van een groote machinefabriek tot ‘s avonds laat werkte en zij dachten daarvan te profiteeren. Zij zouden ‘s avonds den man overvallen, een revolver voor het hoofd zetten, doodsteken en in het kanaal werpen en daarna de kas plunderen en weglopen. Een der jeugdige boefjes kreeg evenwel berouw, liep naar den inspecteur van politie en vertelde hem alles. De jongens zijn gevat en warden verhoord, waarop zij allen bekenden.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Anne de Vries, *Wat heten goede kinderboeken?: opvattingen over kinderliteratuur in Nederland sinds 1880* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1989), 175, [http://dbnl.nl/tekst/vrie089wath01\\_01/vrie089wath01\\_01.pdf](http://dbnl.nl/tekst/vrie089wath01_01/vrie089wath01_01.pdf).

<sup>256</sup> “Zwitserland,” *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, January 14, 1910, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010197786:mpeg21:a0104>. “Connected with the murders, committed by a few Swiss brats in France, it becomes clear that the heads of the boys were confused by reading adventure stories. Several city councils in Switzerland have ordered booksellers to ban books in the genre Buffalo Bill and Nick Carter, from their display windows.” Translation ours.

<sup>257</sup> “Gemengd Nieuws. De Invloed van Prikkellectuur,” *De Tijd: Godsdiensdig-Staatkundig Dagblad*, October 17, 1911, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010542767:mpeg21:a0096>. “In Helmond, some factory and office boys, aged 12 to 14 years, after reading Nick Carter and Buffalo Bill planned the following: they knew the bookkeeper of a large machine shop was working late and they could profit from that. They would attack the man in the evening, hold a gun to his head, stabbing him to death and throw

This news article argues that because of reading Buffalo Bill stories (“prikkellectuur”), two youngsters were motivated to plan criminal actions. Reporting on this evidences how there was a fear of mass culture and the influences of these mass-produced stories on young adults. Another incident that was blamed on the bad influences of Buffalo Bill dime novels was reported a few years later in *Voorwaarts: social-democratisch dagblad* in 1922:

Donderdagmiddag reeds was het tweetal door een rechercheur opgespoord en in arrest gesteld. De loopjongen bekenden toen, dat hij Dinsdag om 6 uur een sleutel had meegenomen van de achterdeur en des avond met zijn vriendje naar het perceel was gegaan om diefstal te plegen.

Daarop was het tweetal naar Arnhem gereisd waar zij het gestolen geld grootendeels hebben verteerd. Bij hun aanhouding waren zij o.a. in het bezit van tien Buffalo Bill-werkjes zoodat wel kan worden aangenomen dat het lezen van sensatie-lectuur de knapen tot hun daar heeft gebracht.<sup>258</sup>

This article argues that the cause of the described criminal offence was the possession of Buffalo Bill dime novels. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century adventurous and sensational stories were seen as the source of criminal actions.<sup>259</sup>

The depiction of Buffalo Bill after his death in the Dutch media consisted mainly of warnings. The dime novels with adventurous stories were ‘prikkellectuur’ and were perceived as the cause of criminal actions both in the Netherlands as abroad.

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him in the canal, where after they would plunder and rob the cash register and run away. However, one of the rascals felt remorse, went to the police inspector and him everything. The boys are arrested, and interrogated, where after they all confessed.” Translation ours.

<sup>258</sup> “Gemengde Berichten. Inbrekers van 13 Jaar Oud. De Invloed van Prikkellectuur,” *Voorwaarts: Sociaal-Democratisch Dagblad*, April 22, 1922, Delpher, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010210371:mpeg21:a0053>. “On Thursday afternoon the pair was already detected and arrested. The bellboy confessed that he took a key on Tuesday to rob the place the same evening with a friend. Thereafter the pair traveled to Arnhem where they spend the stolen money. Upon their arrest, ten Buffalo Bill novels were found. So it can be assumed that reading these thrill literature resulted in these crimes.” Translation ours..

<sup>259</sup> Nynke Hichtum, “Prikkellectuur,” *De Ploeg* 1, no. 12 (1909): 189–92.



## *Conclusion*

The use of techniques from culturomics provides a new and interesting way to research the reception of Buffalo Bill in Dutch media. It provides access, as well as visual representation of data that used to be in (closed) archives. As becomes clear in this chapter, using these techniques is not without the possible danger of drawing incorrect conclusions. In this project, we combined quantitative techniques with qualitative techniques. The ngramviewers show us interesting visual representations in graphs of the occurrence of Buffalo Bill in Dutch media; however, one should always question what the news articles are actually saying, in order to avoid making mistakes and drawing wrong conclusions.

The extensive coverage of Buffalo Bill in the Dutch media shows how Buffalo Bill became a household name in the Netherlands. The coverage of the Wild West shows in Europe and the United States demonstrates how informed the Dutch public was about Buffalo Bill's Wild West, his dime novels and his personal life in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even if the show never came to the Netherlands, the Dutch public was well aware of its content and even made trips abroad to witness the spectacle in another country. Moreover, the news articles informing the Dutch public about Cody's personal life and political ambitions, confirm newspapers were convinced their readers were interested in these events and stories.

Even when the adventurous stories of Buffalo Bill were considered dangerous and the Wild West show could only be visited abroad, the reception of Buffalo Bill in Dutch newspapers confirms that William Cody and his mythical stage character Buffalo Bill were highly visible in the media in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The newspapers disseminated his stories and adventures, provided the public with reports on the shows and introduced a broader public to the Wild West hero.

## CHAPTER 6: THE PUBLISHER(S): STRIVING FOR ORIGINAL WORKS

The dime novel format had been one of the most successful commodities of pulp fiction by publishing houses in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The publishing house Beadle & Adams was the first publishing house to pioneer the format of the dime novel.

However, they were not the only publishing house to undertake the venture of publishing cheap, exciting stories. Many publishing houses followed and were buying the publishing rights of their predecessors, while translating the dime novels for production and distribution beyond the borders of the United States. From a business point of view, these publishing houses were able to capitalize on a popular trend in literature. Chapter 3 (Dime novels: American stories in Europe) explained the historical context of a changing industrialized society which brought with it a commercialized popular culture. This chapter continues and explains what role publishing houses played in contributing to the popularity of the dime novel and more specifically the Buffalo Bill stories. This chapter addresses the following questions: what was the role of publishing houses, and in what way did they contribute to disseminating the (fictional) American West?

Publishing houses did not simply answer a growing demand; rather, they transformed dime novels to fit specific national or continental contexts.<sup>260</sup> Extensive research on a selected group of European Buffalo Bill dime novels revealed that the same publisher most likely published different languages. Despite differences in cultural translation, it appears the European Buffalo Bill series, *Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures*, had a common publisher; the German A. Eichler. This

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<sup>260</sup> This is demonstrated in Chapter 4 (Technical analysis and translation).

chapter focuses on the role of publishing houses in the production and spread of dime novels, and in what way they contributed to the popularity of the dime novel. This chapter also underlines how publishing houses exploited existing myths on the American West, while contributing to the dissemination of mass culture.

### *The dime novel publisher*

The publishers of the series were the creative force behind the dime novel. They saw commercial potential, exploited the opportunity and strictly controlled production and distribution. Contrary to existing beliefs, the publishers made decisions about what stories should be published, and how they were to be written.<sup>261</sup> Writers of dime novel adhered to strict structural storyline lay-outs; noncompliance meant that they would not be paid for their work.<sup>262</sup> For this reason, neither publishers nor dime novel writers pretended to be advancing culture with their popular literature: “the texts were (...) manipulated for the mass public; they were commodities without pretensions, vessels of diversion without cultural ideology.”<sup>263</sup> Although from the perspective of the publishers and writers these claims may have carried an essence of truth, this did not account for the people who actually bought and read the novels. The dime novels projected social meaning and had social significance primarily for the working class who related to the societal struggles expressed in the stories.<sup>264</sup> The perspective of the dime novel audience has already been discussed extensively (above) since the commercial aspect of the dime novel is essential to point out the perspective of the publishers.

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<sup>261</sup> It was often assumed the writers of the stories were the people creating the narrative and storyline, while they had little say in the process and were directed by publishers on what to write. For more on the influence of dime novel writers on the writing process see Denning, *The Cultural Front*.

<sup>262</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 496.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> This is demonstrated in Chapter 3 (Dime novels: American stories in Europe).

Dime novel publishers viewed a dime novel or dime novel series as a potentially profitable commodity; making a profitable margin, although they required careful control during production and distribution.<sup>265</sup> This seems contrary to the idea a dime novel had cultural value and social significance. To its readers, the dime novel was an example of the cultural expression of working-class identity and further reflected growing social class hierarchies, as well as, increased societal discontent. Because publishing houses had little concern for the social significance of dime novels, provided they capitalized on existing social tendencies, they are considered in a more technical light. Publishing houses can be referred to what is described in the Frankfurt School as ‘culture industries.’<sup>266</sup> These culture industries are concentrations of economic and cultural power. Turning to the distribution and circulation of dime novels, it is interesting to further explore in what ways the publishing houses were an economic power and a cultural power. Such considerations are essential for comprehending the importance of their role in the dime novel industry.

The dime novel publisher was an economic power primarily due to the exploitation of popular demand of literature, with dime novels dominating the literary market—second to only newspapers.<sup>267</sup> In his study on the role of the writer in the 19th-century book industry, Russel Berman explains that the elitist idea that popular literature reflected the desires of the masses, and was therefore of low quality, is false.<sup>268</sup> Berman suggests the perceived low quality of popular literature was the result of the manipulations of the book industry and its economic motives. For example, the use of standardized formats for writing stories was a formula for marketing success. The content however suffered, as writers were restrained, creatively speaking.

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<sup>265</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 495.

<sup>266</sup> Traube, “‘The Popular’ in American Culture,” 144.

<sup>267</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 489. Explains that only newspapers found a wider audience besides dime novels.

<sup>268</sup> Derived from: Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America*, 21.

The key to the success of the dime novel lay in distribution. For example, the European publisher A. Eichler managed to produce over 300 stories of the Buffalo Bill series, and translated them in over 9 different European languages.<sup>269</sup> It was specifically the mass circulation of dime novels that largely reinforced their popularity and thereby also increased their sales. With the arrival of a more innovated printing press, publishers were able to increase the production of dime novels at the lowest cost possible resulting in the low sales price of 10 cents. Intense competition in the literary market drove publishers to find ways in which to stand out from their competitors, such as issuing more series than ever before. This also had the effect of forcing down the price of novels from 20 cents to 10 cents.<sup>270</sup> In addition, publishers not only distributed their dime novels to the far ends of Europe, they also created enticing editions with boldly colored covers, which helped increase the attraction of their product.

The dime novel publisher was also a cultural power, because, despite letting dime novel writers appeal to their creative fancies in a restricted manner, publishing houses adhered to existing formulas which ensured stories had instant success. That is, the creativity of writers had to adhere to particulars demanded by publishing houses; namely, quantity, speed, and other fixed demands.<sup>271</sup> Instead of providing writers the freedom to explore new storylines, writers were tightly controlled and restricted when it came to their creative output. For instance, Michael Denning reveals that publishers often provided writers with titles and synopsizes for a serial beforehand.<sup>272</sup> Writers attempted to write stories under the pressure of continuous-changing demands by publishers. In addition to publishers firmly controlling the cultural content of dime novels, they pressed

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<sup>269</sup> Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book*, xix.

<sup>270</sup> Fullerton, "Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany," 500.

<sup>271</sup> Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America*, 21.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

writers to write stories at exceptional speed in marathon session.<sup>273</sup> With almost total control of the cultural context of dime novels, publishers appear to have been more concerned with the quantity over quality; that is, quickly publishing vast amounts of novels, with minimal concern for the actual quality of the writings. Some dime novel writers highlighted the standardized production methods they had to endure. For example, dime novel writer William Wallace Cook (1912), who worked for publisher Street & Smith, was advised by his publisher to: “in future stories make no special effort to produce an unusual plot, but stick closer to the action and incident, taken as much as possible from newspapers, which are teeming with material of this character.”<sup>274</sup> This quotation suggests that not everything within the content of a dime novel story was formulated. Publishers realized that by appropriating actual important stories and events reported in the daily mail and weekly newspapers from around the world for their fictitious dime novels, they ensured, and more than likely increased their sales.<sup>275</sup> In other words, the appropriation of such real-world events created a sense of cultural relatability for readers, who in turn inferred social significance. Although the publishers aim was not primarily focused on creating a social link between its readers and their publications, this occurrence further supported their primary economic motivation.

This trend toward the industrial production of dime novels, based on the division of labor and corporate profit, aligns with the perception that a dime novel publisher was an economic power. The two, a cultural power and economic power, closely relate because motives for cultural control resulted in the accession of economic market power. In general, these two definitions played out well for the European market where Buffalo Bill dime novels had become a seemingly boundless success; success which could be

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Quoted in: Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, 24.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

largely ascribed to a specific agent in the European literary market who understood how to properly market to a mass audience.

#### *A. Eichler Publishing house*

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century important scholarly studies<sup>276</sup> critically examined the dime novel Western, though they were all limited to the American publishing house of Beadle & Adams. The publication of Buffalo Bill dime novels was first promoted by American publishing house Street & Smith in 1869, not by Beadle & Adams.<sup>277</sup> Street & Smith issued the first official Buffalo Bill story, as well as the last, between 1901 and 1919.<sup>278</sup> The Buffalo Bill dime novels later circulated in Europe; first in Germany, by the publishing house A. Eichler in 1905, of which little has been written.<sup>279</sup> Hence, for this research it is important to underline the importance of the European publisher of Buffalo Bill dime novels, instead of the large American publishing houses, which have already been greatly discussed in scholarly works.

The man at the top of this German publishing house, Adolf Eichler, originated from Dresden, Germany. As owner of a New York publishing branch during the 1890s, Eichler early on became familiar with the development of dime novels in America. Later, in 1905, Eichler made a clever strategic move as the first European publisher to buy the sole translation rights to the “Buffalo Bill” stories (*Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures*) and began to issue them for just 20 pfenning a copy.<sup>280</sup>

From a commercial perspective, Eichler had picked the right time to begin issuing these dime novels, since Buffalo Bill had already made a name for himself through his

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<sup>276</sup> Such as Henry Nash Smith' *Virgin Land* and Michael Denning's *Mechanic Accents*.

<sup>277</sup> Raffaella De Berti, “Chapter 8: Italy and America: Pinocchio's First Cinematic Trip,” in *A Companion to Literature and Film* (Maiden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004), 125.

<sup>278</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 395–396.

<sup>279</sup> De Berti, “Chapter 8: Italy and America: Pinocchio's First Cinematic Trip,” 125.

<sup>280</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 498.

Wild West Show, which had traveled throughout Germany. The Eichler house's translations and adaptations of the Buffalo Bill dime novels closely followed the heightened curiosity in Buffalo Bill after the second European Wild West tour in Paris.<sup>281</sup> By the 1890's, pamphlet stories about Buffalo Bill, together with his shows, further heightened legends and myths that surrounded him.<sup>282</sup> Eichler managed to exploit these legends by being the first publishing house to translate the original American dime novels and spread them on a mass scale.

Buffalo Bill quickly conquered the German literary market and mirrored the immense popularity in the United States. During the period between 1905 and 1912, Eichler published 386 German-language Buffalo Bill dime novels.<sup>283</sup> This was a massive commercial success for the house of Eichler, which continued to issue other dime novel series in addition to those about Buffalo Bill. Although Buffalo Bill was a huge success for the German publisher, it was later surpassed by the "Nick Carter" detective dime novels, of which Eichler had bought the rights as well. Nick Carter was a dime novel character that would later sweep American and European popular literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>284</sup>

Eichler's publishing house was not only located in Germany but in a number of European countries. The Buffalo Bill dime novel series *Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures* were translated into languages, such as; Dutch, Danish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian and Swedish. The back covers and final pages of these dime novels reveal the publisher and location. Many of these translations were issued by a publishing house that was a branch of the Eichler house. Respective translations identify A. Eichler as the main house of publishing under which several

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<sup>281</sup> Richard Abel, *Americanizing the Movies and Movie-Mad Audiences, 1910-1914* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 105.

<sup>282</sup> Fullerton, "Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany," 498.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.



other publishers were grouped. For example the French translation of the series identifies A. Eichler, L'imprimeur-Editeur Paris, 20 rue Dauphine (New York, Londres, Dresden) as its publisher (information in parenthesis noted European cities where Eichler had multiple offices).<sup>285</sup> Moreover, Eichler had offices located in Amsterdam, (Spuistraat bij de Molsteeg 119) Milano (Via Monte Napoleone 36), New York (33 First Street), London (E. C., 290 Old Street), Paris (41 Rue Dauphine), Budapest (VII., Király-utca 13. Szám), Copenhagen (B, Colbjørnsensgade 5), Malmö (Kjöbenhavn B, Colbjørnsensgade 5) and, of course, Dresden (Rosenstraße 107).<sup>286</sup> Though this is the only hard evidence available on this series, given that Eichler was the first publisher to buy the rights of the Buffalo Bill series, it is logical to assume he would have translated the novels in other languages in addition to German.

Moreover, chapter 4 demonstrated that the similarities in back cover texts and titles clearly suggest that these dime novel stories have common origins. The few passages of different languages that were contrasted all corresponded with the German translation. However, not all different translated issues within the *Buffalo Bill Stories*, *Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures* series, have been compared, contrasted and read. Russel comments on the existence of various translations of the Buffalo Bill dime novels when he remarks that the price of a European dime novel features 20 pfennings, 25 heller, or 20 centimes.<sup>287</sup> He further states that “a similar format was used for translations into French, Italian and Spanish.”<sup>288</sup> Although Russel does not refer to the specific series discussed in this research, his remark does correspond to our idea that the German translation was most likely used as the standard format for translation. For now only, it is reasonable to assume that they were all based on the first published German

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<sup>285</sup> See Appendix 4 for more on the covers of the *Buffalo Bill Stories*, *Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures* series and publishers.

<sup>286</sup> See Appendix 4 for more on the publishers of the dime novel back covers.

<sup>287</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 401.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

translation of the original American works, while keeping in mind that they were indeed first translated in German before any other language.

Very little research is available on Adolf Eichler or his publishing house Eichler, which explains why there seems to exist indistinctness about whether A. Eichler stood for Adolf Eichler, or Alwin Eichler. Though, throughout this paper it is suggested the publishing house of Eichler was run by a man called Adolf Eichler, some sources suggest otherwise. According to Boris Dralyuk, Alwin Eichler was a Dresden publisher mostly responsible for the Western European publications such as Buffalo Bill and Nick Carter.<sup>289</sup> Alwin Eichler had worked for a publishing house H. G. Münchmeyer where he led the two American branches of this publishing house in Chicago as well as in New York in 1883.<sup>290</sup> This appears to match the description of Adolf Eichler who had also worked in America, New York prior to his success in Germany. Alwin Eichler began his own publishing house, which was situated, just like Adolf Eichler, at the Rosenstraße 107 in Dresden, Germany.<sup>291</sup> Moreover, both Eichlers had success with the publishing of Buffalo Bill dime novels from 1905 until 1912. Interestingly, Alwin Eichler presumably committed suicide because of the pressure he faced of certain groups in society who found his dime novels to be a bad influence and regarded them as ‘prikkellectuur.’<sup>292</sup> While, Adolf Eichler presumably died of old age.<sup>293</sup> Although there remain uncertainties about the details of Eichler’s life, it is evident that, despite some minor differences, various sources are describing the same person, but use a different first name. For this paper, however, these uncertainties do not influence the outcome of this research, since the information that was discovered proved relevant in order to determine how Eichler

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<sup>289</sup> Boris Dralyuk, *Western Crime Fiction Goes East: The Russian Pinkerton Craze 1907-1934* (Boston: BRILL, 2012), 33–34.

<sup>290</sup> Dieter Sudhoff et al., *Karl-May-Chronik. / Band III, 1902-1905* (Bamberg-Radebeul: Karl-May Verlag, 2005), 32.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* 567.

<sup>292</sup> See Chapter 5 for extensive description of ‘prikkellectuur.’

<sup>293</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 511.

became one of the primary Buffalo Bill dime novel publisher and distributor.

Nevertheless, future research on this topic should definitely look into this matter for it might uncover additional relevant information.

The popularity of Buffalo Bill began to fade away in 1912. Many reasons may be ascribed as to why publishers decided to reduce publication of these dime novels, other than they no longer sold as well. For example, the unfortunate death of Adolf Eichler in 1912 might have played a role in the demise of the popularity of Buffalo Bill's dime novels, although, the publishing house did not cease to exist after his passing. In addition, the beginning of World War I created an atmosphere of censorship in Europe, which prohibited publishing houses from issuing dime novels. After World War I, however, publishing houses picked up where they had left off. Though, society had changed significantly by then, and with it the tastes and preferences of the dime novel readership. It is from this period onwards that the significance of American West-themed dime novels fades away and makes room for detectives such as the Nick Carter dime novels, which turned out to be Eichler's largest money-making novels.<sup>294</sup>

Eichler's fast recognition of the market value of Buffalo Bill's dime novels served him well. With the translation rights and multiple offices within Europe, Eichler was able to compete on a high level with other publishing houses. Because of the existence of a publishing house like Eichler, Buffalo Bill manages to penetrate the literary market of other countries, who all read the translated 'German' format of Buffalo Bill's dime novel, resulting in a similar popular reception. Though limited information is available on A. Eichler's publishing house, based upon information derived from the available sources it is fair to claim that Eichler almost held a monopoly position within the Buffalo Bill literary market.

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<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 499.

### *Popularizing Buffalo Bill in Europe*

European publishers endeavored to differentiate their series from rival series by changing the appearance of dime novels and thereby providing each series with a distinct identity. For example, Fullerton indicates the German publishing house Spaarmann specialized in crime stories and adapted their format in order to differentiate their specific series from other rival detective series.<sup>295</sup> These attempts, were not as successful as the dime novel series issued by the larger German publishing houses, such as Bagel, Esslin and Laiblin, and Bardtenschlager. These publishing houses, however, remained, despite attempts to provide each published series with a different identity that would set it apart, difficult to distinguish from one another.<sup>296</sup>

Publishing house A. Eichler had made a strategic marketing move by buying the sole translation rights from American publishing house Street & Smith for the European market. As mentioned previously, given that the Buffalo Bill shows and a few related sporadic printed stories had already heightened mass curiosity about Buffalo Bill, it was almost certain Eichler was sitting on a goldmine. In addition, Eichler systematically issued new stories weekly and delivered a new series every six months.<sup>297</sup> As a result, his overwhelming mass-production completely took over the literary market of Western novels in Europe.

Eichler's success can also be ascribed to the fact that he sold his dime novels at cheap prices at times when it was difficult to keep sales prices low. Although by doing so Eichler was not any different from competing publishers, timing and circumstances were in Eichler's favor. Dime novels, specifically, were able to compete with low prices

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 496.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> Abel, *Americanizing the Movies and Movie-Mad Audiences, 1910-1914*, 105.

against regular book forms of pulp fiction. Denning argues, the dime novel business succeeded further when regular book production was thrown into chaos due to depressed prices, high costs of printing and low availability of writing labor, making the dime novel the closest to what an average middle-class worker could afford.<sup>298</sup> Hence, the vast availability of low-priced dime novels, even during times of economic chaos, made them an even larger success.

All things considered, the reason for European popularity of Buffalo Bill dime novels can largely be ascribed to the changes that Eichler's publishing house made to their content. Publishers in general realized that Buffalo Bill functioned as a mythic space which symbolized America and the American West. In addition, Eichler specifically adapted its German translations in order to better cater to German preferences. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, German literature reflected an intense preoccupation with everything American Western, especially American Indian.<sup>299</sup> In Europe, the literary infatuation with Indians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century functioned as a means to self-reflect upon issues with their own society. More specifically, the traditional German attraction to nature and romanticism increased due to their rapidly industrializing environment, which was perceived as cold and sterile.<sup>300</sup> Dissatisfied with their changing society, Germans leaned towards American Indians, who were portrayed as essentially good, understood and harmonized with nature (just like the Germans), and who faced the same kind of destruction of their environment due to external economic pressure.<sup>301</sup> As a result, Germans found similarities and developed a means of understanding through reading these dime novels. In response to this interest, European publishers let writers freely mix facts and fiction in order to maintain popular interest in the novels.

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<sup>298</sup> Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America*, 19.

<sup>299</sup> This is mentioned in Chapter 1 (National Context of Germany and the Netherlands).

<sup>300</sup> Rydell and Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*, 112.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

Eichler, like many other European publishers during this time, made sure the content of the Buffalo Bill dime novel series matched the growing interest in American Indians. By not translating original American works word-for-word, Eichler was able to incorporate the popular literary demand of the mass audience. Stetler emphasizes that Germans were regularly exposed to depictions of Indians, most of which, however, were not true (i.e., not factual representations). Rather, they were offered depictions of Indians based on dramatized narratives and mythic legends mixed with only fragments of reality.<sup>302</sup> As a result, the German publishing industry, and especially A. Eichler, became a major contributor to the (miss) information and (incorrect) knowledge offered to the public about the American Indian and the American West.

The publishing of dime novels in series was an attempt by publishing houses to stand out among competing publishers. The subsequent overwhelming mass production of Western dime novels further popularized them as they were easily accessible to the working-class, considering they were everywhere, and kept prices low. Publishers even went the extra mile by adapting their dime novels to pre-existing preferences in society. A primary example of these cultural translations have been German dime novels, which further exploited German fascination of the American Indian.

### *Collecting series*

Publishing houses had full control over the production of a dime novel story. Because a dime novel was only about a 100 pages long, writers had to end a story within the set amount of space. These endings, suspenseful by nature, adhered to a set form but also needed to persuade the reader to purchase the following edition. The demand for suspenseful endings and set novel length are examples of the influence and control that publishing houses had in the production of a dime novel story. Short, cheap, and

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<sup>302</sup> Stetler, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Germany. A Transnational History.," 92.

sensational fiction was what sold in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. While the publishers enjoyed great profits, dime novel writers on the other hand struggled to make a living. While, some dime novel writers were able to live comfortably off their writings, Randolph J. Cox states that most writers needed additional jobs to compensate for their low income.<sup>303</sup> In general, no royalties or subsidiary rights were granted to writers; the publishing house earned the bulk of the income off dime novels. This further suggests that publishing houses demonstrated a level of control over the cultural production of popular literature. Because of this, it is essential to continue to research the strategies that went into publishing these dime novels, specifically concerning the intention of further contributing to their mass popularity.

Dime novels were rarely printed as a single edition. In fact most dime novels belonged to a series. The idea behind publishing a series instead of single dime novels had multiple purposes. A single dime novel out of a series was part of a larger collective identity of the series, which served to increase the likelihood that the reader would buy the next issue in the series. This larger collective identity made people aware of possible other series that were published (by the same publisher). Moreover, series were considered “carefully selected works” by its readers who were convinced that a dime novel, as part of a series, served as testimonial that it was good literature.<sup>304</sup>

The choice for publishing series also rested on economic motives i.e., saving money. Writers were promptly laid off when they could not keep up with the demand of the publishers. As a result, publishers managed to cut costs by reprinting old serials.<sup>305</sup> Comparative research between original American dime novels and European translations, concluded that dime novel stories were re-issued. Often both versions had the same

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<sup>303</sup> Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book*, xvii.

<sup>304</sup> Fullerton, “Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany,” 490–491.

<sup>305</sup> Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America*, 20.

front- and back cover, while the content consisted of two completely different stories. The sequence of the series also differentiated among translations.

Unfortunately, due to time restraint, not all Buffalo Bill dime novel series could be researched so that it could be established to what extent Eichler deliberately re-issued old stories as new. Indeed, publishers sometimes reissued stories, with only the title and cover of the respective novel changed. It was unnecessary to deliver an original storyline each week if a publisher could just as easily order and reprint old issues.<sup>306</sup> For example, publishing house Beadle & Adams were known for reprinting some titles a staggering 14 times. Original stories were also at times reissued but assigned a later number in the series. Cox stresses that this was done on the belief that some readers would rather purchase a new edition of an already published (popular) story than purchase a brand new story.<sup>307</sup>

Like other pulp fiction, dime novels were packaged as series in order to maximize market penetration. A lot of thought went in their physical appeal, such as the cover illustration, knowing that the dime novels were put on display by salesmen. More thought and care went into the cover of a dime novel than the actual content of the story. Specifically, the back cover of the dime novels, contained a list of several titles. In order to stimulate increased sales of other dime novels in a series, publishers would list the titles of the specific series on the back cover or final pages of a novel, and sometimes even the front cover.<sup>308</sup> In addition, publishers would mandate that authors reference other series' stories within the content of a dime novel, which would in turn make readers aware of other series and tempt them into purchasing more novels. Despite the fact that publishers included extra information in the stories in order to provide the non-American readership with information needed to understand the story (i.e., describing

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<sup>306</sup> Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book*, xix.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Fullerton, "Toward a Commercial Popular Culture in Germany," 496.



settings and circumstance), the way they issued the stories does not demonstrate a desire to educate the European masses. The carelessness of publishers concerning switching stories, covers and re-issuing them demonstrates that they did not consider the content of Buffalo Bill dime novels to be of great value (as they were to their readership). As a result, publishers disregarded their role in educating the masses on the American West, rather, the dime novels were intended for the reader's amusement.

It is with thanks to a small group of collectors, responsible for the physical preservation of the dime novels, that research on the field of dime novels exists. Had the dime novels not have been as appealing in series as they were, people would likely not have deemed them worthy of collecting and preserving. The publishing houses intentionally served their own entrepreneurial interest, while simultaneously contributing to the dissemination, and primarily, preservation of mass- and popular culture within both America and Europe. Moreover, because they primarily served their entrepreneurial interest, the position of Eichler's publishing house in the European dime novel market can almost be considered a monopoly. Due to their possession of the Buffalo Bill translation rights by American publishing house Street & Smith, and their ability to produce vast amounts, in various European languages, dime novels were widely distributed across Europe. Though other publishers at that time also issued Buffalo Bill series, it would presumably have been difficult to compete with an international company. Dime novels thus have not only made tracing the development of the myth of the American West through the 19<sup>th</sup> century possible, they have shed light on the various changes over time in marketing to a mass audience.

Economic reasoning motivated publisher's strategies to increase the mass popularity of dime novels. Issuing dime novels as part of a series and not as individual issues not only increased the likelihood people would buy more than one copy, it also

increased not only the publishers' market penetration, but its control of that market as well as how the specific dime novel was marketed to a mass audience.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter questioned the role of publishing houses, and in what way they contributed to disseminating the (fictional) American West. In relation to the main research subject of this paper, publishers disseminated a large amount of the American West, which helped compensate for the limited experience or knowledge Europeans had of the United States. The reprinted variations of Buffalo Bill dime novels thus continued to fuel not only German, but also European imagination, which expressed itself in a growing number of dime novel sales. Set formats for publicizing stories ensured they were going to sell and enlarge profits, which further demonstrates the economic motives behind the stories.

Dime novel publishers were a culture industry. Relatedly, they were an economic power, expressed through mass production and distribution, as well as, a cultural power, which adhered to existing formulas and used hack writers to ensure success. The overall carelessness of publishers to the social significance of a dime novel (i.e., to increase popularity, not intentionally culturally influencing society), made them insufficiently aware of the important role they played in society. Specifically Eichler's international publishing house, which owned the original rights to Buffalo Bill's dime novels, intentionally served his own entrepreneurial interest. Moreover, it was Eichler's publishing house that managed to occupy a monopoly position due to its ability to produce vast amounts, in various languages, distributed across Europe. Though other publishers also issued Buffalo Bill series, they could not compete with Eichler.

## CONCLUSION

Contrary to the belief that dime novels in Europe were literal translations of their original American counterparts, the previous chapters have shown how Buffalo Bill dime novels were translated in a European cultural context, further mythologizing and fictionalizing existing late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century European notions of the American West. The translated European dime novels served as a ‘cultural lens’ through which to look at the ‘Europeanization of American culture.’ The popularity of these dime novels and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West shows in Europe, the Myth of the Frontier created fascination for the American West on the European continent around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Germany especially had a prominent role in developing and disseminating this fascination, as it functioned as one of the gateways for the Netherlands to the American West. In this context, this paper answered the following question: in what ways do cultural translations function in the dissemination and reception of American mass culture in Europe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century? While focusing on the American (original) dime novels and their Dutch (translated) counterparts, this thesis contributes to the scholarly discussion about the dissemination and reception of American mass culture in Europe.

The Dutch dependence on neighboring cultures has been a relative weakness; the dependence on other nations limited independence but also procreated access to a wealth of foreign culture. Chapter 1 elaborates that throughout the last two centuries the Netherlands continually changed orientation on reference cultures, which resulted in an interest of foreign popular and mass culture such as Buffalo Bill. These cultures of reference were not always a homogeneous translation of foreign culture, but were often selectively adapted to the Dutch indigenous culture; fostering a composite culture.

In the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century cultural influences from nations such as France and Germany were associated primarily with intellectual virtues and social stature, while Anglo-Saxon influences primarily oriented on the lesser-regarded virtues of for instance leisure time. It is due to cultural orientation on these reference cultures that the Netherlands was able to experience an indirect influence from the American West. Through reference cultures such as France, England and Germany pre-existing images and fantasies about the American West reached the Netherlands. Consequently, Buffalo Bill's first encounter with the European continent in London corresponded with these fantasies as the main image of civilizing savage American Indians remained unchanged throughout his Wild West tour. Specifically Germany's infatuation with the American Indian stemmed from historical ideas of savage 'wild men' German ancestry with which the savage Indian corresponded. As a result, pre-existing fantasies on the American West and a perceived direct cultural influence of Buffalo Bill's Wild West tour heightened mass curiosity in the Netherlands, which only increased after the Great War.

As chapter three illustrates, the popularity of dime novels originates from their transition from popular folk stories to novels. These popular folk stories, created by and for society's lower classes, engendered popular myths about the American West, which also furthered societal hierarchical structures. Specifically, the historical context of 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrialization and penny press made possible the structural division of social hierarchy on a larger scale, separating intellectuals from the working class. This is illustrated by the capitalization of cultural myths by intellectuals, such as publishers, via dime novels, which exploited the idea of American re-unification for the American market and European identification of the American West for the European market. Produced for the largest social class (the working class), while controlled by the few (the intellectuals), dime novels are a clear example of mass culture, which continued to

impact society largely because it was part of a small body of literature with low sales prices (i.e. a dime, or 10 cents) accessible to the lower classes.<sup>309</sup>

The social significance dime novels impressed on the lower classes was not of great interest to publishers beyond their adjustments to storylines to meet popular demand in order to increase the sales volume. The inclusion of a hero character in the dime novels did not function in the same way as did the Myth of the Western Frontier. Rather, the Western Hero Myth illustrated within a dime novel the American experience; that is, the portrayal of the West as a domain entirely separate from eastern social order, and, of course, a character representative of that domain: the Western dime novel hero. By continuing a traditional world view of Eastern response to the Wild West, the Western dime novel hero was not considered innovative to society, rather, such a character presented means for dialogue through which society's fear about modern life was emphasized.

The Buffalo Bill dime novels would likely not have sold and nor have been read by so many if they had not adhered to prevailing beliefs embodied by a mythical Western hero character. The choice for this rugged-looking Western hero outcast character, who abandoned all social and moral codes corresponded with a romanticized image people had of a less structured pre-industrial society. Though publishers never intentionally aimed to further a sentiment of discontentment within industrialized society, they cleverly exploited and capitalized on such feelings. By reading about Western dime novel heroes, primarily the lower classes of society purged, at least momentarily, their troubling feelings of dissatisfaction about society and escaped their daily lives.

While dime novels played an important role in disseminating Buffalo Bill and the American West, the Wild West shows first introduced Europeans to Buffalo Bill and laid

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 500.

the groundwork for its subsequent popularity. As chapter two argues, William F. Cody, and even more importantly his stage and dime novel character Buffalo Bill, served as the representation of the American West in Europe. To put it in the words of Stetler: Cody enriched the “mind map of the American West [of Germans] with the drama of struggle.”<sup>310</sup> To explain how the creation of Buffalo Bill generated fascination for the American West in Europe it is important to acknowledge that both his personas were surrounded by myths, which make confirming or denying aspects of Buffalo Bill’s ‘real’ life very difficult. It was these myths, about his adventures as a scout and hunting guide, however, that made him the ideal frontiersman, and therefore, such a popular personality. These myths about Cody’s adventures can be placed within another American myth: the Myth of the Frontier. This myth explained how Americans viewed themselves as ‘Americans’ and shed light on why the American people and its government were so different from their European counterparts. The myth provided Europeans a different perspective on the United States; that of a nation that was raw, authentic, democratic and heroic—a nation that found its identity in the Myth of the Frontier.

Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show was based on Cody’s mythical adventures and therefore became a commercial success in the United States and Europe. By using the myths of the American frontier, not only to present the American culture and history to international audiences but also to frame it as an ‘authentic’ image of the American West, the Buffalo Bill Wild West show was able to generate fascination for the American West in Europe. Importantly, in generating this fascination, was the international perspective of the show.<sup>311</sup> The ability to adjust the show to its heterogeneous (European) audiences was a primary reason for the success of the Buffalo Bill enterprise,

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<sup>310</sup> Stetler, “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West in Germany. A Transnational History.,” 171–172.

<sup>311</sup> Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 100.

though the Myth of the Frontier was always present. These mythical stories popularized the American West for audiences in the States as well as abroad.

The success of Buffalo Bill dime novels in Europe, specifically the Netherlands, was not just the result of capitalization of the Western Myth of the Frontier; it was also the result of cultural translations. Therefore, this research examined American (original) and Dutch (translated) dime novels of the dime novel series *Buffalo Bill Stories, Original Tales of Buffalo Bill's Adventures*, which resulted in examples that evidence the literal translation of the American dime novels to European languages and illustrate the mass production of the novels.

As chapter four shows, the cover images of the Dutch and American versions seem similar, but the (shorter) translated titles and different captions illustrate the process of copying and translating the dime novels. For example, some dime novels provide different stories than the cover suggests. Publishers copied and altered covers with little consideration for the stories inside them. This can be indicted on the mass production of the novels wherein instead of manual labor, the machines did most of the work. The text comparison of the Dutch and American Buffalo Bill dime novels furthermore illustrates this, as oft-unexplainable differences are mistranslated and printed. For example, the mistranslation of free-breakfast, which is translated into free-lunch.

Moreover, the translated dime novels stories provide additional explanations and alterations about American life and culture; they were not just “reprints and translations.”<sup>312</sup> These ‘cultural translations’ highlight how the American West was translated, explained, and sold to European audiences. By adding explanations about the American frontier life, publishers claimed authority of knowledge about the American West. Moreover, specific references to, and descriptions of, Europeans show the origin of

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<sup>312</sup> Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, 388.

the Dutch translations: Germany. In some of the researched dime novels Germans appear to have a more prominent role and are often referred to as strong and masculine. Taken in consideration that all the researched dime novels have had a connection with a German publisher (A. Eichler), we conclude that the *Buffalo Bill Stories* series were first translated and transformed in Germany. However, the translated European dime novels also illustrate that after these first translations, certain additions and changes were made in the translation of the other European dime novels (Swedish, Hungarian, Dutch, Italian, etc.).

These additions and alterations made the Buffalo Bill dime novels more accessible to its different European audiences. Just as with the Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, we found that changing the content for different (heterogeneous) audiences resulted in a commercial success.

As argued in chapter six, publishers were highly aware that changing the content of dime novels resulted in commercial successes. Moreover, publishers disseminated large quantities of dime novels about the American West, which helped expand the limited experience or knowledge Europeans had with life on the frontier. In general, publishers packaged dime novels as series in order to maximize market penetration. The additional re-issuing of already published novels and switching of covers and stories increased not only their market penetration, but also their control of that market. Dime novels not only made tracing the development of the Myth of the Western Frontier and Western Hero Myth during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century possible, they shed light on the various changes over time in marketing pulp fiction to a mass audience during this period. Publishers are thus considered culture industries because they are both an economic power expressed in the ability of mass production and distribution, as well



as a cultural power adhering to existing formulas and using hack writers that would ensure the dime novel's success.

Although it remains uncertain who stood at the head of the Eichler publishing firm, it is certain this firm owned the sole translation rights to the Street & Smith published Buffalo Bill dime novels. Moreover, Eichler's publishing house served his own entrepreneurial interest by almost occupying a monopoly position due to the ability to produce vast amounts, in various languages, and distribute across Europe. As a result, reprinted variations of Buffalo Bill dime novels fueled European imagination. While motivated by primarily economic motives, publishers, such as Eichler, did not pay sufficient attention to the social significance of dime novels. The reprinting of novels with little regard for repetitiveness or errors made in printing, made publishers insufficiently aware of the important role they played in society. Their main focus on mass production and distribution in order to increase popularity, which would ensure sales and enlarge profit, demonstrates the importance of economic motives opposed to social- and cultural significance.

Next to analyzing dime novels themselves, this research recognized the importance of analyzing the reception of Buffalo Bill as well, and thereby the American West. To analyze how Buffalo Bill was received in the Netherlands, chapter five focused on news coverage in Dutch newspapers of the person behind the character (William F. Cody), the Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows, the dime novels and movies. From the extensive news coverage in the Dutch press (on and off stage) it can be concluded that the Dutch public was informed through newspapers about Buffalo Bill, even if his show never came to the Netherlands. The Dutch public was aware of the content of the Wild West show and even made trips abroad to witness the show in another country. Next to the shows, the Buffalo Bill dime novels were also extensively discussed in Dutch media.

However, instead of praising the content (as was done with Buffalo Bill's Wild West) the adventurous dime novel stories were considered dangerous and were described as "prikkellektuur." Multiple news articles report on this fear and even describe the dime novels as the cause of criminal actions in both the Netherlands and abroad.<sup>313</sup>

Even if the show never came to the Netherlands, this paper argues that the extensive coverage of Buffalo Bill in the Dutch media illustrates how Buffalo Bill became a household name in the Netherlands and was highly visible in the media in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The newspapers disseminated stories about Buffalo Bill, like the dime novels they represented a mixture of reality and fiction, and thereby introduced a more mythologized Wild West hero to a broad public.

This research project was limited to the available time and available dime novels in the McCracken Library. For future research, we recommend, using this library and the multiple available translations of Buffalo Bill dime novels. Since the German dime novel, of the specific series discussed in this paper, were missing in the McCracken library in the spring of 2015, we recommend future research to look for/locate these dime novels and compare them with other European versions of this specific series. The further digitalization of not only (foreign) newspapers but also, for example, dime novels will also contribute to this field of research. Digital sources for scholars all over the world will not only improve access but also encourage new techniques, such as culturomics, which, in turn, will further develop scholarship and provide new insights into a wide range of research areas.

By using the original dime novels in combination with the existing academic discussion, this thesis has both a historic and cultural focus. Not only looking technically at the primary texts, but also putting the text in a cultural context, this thesis shows the

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<sup>313</sup> "Gemengde Berichten. Inbrekers van 13 Jaar Oud. De Invloed van Prikkellektuur."

cultural translations between the original American dime novels and their European counterparts. Significant to the scholarly fields of American Studies, History, and Cultural Studies is the addition of the digitalized old newspaper articles, reviews and advertisements, done by Delpher of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, which informs us on the reception of Buffalo Bill in the Netherlands.

The European cultural translations of Buffalo Bill dime novels thus show that the Europeans were no passive receivers to American culture. Since there were few Europeans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> - and early 20<sup>th</sup> century who witnessed American culture first hand, Buffalo Bill's Wild West show and dime novels functioned as a source of educational information on American culture. Though fascinated by the American West, the European popular image of it was not always based on truthful depictions. The content of dime novels was often a mixture of facts and fiction. While, the rapid 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrialization resulted in dissatisfaction among the working class, they found solace in the European American dime novels. Publishers, such as Eichler, motivated by economic motives, exploited the subsequent popularity of Buffalo Bill dime novels by means of mass production and distribution in return for high revenues.

This thesis contributes to the understanding of the reception and dissemination of American mass culture in Europe by showing how Buffalo Bill's enterprise succeeded in reaching a broad audience (i.e., by means of adjusting its show and dime novels to a heterogeneous audience). It also illustrates how important these 'cultural translations' were to the dissemination of American mass culture in Europe, especially concerning that elements of American culture could not be literally copied but needed to be altered for European audiences.

## APPENDIX 1

List of Dutch dime novels available at Buffalo Bill Center of the West with notes

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The American dime novels were published in a different order than the European versions, and therefore, have a different number. The titles of the American versions are mentioned in this list; however, they do not always correspond to the same story. It seems that a few stories got mixed up. The Dutch titles are almost the same as the English titles and the covers of both editions correspond, only the stories themselves seem to be mixed up.

From no. 21 on, the stories seem to be part of a different series. And do not have an American version, available at the McCracken library.

### **Series X: N--Scandinavia/The Netherlands**

#### **Box 5: The Netherlands**

no. 2 De onbekende Bondgenoot. BB's Unknown Ally (on display)

no. 3 De bereden Scherpschutters. BB's Rifle Rangers

no. 4 Op het Spoor van den Schrik van Texas. BB's Boy Bravo Pard

no. 5 De Padvinders in het Land van der Dood. BB's Bravos

no. 6 De overval van de Prairie-Post. BB's Saddle Sharps

[no. 14 Aug 17, 1901, BB's Saddle Sharps or the pledges pards of the pony express

is not the same story, no. 6 De overval van de Prairie-Post. BB's Saddle Sharps

= the same story as no. 3 Jun 1, 1901, BB's Victory a story of tangled trails]

no. 7 De Bewakers van de Goudschatten. BB's Gold Guard

[no. 5 Jun 15, 1901, BB's Gold Guard or Fort fetterman's girl in gray. Is not the same story. Seems like no. 7 De Bewakers van de Goudschatten. BB's Gold Guard is (almost) the same story as no. 14 Aug 17, 1901, BB's Saddle Sharps or the pledges pards of the pony express]

no. 8 Het Geheim van een Graf. BB's Avenging Trail

no. 9 De geheimzinnige Pijl. BB's Phantom Arrow

no. 10 De Polite-Troep van de Prairie. BB's Prairie Police

no. 11 De zwarte speurhonden van BB. BB's Black Scouts

no. 12 De zegetocht van den padvinder. BB's Victory

[no. 5 Jun 15, 1901, BB's Gold Guard or Fort fetterman's girl in gray. = no. 12 De zegetocht van den padvinder. BB's Victory (same story, different names (Dr. Donald Milner = dokter Hummel))

no. 13 De verdwenen Overlands-post. The Lost Stage Coach

no. 14 De grens-Koning. BB, the Border King

no. 15 De paden des doods van het wilde westen. BB's Pards in Grey

no. 16 Ein geheime zending. BB's Secret Mission

no. 17 In den dooden-pas. BB at Grave Yard Gap

no. 18 Op den rand van het graf. BB's Death Deal

no. 19 Het meestershot van den verkenner. BB's Best Shot

no. 20 Beschermd door de scherpschutters. BB's Death Grapple

no. 21 De zegetochten van BB .

no. 22 Red Hand, het blanke opperhoofd.

no. 23 Navarro, het opperhoofd van de afvalligen.

no. 24 Kenton King, de renegat

no. 25 El Ramon, de roover van de Rio Grande

## APPENDIX 2

### Description of an American tavern in Dutch dime novel.

American version: no. 18 Sep 14, 1901, BB at Graveyard Gap or the doomed drivers of the overland

Dutch version: no. 17 In den dooden-pas. BB at Grave Yard Gap  
[same title]

Dutch novel: (24)

“Er is reeds veel geschreven over de Amerikaansche herbergen, en toch weinig waars.

Voorals in Europa bestaan veel verkeerde meeningen over het Amerikaansche restauratieleven, niettegenstaande er weinig Europeanen zijn, die geen bloedverwanten of familie in de nieuwe wereld hebben.

Voorals over de zoogenaamde <free lunch> (kosteloos ontbijt) zijn de ongelooflijkste geschiedenissen verteld.

De free lunch is voor vele landverhuizers een zegenrijke instelling geweest en menigeen hield zich daardoor boven water en behoefte niet zijn toevlucht te zoeken tot bedelen.

De herberg van heden ten dage verschilt zeer veel van het eenvoudige lokaal, dat in de jaren omstreeks zestig en zelfs nog tachtig de verzamelpplaats was van de verschillende elementen in de nederzettingen van het wilde westen.

Toen ter tijd vond men namelijk in de mijnindustrie nog een menigte <barrooms> of <saloons>, waar de inrichting alleen bestond uit leege biervaten en daarover gelegd planken als zitplaatsen.

Tafels en stoelen zijn er in de werkelijke <kroegen>, waar veel Ieren of Duitschers als waard optreden, bijna geheel niet.

Een lange, gewoonlijk lands den geheelen muur, loopende ongeveer anderhalf meter hooge tapkast. Daarachter prachtige spiegels, die den geheelen muur bestaan, met buffets, maken de voornaamste inrichting uit.

Voor de bar, zooals men de hooge tapkast noemt, zin een paar hooge stoelen, waarvan echter weinig gebruikt gemaakt wordt, daar de gasten meestal staan.

(25) Onder aan de bar is een dikke koperen stang, waarop men de voeten kan zetten. Groote spuugbakken staan daaronder en het is interessant, te zien met welk een virtuositeit de brave grensjagers het pruimsap zelfs van een grooten afstand uit in de spuugbakken kunnen balanceeren.

In de groote steden zijn er natuurlijk ook restaurants naar Europeesch, vooral Duitsch model, waar het ook Europeesch toegaat.

De <saloon> van vroeger is precies afgebeeld op den omslag van aflevering vier. [no. 4 Op het Spoor van den Schrik van Texas. BB's Boy Bravo Pard] Toen gaf men ook niet veel om een elegante inrichting, en bij de primitieve verkeersmiddelen van die dagen zou het ook alleen met grote offers mogelijk geweest zijn, zulke eleganten inrichtingen te maken. Bovendien zou het niet veel nut gehad hebben, mooie meubels en prachtig spiegelglas aan te brengen in een lokaal, waar elken dag geschoten en gevochten werd!



De free lunch is dus een kosteloos ontbijt waarvan iedere gast gebruik kan maken. Naar gelang de concurrentie en de inrichting van de herberg is, is dit ontbijt meer of minder rijk.

Voor tien jaar, toen de matigheidsbeweging nog niet zulke goede gevolgen had als thans, en de belasting op vergunningen nog niet zoo enorm hoog was, waren er veel herbergen, waarin een vrij ontbijt gegeven werd, dat een mensch het water uit den mond deed lopen.

Toenmaals waren de levensmiddelen veel goedkooper, het gebruik van bier, jenever enz. zeer groot en toen trachtte de eene waard den anderen te overtroeven door een rijk vrij ontbijt, waardoor de gasten werden aangetrokken.

Wel vindt men nu nog vele herbergen een behoorlijke free lunch gegeven wordt, maar toch is de goede oude tijd voorbij, toen men nog ongeneerd een kroeg kon binnen gaan, al had men nog een dubbeltje op zak, om een glas bier te bestellen en... voldoende te eten!

Hoe menig arme landverhuizer, die misschien dan geheelen dag tevergeefs naar werk gezocht had, heeft zijn redding te danken aan het vrije ontbijt.

Het is niet ieders werk, om te bedelen. Velen zullen liever bedriegen en stelen, dan zich te vernederen, bedelaar te worden.

Maar wat moet een mensch in een vreemd land beginnen, waneer hij geen geld heft en geen werk kan vinden?

De taal niet machtig, dikwijls zwak van gestel en slecht van gezondheid, nauwelijks zoo veel geld op zak, dat hij de passage kan betalen in het afschuwelijke tusschendek, keert menige jonge man, en ook dikwijls oude man, met hooge verwachten het vaderland den rug toe, om aan den overkant van de Oceaan niets dan teleurstelingen te beleven.

Dan is de free lunch voor velen dikwijls een goede vriend in den nood geweest.

In Europe zegt men steeds, wanneer over deze instelling gesproken wordt; ja, maar hoe kan de waard dit doen? Dan moet hij toch bankroet gaan, zijn eten hem toch de oren van het hoofd, enz...

Ja, de toestanden zijn nu anders, dan in Europa, waar iedereen gewend is, voor zich zelf te betalen, (wat ook wel het beste is) en iemand niet spoedig op de gedachte komt, vrijwillig een rondje te bestellen.

In Amerika daarentegen gebeurt het dikwijls, dat een wildvreemd mensch in een herberg komt en, zooals in dit geval de stocktender Rollin, iedereen uitnodigt met hem te drinken en te roken en rondje na rondje bestelt, zonder er aan te denken dat een ander op zijn beurt dit zal doen.

Integendeel, wanneer men weigert zich te laten trakteren door een goedgeefschen man, dan voelt deze zich zwaar beledigd, en gaat men niet politiek te werk, dan moet men dadelijk rekeken op een verchtpartij.

Er zijn namelijk in het westen van Amerika een massa menschen, die dikwijls maanden lang in de meest afgelegen streken wonen, in mijnen, groote fokkerijen bij den aanleg van spoorwegen als houthakkers en jagers. enz, die daar geen gelegenheid hebben, hun geld kwijt te raken.

Komt zoo'n man weer onder de menschen met de zakken vol geld, dan werpt hij het zuur en dikwijls gevaarlijk verdiende geld met volle handen weg en rust niet, voor de laatste cent verkwist is.

Dan gaat hij weer kalm aan het werk, om een paar maanden later dezelfde domheid uit te halen.

Deze onzinnige trakteeuwoede stelt den waar in staat zijn gasten de lunch voor niets te geven en toch nog zijn kosten goed te maken.

Bij deze lunch geven de gasten dikwijls jenever enz. weg.

Vele menschen eten natuurlijk niet en drinken wel, en dan komt de zaak weer overeen uit.[ end page 25]

Na dezen kleine uitweiding keeren wij weer terug naar de herberg van Peters, waar Rollin voortdurend trakteerde.”

## APPENDIX 3

### Description of an American army in Dutch dime novel.

American version: no. 10 Jul 20, 1901, Buffalo Bill's Bravos or Trailing through the land of death

Dutch version: no. 5 De Padvinders in het Land van der Dood. BB's Bravos

Dutch novel (31-32):

“Gaarne gaf kapitein Cook bevel tot het opslaan van de tenten, daar ook de soldaten hun plicht gedaan hadden, en een langere rust wel verdienden. Onder deze soldaten waren vele Duitschers, die hun vaderland verlaten hadden, om daar van den militairen dienst vrij te komen.

Het is een bekend feit, dat in het leger van de Vereenigde Staten, dat alleen uit aangeworven vrijwilligers bestaat, vele Duitschers dienen, die in het nieuwe vaderland geen positie konden krijgen naar hun zin. Wanneer dan alle hulpmiddelen zijn uitgeput en in de dikwijls terugkeerende tijden van industriële en economische crises geen werk te vinden is, dan gaan zij in hun wanhoop naar het eerste het beste werf-kantoor, om zich voor vijf jaar te verbinden met „Uncle Sam”.

Het loon is naar onze begrippen hoog en de behandeling over het algemeen goed. En toch hebben deze lichtzinnige menschen nog tijd genoeg, om over hun dwaasheid na te denken, al is de dienst zeer inspannend en vermoeiend, om van talrijke gevaren niet te praten.

Voor al in den tijd, toen deze geschiedenis zich afspeelde, was het even van een soldaat in het wilde Westen niet benijdenswaard. Voortdurend moest gevochten worden tegen de Roodhuiden en het gespuis onder de blanken. De ondraaglijke onveiligheid aan de Mexicaansche grenzen van de Vereenigde Staten had reeds lang aanleiding gegeven tot klachten van de moedige pionieren der beschaving.

Van alle kanten stroomden de avonturiers, en ieder, die in de Oostelijke staten iets op zijn kerfstok had, ging naar deze afgelegen streek, in de buurt van de Mexicaansche grens, en was daar tamelijk veilig voor de organen van de wet der beschaafde Oostelijke staten.

Herhaaldelijk hadden de blanke bewoners afgezonden gezonden naar het congres der Vereenigde Staten om hulp te vragen, herhaaldelijk waren deputaties van boeren en vee-fokkers, die vooral te lijden hadden onder deze ontzettende landplaag, naar Washington gezonden.

Een vrijwillige farmers-politie was opgericht, en deze maakte met elken op heeter daad betrapte korte wetten.

Maar wat hielp het? de kolonisten die ver van elkaar, waren te zwak, om krachtig hun belangen te kunnen beschermen.

En daarom zou ook in dit opzicht de merkwaardige rit der zeventien een zegen voor het land blijken te zijn.

Het bericht van hun weergalooze, roemrijke daden drong spoedig tot Washington door, en de afgevaardigden van de Westelijke staten en territorien werden door de openbare meening er ernstig aan herinnerd hun plicht te doen.

Door hun bemoeienis was het congres te bewegen tot het toestaan van voldoende middelen, om de garnizoenen in de zuidwestelijke vestingen flink te versterken.

Juist in den tijd, dat de koene rit van de zeventien plaats had door het land des doods, wachtten sedert maanden duizenden verlopen mannen op de opening van een gedeelte van het groote Indianen-territorium voor kolonisatie.

Wanneer zoo'n stuk land vrij gegeven werd, wat den Indianen weliswaar rechtmatig toe kwam, en dat hun eindelijk toe gewezen werd als woonplaats door de regering na langdurige oorlogen, kwam het steeds tot woelige tonelen.

Het land werd in perceelen van 160 acres verdeeld en kosteloos gegeven aan werkelijk blanke kolonisten, of zulke, die zich daarvoor uitgaven. (Een acre is 4500 vierkante meter.)

Iedereen wilde natuurlijk, wanneer zoo'n land vrij gegeven werd, het eerste er bij zijn, om de mooiste stukken voor zich te kunnen nemen.

Als wij hier de gewelddadigheden en de gevechten van deze avonturiers onderling wilden schilderen, dan zou de lezer ons wellicht van overdrijving verdenken. Maar werkelijk speelden er zich ongehoorde scènes af bij zulke gelegenheden.

Na deze kleine uitweiding zullen wij terugkeeren naar den merkwaardigen rit van de zeventien mannen en tot de onmiddellijke gevolgen van dien rit.

De garnizoenen van de westelijke grensvestigingen, en dus ook de patrouilles, werden belangrijk versterkt, en weldra keerden rust en vrede terug in het land, dat zoo lang geplaagd was door verschillende gevechten. De farms en nederzettingen vermeerderden zich met buitengewone snelheid.

De wildernis, waarin menige dappere man in dienst van de beschaving zijn leven had moeten laten, veranderde in een rijk gezegend land, en de staat Texas, de grootste in den bond, doet thans in vruchtbaarheid voor geen der andere onder.

In het kamp in de vesting ging het weldra vroolijk toe. En dit betekend iets in een Amerikaansch kamp, waar het meestal zeer ongebonden en luchtig toegaat.

Zoo streng de discipline is tijdens den dienst, zoo ongedwongen en vergenoegd is het in het kamp. Duitschers, Ieren, Noren, Engelschen, Franschen, Italianen, en nog andere nationaliteiten zijn er in het Amerikaansche leger vertegenwoordigd. Dus kan ieder zich voorstellen, dat het vermaak in zoo'n kamp zeer veelzijdig is.

Elk volk heeft zijn eigenaardigheden en zijn bijzondere hoedanigheden. Zorgen kennen deze menschen niet en een ieder tracht zoo onderhoudend mogelijk te zijn.

De veelzijdigheid van de menschen die naar Amerika trekken, de vermenging van de rassen, en de stalen wilskracht, welke den onbemiddelden inwoner dwingt, zijn best te doen, en het algemeen belang te dienen, hebben dit land in zoo'n korte tijd tot dien grooten bloei gebracht.

Geen land van de oude wereld bezit met een bevolking met zoo'n energie en werkkraft als de Vereenigde Staten, alleen omdat er steeds nieuw bloed komt door den voortdurende stroom van immigranten.

De Engelsche omgangstaat is betrekkelijk gemakkelijk te leeren. Alleen de uitspraak klinkt natuurlijk bij de verschillende volkeren anders.”

## APPENDIX 4

### Dutch back cover

Publisher:

Amsterdam, Spuistraat bij de Molsteeg 119

(Dresden Rosenstrasse 107, New York 33 First Street, Londen E. C., 290 Old Street).

### Danish back cover (English translation)

Publisher:

“Generalrepræsentanter for Skandinavien”

Translation: General Publisher for Scandinavia:

Andersen & Westi,

Kjöbenhavn B, Colbjørnsensgade 5.

Kopenhagen

### Swedish back cover (English translation)

Title: “Buffalo Bill de beridna skarpskyttarne.”

Translation: “Buffalo Bill the mounted sharpshooters”

Publisher:

“Generalrepræsentanter for Skandinavien”

Translation: General Representative for Scandinavia

Nick-Carter-Förlag Malmö

### Italian back cover



Title: “Buffalo Bill I tiratori scelti a cavallo”

Translation: “Buffalo Bill the riding sharpshooters”

Publisher:

Casa Editrice Americana

Milano, 36 Via Monte Napoleone 36.

Same offices located as publisher A. Eichler:

New York, 33 First Street. London E. C., 290 Old Street. Paris, 41 Rue Dauphine.

Hungarian back cover (1908)

Title: “Buffalo Bill a lovas mülövök”

Translation: “Buffalo Bill the horse ‘rider shooter’” (uncertain about translation)

Publisher:

Branch of Eichler.

A. Eichler, könyvkiadóhivatala (New-York, London, Paris, Dresden).

Stokovszky és Mikolásy

könyvkiadóhivatala

Budapest, VII., Király-utca 13. Szám.

C. udvar 28 (Gozsdu-udvar).

German back cover (“Buffalo Bill’s unknown ally or the brand of the red arrow”)

Title: “Buffalo Bill ein unbekannter Verbündeter or the brand of the red arrow”.

Translation: “Buffalo Bill an unknown ally”.

Publisher:

Gustav Kühn Verlag, Leipzig C1, Lange Str. 8.

There is no original German copy available of the previous examined dime novel 'Buffalo Bill's Rifle Rangers'. Moreover, the available German copies lack a back cover similar to the Dutch, Scandinavian, Italian, Hungarian and French. This has been the only back cover found containing a specific text that provides some sort of advertisement on Buffalo Bill.

French back cover

From: no. 2 "Buffalo-Bill L'allié inconnu." (Buffalo Bill's unknown ally or the brand of the red arrow no. 15).

Publisher:

A. Eichler, L'imprimeur-Editeur

Paris, 20 rue Dauphine (New York, Londres, Dresde)

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