

Predatory Care: The Imperial Hunt in Mughal and British India

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Abstract Taking the hunt as both metaphor of rule and political practice, this paper compares the predatory exercises of two imperial formations in India: the late British Raj and the sixteenth-century Mughal empire. The British pursuit of man-eaters confronted feline terror with sovereign might, securing the bodies and hearts of resistant subjects through spectacles of responsible force. The Mughal hunt, on the other hand, took unruly nobles and chieftains as the objects of its fearful care, winning their obedient submission through the exercise of a predatory sovereignty. Both instances of 'predatory care' shed light on the troubling intimacy of biopolitical cultivation and sovereign violence.

Tigers must have been terribly destructive to both people and cattle before the advent of English sportsmen. *Brigadier-General R. G. Burton, 1931*¹

If your roar were to pervade the world, then the wolf would himself become the shepherd. *Muhammad Arif Qandhari, on Emperor Akbar, 1580*²

Introduction

One of the most formidable foes the British East India Company faced in its eighteenth-century effort to gain control of the Indian subcontinent was Tipu Sultan, ruler of the south Indian princely state of Mysore. Raiding his treasuries, storehouses and palace grounds after Tipu Sultan's final defeat at Srirangapatnam in 1799, British soldiers and Prize Agents found a spectacular trove of tigerish artifacts.³ Perhaps the most shocking and fascinating of these was a musical organ constructed in the form of a life-size tiger pinning an Englishman to the ground, jaws clamped around his neck while his arm waved ineffectually in the air. Displayed later as 'Tippoo's Tiger' in various museums in London, the musical device was designed to reproduce the cries of a man being devoured by a roaring tiger. The organ was most likely modeled on a well-known incident of 1793 when an immense tiger pounced on the young son of noted general Sir Hector Munro in the mangrove forests of Bengal.⁴ But this gruesome artifact found its double in a medallion issued to all British soldiers after the Srirangapatnam victory, featuring a British lion pinning a growling tiger down onto the ground.⁵ This traffic in totems between a notorious 'Oriental despot' and his Western usurpers invites a consideration of predation in the service of state power.

Scholars of the state often employ predation as a metaphor for exploitative and injurious rule. The predatory state, as described by Peter Evans for example, 'preys on its citizenry, terrorizing them, despoiling their common patrimony and providing little in the way of services in return'.⁶ Studies such as these rely on a commonsensical opposition between predatory rule and the care of the populace. The logic of the latter objective has been developed most fully perhaps by Michel Foucault, who suggests that the cultivation of welfare is the primary aim of modern power. Drawing a metaphor from animal shepherding, Foucault argues that a *pastoral* strategy – conducting the conduct of subject populations – underpins the 'governmentalization' of the state and the cultivation of the social body. The sovereign power that Foucault opposes to pastoral power is itself predatory by nature: seizing and subtracting from his subjects, the sovereign imposes death selectively to ensure his own survival.⁷

But what predators haunt the pastoral fold of good government? Must the state itself prey on threats to the welfare of those in its care? How, in other words, does the exercise of sovereign force aid in the cultivation of subject populations?⁸ Foucault directed attention to the 'overlappings, interactions and echoes' between sovereign power and pastoral care,⁹ while offering only fragmentary speculations on this relation.

In this paper, I explore two instances of *predatory care* in the Indian past: the colonial hunt in the later decades of the British Raj, and the Mughal imperial hunt of the sixteenth century. In each of these instances the relation between predatory metaphors of rule and concrete hunting practices was neither accidental nor arbitrary. Favored by men of the state in both Mughal and British India, the hunt was one of the most violent and visible spectacles of political authority in each of these empires.¹⁰ But welfare too was a prized object of both of these chases, albeit in quite different ways. The first part of this paper details the colonial rescue of native Indian subjects from the 'tyranny' of man-eating tigers. European hunters appropriated the figure of the Oriental despot to narrate these encounters, depicting themselves as more caring and responsible sovereigns. The second part of the paper leaps beyond this colonial representation of Asiatic governance, turning to the hunting practices of Mughal emperor Akbar to uncover a different logic of predatory care. Wellbeing in the Mughal 'garden of empire' was cultivated through the chase and discipline of refractory noblemen, petty kings, and chieftains, whose very disobedience to the emperor was figured in court chronicles as an oppression of imperial subjects.

Postcolonial scholars have argued that colonial cultivation was overshadowed by coercive force, as both threat to authority and tactic of rule.¹¹ Ranajit Guha characterized such colonial

'despotism' as a dominance without hegemony, devoid of 'mediating depths ... between the will of the rulers and that of the ruled'.¹² Without presuming the hegemony of its workings, I seek to demonstrate nonetheless that the very violence of imperial predation in both Mughal and British India mediated the authority of governors and the political subjectivity of those they governed. I follow Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer in taking state rule as a cultural project, exercised through contradictory and contested material practices and symbolic forms.¹³ The imperial hunt constituted a culture of rule through both its symbology of power – the representations and rituals expressing authority – and the power of its symbology – the deployment of these cultural forms in political practice as a means of subjection.¹⁴ The possibility of careful government was imagined and exercised on a violent terrain of predatory force, though once again in contrastive fashion. The ritualized pursuit of man-eating felines by British officials and soldiers sought also the hearts of wary and non-cooperative colonial subjects, facilitating the pastoral governance of wild peripheries. The Mughal hunt, on the other hand, took *grandees*, warlords and petty potentates as the preeminent objects of its fearful care, cultivating their faithful loyalty through the spectacular exercise of a predatory sovereignty. In sketching these two moments of predatory care, I hope to contribute to both the deepening genealogy of Indian governmentality and the 'natural history' of modern power. My discussion begins with the colonial hunt.

Terror and the Raj: The Pursuit of Colonial Man-eaters

Oriental despotism returned with an ironic twist in the wake of the 1857 uprisings in colonial north India. Liberal hopes for the legal and pedagogical 'improvement' of Indian subjects were tempered by a sober recognition that these natives were different by nature from their Western rulers. The Raj itself was reconstructed as a feudal order, crowned by the Empress of India and consecrated by spectacular public rituals of imperial authority.¹⁵

A cartoon carried by the popular London weekly *Punch* on August 22, 1857, shortly after the revolt had peaked, captures some of these sentiments (*Figure 1*). Like the Seringapatnam victory medal of 1799, this representation too confronts an Indian tiger with a British lion. Unlike the earlier image, however, this cartoon depicts the limp bodies of a woman and child as the object of their struggle. Does the lion charge to save their lives, avenge their deaths or win them back? Prone and partially unclad, she is most likely a white woman, marking the lurid tales of rape and mutilation that circulated in British popular discourse on the Mutiny. However, her dress and



Figure 1

hair color are somewhat ambiguous, complicating this assignment of race. She may stand in equally well as a native victim of the man-eating tigers that stoked the chivalry of manly hunters. If colonial Mutiny narratives could only hint at the possible rape of Indian women by counterinsurgent forces through the black-faced figures of Englishwomen, as Jenny Sharpe has argued,¹⁶ then it is the very vulnerability of this woman's body that registers colonial complicity with the specter of native terror. The problem of her welfare – subject to both violation and rescue – enables the erection of an unstable distinction between responsible and irresponsible sovereign force. Good government is made possible on predatory terrain.

In the following pages, I will explore the political efficacy of the hunt in the later decades of the British Raj, focusing on the man-eating tigers¹⁷ that cast such a fearsome shadow on colonial governance. In the hunting narratives I will discuss, men of the state¹⁸ rescued helpless and servile subjects from the tyranny of these beasts. Such predatory play aided the territorial consolidation of pastoral governance on the wild peripheries of the colonial state by securing the bodies and hearts of resistant subjects. In an exemplary instance of the illiberal underpinnings of colonial governmentality, the late Raj parasitized both the threat of despotic terror and the promise of sovereign force as buttresses to its own mortal authority.

Sporting practices such as the hunt were crucial constituents of colonial rule. Early British hunting practices were adapted largely from those of native princes and low-caste *shikaris* (hunters), and soldiers and officials of the East India Company often participated in Indian hunts. However, the 1857 Mutiny catalyzed a radical transformation in colonial predation, and elaborate codes of sportsmanship were developed to distinguish refined British hunting practices from cruel native practices. Native Indians were disbarred from owning firearms, and native *shikaris* tackling predatory pests and capturing small game for consumption were stigmatized as poachers. By the late nineteenth century, conservation efforts restricted access to dwindling stocks of game animals, established licenses and quotas to regulate their pursuit, and reserved special shooting blocks for the sport of officials and military officers.¹⁹

In the 'colonial masculinity' of the late Raj,²⁰ sportsmanlike hunting provided an important means of cultivating disciplined officers and officials. Captain Henry Shakespear, for example, recommended the hunt as an 'innocent, manly and useful' way of preventing young soldiers from falling prey to 'frivolous pursuits or effeminate pleasures' such as 'feasting, rioting or debauchery' and training them to better deal with crises such as the Mutiny.²¹ If the gender of the tiger hunter was unambiguously masculine, the

gender of the hunted tiger was more ambivalent, oscillating between representations of powerful, noble and fearless masculine tigers and savage, cunning and cruel feminine tigresses.

The tiger often figured in colonial hunting narratives as an oppressive figure terrorizing the rural populace with the specter of arbitrary violence. Tigers were seen as a tremendous threat to the colonial agrarian revenue base – ‘a single man-eating tiger or rogue elephant may so terrorize a district that miles of arable land are wasted because the peasants dare not plough or sow corn’²² – whose outright elimination was encouraged by bounties and policy directives for decades. By the turn of the century, however, mounting concerns regarding the decline of worthy trophy-size tigers prompted the development of licenses, quotas and other conservation efforts. In a characteristic gesture of colonial biopolitics, these efforts to manage access to the wild tiger population were motivated by a interest in maintaining vital populations of large animals and preventing their ‘degeneration’ in size.²³

However, many of these hunter-conservationists drew an important distinction between tigers that subsisted on wild game and tigers that preyed on cattle and people. For example, even as E. P. Stebbing’s District Collector friend suggested to him that some kind of protection needed to be extended to game-killing tigers to prevent their extinction, he went on to say that ‘[n]o one wants to protect a man-eater, of course; he is a pest to be stamped out as early as possible’.²⁴ Man-eating tigers, though comparatively rare, were still held responsible in government statistical accounts for between 1000 and 1600 human deaths per annum in the late nineteenth century with many times as many cattle lifted by tigers annually.²⁵ Any perusal of the voluminous colonial hunting narratives and memoirs authored by British officers and officials would suggest that the slaying of a man-eater was almost a ‘rite of passage’ for these men: each had their own story to report and glory in. The elimination of man-eaters stands out as a great anomaly in the late colonial art of managing tiger populations, for here the elaborate masculinist codes of sportsmanship often did not apply.²⁶ Man-eaters had to be eliminated at all costs, even if that meant resorting to the regretful tactic of shooting a sleeping tiger as legendary hunter Jim Corbett once reported doing.²⁷ In the words of G. P. Sanderson, another colonial officer holding a post in the forests of Mysore, ‘[t]race out and slay every man-eater by all means possible, and at any expense’.²⁸

How might we understand this injunction to eliminate man-eating tigers by all means possible? Sanderson himself suggested one answer in his observation that man-eaters were more often tigresses

rather than tigers, speculating further that this may be linked to 'the fact that tigresses are as a rule more vicious, sly and enterprising . . . than their lords'.²⁹ In the gendered practices of colonial rule, the wild and unruly feminine had to be disciplined at all costs. But the colonial state's interest in *territorial* control and administration may supplement this understanding. Consider R. G. Burton's fascinating comparison of tiger-hunting expeditions in the Deccan plateau to military campaigns. Burton described the hunter as a general, assisted by a staff of native shikaris and an army of beaters enlisted to flush out tigers from the jungles. Detailed knowledge was crucial to the success of the campaign. Maps had to be studied to select an appropriate tract of country for the theatre of operations. Reliable scouts had to be sent out to discover the haunts and habits of particular tigers. And the personal inclinations of individual tigers had to be ascertained in advance to ensure an efficient and successful hunt: 'The character of the enemy must be known in order that the best plan of campaign may be devised for circumventing him'.³⁰

A logic of territorial control based on abstract, mappable space undergirds Burton's description. Indeed, he was writing in the early twentieth century when the modern administrative territorialization of India was well underway. The Imperial Forest Department was created in 1864 to regulate reckless commercial exploitation of Indian forests, and the 1878 Indian Forest Act enabled the establishment of 'reserved' and 'protected' forests whose access regimes were dictated by the colonial state.³¹ Projects of regulated resource extraction were a constitutive feature of colonial governmentality, premised on the simultaneous management of natural resources and the cultivation of disciplined and industrious subjects.³² Nevertheless, the persistence of 'the enemy' – the tiger, intimate knowledge of whom was necessary for his defeat – suggests that in the 'mounds and hollows of the geographies of empire',³³ the territorialization of colonial pastoral power was an ongoing and contested process. The figure of the man-eating tiger – commanding space through the force of terror – was one powerful challenge to colonial authority and an irresistible incitement to predation on the part of colonial officers.³⁴

Let us turn to the hunting stories of Jim Corbett, one of the most famous slayers of man-eaters in India, to look more closely at these contests over colonial space. Corbett was a domiciled European – a second-generation Indian – born and raised in the hill country of Naini Tal in the Himalayan foothills. First an employee of the railways, later the proprietor of a business in Naini Tal and a member of the Naini Tal Municipal Board, citizen Corbett maintained a lifelong association with various agencies of the colonial apparatus.

Captain of the 70th Kumaon Company in the First World War, Corbett was awarded the honorary rank of Lieutenant-Colonel for his training of British troops in jungle fighting techniques for the Second World War. A close friend of Percy Wyndham (Kumaon District Commissioner), Malcolm Hailey (Governor of the United Provinces) and Lord Linlithgow (Viceroy of India), he spent much of his time arranging shooting drives in the hills for touring officials and friends in the civil service. Corbett governed Choti Haldwani – a small derelict village that he had purchased and set about to improve into a model agrarian settlement – with a ‘fair but iron hand,’ zealously policing in particular the surrounding forests as a ‘self-styled game warden’.³⁵ For a short while Corbett was invited by Wyndham to join the Special Dacoity Police Force in pursuit of notorious bandit and ‘criminal’ tribesman Sultana. But he gained his local name and global fame mainly for his successful pursuit of the numerous man-eating tigers and leopards that plagued the area until the mid-twentieth century.

Stories of these encounters in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* make terror the instrument of a feline predator’s territorial sovereignty. Viceroy Linlithgow describes in the foreword the ‘great fear’ and ‘utter disorganization of rural life’ induced by the appearance of a man-eater. Corbett describes these cats as ‘operating’ on the settlements of a particular area, casting a fearsome shadow over all the inhabitants of that territory. The Chowgarh tiger, for example, ‘had established a reign of terror’ over ‘1,500 square miles of mountain and vale’. The Champawat man-eater had plunged the people of one village into such a ‘state of abject terror’ that villagers had taken to defecating outside their own homes rather than venturing into the fields for their ablutions.³⁶ Colonial discourse thus ‘recuperated’³⁷ the figure of the Oriental despot not only to characterize the native predecessors of British rule but likewise to represent the man-eating tiger as a terrible and arbitrary monarch, exercising control over the servile inhabitants of a given territory through the force of terror.³⁸

Deputy Commissioners and other concerned officials enlisted Corbett to track down many man-eaters, missions he performed with remarkable success. His individual pursuit of these errant tigers on foot may be taken as a necessary counterpart to the territorialization of state power through ‘scientific forestry’ in the forested Himalayan foothills. The Thak man-eater, for example, threatened to halt forestry operations in the Ladhya valley:

During the summer of 1938 the Forest Department had marked all the trees in this area for felling, and it was feared that if the man-eater was not accounted for before November – when the felling of the forest was due to start – the contractors would not be able to secure labor and would repudiate their contracts.³⁹

Donald Stewart of the Forest Department approached Corbett, and he agreed to take on the assignment 'in the interests of the local inhabitants'. As Corbett struggled to track down the man-eater for days on end, terrified forest laborers refused to go to the forest to cut down trees altogether, and an entire 'industrious' village was deserted for fear. Finally, however, the tigress was slain, and 'two days later the entire population returned to their homes and have lived in peace ever since'.⁴⁰

Tigers were not the only rebellious agents in the Himalayan foothills. Escalating restrictions on Kumaoni villagers' access to fuelwood, fodder and other resources through the extension of scientific forestry met with fierce local resistance, expressed in a wave of labor strikes and incendiarism – defiant burning of the forest floor – between 1916 and 1921.⁴¹ Many of Corbett's own exploits took place in the same hills at roughly the same time, and there are hints of their convergence with anticolonial insurgency. Consider his account of the Mohan man-eater in the 1920s. Corbett's journey to the village of Kartkanoula is complicated by the 'unsettled conditions' in the area; 'there had been some trouble in the upper villages a short time previously, necessitating the dispatch from Naini Tal of a small police force'. Upon his arrival to the village, a woman cross-examines him regarding his reasons for coming. It is only when he convinces her that he is neither a forester nor a police officer, and that he has come only to 'try and help the people of Kartkanoula' that he wins her trust. Although Corbett and his men brought tinned milk with them for their tea, expecting no volunteering of local provisions, his preliminary operations to stalk the man-eater convinces the villagers of his good-faith intentions, resulting in 'an array of pots and pans of various shapes and sizes on the verandah, all containing milk', when he returns from a foray into the jungles.⁴²

This was a gesture ripe with political significance. Government officers touring in these hills expected villagers to supply them fuelwood, grass and milk, hospitality that was refused to British officers during the years of the Non-Cooperation Movement.⁴³ After slaying this man-eater, Corbett gives the villagers an opportunity to see the dead beast 'with their own eyes' to know that the reign of terror is truly over, suggesting indeed that campaigns such as these to gain control of the countryside served the double purpose of winning the hearts of its inhabitants. Public spectacles of terror, as Diana Taylor has argued,⁴⁴ aim to produce identity with the state by constituting subjects as passive and feminized spectators. In these hunting narratives, the utter incapacity of native villagers in the face of a tiger's terror is resolved only by the masculine intervention of the white hunter.

But what agency is addressed by villagers grateful for the elimination of a man-eater? Corbett stands in these stories less as a representative of a formal administrative apparatus and more as a personal embodiment of capable sovereignty. Consider the text of a petition submitted by 'the public of patti Painaun, Bungi and Bickla Badalpur' to Corbett, requesting him to tackle the Kanda man-eater, which had already killed 5 people of their area:

The Forest officials are doing every possible arrangement to kill this tiger but there is no hope of any success. 2 shikari gentlemen also tried to shoot it but unfortunately they could not get it. Our kind District Magistrate has notified Rs. 150 reward for killing this tiger, so everyone is trying to kill it but no success. We have heard that your kind self have killed many man-eater tigers and leopards. For this you have earned a good name specially in Kumaon revenue Division. The famous man-eater leopard of Nagpur has been shoot by you. This is the voice of all the public here that this tiger also will be killed only by you. So we the public venture to request that you very kindly take trouble to come to this place and shoot this tiger (our enemy) and save the public from this calamity.⁴⁵

The villagers write in the name of the public, but their petition is addressed to neither an anonymous administrator nor an abstract state agency but instead to a specific individual endowed with the power to slay the man-eater.

Corbett himself may have been a singular figure, but such recourse to extra-official authority was not uncommon. F. B. Simson, serving with the Bengal Civil Service until 1872, was approached in court one day by a villager carrying the mangled leg of his son: 'What are you doing, sitting here arguing with lawyers when a tiger is eating my son?' The Magistrate took up the call to duty, leaving his official responsibilities at court behind to chase and shoot the tiger.⁴⁶ In these hunting narratives, colonial pastoral care is exercised under the shadow of the despot. The pursuit of predatory tigers opened the countryside to the rule of law and the improvement of welfare only by instantiating the hunter himself as kingly potentate, personification of sovereign force. Stories such as these register the ambivalence of colonial authority in their fugitive identification of man and tiger, hunter and hunted, officer and despot.⁴⁷ Jim Corbett, patriarch of Kaladhungi, insisted that the tiger himself was a 'large-hearted gentleman' who took to human prey only under dire and unfortunate circumstances.⁴⁸

A similar ambivalence informed James Mill's *History of British India*. Describing the generally savage and degrading condition of Oriental despotism, Mill nonetheless praised the 'Mohammedan despotism' of the Mughals for partially advancing the welfare of subject Hindus. He described the 'plain good sense' of their legal and administrative arrangements, noting at the same time that their

exercise was hampered by a 'spirit of rebellion' that endlessly troubled 'high-minded' sovereigns such as Akbar. Most strikingly, Mill also found in the 'manly' and 'vigorous' manners of the Mughals the faint traces of character that equipped British men for good governance: unlike the slavish and indolent Hindu, the Mohammedan 'more nearly resembles our own half-civilized ancestors'.⁴⁹ As Uday Mehta has noted, Mill and his compatriots found sanction in these histories for Britain's own authoritarian governance of India.⁵⁰

Colonial conditions licensed the exercise of despotic authority. And seized by a mood of 'imperial nostalgia' in the later decades of the nineteenth century, writes Tom Metcalf,⁵¹ authorities of the Raj drew on Mughal court traditions and rituals to represent their own reign as a monarchical order. But the Oriental despot himself, caught in the specular frame of colonial self-representation, stands either as a cruel tyrant to be deposed or an imperfect aspirant to the good sense of modern rule. Must the violence and political turbulence of Mughal rule necessarily mark a prior stage in the evolution of modern government? Must the mimicry of Mughal forms in the late Raj stand as a retrogressive concession to the perverse conditions of colonial rule? Or, does the Mughal past itself perhaps bear elements with which a different genealogy of governmentality in modern South Asia may be constructed?⁵² Following Walter Benjamin's admonitions to blast the past out of the 'continuum of history,' I will now take a 'tiger's leap' into the thickets of a deeper past, shifting my attention to the Mughal hunt of the sixteenth century.⁵³ My aim here is to chart a different relationship between imperial predation, sovereign force and pastoral care, a configuration elided by the nineteenth-century recuperation of despotic terror.

Circle of Sovereignty: The Mughal Imperial Hunt

By the seventeenth century, successive conquests and tributary relations drew most of the Indian subcontinent into the reach of the Mughal empire. Most of the Mughal sovereigns were prodigious hunters, their memoirs peppered with stories of the chase. Lions and tigers, elephants, deer, antelope, buffalo, waterfowl and many other kinds of birds and animals were subject to imperial predation. Official annals recorded several distinctive hunting practices: animals were chased with swords, pursued with rifles on the backs of elephants, driven *en masse* by attendants into netted enclosures for slaughter, even tracked down by trained cheetahs and horned buffalo.⁵⁴ A *mir-i shikar* (Master of the Hunt) and his staff of *qarawals* (huntsmen) were entrusted with the organization of hunts,

and *shikargahs* (hunting grounds) were reserved for the emperor's use in numerous places. The hunt was one of the chief amusements of the Mughal rulers, and royal advisors warned against the dangers of an excessive passion for women, wine and the chase.⁵⁵ However, in his *Ain-i Akbari* Abu'l Fazl took pains to stress that Emperor Akbar pursued much more than worldly pleasure on his hunting expeditions: "[His Majesty] always makes hunting a means of increasing his knowledge, and besides, uses hunting parties as occasions to inquire, without first having given notice of his coming, into the condition of the people and the army . . . He lifts up such as are oppressed, and punishes the oppressors."⁵⁶

How did the Mughal hunt serve such 'higher aims'? The *Ain* describes multitudes of common people who sought out the emperor on his hunting expeditions and petitioned him for blessings, advice, enlightenment, succor and justice.⁵⁷ While such direct encounters between the emperor and his subjects undoubtedly lent a certain efficacy to the imperial hunt, my argument in the following pages will focus on a different locus of Mughal politics: relations between the emperor and the volatile body of *grandees*, petty kings and warlords supporting the imperial edifice. In the official chronicles of the Mughal empire, references to injustice, oppression and tyranny typically mark the disloyalty and disobedience of these subordinate noblemen and potentates. The imperial hunt worked in a variety of ways to cultivate their faithful servitude. As a metaphor for sovereignty, the hunt conveyed the fearful grandeur of the emperor, and his capacity to capture and subdue lesser predators. As a military tactic, the hunt enabled the pursuit and punishment of seditious officers and chiefs. And as a ritual form, the hunt staged the forgiveness and incorporation of these insurgents into the hierarchical order of empire. My investigation of the hunt suggests that in the Mughal *garden* of good government – to employ a favorite metaphor of Indo-Islamic court literature – powerful yet unruly subordinates were the privileged objects of cultivating care. The argument dwells most closely on the expansive reign of Akbar, who ruled the empire between 1556 and 1605.

In the Mughal 'garden of empire' the sovereign ensured the welfare of his subjects by establishing order, meting out justice and maintaining a secure peace. 'A garden without a gardener will be a playground of thorns'⁵⁸: a responsible ruler deployed violence judiciously to combat tyranny and equilibrate clashing forces in conformity with the will of God.⁵⁹ On several occasions, Akbar's chroniclers credited the emperor with bringing rains to parched lands and desperate subjects.⁶⁰ However, as a nobleman serving the Mughal state avowed with an apt turn of phrase in 1612, 'the roots of the empire must be kept refreshed by the *water of discipline* . . . to

reap the fruit of peace and security.’ The sword, Baqir wrote in this advisory manual on the art of governance, was the rejuvenating basil of the imperial garden.⁶¹ In a 1586 letter to Turanian governor Abdullah Khan Uzbek, Akbar insisted that his ‘clime-conquering swordsmanship’ sought neither hoarded treasures nor worldly pleasures but rather the ‘shepherding and care-taking of the people’.⁶²

The emperor’s sword sometimes struck man-eating lions and tigers threatening the common subjects of the realm. On his way to Ajmer in 1572, for example, Akbar learned of a tiger that waylaid travellers and killed them: ‘Inasmuch as the extirpation of causers of evil is one of the duties of sovereignty, the prince went forward to destroy him’.⁶³ Jahangir too described shooting a tiger that reportedly ‘vexed wayfarers’.⁶⁴ However, such beasts are greatly overshadowed in the pages of royal historiography by the predatory evil of refractory servants and lieges to the imperial state. Consider the following passage from Muhammad Arif Qandhari’s *Tarikh-i Akbari*:

[T]he country is enjoying a peaceful life, free from fear and anxiety . . . [T]he young kid is being nursed on the milk of a lion. The protection of the king is even available to the weakest person. If any watchman or even a Kotwal happens to pass by the house of a widow, he feels frightened lest his shadow might not fall on the walls of that woman because [the king’s] protection and help is readily available to every helpless and poor person.⁶⁵

This triangle of protagonists – vulnerable female, dangerous male, protective ruler – certainly mirrors that of the British *Punch* cartoon I discussed earlier. Here, however, defenseless subjects need protection from the potential violence of the *kotwal* – an imperial officer appointed to police each municipality with a small contingent of troops⁶⁶ – and his hired watchmen. In passages such as these, oppression and tyranny serve as figures for disloyal and disobedient challenges to the imperial order from its own servants, officers and confederates. The hunt as both metaphor of rule and political practice can be understood only in relation to this thorniest of problems.

To grasp the work of the sovereign sword in the cultivation of the imperial garden, we must therefore consider one of the abiding tensions that animated the Mughal state: an ongoing tussle between the centripetal force of imperial ideology and ritual, and the centrifugal tendencies of the imperial apparatus. Abu’l Fazl – Akbar’s court historian, principal advisor and chief propagandist – developed a syncretistic and idiosyncratic ideology of rule that represented the emperor as a divine figure, illumined by the light of God. In an echo of Persian notions of kingship, virtue and order were said to radiate downward and outward from Akbar’s benevolent person. But Akbar

also initiated the *jharokha-i darshan*, standing daily at a special balcony of the palace to show himself to the populace in the manner of a Hindu deity and dispense justice for hours.⁶⁷

Mughal courtly rituals such as these, like those of the Balinese *negara*, made a 'radial space' centered on the emperor himself.⁶⁸ The formal court meetings of the *darbar*, as F. W. Buckler has suggested, *incorporated* notables into the body of the emperor through the receipt of clothes and various accoutrements that had come into contact with his person.⁶⁹ The spatial arrangement of these encounters, with the elevated emperor giving audience to various ranks of officers, nobles and subjects, was crucial: 'The closer to the person of the ruler or his representative one stood, the higher one's status'.⁷⁰ These rituals were enacted not only at the capital city of Fatehpur Sikri, but throughout the empire as Akbar travelled to conquer new territories, hunt and inspect the affairs of various provinces. These constant travels undertaken – in the company of a massive and spectacular mobile court complex and perhaps tens of thousands of courtiers, officers, soldiers and attendants – suggested further that the empire was centered in his person and not at any particular geographic location.⁷¹

These rituals sought to cultivate loyalty and obedience among a corps of imperial servants and allies that ceaselessly threatened to escape the circle of Mughal sovereignty. The weighty military, administrative and courtly apparatus of the empire depended on a sustained flow of agrarian revenue from individual cultivators to the political center. Varying degrees of regional and local autonomy had to be conceded to direct this flow upwards and inwards. Regional kings and local chiefs subdued through military force were granted a measure of political authority and economic right based on their ritual submission to and military support of the empire. Armed caste and clan leaders held inheritable *zamindari* rights to agrarian revenue in many regions. In others, autonomous chiefs were permitted to manage their own internal affairs in exchange for tributary payments and military service.⁷² Many of these chieftains, such as the great Rajputs, were incorporated directly into the imperial service as *mansabdars*. The mansabdari system – a ranked order of status positions graded by the number of cavalry expected from a given officer – was the backbone of the Mughal administrative bureaucracy. For their administrative and military service, mansabdars were paid either a cash salary or granted a *jagir*: a right to the land revenue accruing from a particular region. Chieftains recruited as mansabdars were often granted jagirdari rights to their own territories.⁷³

These mansabdars, zamindars and chieftains confronted the Mughal emperors with the repeated threat of revolt and dissension.

The *Akbar-nama* brims with accounts of major rebellions, minor disturbances and refractory warlords. The *Tarikh-i Akbari*, another chronicle of Akbar's reign, reads as a continuous cycle of seditious uprising, punitive expedition, imperial victory, royal forgiveness, and renewed incorporation of the recalcitrant potentate into the imperial body. Much of this resistance was rooted in the forests, hills and ravines on the periphery of the cultivated plains. The Mughal state sought to extend the reach of settled agriculture through numerous means, granting to Muslims, for example, revenue rights to cultivable waste as *madad-i ma'ash*. Nevertheless, autonomous tribes such as the Jats and Ghakkars took shelter in jungle terrain to resist tributary extraction, earning a reputation for raiding and thievery.⁷⁴

The Geertzian model of the theatre state finds its limits here, as does a historiography of the Mughal state that takes its bureaucratic centralization for granted. It would be unwise to treat Mughal statecraft in terms of either a 'hermeneutic circle' fixed firmly to the imperial center, or a stable structure of systematic levy, submission and administration.⁷⁵ Rather, the material practices and ritual forms of the Mughal state served as imperfect instruments of persuasion, aimed at affirming and advancing the sovereignty of the emperor. They may be understood only in relation to the ceaseless struggles – simultaneously material and meaningful – to enact the political and ideological centrality of the emperor to the empire. Court practices sought to interpellate imperial and provincial noblemen as faithful and obedient servants, slaves and even disciples – in the case of Akbar's iconoclastic *Din-i Ilahi* cult – of the sovereign.⁷⁶ Either as fruit-bearing limbs to be carefully nurtured,⁷⁷ or as weedy 'rubbish' to be swept away,⁷⁸ grandees, chieftains and petty kings were the preeminent objects of cultivation in the Mughal imperial garden.⁷⁹

How did the Mughal hunt aid in the cultivation of a loyal body of imperial servants, vassals and confederates? To begin with, hunting practices were often indistinguishable from the methods of Mughal warfare. The very technology of the hunt – its deployment of men, its use of terrain, its techniques of capture – approximated that of war. *Qarawal*, for example, doubled as both imperial huntsmen and military scouts and skirmishers.⁸⁰ Military expeditions were often launched under the pretext of hunting. In 1567, for example, Akbar embarked on a hunting expedition with the dual political purpose of suppressing a rebellion by the sons of Muhammad Sultan Mirza – petty potentates who held domains in the Sarkar of Sambhal – and of conquering the fort of Chittor.⁸¹ Hunting forays were also transformed quickly into military ventures. On a hunting expedition to the forests near Sakit in modern Uttar Pradesh, Akbar learned of

the 'insolence, robbery, manslaughter, boldness and turbulence' of ruffians in eight local villagers. Beseeched by a local Brahman headman – via the imperial huntsmen – to redress their plunder of property, the emperor led the 200 horsemen and fighting elephants in his company to storm and torch the garrison where they had gathered.⁸²

To further grasp this intimacy of hunting and warfare in Mughal India, let us look closely at one account by Father Monserrate, a Jesuit missionary who spent a number of years at Akbar's court. Monserrate recounts an expedition that Akbar launched against his half-brother Mirza Hakim Muhammad, the ruler of Kabul, in 1581. New regulations concerning the mansabdari system had prompted the rebellion of imperial jagirdars, officers and troops in Bengal and Bihar, strife that spread quickly to other regions to become the largest revolt Akbar faced during his reign. Rebel leaders proclaimed Mirza Hakim their king, and the latter led an invading army across the Indus River towards the city of Lahore, where he attempted unsuccessfully to rally support from local leaders for his cause.⁸³ Meanwhile, at the capital city of Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar 'declared that he was going hunting' and prepared to lead an army to Kabul. '[I]nformed that [Akbar] had given orders for a hunting expedition . . . [Mirza Hakim] betook himself to flight'.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, Akbar continued onwards in what seemed to Monserrate a spectacular display of might. The emperor set off from the capital with a force of fifty thousand cavalry, five hundred fighting elephants and camels and countless infantry. The army proceeded in a great crescent-shaped formation, with Akbar at the head, followed by the elephants and cavalry. The army grew rapidly as it marched – perhaps with the addition of men summoned from the countryside – and 'it soon seemed to hide the earth. It extended over the breadth of a mile and a half, covering the fields and filling the woods with a crowding multitude'. Monserrate seems to suggest that animals were hunted continuously along the way. Strict orders were given to prevent anyone from approaching the line of the march, both to lessen the risk of treachery and 'to prevent wild beasts being frightened away . . . No beast, if surprised on the way, could break through the ranks and escape'. The great body of people and animals followed the foothills of the mountains, where water was more plentiful and the hunting was better. Along the way, Monserrate reports, petty kings terrified by the size of the army were bound to the emperor by means of treaties, gifts and promises, ensuring that the vast force would be well-provisioned.⁸⁵

Monserrate relied on an idiom of terror to characterize the effects of this march on the political dispositions of little kings. Lest we reduce his narrative to an early European vision of a despotic Orient,

which it surely is in part, it is worth reflecting further on the rationality of fearful force to Mughal rule. Imperial historiography and hagiography elaborated the principles of Mughal kingship on a narrative terrain saturated with predatory motifs.

Consider, for example, a story from the *Akbar-nama* describing a sudden encounter with a tigress⁸⁶ and her cubs in the dense forests near the fort of Narwar in 1561. The emperor went forward alone and without hesitation, Abu'l Fazl writes, to slay the tigress with a single stroke of his sword. His men looked on with fear and wonder at this singular act of strength and courage, and a few brave attendants came forward to dispatch her remaining cubs.⁸⁷ The figure of Akbar dominates the miniature illustration of the encounter,⁸⁸ a radius of power projecting implacable determination from the center of the image (*Figure 2*).⁸⁹ In another miraculous incident reported in the *Ain-i Akbari*, the emperor brought a tiger to cower down and tremble before his divine glance and furious gaze.⁹⁰ Court officials meticulously recorded the size and claw length of each tiger killed by the emperor.⁹¹

Stories such as these conveyed the predatory *jalal* of the emperor,⁹² a mighty grandeur that exceeded that of the very beasts he resembled.⁹³ In a series of metonymic substitutions that echoed the exploits of legendary Persian kings such as Rustom, Bahram Gor and Isfandiyar, Mughal court literature depicted a leonine sovereign: hunter of lions, hunter of hunters, hunter of kings.⁹⁴ While good sovereigns were said to sweeten such might with the virtues of benevolence, mercy and right judgment,⁹⁵ refractory potentates were classed as inferior predators with lesser might and right. 'How can a fox face the lion, though it has nails as sharp as ten swords?'⁹⁶ Court chronicles proposed the deferential submission of noblemen, rival kings and chieftains to the encompassing sovereignty of the emperor, much as animals on the hunting field were said to eagerly seek the emperor's arrows in eulogistic poetry.⁹⁷ As Ebba Koch has observed, Mughal paintings and panegyric prose often allegorized this ideal as a 'Solomonic' peace among the animals – tiger and deer, dog and hare, falcon and pigeon, cohabiting tranquilly – under the just rule of the sovereign hunter.⁹⁸

Such order was pursued through sciences of imperial *siyasat*, or discipline, that guided the husbandry of both human subjects and animal servants. Treatises on Muslim statecraft proposed for rulers a judicious mixture of *targhib wa tarhib*, both caring attention and fearful distance: the proverbial carrot and stick.⁹⁹ In his advice for princes, Baqir suggested that imperial officers and courtiers of a mean and unreliable nature be caught between the states of 'fear and hope ... between apprehension and expectation'.¹⁰⁰ The 'collaring' of nobles was an exemplary instance of this Mughal



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means of conducting conduct. Akbar developed a deep passion for hunting with trained cheetahs, and he took great personal interest in devising superior means for their capture, care and training. Each of the hundreds of these animals in the imperial stables was vested with a golden collar and brocaded quilt, and awarded meat, honorary title and ceremonial privilege based on its rank and prowess.¹⁰¹ Arif penned the following verse to describe these practices: 'If a wild animal will not avoid your trap of prey, then it will find rest and comfort by being a prisoner in your noose or lasso'.¹⁰² Intriguingly enough, he went on to suggest that the noble officers of empire too were captured by the emperor in the same fashion. Akbar showered 'all sorts of gifts and rewards' upon Sikander Khan Uzbek – a Kashghar noble who came to Hindustan from Persia in the attendance of Humayun – in a futile effort to maintain his faithful service: 'He threw the trap of love and friendship round his neck and thus collared him tightly'.¹⁰³ Unfortunately, like Sultan Daud Khan – Afghan ruler of Bengal who made a bid for independence after 1572 – Sikander slipped his 'collar of loyalty'¹⁰⁴ and raised the standards of rebellion. Both Sikander in 1567 and Daud in 1574 met the retributive force of the imperial armies, which fell upon the latter, Arif writes, 'like a hungry hawk falling on a pack of pigeons'.¹⁰⁵ Chastened and forgiven – for the moment – Daud accepted and donned Mughal belt, cloak and sword in an elaborate ritual in 1575 to signal his incorporation into the empire.¹⁰⁶

As both metaphor for sovereignty and strategic practice, the Mughal hunt provided for the discipline and punishment of refractory officers, chieftains and warlords. Baqir reminded readers of his manual for Mughal princes that "a royal employee, in his fear, danger, apprehension and terror, is like one sleeping with a panther or like one dwelling with a lion. Although the panther sleeps and the lion hides, in time one will rise and the other will open its mouth."¹⁰⁷

But let us now consider a third means by which the hunt aided in the cultivation of imperial notables: as a stage for the very rituals of incorporation that constituted the hierarchical order of empire. I focus here on the ritual structure of the *qamargah*, the spectacular enclosure hunt favored by the Mongols as an exercise in military training and practiced often by the Mughal emperors. A special prerogative of the emperor alone,¹⁰⁸ the intensive efforts of the *qamargah* made a vast radius of sovereignty centered on the body of the ruler. Access to this privileged corral was governed by a succession in time analogous to the spatial order of the *darbar* I described earlier.

Consider an expedition to the Panjab that Akbar launched in late 1566 to deal with an invasion by his half-brother from Kabul. Mirza Hakim had fled by the time Akbar arrived in Lahore towards the end

of February, 1567. On March 11, 1567, Akbar called for a qamargah hunt, ordering that all the land between the mountains and the river Jhelum be surrounded and driven for animals.¹⁰⁹ Several thousand men were enlisted from nearby towns and villages to drive the game towards a central point, and army officers were appointed to coordinate the beating in each concerned district and quarter. The officers and other men beat the game for one month towards a wide space ten miles from Lahore, at which point Akbar came to inspect the hunting ground and the animals collected there. Approving of the arrangements, the emperor 'placed the foot of dominion in the stirrup of auspiciousness and made his tiger-like steed career in the pursuit of the prancing deer'. Beginning with a ten mile circumference, the hunting ground was reduced day by day as the enclosure grew tighter. The emperor hunted for five days with arrow, sword, lance and musket. After he had finished hunting, the nobles of the court were allowed their turn. Subsequently, court servants were allowed to hunt, and finally the troopers and footmen were given their turn.¹¹⁰

Death was dealt to most captured animals, to be sure, but the qamargah was sometimes capped by gestures of imperial clemency. In the *Ain-i Akbari* Abu'l Fazl attributes the following words to the emperor himself: 'Although hunting suggests many analogies of kingly action, certainly the foremost of them is that the granting of life [to the doomed] becomes a habit'.¹¹¹ Animals caught within the qamargah were often released with a mark on their bodies signifying a privileged relation to the emperor.¹¹² But, as the following incident suggests, rebellious chieftains too could be granted life within the circle of sovereignty, incorporated by the rituals of the qamargah into the order of empire. In 1578 Akbar called for another qamargah in Panjab, near the town of Bhera on the right bank of the Jhelum River.¹¹³ While the great hunt was being prepared, the *Akbar-nama* reports that Haji Khan, Chita Khan and other Baloch chiefs 'came with a thousand feelings of shame and did homage'.¹¹⁴ The Balochis were one of the great tribes of Multan, well-known for their horsemanship and most likely pastoral nomads.¹¹⁵ While the Baloch chiefs of northern Multan were well-settled as zamindars, the Baloch chiefs of southern Multan were a constant source of trouble for Akbar. Dwelling in vast rocky tracts and many isolated forts, these chieftains maintained thousands of cavalry and infantry and refused to submit to Mughal authority.¹¹⁶ As Abu'l Fazl put it, 'leaders of that tribe, owing to their innate savagery and ill-fatedness, had turned away their heads from obedience and had not paid proper respect'.¹¹⁷ Under Akbar's orders, an army was assembled in the Panjab and sent off to force them to bow, prompting the Baloch chiefs to meet Akbar at the Bhera qamargah and entreat him to call

back the troops. The emperor 'forgave their offences and raised them from the ground of disgrace'. Most important, however, is what happened next: 'At a sign from His Majesty, they obtained a place in the company (for hunting)'.¹¹⁸ Submitting to the emperor, the Baloch chiefs won forgiveness; winning forgiveness, they assumed their place in the hunt; assuming this place, they marked their own position within the hierarchical order of empire.

Figure for sovereignty, technique of domination, and means of incorporation, the Mughal imperial hunt cultivated loyalty and obedience among an unruly body of imperial subordinates. As metaphor, tactic, and ritual form, the hunt conveyed, enacted and reproduced the predatory sovereignty of the emperor in the garden of empire. Forceful and persuasive, this ideology was by no means hegemonic. Shail Mayaram has found in the oral traditions of the Mewati petty principality of Agra, for example, a representation of the Mughal state itself as violent, tyrannical and exploitative.¹¹⁹ And the Baloch chieftains described above fled from the hunting ground soon after their audience and returned to Multan, continuing to pose problems for the empire until they were definitively subdued in 1586.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, while imperial hagiography and panegyric prose offer a very particular vision of the Mughal state, these chronicles sometimes hint at the wider reach of the ideology they circulated. On an expedition to Ajmer in 1579, Abu'l Fazl writes in the *Akbar-nama*, the emperor and his party met landowners bearing a remarkable tale. A traveller suddenly threatened by a famished tiger as he passed through these forests immediately drew a line around himself and called out the name of Akbar: 'On hearing the honored name the beast stood still, and the man escaped from his mortal danger'.¹²¹ The story echoes miraculous accounts of the subservience of tigers to Muslim holy men and Sufi saints on the forested peripheries of the empire.¹²² But in its depiction of a protective enclosure charmed by the name of the emperor, the tale also recalls subtly the circle of sovereignty forged by the imperial hunt. In this fragmentary narrative of an admittedly fabulous quality, sovereign and subject meet on a cultivated terrain of predatory care.

Conclusions

A ranch guard affirming the extermination of Yana Indians from a newly settled California in the late nineteenth century declaimed that 'we must kill them big and little . . . nits will be lice'.¹²³ Several decades later, Adolf Hitler proposed that the Jews too be eradicated 'as lice' from a rarefied Germany.¹²⁴ Pestiferous lice and rapacious tigers share little more than their common prevalence as bestial

tropes sanctioning some of the most violent pursuits of modern welfare. What can be gleaned from the recurrence of these predatory triangles – dangerous threat, vulnerable body, aggressive savior – in the metaphors of power? In this paper I have suggested that ‘predatory care’ may provide one means of grappling with the uneasy intimacy of biopolitical cultivation and sovereign violence. I find in predation less a unifying theory of rule and more a terrain within which a deadly pursuit of good government may be proposed in varying ways. Mapping this terrain requires attention to both the symbology of power and the power of symbology: that is, both the representations through which authority is expressed and the practices through which it is exercised, both the metaphors that organize rule and the engagements that recruit its subjects. The political logic of predation is best grasped in its concrete instantiations, singular cuts between life and language.

I developed in this paper a series of contrasts between two hunts in imperial India. The British pursuit of man-eaters confronted despotic terror with sovereign might, illuminating the brutal underpinnings of colonial pastoral care. Indeed, as ‘conscripts of Western civilization’¹²⁵ Indian subjects were chased into modernity by the violent force of claw and gun, while tigers were largely chased out. Though this colonial formation relied on a particular construction of Oriental governance for its own efficacy, a closer look at the Mughal hunt reveals a radically different imagination and exercise of governmental care. In this imperial garden, the hunt cultivated the submission of unruly nobles and chieftains, capturing them in a circle of predatory sovereignty. What possibilities for further reflection are ultimately yielded by this contrastive exercise? On the one hand, the Mughal instance may be taken as an alien ‘outside’ to the workings of modern biopolitics, an unsettling limit of the sort that Foucault himself seemed quite fond of.¹²⁶ The total eradication of the tiger as a tactic of welfare, for example, could then be proposed as a distinctively modern possibility, unthinkable to Mughal sovereigns sharing in a predatory imperial order.¹²⁷

Such a move, however, would cede authorship of Indian modernity too readily to Europe.¹²⁸ Can expressions and exercises from the Mughal ‘garden of empire’ be incorporated instead into a different genealogy of pastoral government in modern India, one that is not inaugurated by colonial discourses and administrative tactics? In the annals of ethnohistory, kingly legacies of sovereign care reverberate unevenly into the postcolonial present.¹²⁹ A genealogy of predatory care in India might track a number of similar doublings, displacements and returns: Tipu Sultan’s appropriation of tigerish royal symbology, the fate of princely hunting traditions in colonial and postcolonial India, and colonial efforts to discipline predatory

'wild' tribes, for example.¹³⁰ Such possibilities require further exploration. Nonetheless, by confronting Jim Corbett with Emperor Akbar in a somewhat puckish play of mirrors, I hope to have suggested that the persisting chase may indeed provide a means of writing a different 'natural history' of modern power.

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⁴ Mildred Archer, *Tippoo's Tiger*, London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1959.

⁵ Reproduced in Kailash Sankhala, *Tiger! The Story of the Indian Tiger*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977.

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¹³ Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch*, London: Basil Blackwell, 1985.

¹⁴ Following Clifford Geertz and Michael Herzfeld respectively. See Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981; Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*, New York: Routledge, 1997. Thanks to Donald Moore for the pithy formulation.

¹⁵ Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India" in *An Anthropologist among the Historian and Other Essays*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987.

¹⁶ Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

¹⁷ Although I follow textual convention in describing these animals as man-eaters, it should be noted that many (and perhaps even most) of their victims were women searching the jungles for forest resources. I hope that my discussion of the gendered nature of colonial power makes up for this elision.

¹⁸ I use 'men' advisedly as an index of the masculinity at work. I understand the state as a cultural project of rule that extends beyond the formal administrative apparatus.

¹⁹ Rangarajan, *Fencing*.

²⁰ Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the late nineteenth century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.

²¹ Henry Shakespear, *The Wild Sports of India*, London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1860, pp. 2-3, Cited in Mackenzie, *Empire*.

²² T. H. Hendley, "Sport in Indian art", *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, 17: 55-65, 1916, p. 65.

²³ Rangarajan, *Fencing*.

²⁴ E. P. Stebbing, *The Diary of a Sportsman Naturalist in India*, London: John Lane, 1920, p. 229.

²⁵ R. G. Burton, *The Book of the Tiger*, Dehra Dun: Natraj Publishers, [1933] 1989.

²⁶ M. S. S. Pandian has argued that the practice of British hunting was more complicated than codes of sportsmanship would suggest: like stereotyped native Indians, the planters, army personnel and vacationers in the Nilgiri Hills of the Madras Presidency often hunted just for game meat with little attention to masculinist hunting norms. See Pandian, "Gendered negotiations: hunting and colonialism in the late 19th century Nilgiris", *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 29(1&2): 239-263, 1995.

²⁷ Jim Corbett, *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1946.

²⁸ G. P. Sanderson, *Thirteen Years Among the Wild Beasts of India*, Edinburgh: John Grant, 1912, p. 269.

²⁹ Sanderson, *Thirteen Years*, p. 272.

³⁰ R. G. Burton, *Sport and Wildlife in the Deccan*, London: Seeley, Service and Company, 1928, p. 112.

³¹ Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Fissured Land*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.

³² On the government of nature in Victorian Canada, see Bruce Braun, "Producing Vertical Territory: Geology and Governmentality in Late Victorian

Canada”, *Ecumene*, 7(1): 7–46, 2000.

³³ K. Sivaramakrishnan, “A Limited Forest Conservancy in Southwest Bengal, 1864–1912”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 56(1): 75–112, 1997, p. 100.

³⁴ Travelling in Nagpur, Major Shakespear for example learned of a pair of man-eaters that had “desolated” a village and killed a number of people; writing “[m]y determination was taken: I felt this was a call” Shakespear changed his plans to pursue the tigers. See Shakespear, *Wild Sports*, p. 53.

³⁵ Martin Booth, *Carpet Sahib*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 129; D. C. Kala, *Jim Corbett of Kumaon*, Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 1999, p. 64.

³⁶ Corbett, *Man-Eaters*, p. 45 and p. 4.

³⁷ Laura Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

³⁸ On the discourse of Oriental despotism, see Brendan O’Leary, *The Asiatic Mode of Production*, London: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

³⁹ Corbett, *Man-Eaters*, pp. 182–3.

⁴⁰ Corbett, *Man-Eaters*, pp. 208–32.

⁴¹ Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989.

⁴² Corbett, *Man-Eaters*, pp. 122–131.

⁴³ G. R. Kala, *Memoirs of the Raj: Kumaon 1911–1945*, New Delhi: Mukul Prakashan, 1974, p. 62.

⁴⁴ Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina’s ‘Dirty War’*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

⁴⁵ Corbett, *Man-Eaters*, p. 166.

⁴⁶ Peter Woodruff, *The Men Who Ruled India, Volume 2: The Guardians*, New York: Schocken Books, p. 178.

⁴⁷ For a classic and nuanced reflection on this theme, see George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant”, in *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1945.

⁴⁸ Corbett, *Man-Eaters*.

⁴⁹ James Mill, *History of British India, Volume II*, London, p. 492, p. 340 and p. 517.

⁵⁰ Uday Mehta, “Liberal Strategies of Exclusion” in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

⁵¹ Metcalf, *Ideologies*.

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⁵³ The metaphors are his. See Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken Books, 1968, p. 261.

⁵⁴ Muhammad Azhar Ansari, *Social Life of the Mughal Emperors*, Allahabad: Shanti Prakashan, 1974; Mubarak Ali, *The Court of the Great Mughuls*, Lahore: Book Traders, 1986.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Muhammad Baqir Najm-i Sani, *Advice on the Art of Governance: Mau’izah-i Jahangiri*, Sajida Sultana Alvi (tr.), Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989, p.69.

⁵⁶ Abu’l Fazl Allami, *Ain-i Akbari*, H. Blochmann (tr.), Lahore: Qausain, [1927] 1975, p. 292.

⁵⁷ Abu’l Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, p. 173.

⁵⁸ Arif, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, p. 41.

⁵⁹ P. Hardy, “Force and Violence in Indo-Persian Writing on History and Government in Medieval South Asia”, in Milton Israel and N. K. Wagle (eds.), *Islamic Society and Culture*, Delhi: Manohar, p. 202.

⁶⁰ Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Akbar and Religion*, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, 1989, p. 156.

⁶¹ Baqir, *Advice*, p. 46 and p. 48. My italics.

⁶² Mansura Haidar, *Mukatabat-i 'Allami: Letters of the Emperor Akbar in English Translation*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1998, p.33.

⁶³ Abu'l Fazl Allami, *Akbar-Nama*, H. Beveridge (tr.), Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 1977, Volume II, p. 539.

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⁶⁵ Arif, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, p.1 0.

⁶⁶ K. K. Trivedi, *Agra: Economic and Political Profile of a Mughal Suba 1580-1707*, Pune: Ravish Publishers, 1998, pp.187-8.

⁶⁷ Richard Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 159-60. A. L. Srivastava, *Akbar the Great, Volume II: Evolution of Administration, 1556-1605 AD*, Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala and Co., 1967, p. 275.

⁶⁸ Geertz, *Negara*. For a discussion of radial space in kingly Thailand, see Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Peluso, "Territoriality and state power in Thailand", *Theory and Society*, 24: 385-426, 1995.

⁶⁹ M. N. Pearson (ed.), *Legitimacy and Symbols: The South Asian Writings of F. W. Buckler*, University of Michigan: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1985.

⁷⁰ Cohn, "Representing Authority", p. 636.

⁷¹ J. F. Richards, "The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir" in J. F. Richards (ed.) *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, Madison: Center for South Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin, 1978.

⁷² Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963.

⁷³ H. K. Naqvi, *History of Mughal Government and Administration*, Delhi: Kanishka Publishing House, 1990.

⁷⁴ Chetan Singh, "Conformity and conflict: tribes and the 'agrarian system' of Mughal India", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 23(3): 319-340, 1988; "Forests, Pastoralists and Agrarian Society in Mughal India" in David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha (eds.) *Nature, Culture, Imperialism*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995.

⁷⁵ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Mughal state: Structure or process? Reflections on recent western historiography", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 29(3): 291-321, 1992.

⁷⁶ Richards, "Imperial Authority".

⁷⁷ Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume II, p. 486.

⁷⁸ Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume III, p. 755.

⁷⁹ For similar reflections on Louis XIV, his nobility and the gardens of Versailles, see Chandra Mukerji, *Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

⁸⁰ C. R. Naik, *Abdur-Rahim Khan-i-Khanan and His Literary Circle*, Ahmedabad: Gujarat University Press, 1966, p.60.

⁸¹ A. L. Srivastava, *Akbar the Great: Political History, 1542-1605 A.D.*, Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala & Company, 1962, p. 113.

⁸² Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume II, p.251. Srivastava, *Political History*, p. 66.

⁸³ Srivastava, *Political History*; Douglas Streusand, *The Formation of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989.

⁸⁴ Antonio Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate on His Journey to the Court of Akbar*, J. London (tr.), Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1922, p. 74 and p. 72.

⁸⁵ Monserrate, *Commentary*, pp. 77–83.

⁸⁶ There is a measure of semantic ambiguity between ‘lion’ and ‘tiger’ in these Persian texts. Asok Kumar Das notes that *sher* typically means lion in ordinary Persian but sometimes also tiger. Beveridge translates *sher* in this text as tiger, noting the use of *babar* – another Persian word for tiger – for this incident in a few manuscripts. The animal in this painting is clearly striped, though striped lions also sometimes appear in Mughal paintings. See Asok Kumar Das, “Mughal Royal Hunt in Miniature Paintings”, *Indian Museum Bulletin*, 2(1): 19–23, 1967, p. 20.

⁸⁷ Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume II, pp. 222–3.

⁸⁸ Reprinted in Stuart C. Welch, *The Art of Mughal India*, New York: Asia Society Publications, 1963.

⁸⁹ Bernard Cohn has argued that the Mughals dwelt in a world of substantial relations rather than arbitrary signs, where authority was transmitted through bodily contact (“The Command of Language and the Language of Command” in Ranajit Guha, (ed.) *Subaltern Studies, Volume IV*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985). The physical connection established in this painting between the body of the emperor and the body of the tigress suggests that Mughal sovereigns may have *incorporated* the qualities of their powerful prey into their own bodies through the medium of the hunt. Badauni noted that ‘[t]he flesh of the wild boar and the tiger was also permitted [to the members of Akbar’s Din-i Ilahi] because the courage which these two animals possess would be transmitted to anyone who fed on such meat’. See his *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, W. H. Lowe (tr.), Karachi: Karimsons, [1884] 1976, Volume II, p. 315. There is no evidence, however, that Akbar himself engaged in such consumption, and he in fact proposed abstention from meat on several occasions.

⁹⁰ Abu'l Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, p. 294.

⁹¹ Ansari, *Social Life*.

⁹² See Arif, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, p. 127.

⁹³ The signifying relation between emperor and predator may perhaps be understood as *iconic* in the sense proposed by C. S. Peirce, founded on the persuasive play of resemblances. See Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy*, pp. 56–73.

⁹⁴ William L. Hanaway, Jr., “The Concept of the Hunt in Persian Literature”, *Museum of Fine Arts Boston Bulletin*, 69: 21–34, 1971.

⁹⁵ ‘Rulers should dip the lancet of their rage in the honey of kindness’. Baqir, *Advice*, p. 47.

⁹⁶ Arif, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, p. 78.

⁹⁷ For a discussion of the mystical and erotic connotations of such imagery, see Hanaway, “Concept of the Hunt” and Koch, “Dara Shikoh”.

⁹⁸ Ebba Koch, *Shah Jahan and Orpheus*, Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1988.

⁹⁹ Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Politics*, London: Tauris Publishers, 1997, p. 118 and p. 127.

¹⁰⁰ Baqir, *Advice*, p. 68.

¹⁰¹ Divyabhanusinh, *The End of a Trail: The Cheetah in India*. New Delhi: Banyan Books, 1995.

¹⁰² Arif, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, p. 68.

¹⁰³ Arif, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, p. 135. The word employed in the original Persian

passage is in fact *ruqbat*, denoting a pit used to catch leopards according to Steingass' *Persian-English Dictionary*. Thanks to Aditya Behl for the translation.

¹⁰⁴ Arif, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, p. 221.

¹⁰⁵ Arif, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, p. 254.

¹⁰⁶ Eaton, *Rise of Islam*, pp. 141–3.

¹⁰⁷ Baqir, *Advice*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁸ Ali, *Great Mughuls*, p. 76.

¹⁰⁹ This area was sixty miles in diameter, according to Bamber Gascoigne, *The Great Moghuls*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1971. One source suggests that 50,000 beaters were employed on this occasion. See Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume II, p. 416, n. 2.

¹¹⁰ Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume II, pp. 416–7.

¹¹¹ Abu'l Fazl Allami, *Ain-i Akbari*, Volume III, H. S. Jarrett (tr.) and Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Co., 1978, p. 451.

¹¹² Jahangir, for example, ordered 84 antelope caught in one qamargah to be fitted with silver nose rings and set free. See *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, Volume I, p. 204. Persian kings often freed captured animals after branding them or fitting them with earrings displaying the royal seal. Anyone who killed or captured such animals was subject to death by command of the king. See Hanaway, "Concept of the Hunt".

¹¹³ Akbar, overcome by a trance-like possession, ordered the release of all of the animals captured in this particular enclosure. In an enigmatic and somewhat inscrutable index of the political stakes of the Mughal hunt, Badauni reports that as stories of this event spread to eastern India, 'strange rumours and wonderful lies became current in the mouths of the common people, and some insurrections took place among the ryots, but these were quickly quelled'. See *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Volume II, p. 261.

¹¹⁴ Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume III, p. 346.

¹¹⁵ 'The Biloch of the hills lives in huts or temporary camps, and wanders with his herds from place to place'. Denzil Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, Lahore: Government Printing Press, 1916, p. 42.

¹¹⁶ Ahsan Raza Khan, *Chieftains in the Mughal Empire*, Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1977.

¹¹⁷ Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume III, p. 335.

¹¹⁸ Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume III, p. 346.

¹¹⁹ Shail Mayaram, "Mughal State Formation: The Mewati Counter-Perspective", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 34(2): 169–197, 1997.

¹²⁰ Khan, *Chieftains*, 1977.

¹²¹ Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, Volume III, p. 404.

¹²² See Eaton, *Rise of Islam*, p. 209. Thanks to Aditya Behl for this association.

¹²³ Theodora Kroeber, *Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, p. 76.

¹²⁴ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 114.

¹²⁵ Talal Asad, "Conscripts of Western Civilization" in Christine Ward Gailey (ed.) *Civilization in Crisis: Anthropological Perspectives*, Volume 1, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1992.

¹²⁶ The Chinese encyclopedia that inaugurates *The Order of Things*, New York: Vintage Books, 1970, for example.

¹²⁷ Such an argument could be sustained even in the face of emerging efforts to regulate hunting and conserve wild tiger populations. Consider, for example, the following reflections of a colonial huntsman: 'The tiger is a very necessary evil in India, and were it not for him, deer and wild-boar would

increase to such numbers that the cultivation of the land would become an immense hardship, and almost an impossibility; he keeps them within bounds, and relieves the ryots from watching their fields by night in the unhealthy localities. We are accustomed in England to hear constant war preached against this animal for its total extermination: but this ought only to be in cases of the destructive cattle-killer or man-eater, and these ought to be got rid of at any cost'. See R. Caton Woodville, "Tiger Hunting in Mysore", *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 85: 706–15, 1892, p. 707.

¹²⁸ Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality".

¹²⁹ See for example Nicholas Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom*, Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 1993; Pamela Price, *Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India*, Cambridge: Cambridge U Press, 1996; Nandini Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar 1854–1996*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

¹³⁰ On Tipu's tigers, see Brittlebank, "Sakti and Barakat"; on wild tribes, wildness and the modern state, see Ajay Skaria, *Hybrid Histories: Forests, Frontiers and Wildness in Western India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.