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### Making subaltern shikaris: histories of the hunted in colonial central India

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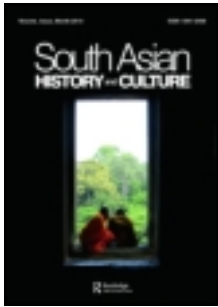
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## Making subaltern *shikaris*: histories of the hunted in colonial central India

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Academic histories of hunting or *shikar* in India have almost entirely focused on the sports hunting of British colonists and Indian royalty. This article attempts to balance this elite bias by focusing on the meaning of *shikar* in the construction of the Gond 'tribal' identity in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century colonial central India. Coining the term 'subaltern *shikaris*' to refer to the class of poor, rural hunters, typically ignored in this historiography, the article explores how the British managed to use hunting as a means of state penetration into central India's forest interior, where they came to regard their Gond forest-dwelling subjects as essentially and eternally primitive hunting tribes. Subaltern *shikaris* were employed by elite sportsmen and were also paid to hunt in the colonial regime's vermin eradication programme, which targeted tigers, wolves, bears and other species identified by the state as 'dangerous beasts'. When offered economic incentives, forest dwellers usually willingly participated in new modes of hunting, even as impact on wildlife rapidly accelerated and became unsustainable. Yet as non-indigenous approaches to nature became normative, there was sometimes also resistance from Gond communities. As overkill accelerated, this led to exclusion of local peoples from natural resources, to their increasing incorporation into dominant political and economic systems, and to the eventual collapse of hunting as a livelihood. All of this raises the question: To what extent were subaltern subjects, like wildlife, 'the hunted' in colonial India?

**Keywords:** *adivasis*; Central Provinces; tribes; subalterns; wildlife

### Introduction

This article looks at a specific instance of the colonial construction of the concept 'tribe'.<sup>1</sup> It examines a case in which the British encountered the Gonds, a fallen power in Central India, the remains of which had taken to the hills and forest as a mode of escape from and resistance to invading states.<sup>2</sup> But because the colonial machinery observed these people living in the forests, living in nature as it were, it projected them as essentially, and sometimes as eternally, primitive.<sup>3</sup> The British then developed various administrative policies towards these people based on their own primitivist representations of them. The ultimate irony here was that these policies sought to dismantle the very identity formation, namely, primitive tribe, which the administrators, anthropologists and sportsmen themselves had constructed.

The article makes its contribution to the historical understanding of this trajectory by focusing on a key aspect of the colonial encounter with the Gonds – namely hunting – to show how the British constructed these people as quintessential 'tribals' and then worked at their detribalization. One of the colonial administrators' favourite ways of penetrating

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the forest interiors of their new domain was through sports hunting, or what following in the Mughal tradition the British called *shikar*. For this reason, hunting or *shikar* became central in the colonial ethnological representation of the Gonds. The Gonds were understood to be natural-born hunters and woodsmen,<sup>4</sup> and the British constructed them essentially as ‘hunting tribes’ of the past.<sup>5</sup>

With British influence, the Gonds increasingly engaged in service-oriented and market-based hunting in the late nineteenth century. Thus I coin the term ‘subaltern *shikaris*’ to describe the hunters thrust into these subordinate roles. Working as the employees of British sportsmen as *shikaris*, guides, trackers, beaters, porters, camp servants, etc., became a common means of earning a living among the Gonds. It also became possible to earn significant sums of money by destroying tigers, leopards, wolves, bears and other species labelled as ‘dangerous beasts’ in colonial vermin eradication campaigns.<sup>6</sup> Hunting as an income generator boomed in the late nineteenth century. But the boom was quickly followed by a bust, as by the early twentieth century hunted-species populations collapsed and early conservation laws asymmetrically targeted local peoples as poachers. Hunting tribes were made to stop hunting. The essentially and eternally primitive tribal, stripped of the opportunity to hunt and live a ‘wild life’ in the forest, could now be detribalized.<sup>7</sup>

Working towards an understanding of Gond hunting history we are plagued with a whole series of lapses in academic literature: theoretical, epistemological and applied, which leave us nearly completely reliant on often deeply problematic primary source material. Thus, I seek to read the colonial archive against itself in order to reconstruct a subaltern history of changing relationships between humans and wildlife in modern South Asia, specifically grounding itself in studying the transformation in the Gond experience in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Aside from the usual administrative and ethnographic reports from this period, most useful in widening our understanding of Gond hunting history, then, are the abundant *shikar* memoirs written by British colonists who are not infrequently employed Gonds in their hunts. The British in India often called the hunt a ‘ruling passion’, and at least one historian has since labelled it ‘an obsession’.<sup>8</sup> In 1905, Colonel A.I.R. Glasfurd – huntsman, soldier and author – calculated, ‘Few subjects of such comparatively circumscribed bounds have elicited more literature than has Indian sports’.<sup>9</sup> One author, Kenneth P. Czech, published an annotated bibliography of hunting books from Asia some 250 pages long, and still the catalogue is not complete.<sup>10</sup> These are exciting sources, not only because they are meant to read like high adventure, but also because they have never been fine-combed (or combed at all) for references and insights into the lives and hunting practices of so-called ‘tribals’ and peasants of India.

Stuart Marks had attempted to use similar sources to write a cultural history of hunting in Zambia, but found that

The interests of the authors of these books appear to have been dominated by their passion for securing record trophy heads, and all too often their books are either dull or nauseating records of butchery. Very few of these men, and occasionally women, took more than a passing interest in the role played in the indigenous communities by the hunters who served as their guides and trackers, and whose knowledge of animal behavior and skill in stalking and killing usually far outclassed their own. The indigenous hunters either remain anonymous or receive only cursory acknowledgement in these self-laudatory volumes.<sup>11</sup>

Fortunately, this is not the case in the sources on *shikar* in India. They are brimming over with such references – revealing not only information on how these colonial huntsmen belittled and abused, always relied on, and sometimes begrudgingly admired their Indian counterparts, but how also the colonial enterprise transformed the Gonds’ historical

ecology. *Shikar* literature thus provides some of the most interesting, unique and insightful statements about the Gonds available from the colonial era.

Still, what Scott Bennett said in 1984 about the history of hunting in India remains largely true today: ‘Historians understanding of *shikar* is not particularly deep’.<sup>12</sup> Bennett’s own article ‘Shikar and the Raj’, like nearly all of the articles and books since written on *shikar*, only focused on the elite elements of the history of hunting among the British and the maharajas of India.<sup>13</sup> Much of the project of subaltern studies diagnosed an elite bias in modern South Asian historiography, and instead focused on the agency and actions of those commonly ignored in historical analysis; a similar critique could be made of the historical literature on hunting in the subcontinent.

In an important step towards moving the historiography of hunting in India beyond the study of European sportsmen, in her book on the hunting of India’s royalty, Julie E. Hughes traces the contours of what she refers to as the ‘princely ecology’, which she says did not see sharp divisions between humans and animals or between artificial and natural environments.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, the objective here is not to document an ‘authentic’ Gond ecology or to claim access to subaltern consciousness.<sup>15</sup> Rather, the goal is to show how British perceptions of who and what the Gonds were (specifically their construction of a vision of an authentic Gond primitive ecology) worked to shape Gond identities, change their ecological situation and produce a class of subaltern *shikaris*, which would eventually be dismantled as the population became agrarianized and wildlife became increasingly scarce. What we can also do, within the limitation of the available sources, is foreground Gond agency and actions.<sup>16</sup>

There seems to be a consensus among scholars that ideologies of domination, imperialism and patriarchy were interwoven with the hunt. Perhaps it was John MacKenzie’s hunting history classic *The Empire of Nature* that laid the foundations for this perspective when he argued, ‘the Hunt... constituted propaganda: it showed the emperor, king, or lord exhibiting power, enjoying the privilege that went with it and asserting prestige within widespread territorial bounds’.<sup>17</sup> Yet scholars that have sought to further elaborate on the sociopolitical meanings of this history have continued to take an essentially elite perspective. They have failed to fully contextualize this argument by examining sport hunting’s impact on those who served in it.<sup>18</sup> Thus, writing a history of hunting that closely examines the roles of subaltern actors represents a significant contribution in this respect.<sup>19</sup>

Yet this article is not only about hunting, it is about how hunting altered the course of central India’s environmental history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The creation of a category of subaltern *shikaris* to serve in the elite hunt, and the category’s eventual dismantlement as wildlife became scarce, played a key role in the social and ecological transformation that overwhelmed central India in the colonial era. Critically assessing conscription and employment practices in sports hunting reveals how the British shaped the social and environmental history of central India’s forest and hill dwelling communities. Not only does this approach reveal forms of domination, stratification and systems of violence that defined the colonial era, it also shows how these systems worked to reshape the living environment and the political landscape of the forests. Hinterland communities became increasingly incorporated into dominant modes of political and economic relations. Where colonial approaches to wildlife became normative, this often led to overkill or to exclusion of local peoples from natural resources, and contributed to the decline of forest dwelling as a way of life.

### From 'tribals' to subalterns

Through the widespread incorporation of the so-called 'tribal' employees into colonial hunts and through the creation of new economic incentives for the destruction of numerous species, the British seem to have effectively created a new class of subaltern *shikaris*. The result was a precipitous slide towards endangerment and extinction for many species, followed by rapid changes in and the subsequent demise of wildlife-based livelihoods. With the British takeover of central India, hunting became vocationalized and market-oriented for the Gonds, and within 50 years it was clear that wildlife populations were decimated through overexploitation.<sup>20</sup>

The timeline of the rise and fall of the class of subaltern *shikaris* in central India coincides precisely with the broader trajectory of the history of hunting in South Asia. The upsurge in the prevalence of subaltern *shikaris* begins only in the 1870s. Similarly, it is only in the 1870s that *shikar* rises in popularity to the point where it could be labelled a colonial obsession.<sup>21</sup> One very practical reason for both was the level of rifle technology available. In the early part of the nineteenth century when only smoothbore and non-repeating rifles existed, even the best sportsmen would still have had to hit their targets multiple times before bringing down big game. Thus, big game hunting was more difficult, more dangerous and comparatively rare in the early years of empire.

R.W. Beachy suggests that because by 1878 all European powers had rearmed with breech loading weapons, this made old percussion cap, flintlock and muzzle-loading weapons available on overseas markets.<sup>22</sup> Not coincidentally, in 1878 an amendment to the Arms Act made it legal for most Indians to own sporting rifles for the defence of crops and the destruction of dangerous animals for the first time since the war of 1857.<sup>23</sup> At that point many Gonds must have bought old European weapons, and the ranks of subaltern *shikaris* also swelled because suddenly they had a new clientele to work for. Now that it was not only easy but also popular to kill large carnivores by hunting, the British also systematized the reward system for the destruction of these 'dangerous beasts' at the all-India level in the 1870s.

Payment must have been a major motivating factor for many subaltern *shikaris*. Poor hunters focused on earning rewards for vermin eradication, on putting meat on the tables of townsmen and on earning a living by acting as *shikaris* for wealthier sportsmen. Professional white hunters did not exist in India during the colonial period as they did in Africa. This was largely because excellent and inexpensive *shikaris* could almost always be procured from the local population. C.E. Gouldsbury of the Indian Police described professionalized sport in India among whites as 'practically tabooed' and suggested that profits from professional hunting would not cover 'cost of ammunition much less provide a livelihood for the hunter'.<sup>24</sup> The irony of this statement, of course, is that though the amount paid to subaltern *shikaris* was considered insufficient even for a white man's ammunition, it represented a relatively good livelihood to impoverished rural Indians. Thousands of Gonds did indeed make their livelihood in this way.

Rewards for vermin eradication could potentially be a major source of income for subaltern *shikaris*. By destroying a single man-eater, a poor hunter could potentially earn more with a single bullet than in an entire lifetime.<sup>25</sup> It is clear that *shikaris* were keenly aware of the prices set by the government because as rewards increased or decreased, so too did the numbers of animals killed.<sup>26</sup> It was also assumed by colonial officials that *shikaris* would look for ways to gain from the system. Central Provinces officials reported that

European and Native gentlemen are, as a matter of course, allowed to retain the skin of the animals they kill... On the other hand, as in the case of native shikaree, where there is a

chance of the skins being fraudulently reproduced for the payment of the reward a second time, the district authorities are in the habit of taking possession of the skins.<sup>27</sup>

British sportsmen were typically unified in blaming ‘native *shikaris*’ for the ‘destruction of game’ in their Indian Empire, and most refused to accept responsibility for their own impact on hunted species populations. As one sportsman in central India wrote:

The root of the evil lies in the depredations of native shikaris – trappers, snarers, and shooters, but especially shooters... the period from which one can place a finger on the marked diminution of game dates from the time when serviceable guns became cheap and easy of purchase by native shikaris.<sup>28</sup>

Henry Seton-Karr, an early sportsman-conservationist, explained in 1908, ‘Your true sportsman is always a real lover of nature. He kills, it is true, but only in sweet reasonableness and moderation, for food if necessary, but mainly for trophies. Wholesale and unnecessary slaughter are abhorrent to him’.<sup>29</sup> Quite paradoxically, it seems to have been a widely held belief that killing for subsistence or for a livelihood was ‘unnecessary slaughter’ whereas killing for trophies was a matter of, as Seton-Karr puts it, ‘sweet reasonableness and moderation’. It was only in retrospect, when many wildlife species were well past their heyday in India, that conservationists started to assign blame differently. In his 1953 book, the conservationist R.W. Burton argued:

It must be admitted that up to that time – that is till the beginning of this century – the main agent of destruction was the ‘European sportsman’, to give him the title established by long usage in India. Neither the indigenous ‘shikari’ nor the wild dog – two kinds of ‘poacher’ frequently accused – can properly be blamed for it.<sup>30</sup>

While it may be all but impossible to prove who killed more wildlife, either sportsmen or subaltern *shikaris*, what we can observe is that many colonial sportsmen and conservationists held deep prejudices against their Indian counterparts. Furthermore, it is clear that while many subaltern *shikaris* eagerly participated in vermin eradication campaigns and in sports hunting, the impetus for overhunting large carnivores stemmed from a reward system that was of British origin, and also from a colonial obsession with trophies. Therefore, while subaltern agency in overhunting can be observed, it must be understood in relation to the new colonial structures at work in altering central India’s historical ecology.

In the process of transforming central India into their happy hunting grounds, British sportsmen tended to group all Gonds together as a homologous mass, a sort of *lumpen-proletariate* of forest dwellers, either available as hunter-employees or to be marginalized as poachers. Sportsmen might occasionally include relevant details such as a subaltern *shikari*’s name or the area that he came from in his memoirs, but rarely if ever gave the details of precisely which Gond community a *shikari* came from. The fact that the word Gond is little more than an umbrella term covering a wide range of disparate communities was hardly ever acknowledged. As we will see in the next section, not all British texts treated the Gonds exactly alike, but few sportsmen would bother to explore the deeper aspects of Gond history and culture. ‘Wild beasts’ and *shikar* were essential to the British sportsman’s imagination of the Gonds and their homeland. As Eyre Chatterton, missionary and Anglican Bishop of Nagpur, would grandiosely begin his 1916 history of the Gondwana region: ‘Nowhere in all India is there a region more beloved by the sportsman!’<sup>31</sup> As one hunter explained:



Sportsmen visiting the Central Province jungles will assuredly meet some of these aboriginal ‘children of the forest’ in their wanderings, and their spontaneous friendship, their uncanny knowledge of wild beasts and their ways, and the charming welcome they offer to visitors – once their fears have been allayed – are amongst one’s happiest recollections of a shikar trip.<sup>32</sup>

### Gondwana

To understand how the Gonds were homogenously constructed as ‘aboriginal children of the forest’ in the colonial sportsman’s imagination, we must situate ourselves now in a significant long-term shift in power relations and community dynamics in the hills of central India – a moment in the late 1800s when the Raj Gonds of central India, long past their political prime as rulers of the region, became marginalized hinterland communities.<sup>33</sup> The ruptures in political ecology addressed here relate to processes starting in the mid-1700s with power in the region transferring hands from the Raj Gonds to the Bhonsle Marathas – a process culminating in the utter destitution of most Gond communities by the early twentieth century.

Much of the region today known as Madhya Pradesh had long been an ambiguously defined area known as Gondwana, populated by an as ambiguously defined heterogeneous set of communities collectively identified as the ‘Gond tribe’ by the British. For hundreds of years, from at least the twelfth century, a series of Gond kingdoms had

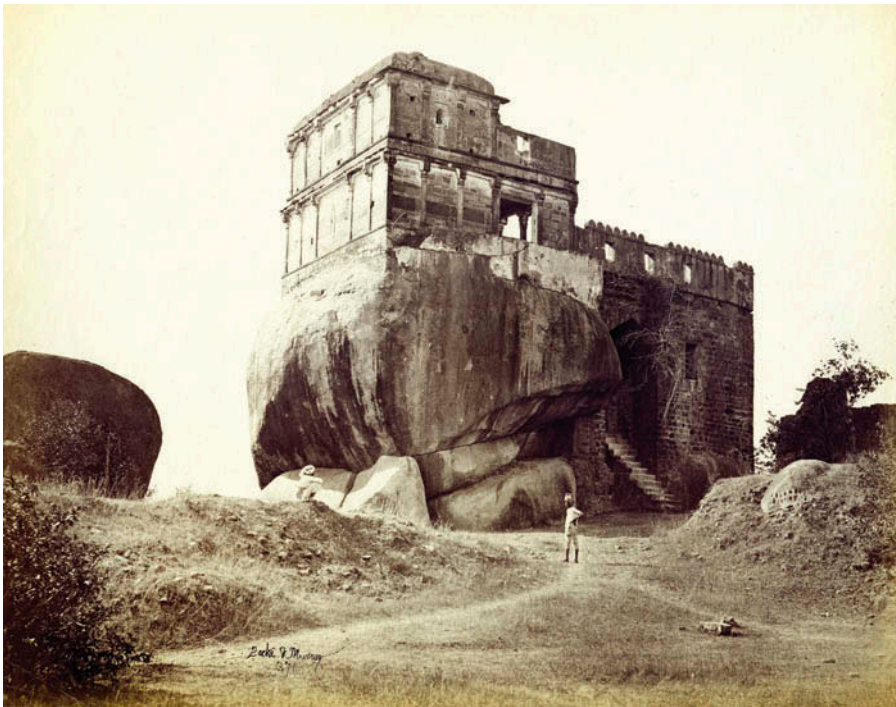


Figure 1. (Colour online) John Edward Saché & Murray, ‘Jubbulpore, Madan Mahal from the North’. Albumen Print, Photographer’s ref. 371, 1869, 228 x 279 mm ACP: 96.20.0553, The Alkazi Collection of Photography. Pers. Comm. Sophie Gordon, Stéphanie Roy-Bharath, and Deepak Bharathan with thanks. According to most sources Madan Mahal was built atop this massive granite boulder by the Gond king Madan Singh, c. 1100 CE. See Grant, *The Gazetteer of the Central Provinces*, 191.



reigned over the area. Although Gond rulers had built architecturally splendid palaces and forts centuries before the British ever arrived on the scene (see Figure 1), far from respecting the position of Gonds as former elites, colonial texts were riddled with internal inconsistencies about how they understood these communities. Official gazetteers and administrative texts often in one breath described the Gonds' accomplishments of the past and then in the next nonetheless rendered them at the bottom of the scales of humankind in their unilineal theories of sociocultural evolution (see Figure 2).<sup>34</sup> Archaeology texts would similarly contradict one another. So, for example, the Archaeological Survey of



HOT WEATHER—THE MID-DAY HALT

Figure 2. A.I.R. Glasford, *Rifle and Romance in the Indian Jungle*, frontispiece, c. 1905. This image clearly shows the author's hierarchical or even evolutionary conception of subaltern *shikaris*.

India in the 1880s clearly documented palace of the Gond Rajas of Garha Mandala, Moti Mahal at Ramnagar, among numerous other Gond remains.<sup>35</sup> Yet Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* from the same period completely denied the existence of such Gond antiquities, writing:

Side by side with the intellectual Brahman caste, and the chivalrous Rajput, are found the wild Bhil and the naked Gond... living now as they have done for thousands of years.... these tribes are in too rude a state to have any architecture of their own in a sufficiently advanced state for our purposes.<sup>36</sup>

British entry into central India's jungle interiors did not occur until the mid-nineteenth century. But when it did, it was abrupt and intensive. As David Baker (one of the foremost historians of Madhya Pradesh) writes, 'The forests of Gondwana covered a vast area, which early civil servants had not dreamt of penetrating and which, even by 1853, remained largely unexplored'.<sup>37</sup> The British formed the Central Provinces here in 1861 (see Figure 3), merging the Saugor and Nerbudda territories, which had been captured from the Marathas in the 1820s, with the former princely state of Nagpur; this after the British used the doctrine of lapse in 1853 to seize Nagpur from the heirless Maratha Bhonsle Maharaja Raghoji III. In 1857, the last of the Raj Gond kingdoms fell to the British. The British executed the Gond Raja of Jabalpore by cannon for his part in the 1857 'mutiny', and the annexation was complete.<sup>38</sup>

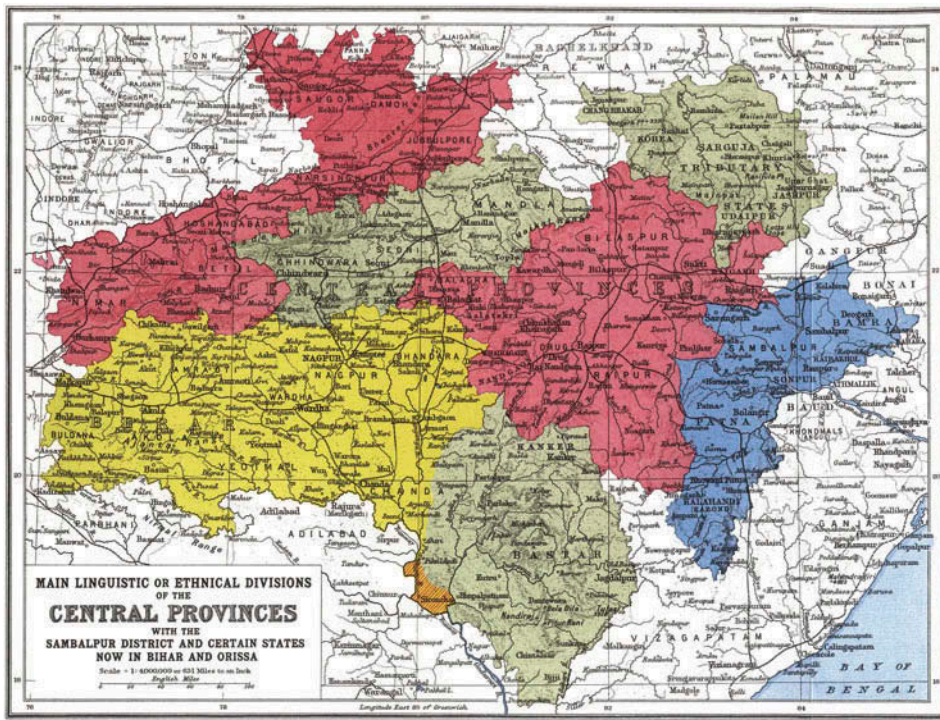


Figure 3. (Colour online) R.V. Russell & Hira Lal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, v. 1, folding plate. A map of the Central Provinces, c. 1916, purporting to show the main linguistic and ethnic divisions of the region.

Just a few years after British paramountcy into the region, in 1866 the newly established Imperial Forest Service under Dietrich Brandis quickly became one of the most powerful departments of government in central India when it was granted control of the administration of about 23% (19,500 square miles) of British territory in the Central Provinces.<sup>39</sup> The Forest Act of 1878 further allowed the forest service to exclude local peoples from reserve forests and ‘assert its control over game’.<sup>40</sup> The second half of the nineteenth century was accordingly a period of unrivalled social and ecological upheaval in central India.

### Colonial ethnology

Colonial administrators viewed the central Indian highlands as a ‘great natural fastness’ for the ‘aboriginal tribes’, who retreated there to escape the impact of ‘more powerful and highly organised races’.<sup>41</sup> To Charles Grant, author of the *Central Provinces Gazetteer of 1870*, ‘There was probably as much difference between Hindus and Gonds as there is now between Anglo-Americans and Red Indians, or between Englishmen and New Zealanders’.<sup>42</sup> In colonial ethnology, it was the Gonds’ essential primitivity that explained why the onslaught of each successive wave of invaders drove them to escape deeper into the forest. Now that they were there, the British projected them as timeless tribals, aborigines in need of improvement, or threatened by civilization.

Ignoring or dismissing the community’s former status as rulers of the region, colonial sources typically reported that the Gonds were ‘hunting tribes’ in the past. In the words of one: ‘The primary occupation of the Gonds in former times was hunting and fishing’.<sup>43</sup> Another wrote: ‘These castes are really hunting tribes, for whom grain is a luxury and jungle roots and berries their ordinary diet, which they are said to supplement by eating field mice, lizards, and snails’.<sup>44</sup> In 1882, Shoshee Chunder Dutt published *The Wild Tribes of India* under the pseudonym Horatio Bickerstaff Rowney, where he presented a pastiche of the colonizer’s appraisal of the Gonds. ‘Some parts of the territory’, he wrote, ‘are well suited for European settlement, while the rest are fit only for the habitation of tigers or other wild animals; and it is here that the Gonds have existed for ages, and gradually degenerated’. Dutt in the voice of Rowney continues some pages later:

Where the seclusion of life is very great, the chief occupation of the Gond still is to rove about his forests, hatchet in hand, almost without any object to secure, but ready at all times to cut down trees that obstruct his path, or to contend with the wild beasts that go prowling about him.<sup>45</sup>

For many, environment was used to explain how the Gonds and other communities of the region continued to maintain a ‘tribal’ lifestyle. In 1868, a British Ethnological Committee, adopting all the usual metaphors of hunting, reported:

The Central Provinces, from their geographical position, and still more from their natural features, form exactly the tract in which one would expect to find waifs and relics of aboriginal tribes. It is like a thick bit of cover in the middle of open country; when the plains all round have been swept by hunters or cleared by colonists, you are sure to find in such a thicket all the wild animals that have not been exterminated. In the present instance the cover has never yet been properly beaten. Up to a very recent date that part of the Central Provinces which used to be called Gondwana was entirely unexplored, and it has no history prior to the time of the Maharattas.<sup>46</sup>

Just a handful of years after the British entry into their homeland, the Gonds and their way of life in the forest were already perceived to be vanishing remnants of a prehistoric era.

This quotation cited at length is a revealing statement of the typical late nineteenth-century *mentalité* that saw both the ‘aboriginal tribes’ and ‘wild animals’ of central India as anomalies in a sea of deepening modernity. If this cover had not ‘yet been properly beaten’, it soon would be.

### Sportsmen and *shikaris*

Perhaps the most interesting aspect about reading *shikar* memoirs as sources on *adivasi* history is the distinctiveness of their perspective. In contrast to the administrative and ethnological archive, it is often striking how sympathetic sportsmen could be to their Indian counterparts. As A. Mervyn Smith said in his book, *Sport and Adventure in the Indian Jungle*, where he devoted four chapters to lauding his hunting staff, ‘I am not writing a dissertation on ethnology; I merely wish to describe some of my shikaree friends’.<sup>47</sup> Sportsmen in central India were often practically enthralled by their ‘shikaree friends’. For example, B.N. Gordon Graham dedicated his book *Hunter at Heart*, ‘to the Jungle Folk in India and Ceylon, particularly to the Shikaris and Trackers from remote jungle hamlets, in whose company I have spent many happy days with gun and rifle’. Graham, visiting the Central Provinces, projected the Gonds as ‘aboriginal children of the forest’ and looked forward to ‘their spontaneous friendship, their uncanny knowledge of wild beasts... and the charming welcome they offer to visitors’.<sup>48</sup> As one hunter writing under the pseudonym Ajax put it: ‘The whole secret of success in shooting lies in being in thorough accord with your shikari and servants: they are human like yourself, and very often exceedingly fine men, and there is no better way by which you can insinuate yourself into their usual reticence and reserve’.<sup>49</sup> Of course it is noteworthy that Ajax felt the need to state that *shikaris* and servants ‘are human’, as some of his readership clearly needed reminding of this fact.

Many of these texts also reversed the usual stereotype in colonial discourse of the ascendant Englishman and the cowardly native, and remind us that subaltern *shikaris* too could pass judgements about the foreigners that they were interacting with. Thus, one sportsman, William Henry Horsley, recorded the judgement of a *shikari* who did not have ‘much of an opinion of English pluck’. The subaltern’s gleeful stories about how ‘one sahib’s hand shook so that his balls went any how but into the game, and another neglected to fire at all, while a third began to run on seeing a cub’ were dutifully recounted in the sportsman’s letters home. Horsley further elaborated, ‘I have heard Englishmen talk about the cowardly native, but they were seldom fond of shooting. Those who creep about the jungles behind men like this grisly old fellow generally have a very different story to tell’.<sup>50</sup>

British sportsmen in India had a range of feelings towards their subaltern *shikaris*, stretching from respect to contempt. While some might wish to interpret this effusive praise of subaltern *shikaris* as wholly benign, on the other hand it must also be argued that to some extent all of this admiration perpetuated the colonial binary between civilized and primitive. Linking nature with natives, these texts can be said to emphasize essentialized ‘wild’ qualities of the ‘hunter races’ that rested on a Eurocentric, racist and imperialist framework. Commenting briefly on *shikar* in her book on the introduction of western science to India, Kavita Philip makes an insightful point:

Indigenous groups were *represented* as having accurate knowledge of nature due to the ‘wild’ or ‘natural’ state in which they lived... representations of tribal shikaris were rendered in



terms that explicitly equate tribal with animal existence. 'Natives' themselves were repeatedly constructed as part of 'nature'.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, these colonial representations not only depicted 'natives' in specific ways, they were orientalist constructions used to dominate, restructure and have authority over lives of rural subjects that the British employed as subaltern *shikaris*.

'The Hunt' became such an important institution not only because it fed a colonial hunger for the romance and adventure of the Indian jungle. Widely discussed has been how sports hunting served as a means of state penetration into forest regions like those in central India. Anand Pandian has also documented how through *shikar*, colonial administrators in the role of sportsmen hoped to win the hearts and minds of Indians they constructed as 'helpless servile subjects' who need to be rescued 'from the tyranny of ... beasts'.<sup>52</sup> Those who had long resisted outside rule by escaping into the hills and forests nonetheless seemed amenable to acting as subaltern *shikaris*.<sup>53</sup> From sportsmen's descriptions, we also get the impression that hunting was not only something that subaltern *shikaris* did in order to survive, it was also an activity that many earnestly enjoyed. As Sterdale recorded:

In fact there is nothing the Gonds enjoys so much as a day's shooting out with a sahib, and, as each man gets from a penny to two pence-halfpenny in Indian money for the day's work, it combines profit with pleasure, for small as the sum may appear to us, it is more than what these poor savages usually earn.<sup>54</sup>

Another sportsman recorded how his *shikari* drunkenly expressed his affection towards his master the night after the hunt:

Budoo called for silence & was evidently about to address the court on the merits of the 'sirkar'. He had been addressing me throughout the evening as 'Huzoor-Maharaj-Jemadar-Sirkar & Malik' quite indiscriminately – when suddenly without warning he fell forward into the flames, & was with difficulty extracted.<sup>55</sup>

However, the fact also remained that under the British, as the peoples' hunting became professionalized and market oriented, it also opened up their landscapes and exposed their communities to new colonial pressures.

### Abusing the subalterns

Postcolonial critics, including subaltern studies historians, have now famously shown that one can deconstruct a colonial text to reveal a whole range of systemic prejudices in the British way of knowing India. This historiography has dedicated a large effort to critiquing colonial attitudes towards subjected peoples. In its simplest form, the postcolonial appraisal focuses on the colonial construction of opposing pairs to explain the divide between the 'self' and 'other'. This bifurcation of reality identified in colonial discourse is said to portray the colonial 'self' as masculine, superior, dominant, civilized, etc., and the 'other' as effeminate, inferior, subordinate, savage, etc.<sup>56</sup>

In the preceding section, we have discussed how not every sportsman represented *shikaris* in this way. Yet in some of these sources human life was so devalued it seemed worth less than that of a game animal. Direct assertions of the relationship between dominating people and animals were indeed common in the colonial era, but perhaps nobody expressed this perverse logic as directly and as abusively as Ralph Stanley-

Robinson, a man known as ‘Sir Tiger’. ‘The object of this hunt is imperial. We are the rulers here’, he boomed at the start of one hunt. A little later on, Stanley-Robinson and his cohorts shared the following exchange:

‘The supposition is that we will lose a beater or two’...

‘In that country, it is probably inevitable’, said Stanley-Robinson. ‘In fact, the beaters are basically the bait in such a situation, and if they get into difficulties, then that will be your opportunity. I warn you not to be impetuous with this animal. Keep well back from the beaters and do not risk any close work’.<sup>57</sup>

Such blatant disregard for human life hardly seems credible. The example serves to remind us that the imperial experience in India was one of systemic violence and abuse, and that practices like the hunt, which might be understood superficially as nothing more than relatively innocuous pastimes, were even interpreted by sportsmen themselves as highly meaningful expressions of power.

Hunting has always entailed some risk to the hunters, and a long list of famous hunting accidents involving the deaths or injury of notable figures could be compiled. Far more numerous, however, have been accidents impacting underlings and servants in the elite pursuit of game. As Viceroy Hardinge recorded:

Tiger shooting in India is the sport of kings and of tin gods such as Viceroys. It is by far the most thrilling sport of which I have ever had experience, and though owing to the precautions taken danger to the sportsman is very slight, nevertheless the danger for the beaters, who usually only carry sticks, is very real, and is generally dependent on the skill of the sportsman with his rifle. Nothing is more dangerous than a wounded tiger when he breaks back through the line of beaters.<sup>58</sup>

Often barefoot, herding a reluctant tiger towards a trap, it was not uncommon for beaters to be maimed or killed. Their safety very much depended on their master’s being a good shot. If a *shikari* was injured or killed in the line of duty, they could not expect much in the way of compensation. The lives of rural folk conscripted in *shikar* were considered very cheap. The Viceroy Hardinge, for instance, recounted how when one of the Maharaja of Gwalior’s men was killed in a shoot arranged in his honour, the Maharaja paid the dead man’s wife 100 Rs (then the equivalent of about 6 GBP), which all parties involved considered to be a fair sum.<sup>59</sup>

Drastic power dynamics also led to situations where those typically in a position of weakness would seize the opportunity of an accident affecting them to make a little extra money. Gouldsbury recounts one incident where a novice (‘griff’) shooter injured a *shikari*:

Thinking it safer to impart preliminary instruction with shot guns, we had taken our pupil out after partridge, and were beating through some grass, when, at the first bird that rose, which, by the way, happened to be a crow, he let off both barrels, the contents of one lodging in the body of one of the beating elephants, while with some of the pellets of the other, he peppered its Mahout. The latter, more frightened than hurt, reeling for a moment in his seat, slid down to the ground, and, as is usual with natives on such occasions, crying out that he was dead, went off apparently in a swoon... we could hear the distracted author of the calamity, imploring his victim in Hindustani ‘to show some sign of life’, promising him ‘backsheesh’ if he would exhibit some evidence of vitality. ‘I will give you ten rupees to get up’, he began, but there was no response. ‘Twenty!’ he added, the reward increasing in proportion to his anxiety, still the man gave no sign of reanimation. Then, driven to desperation, he yelled out: ‘Fifty rupees – I will give you fifty-rupees!’ Now, whether only a coincidence or part of his



well-laid plan, we could not tell just then, but at the mention of this sum the 'dead man' came to life in a twinkling of an eye...<sup>60</sup>

Such incidents are worth reproducing here at length not only to bring forth the voices of colonial sportsmen who made these stories out to be entertaining anecdotes in the face of serious injury, maiming and death, but also because it is possible to excavate the subaltern's voice from this text and glimpse the constant contestations between master and servant at play in the colonial hunt. The fact that so many *shikaris* were literally shot in the process of sports hunting speaks loudly to the interpretation that subaltern communities, like wildlife, became 'the hunted' in colonial India. Yet as argued in the next section, subaltern *shikaris* did not always passively submit to sportsmen, and also often showed the capacity to resist when necessary.

### Resistance to hunting

One of the fundamental insights of the subaltern studies project was that it was in the mode of resistance that subaltern agency could be seen.<sup>61</sup> Until now, this insight has yet to be applied to resistance to hunting. In this section, by studying everyday subaltern responses to sportsmen rather than historic events such as rebellions or collective actions I show the subtle forms of resistance that occurred in situations of persistent servitude.<sup>62</sup> As has been well established in the historiography of *shikar*, it is clear that hunting represented as much a clash between different social classes as a struggle between hunters and prey. But as already explained above, works that have tried to examine this insight have not focused on subaltern *shikaris*' own agency and actions. Taking subalterns seriously as actors in exploitative conditions, rather than as an inert mass to be acted upon, yields a variety of interesting insights into the colonial situation in central India.

There is little evidence to indicate that so-called tribals or other forest dwellers would actively oppose anyone else's hunting through physical confrontation. Still, if pressed to hunt when they deemed it improvident or impious, they repeatedly showed the capacity to refuse.<sup>63</sup> Subaltern *shikaris*, for example, might not want to show dangerous game to sportsmen. There were a variety of reasons for this. Foremost was the worry about putting their lives in the hands of an unknown or untrusted sportsman. As one sportsman recalled, 'the natives, until they know and have learnt to trust him, will not beat dangerous game to an unknown shot, and there are, of course, many indifferent shots'.<sup>64</sup> For a newcomer, they would almost always beat harmless game and birds. And when Europeans entered villages for the first time, the populace often fled to the surrounding hills and forests rather than greeting them.<sup>65</sup>

At the same time, the *shikari* might be trying to save the game for a higher-paying or higher-ranking customer, an old customer-friend or for himself. Unknown hunters might be viewed as outsiders to be shut out from local hunting grounds rather than helped. E.P. Stebbing, writing in the first decades of the twentieth century, particularly criticized the 'selfish native shikari' who 'endeavour to keep the tiger, and especially notable tigers, to shoot them himself and obtain the Government reward'. He believed that rewards should only go to *bona fide* sportsmen and that 'native shikaris' should not be eligible for them. When it was apparent that wildlife was diminishing, Stebbing, first Forest Entomologist of the Imperial Forest Service and later Professor of Forestry at Edinburgh, argued that those groups with the most acute need to hunt should be restricted from doing so because they might compete or even interfere with the attempts of proper sportsmen to bag animals. 'Many of us will probably be able to quote cases', he wrote,

where the local shikari or shikaris in the beat of a notorious man-eater, have put sahibs off the track and prevented them having any reasonable chance of a shot at the pest who had established a reign of terror over a district, and for whom the large reward of 500 rupees was offered. With the callous indifference of the native to human life they would rather let the weekly toll of human kills go on until they secured the animal and the reward, rather than help the parties of European sportsmen who arrived on the ground prepared to do all they knew to wipe out the noxious pest.<sup>66</sup>

Again, there might be deeper resentments in the local population, such as in the case of *begari* (conscription labour).<sup>67</sup> One sportsman recorded how when speaking to villagers in Balaghat he 'was told, the *beggar* had become too oppressive'.<sup>68</sup> When compelled to participate in the hunt against their will, villagers could show remarkably creative powers of subversion and resistance.

Resistance to British sportsmen might have also been manifested for overtly political reasons. Such was particularly the case in the pre-independence era when, as Major Leonard Handley reported, it was nearly impossible to 'get any assistance from the villagers near civilisation, where the noncooperative [sic] agents of Gandhi have sewn their poison'.<sup>69</sup> If villagers were uninterested in helping a sportsman for any reason, they might also refuse to provide provisions to sustain his party or to provide livestock to use as bates for tigers.

Finally, nearly every forest community in colonial India refused to kill certain animal species on religious grounds. It was not because they believed in *ahimsa* or in protecting all animal life, but because in each case the specific animal was considered sacred, totem or taboo.<sup>70</sup> The one anthropologist to write on indigenous resistance to European sportsmen in what is today Afghanistan and Pakistan has been Shafqat Hussain. Drawing on James Scott and Michael Dove's work introducing the concepts of 'moral economy' and 'moral ecology', Hussain explains how competing attitudes towards wildlife and hunting 'placed tension in the colonial encounter'.<sup>71</sup> In many cases, not even bounties offered by the government in cash would tempt *adivasis* to kill particular species. For example, frustrated by resistance to his desire to hunt, a colonial official from the 1870s Central Provinces grumbled, 'if you were to offer ten pounds a life it would not tempt the natives more. I believe no reward will tempt these superstitious creatures to stir in the matter'.<sup>72</sup>

It was said that the Gonds of central India often believed that if they attacked a tiger there would be divine retribution, especially if they failed to kill the animal. Christoph von Fuerer-Haimendorf described how when the Raj Gonds of Adilabad District in Hyderabad killed a tiger, all of the hunters would go up to the animal in turn, put its paws on their heads and say: 'you we killed guru/don't get angry, feet I touch'.<sup>73</sup> Verrier Elwin and others noted that when a tiger killed a Gond, his relations would not attempt to slay the tiger, but rather would seek to appease it. These forest dwellers would turn to a Baiga priest to propitiate the man-eater and make peace with the spirit of the deceased.<sup>74</sup>

Many sportsmen found that forest dwellers maintained a sort of truce with the tigers and other carnivores in their vicinity. One sportsman recorded that he killed an old pair of tigers in the jungle within a mile of a village where the people spoke with respect of the tigers and referred to them as familiar objects; they neither feared them nor objected to their presence. 'Sahib!' said the headman of the hamlet, 'we have known these Tigers for more than a dozen years, and they never harmed us. Certainly they have killed some of our cattle, and we have seen them close to the village, but they have not attacked or molested any of us'.<sup>75</sup> Sainthill Eardley-Wilmot, the Inspector General of Forests to the Government of India, recorded, 'As a rule the jungle tribes will not readily give information as to the whereabouts of a tiger, and it is not till he passes the bounds of neighbourly acquaintance that they ask for help or set to work to remove him'.<sup>76</sup>

### Agrarianization and dispossession

At the same time that sportsmen and *shikaris* were overhunting central India's forests, the state was engaged in a large-scale push to agrarianize the region and its inhabitants. Thus, the 'war against dangerous beasts' in India can be interpreted as just another prong of the 'landscape-reordering procedure' of empire.<sup>77</sup> Agrarianization meant not only encouraging a specific form of agriculture, but also incorporating the forest dwellers into a political ecology based on taxation and intensive resource exploitation, which could not have been enjoyable to people who were used to, in Verrier Elwin's words, 'the freedom of the forest'.<sup>78</sup>

If we look at Mandla District as a case in point, in the pre-colonial period it was under the rule of the sophisticated Raj Gond Garha-Mandla Dynasty. But because it was one of the few still mostly forested areas by the early twentieth century, the *Mandla District Gazetteer* referred to it as the 'Ultima Thule of civilization, the dreaded home of the tiger, the Gond, and the devil'.<sup>79</sup> Yet the forces of modernity and colonialism dramatically altered even this hinterland. As early as 1912, a number of Tehsils in Mandla such as Haweli, Pathar and Dindori were already reported as more or less 'devoid of game' due to the 'steady advance of civilization'.<sup>80</sup> The *Mandla District Gazetteer* published that year also reported that 81% of the population was agriculturalist including 1500 landlords who 'do not themselves put hand to a plough, but live on the rents', 246,000 ordinary cultivators and 80,900 farm servants. Only 101 men in the district listed their primary occupation as hunters.<sup>81</sup>

Since the mid-nineteenth century the British Indian government had pursued a policy of colonizing the central Indian hinterland with hardworking agriculturalists from the plains. As the *Balaghat Land Revenue Settlement Report* acknowledged, the government practiced a 'policy of settling immigrant castes in the home of the Gond' so that Gonds would become attached to the land. As one official wrote, 'the local Gond is a migratory thriftless fellow, and it was necessary to increase the supply of cultivators of industrious castes'.<sup>82</sup> Here again it is easy to see the internal contradictions in the colonial texts – on the one hand, the Gonds were projected as timeless tribals, on the other hand, they were actively being detribalized.

Ironically, colonial gazetteers explain that it was the Gond Rajas themselves in the seventeenth century who started to encourage 'Hindu' cultivators to settle and work their lands.<sup>83</sup> By the late nineteenth century, the incursions of immigrants from the surrounding plains were viewed as posing a serious threat to Gond survival. By the first census of the Central Provinces in 1866, only roughly 1.8 million of the 9 million inhabitants were 'aboriginal and hill tribes', a number that would only further decline. About 75% of these were considered Gonds. Already in 1867 it was said that the Gonds 'cannot compete' with Hindu agriculturalists, who were 'slowly, but surely, driving them out'.<sup>84</sup>

Based in a capitalist bourgeois perspective that prides itself on work ethic, one of the primary critiques of the forest tribes was that they were 'lazy cultivators'. As Captain H.C.E. Ward disparaged in his land revenue settlement report of the Mandla District of 1870, Gonds 'grow kodon and koodkee' (millets grown in jungle clearings made through slash and burn techniques) 'which give large returns with little trouble, but are not worth much, and exhausts the soil'. Ward, like most of his colleagues, felt that this 'lazy' cultivation technique related to the 'wandering propensities' of the Gonds and 'the decline of forests'.<sup>85</sup> In Mandla, 'aboriginal tribes' composing roughly 20% of the population were reported to be engaged in agriculture 'of an inferior kind' relying on 'cultivation with the axe and fire'.<sup>86</sup> As one army officer jibed, 'Never could I discover when the

Gond took time off to work for a living'.<sup>87</sup> Yet over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Gonds were increasingly sedentarized and made to work at the hard steady labour of agriculture. Given the option, it is unsurprising that some Gonds would have preferred the life of a subaltern *shikari* to the available alternatives.

### The extinction of hunting

One day in the field a British sportsman was speaking to his Gond *shikari* about the virtues of Christianity. 'I very good Christian, Sahib: eat beef, drink brandy, curse and swear, same like master', responded the *shikari*. The sportsman, with his colonial sense of humour, noted that these traits, 'according to their ideas, comprise the salient outward signs of Christianity'.<sup>88</sup> On a serious note, however, such anecdotes do provide evidence that working in close proximity with Europeans was a fast track to social and ecological change in central India. As one sportswoman recounted:

Alan tried to impress upon Rahman that if game became extinct it would not be long before the *shikari* followed suit, and with him would disappear the numerous train of followers who now fatten on the sahib's gold. The 'man of the world' perfectly agreed with this, and pointed the moral with a little Hindustani fable bearing a striking resemblance to 'killing the goose with the golden eggs'.<sup>89</sup>

Throughout colonial and much postcolonial discourse on indigenous peoples it has been accepted as axiomatic that as forests disappear so too must forest societies, and that as hunted species become extinct, hunting as a way of life and a livelihood must vanish along with them.<sup>90</sup> By the early twentieth century the Superintendent of Ethnography in the British Central Provinces, Robert V. Russell, along with many others, realized that the opportunities of Gond *shikaris* had 'been greatly circumscribed by the conservation of the game in Government forests, which was essential if it was not to become extinct'.<sup>91</sup> All of this raises the question: To what extent were subaltern subjects, like wildlife, 'the hunted' in colonial India?

Throughout the nineteenth century there was a widespread conviction that 'tribal' societies around the world that were coming into contact with Europeans in the age of empire were vanishing or changing irrevocably. One particularly disturbing manifestation of this discourse was in the latter half of the century when the dual concerns of disappearing 'wildlife' and so-called 'wild tribes' were commonly paired. James Froude, in his 1886 colonial classic *Oceana: Or, England and Her Colonies*, divided the conquered peoples of the world into two categories of animal life, domesticable and wild, writing:

It is with the wild races of human beings as with wild animals, and birds and trees, and plants. Those only will survive who can domesticate themselves into servants of the modern forms of social development. The lion and the leopard, the eagle and the hawk, every creature of earth or air, which is wildly free dies off or disappears; the sheep, the ox, the horse, the ass accept his bondage and thrives and multiplies. So it is with man. The negro submits to the conditions, becomes useful, and rises to a higher level. The Red Indian and the Maori pine away as in a cage, sink first into apathy and moral degradation, and then vanish.<sup>92</sup>

And it was not just blatant imperialists who projected such parallels. Charles Darwin, in a section of *The Descent of Man* titled 'The Extinction of Races', writes, 'When civilised nations come into contact with barbarians the struggle is short, except where a deadly climate gives its aid to the native race'. He also suggests, 'Finally, although the gradual

decrease and ultimate extinction of the races of man is a highly complex problem... it is the same problem as presented by the extinction of one of the higher animals'.<sup>93</sup> Marx, too, adopted this metaphor, writing in *Das Kapital*: 'the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into the preserve for the commercial hunting of Black skins, are ... things which characterise the dawn of the era of capitalist production'.<sup>94</sup> Such lines call for a critical examination of the configurations of power in colonial India that informed this particular metaphor of dominance and subordination.

## Notes

1. A number of works have explored the colonial construction of the concept 'tribe' in India in its broadest terms: Beteille, "The Concept of Tribe"; Damodaran, "Colonial Constructions of Tribe"; and Xaxa, "Tribes as Indigenous People of India."
2. This major revision to the standard understanding of Gond 'tribal' histories was perhaps first most cogently undertaken in Guha, *Environment and Ethnicity*, 122–9.
3. For more theoretical framework, see Prasad, *Against Ecological Romanticism*; and Fabian, *Time and the Other*.
4. One sportsman preparing for a hunt reported dismissing 'the Thakur Rajput forest guard from Narbeli on sight as useless, as I've determined to trust to the Gonds'. British Library, Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections, Private Papers (hereafter: BL, Mss Eur) E399/2 "Shikar Wanderings, L.M.H", Jan 1922–March 1927.
5. Fraser, *Report on the Famine in Central Provinces in 1899–1900*, v. 1, 3.
6. Rangarajan, "The Raj and the Natural World."
7. See Cumming, *Wild Men and Wild Beasts*, for an excellent example of the colonial discourse of sports hunting and human wildness in the central Indian jungle.
8. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 168.
9. Glasfurd, *Rifle and Romance*, v.
10. Czech, *An Annotated Bibliography*.
11. Marks, *The Imperial Lion*, xvii.
12. Bennett, "Shikar and the Raj," 72.
13. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, is the paradigmatic text in this genre.
14. Hughes, *Animal Kingdoms*, 4.
15. See, for example, Führer-Haimendorf, *The Gonds of Andhra Pradesh*; Fuchs, *The Gond and Bhumia*; and Mehta, *Gonds of the Central Indian Highlands*.
16. For an example of this foregrounding of subaltern agency in the environmental history of the Bhils, see Thakur, "Logjam."
17. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 10.
18. See MacKenzie: Storey, "Big Cats and Imperialism"; Pandian, "Predatory Care," 79–107; Taylor, "Pig-Sticking Princes"; Pandian, "Gendered Negotiations"; Procida, "Good Sports and Right Sorts"; and Sramek, "Face Him Like a Briton."
19. In part, this essay is a call for more and better scholarship on the history of hunting from below. Cf. Altherr, "Academic Historians and Hunting."
20. Rashkow, "Wildlife Conservation."
21. Mackenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 171.
22. Beachey, "The Arms Trade," shows that 1,000,000 firearms, 4,000,000 lbs. of gunpowder, and millions of percussion caps and rounds ammo entered British and German East Africa between 1885 and 1902.
23. *Indian Arms Act*, 1878. Apparently, however, as early as 1864 in the Central Provinces, arms licences to fight 'dacoits and wild beasts' were being granted for 'free to village headmen or persons he chooses on his behalf'. Wrote one administrator, 'Ever since the disarmament took place, the general idea has been that it was highly unlawful under any circumstances to possess arms. This impression it is very desirable to remove'. Madhya Pradesh State Archives, Central Provinces Correspondence Series, Progs. Nos. 4, 1864 (B. No – 11), Bundle Correspondence (General Department), 1864, Pt. I, 'Licences to possess arms'. C. Bernard, Sec. to Chief Commissioner of CP to all District Commissioners, 13 Oct 1864.

24. Gouldsbury, *Tiger Slayer by Order*, 1, 35n, 53. There was at least one notable exception to the rule that there were no professional white hunters, however. Digby Davis was appointed Tiger Slayer to the Government of India in the Khandesh Bhil Corps. By the end of his career, Davis had shot over 250 tigers.
25. Rewards of over 1000 Rupees for the destruction of a man-eating tiger were not unheard of. National Archives of India, Home (Political), A Series (hereafter: H(P) A), November 1892, no. 227–260, “Measures adopted in British India with the view of exterminating wild animals and venomous snakes.”
26. ‘A startling instance of what rewards can do is given in the Burma returns. In 1910 only 10,549 snakes were said to be killed. Next year rewards on a high scale were started in 2 districts... The number killed rose to 99,964, and the expenditure on rewards frightened the financial authorities. A reduction in the reward has reduced the numbers in following years to 45,788’. BL, India Office Records (hereafter: IOR), L/PJ/6/1441 f.2126 of 1916, ‘Annual reports regarding the mortality caused by wild animals and venomous snakes’.
27. NAI, H(P) A, September 1871, nos. 43–72, “Measures adopted in British India with the view of exterminating wild animals and venomous snakes.”
28. Glasfurd, *Leaves from an Indian Jungle*, 164.
29. Seton-Karr, “The Preservation of Big Game,” 26.
30. Burton, *The Preservation of Wild Life*, 52.
31. Chatterton, *The Story of Gondwana*, 5.
32. Gordon Graham, *Hunter at Heart*, 14.
33. To some extent, we should not be surprised that a Gond history of hunting has not yet been written since few academic historians have examined the contours of the Raj Gond kingdoms of Gondwana in any depth. This section draws largely on a few volumes which reconstruct this history from colonial era surveys and reports: Thusu, *Gond kingdom of Chanda*; Deogaonkar, *The Gonds of Vidarbha*; and Misra, *Tribal ascendancy in Central India*.
34. Grant, *Gazetteer of the Central Provinces*, xiv–xv.
35. Cunningham, *Report of a Tour of the Central Provinces*, 46–55.
36. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, v. 3, 3, 319.
37. Baker, *Colonialism in an Indian Hinterland*, 84 draws on Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India*, 16.
38. The founding of the city of Nagpur is attributed to the Gond Raja Bakht Buland Shah of Devagad in the year 1702. Nagpur fell the Marathas in 1742. A Raj Gond kingdom in Jabulpore, said to have been founded by ‘kshatriyas’ who married with local ‘aborigines’ survived from 1180 to 1857 AD. Presler, “Patronage,” 116–24.
39. Craddock, *Report on the Famine*, v. 1, 1.
40. Rangarajan, *Fencing the Forest*, 158.
41. Guha, *Environment and Ethnicity*, 11.
42. Grant, *Gazetteer of the Central Provinces*, xiv.
43. Russell, *Tribes and Castes*, v. 3, 141.
44. Fraser, *Report on the Famine*, v. 1, 3.
45. Rowney, *The Wild Tribes of India*, 1, 11.
46. Hislop, *Report of the Ethnological Committee*, 2.
47. Mervyn Smith, *Sport and Adventure*, 32.
48. Gordon Graham, *Hunter at Heart*, frontispiece, 14.
49. Ajax [pseud.], *Good Hunting!*, 55.
50. BL, Mss Eur B304/1 “Letters of William Henry Horsley (1848–1915), Indian Civil Service, Bombay 1870–96; forest officer in Khandesh, Kanara, Belagum and Dharwar 1872–81.” Letter dated Khandesh, Dec 19, 1872.
51. Philip, *Civilizing Natures*, 26.
52. Pandian, “Predatory Care.”
53. Cf. Scott, *Against the State*.
54. Sterndale, *Seonee or Camp Life*, 35.
55. BL, Mss Eur E399/2.
56. See Pandian, “Gendered Negotiations” for an article dealing with this gendered discourse, as specifically applied to *shikar*.
57. Russell, *The Hunting Animal*, 28, 36.
58. Hardinge, *On Hill and Plain*, 44.



59. Ibid., 44–6.
60. Gouldsbury, *Tiger Slayer by Order*, 204–5.
61. Guha, *Subaltern Studies I*, vii.
62. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*.
63. This, in contrast to Hindu agriculturalists and other rural vegetarian communities who often opposed hunting entirely, and would even physically resist sportsmen to keep them from hunting. Elsewhere, I have engaged in a more detailed examination of the question of whether such subaltern resistance to hunting in pre-independence India was religiously, politically, environmentally motivated. See Rashkow, “Resistance.”
64. Felix [pseud.], *Recollections*, ix–x.
65. Rangarajan, *Fencing the Forest*, 100, 116–26.
66. Stebbing, *Jungle By-Ways in India*, 239.
67. Joshi, *Tribal Bastar*, 31–4 shows how the Muria Gond revolt in 1876 Bastar began because of the demand for begari labour. The settlement officer of the Balaghat District of the British Central Provinces defended it, arguing its abolition would strike a ‘serious blow’ to efficiency of administration in these forest districts. Government of the Central Provinces and Berar, *Central Provinces District Gazetteers: Balaghat*, B Volume (Bombay, 1916), 95.
68. Best, *Forest Life in India*, 135.
69. BL, Mss Eur E399/2.
70. See Ferreira, *Totemism in India* for an early history of the problematic usage of the ‘totem’ concept.
71. Hussain, “Sports-hunting, Fairness and Colonial Identity,” 112–26.
72. Sterndale, *Seonee or Camp Life*, 371.
73. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (SOAS) Special Collections, Christoph von FÜRER-Haimendorf Papers, PP MS 19, Box 12, Gond 4: 187.
74. Elwin, *The Baiga*, 148.
75. Burton, *Book of the Tiger*, 90.
76. Eardley-Wilmot, *Forest Life and Sport*, 24–5.
77. To borrow a phrase of Sivaramakrishnan, *Modern Forests*, 90–102.
78. Elwin, *The Baiga*, xxix.
79. BL, IOR V/27/65/66 F.R.S. Rudman, *Mandla District Gazetteer*, vol. A (Bombay, 1912), 2 (hereafter: *Mandla District Gazetteer*).
80. Ibid., 10–11. A similar clearance of wildlife occurred in the area of Mandla known as Baiga chak.
81. Ibid., 51–2.
82. Scott, *Settlement of the Balaghat District*, 26, 4.
83. Grant, *The Gazetteer of the Central Provinces*, lxxx, lxxiv.
84. Thomson, *Settlement of the Seonee District*, 42.
85. Ward, *Settlement of the Mundlah District*, 33.
86. Craddock, *Report on the Famine*, vol. 1, 2–3.
87. Martin, *Sunset from the Main*, 55–6.
88. Gerard, *Leaves from the Diaries*, 28.
89. Gardner, *Rifle and Spear*, 49.
90. Rashkow, “The Nature of Endangerment,” 1–42.
91. Russell, *Tribes and Castes*, 141.
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