DP1150: Master of Arts Research

Cultures of the Chase: Authority, Community and Ritual in the Landscape of British Blood Sports, 1800-1914

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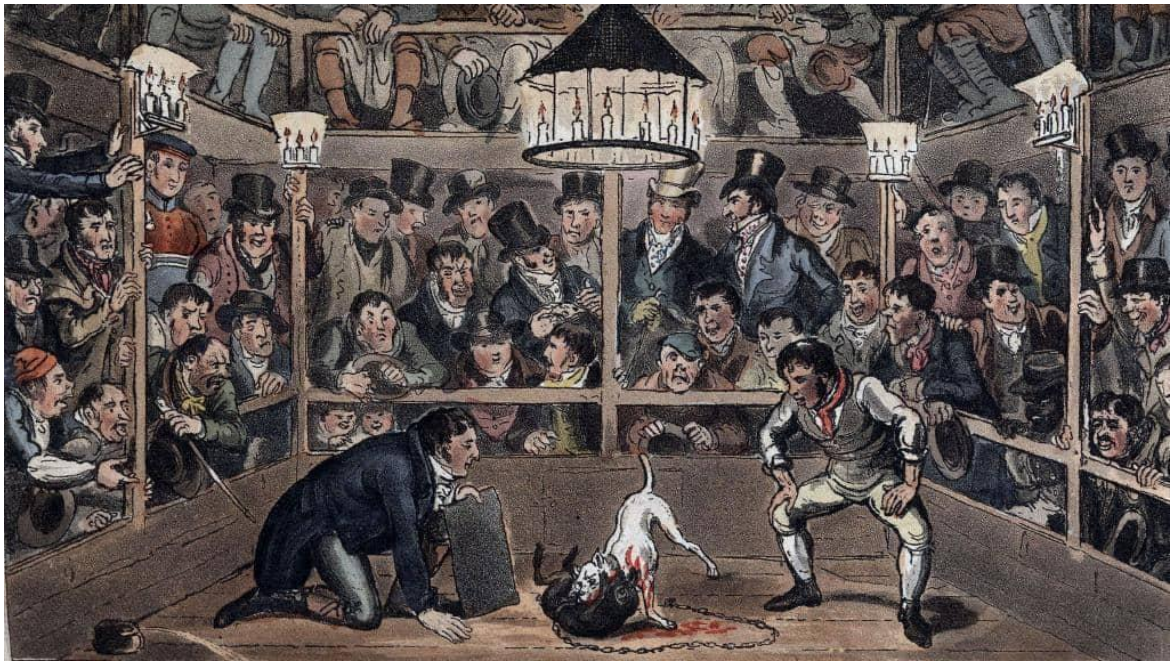

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Abstract

Previous studies of British bloodsports have tended to focus solely on elite participants, examining how themes of class and ethnicity have affected the ways in which they visualised and conducted their chosen sports. This thesis takes a slightly different approach, choosing to chart the use of rituals within the cultures of a widely divergent set of blood sports communities across a period of one-hundred and fourteen years. During that time, both the social and the environmental landscapes evolved a good deal which duly shaped how many of these communities chose to represent themselves. However, the one constant was the theme of authority which these different communities were chasing. Across these different cultures, authority was a key part of sporting ritual, designed both to promote the community as a whole and the reputation of the personal protagonist. Whether it was enacted through the mechanisms of gender, class, culture or morality, appearing powerful and in control was what all blood sports enthusiasts desired, whatever their social background. Authority bound these communities together as well as exalting individuals, making them feel protected and accepted in an oft-changing world. Despite the different social demographics, moral standards and geographies over which they indulged in their sports, these feelings of community and authority was what drove them all and continued to inspire their love for the thrill of the chase.

Covid-19 Mitigation Statement

The constraints imposed by Covid-19 have naturally affected the course of this research to a certain extent. Both the British Library and the Powel-Cotton Museum archives at Quex Park were shut for extended periods of time which meant there were no research trips allowed. This meant that online sources and archives were used more often in the course of this research than originally planned, with there being little time for extended research trips once museums and archives reopened after the third lockdown. Despite this, it was still possible to gain access to a wide range of resources and the author does not feel that the quality of the research has deteriorated by any noticeable extent. However, he would like the restraints and barriers created by the pandemic born in mind by the examiners when marking this work.

Introduction

The environment of British blood sports is, by and large, a very peopled landscape. This differentiates British hunting culture from its US counterpart. As historians like Karen Jones and Daniel Herman have explored, American blood sports are primarily engaged with the idea of the hunter as an intrepid outdoorsman, the American landscapes producing a focus on the cultural construction of 'the wild'.[1] By contrast, British blood sports became more focused around the landscape of rituals, using them to project important facets and ideas. This thesis aims to unpack this further, detailing how sportspersons from widely varying social groups used their culture to chase identities of gender, class, patriotism and skill against a backdrop of social and environmental change. By exploring these, we can achieve a better understanding of this hunting culture and how it was constructed.

As Tim Edwards rightly says, before unravelling a group's cultural theory, one must first define culture itself.[2] According to Raymond Williams, culture can either describe different styles of art or alternative ways of living.[3] This study adopts the second definition, observing the ways in which the different blood sports communities lived and the roles their rituals played in binding them together through a sense of shared identity. Just as Benedict Anderson explored how nationalist culture created imagined communities, this thesis aims to explore how the blood sports fraternities in different class brackets created a similar ethos based around shared values.[4] In order to create these fraternities, conveying the right tone of authority throughout the sporting narrative was essential whether in discussions of morality, gender, class or nationalism. We should therefore start by defining what the term authority actually means.

Essentially, authority is concerned with the consolidation of power. Pierre Bourdieu has noted how culture is frequently used as way of keeping power within the echelons of elite society, excluding those considered less desirable.[5] Such ideas can be easily transferred to explain how the hunting elite tried to keep their circle exclusive in order to maintain their dominance. However, authority is based on more than just exclusion. As Eric Hobsbawm explored with his ideas of invented tradition, it is vital to engage with others if you wish to maintain the power you have garnered.[6] By involving keepers and estate staff in cultural transactions, elite sportspersons aimed to safeguard the continued longevity of both their sport and their community. They could also use similar rituals when interacting with each other in order to highlight power structures and authority within the fraternity. Overall, the elite's authority was based on the pursuit and retention of power, using ideas of morality, gender, class and culture to keep their sports exclusive and to leave more power in their

[1] Karen R. Jones, *Epiphany in the Wilderness: Hunting, Nature and Performance in the American West* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015), pp. 3-23; Daniel Justin Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2001), pp. iv-12.

[2] Tim Edwards, 'Introduction' in *Cultural Theory: Classical and Contemporary Positions*, ed. by Tim Edwards (Sage Publications, 2007), p. 1.

[3] R. Shashidhar, 'Culture and Society: An Introduction to Raymond Williams', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 25 No. 5/6, May-June, 1997, 33-53 (p. 35).

[4] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Revised Version (London: Verso, 2006), pp. 9-36 <https://hdl-handle-net.chain.kent.ac.uk/2027/heb.01609> [Accessed 08/05/2021].

[5] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 2nd edn. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), pp. 469-472.

[6] Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction' in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 1-14 <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1017/CBO9781107295636> [Accessed 08/05/2021]

hands. Changes concerning ideas of morality and animal welfare amongst contemporary society were equally important in influencing how this authority was portrayed and channelled.

However, this thesis aims to show that the elite did not have a monopoly on rituals, transactions or creations of authority. Poachers, gamekeepers and enthusiasts of urban blood sports were just as eager to chase after authority, using it to emphasise their own cultural portrayal. According to Keith McClelland, traditional histories of the working-class generally focus on labour and the world of work.[7] This is clearly illustrated throughout much of the historiography where – even after the shift in focus away from the industrial – historians like David Kennerley still link recreational activities with the politics of the labour movement.[8] This leaves the focus on one facet of recreation rather than the culture of leisure as a whole. Equally, historians like Peter Bailey view leisure pursuits through the prism of control where the working-class is seen as being forced into adhering to middle-class values through extreme social control.[9] The disadvantage of this theory is that it makes working-class sportspersons seem rather weak, forced into following social conventions rather than creating their own culture. In reality, whilst proletarian culture was affected by social and environmental changes, such sportspersons still created their own rituals and transactions, illustrating their authority through existing ideas of gender and class. Therefore, rather than simply focusing on elite attitudes to ritual and authority, this thesis aims to evaluate blood sports culture at all levels to see how the theme of authority was variously interpreted against different social and environmental backdrops.

Of course, rules and rituals were not unique to nineteenth century British hunting culture. As Emma Griffin has demonstrated, their importance dates back further than 1066.[10] However, the period between 1800 and 1914 was a particularly rich time for the themes of authority and landscape. It was a golden age for elite blood sports: fox hunting was established as a British tradition; driven game shoots increased in size whilst trips to Scotland to stalk deer became a societal institution. These changes in hunting needed new rituals through which the elite could demonstrate both their own power and the power of their community. Moreover, the rise in upper-class sport directly affected those lower down in society. The passing of the General Enclosure Act of 1801 marked the climax of British land reform as well as highlighting the industrialisation of the rural landscape. The increase in game meant a rise in gamekeepers while the restrictions imposed created an upsurge in poaching. Such changes to the rural environment made poaching much easier and more economically profitable. This struggle has already caused some historiographical comment with Harry Hopkins examining it politically and Stephen Ridgwell observing its effects on popular British culture.[11] What has been less explored are the rituals and themes surrounding the culture of these groups. Against this social upheaval, the cultural transactions which bound these communities together became even more important as people aimed to preserve a sense of identity. This makes

[7] Keith McClelland, 'Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan' in Britain, 1850-80', in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*, ed. by Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 74-91 (p. 75).
[8] See for example David Kennerley, 'Strikes and Singing Classes: Chartist Culture, 'Rational Recreation' and the Politics of Music after 1842', *English Historical Review,* Vol. CXXXV, No. 576, October 2020, 1165-1194.
[9] Peter Bailey, 'Introduction', in *Music Hall: The Business of Pleasure*, ed. by Peter Bailey (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), pp. vii-xxiii (p. x-xiii)
[10] Emma Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain Since 1066* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 1-10.
[11] Harry Hopkins, *The Long Affray: The Poaching Wars, 1760-1914* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1985), pp. 1-16; Stephen John Ridgwell, 'On a shiny night': The Representation of the English Poacher, c.1830-1920' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2017), pp. 9-19.

it the perfect time to study their culture as demonstrating authority through ritual became increasingly important in defining who people were at a time of massive upheaval and change.

In addition to the increased industrialisation of rural Britain, 1800 also marks the beginning of the campaign for animal welfare in Britain, with an attempt to ban bull baiting defeated in the commons in that same year. According to Harriet Ritvo, this interest and sympathy for the animal kingdom would rise throughout the period, having significant impacts on both elite and working-class sport.[12] Elite hunters adapted to this change, reinforcing existing ideas of sportsmanship to offer a shared authority based around ideas of ethics and sportsmanship. By contrast, proletarian sportspersons adopted a divergent (but in many ways parallel) approach, continuing with their traditions long after they were declared illegal based on a differently constructed view of access rights and moral authority. This difference in approach will be examined in detail, building on the work of cultural historians like Guy Woolnough and Neal Garnham.[13] It also provides the opportunity to study how blood sports diverged in different class and cultural landscapes and how ideas of sportsmanship were alternatively interpreted. While elite sport ritualised their authority through the pageantry and narrative of sportsmanship, proletarian sportspersons broadcasted similar ideas using very different rituals.

Historians of more conventional sports can therefore be useful in providing insight into how rituals could be used to further a particular sporting identity. Christiane Eisenberg's study of amateur sportsmen and their use of rituals and award ceremonies is equally useful when applied to the elite rituals surrounding trophy hunting.[14] Likewise, Jack Williams research into sportsmanship and the divide between amateurs and professionals in cricket is helpful in examining the links between elite hunting, rituals and class which is apparent in many sporting narratives.[15] Sociological studies researching violence in modern sports prove helpful when examining the attitudes held by proletarian sportspersons. Generally speaking, working-class sportspersons were less restrained in their use of some blood sport methods; this means that academics like Eric Dunning, Amanda Keddie and Ilan Tamir can help when exploring these more extreme cultures.[16] This helps when understanding the social environments such sports thrived in and how existing concepts of masculinity and courage shaped the rituals which developed within these sports.

Furthermore, ideas of geography must be considered when examining these themes. By the nineteenth century, the British elite eagerly ventured on hunting trips abroad while proletarian sportspersons could also travel with institutions like the British army. Imperialist hunting culture has already been examined; John MacKenzie observes how hunting rituals emphasised the power of

[12] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 2-3.
[13] Guy Woolnough, 'Blood Sports in Victorian Cumbria: Policing Cultural Change', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2014, 278–294; Neal Garnham, 'The Survival of Popular Blood Sports in Victorian Ulster', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, Vol. 107C, 2007, 107-126.
[14] Christiane Eisenberg, 'Playing the Market Game: Cash Prizes, Symbolic Awards and the Professional Ideal in British Amateur Sport', *Sport in History*, Vol. 31 Issue 2, 2011, 197-217.
[15] Jack Williams, 'The *Really* Good Professional Captain Has *Never* Been Seen': Perceptions of the Amateur/Professional Divide in County Cricket, 1900–39, *Sport in History*, Vol. 26, No. 3, December 2006, 429-449, (pp. 435-438).
[16] Eric Dunning, *Sports Matters: Sociological Studies of Sport, Violence and Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1999); Amanda Keddie, 'On Fighting and Football: Gender Justice and Theories of Identity Construction', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Vol. 18, No. 4, July-August 2005, 425-444; Ilan Tamir, 'The Object is the Message: Sports, Violence, and Throwing Objects onto Fields', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, Vol. 51, March-April 2020, 1-5.

imperial elites, Greg Gillespie explores the ritual of constructing hunting narratives while Harriet Ritvo looks at how ritual trophies were used to emphasise positive attributes.[17] This thesis aims to build on the transnational nature of these studies by examining hunting expeditions to places outside of the British empire. This approach puts the focus less on place and more on the culture of the hunt, leading to a more detailed examination on how British hunters created and used authority within their sports. A hunter's authority was based around more than just one factor such as class, gender or ethnicity and was instead a combination of these facets which will be explored in more detail throughout this thesis. In particular, the subject of humour is an interesting way to explore authority amongst elite hunters as, irrespective of location, it proves a useful vector for highlighting and demonstrating an elite sportspersons position within the community.

Finally, the advantages of examining the social landscape of hunting during the nineteenth century is in the wealth of source material. Elite writings on blood sports can be found as far back as the Middle Ages but the increasing popularity of both hunting and literature on the subject makes the nineteenth century a particularly good period for examining the ritual of narrative writing. By this period, there was a loose template for constructing a sporting memoir, examination of which (regardless of exaggerations) provides insight into how ritual was a key part of the story of hunt. Unsurprisingly, such ritualised narratives were a more prominent part of elite culture compared to their working-class equivalent. This was not just a question of status but also one of risk. Many working-class sports were illegal with writers less willing to detail matters that might get them into trouble. There were also cultural differences to account for with communities being imagined less around written accounts and more by communal activities like drinking or socialising. Thus, the written page is not the best source available when attempting to reconstruct how these proletarian sporting cultures actually worked.

Fortunately, oral history interviews allow us to examine areas which otherwise might have passed undocumented. Such interviews – often conducted by those interested in folk music or proletarian culture more generally – allow the historian to hear those who participated in poaching, gamekeeping and urban blood sports in the 1890s and 1900s recounting their experiences.[18] Of course, the disadvantage of such methods is the time that has passed between the incident and the interviews being conducted making it impossible to know for sure whether the narrative recital of the incident has stayed the same or changed over time. Dates and even places are also rarely mentioned, making it difficult to gauge when exactly some incidents occurred. However, both these drawbacks are minor details when compared to their advantages. Therefore, while the first two chapters dealing with elite blood sports will concentrate on using written sources, the third and fourth will use more of a range of materials, incorporating these oral interviews into its methodology to broaden the outlook of the thesis.

Overall, this study seeks to investigate how the projection of authority is affected by a combination of the social and the environmental landscape. By surveying a wide range of geographies, this thesis identifies how authority was a key facet of the social landscape of the hunt, whether in rural, urban,

[17] John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 163-4, 179-182, 190-196; Greg Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840-70* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), pp. 26-28, 40, 48; Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, pp. 272-275.

[18] *Roy Palmer English Folk Music Collection*, British Library Sounds Archive; *Bob and Jacqueline Patten English Folk Music Collection*, British Library Sounds Archive.

national or international contexts. This approach highlights how elite hunters created a sporting code which emphasised both their own authority and the power of the fraternity as a whole. However, it also aims to show that upper-class hunters were not the only conveyors of authority through cultural constructions, with proletarian and urban sportspersons just as eager to chase after these concepts. The rules and rituals adopted by hunters could be used to express a broad range of cultural transactions, dependent on the constraints surrounding them. Elite sportspersons were shaped by the requirements of their social position, poachers and gamekeepers by the increased industrialization of the countryside whilst urbanites by changing industrial notions of masculinity and community. What they had in common were rituals that sought to bind these fraternities together, exalting the individual and protecting the community from outsiders, often in surprisingly similar ways. To be successful, these transactions had to create a sense of authority and power. The varying ways this occurred are the subject of this study.

Chapter 1 - Fox and Fair Play: Blood Sports, Ethics and Moral Authority

As the nineteenth century dawned, British hunters would face the biggest challenge to their authority since the Norman Conquest. As the century progressed, the growing societal concern over human responsibility towards animals would create opposition towards hunting on strictly moral grounds which threatened the continuation of sports widely viewed as catering solely for elite interests. In order to combat this threat, elite hunters had to demonstrate that they possessed the moral authority necessary to decide when it was right to take life. To do this, the disparate values and ethics which many sportspersons already possessed to some degree needed to be streamlined, reworked and turned into a code of sportsmanship which would highlight the moral authority of elite hunters to the world. This led to a new type of sportsperson; one who balanced joy in the thrill of the hunt with a more ethical, sensitive side which prided itself on adhering to the correct code of conduct.

Dr Wilfred Grenfell typified this new breed of sportsperson. As a medical missionary to Newfoundland, Grenfell combined a love of action and excitement with a genuine desire to help anyone in need. A man of strict Christian principles, his biographer recorded how Grenfell and his brothers 'were brought up to believe that the taking of animal life was only honourable when it was for some useful purpose, like food or study or self-preservation, and this was a lesson that he never forgot'.[1] This key facet the sporting code, with its insistence on honour and killing only for a 'useful purpose' enabled Grenfell to square his role as a masculine hunter and explorer with his life as a medical missionary. Despite their differences, these two parts of his identity could dwell alongside one another, thanks to the rules that reconciled hunting with a more humanitarian outlook (see figure 1).

Figure 1: two postcards created by Sir Wilfred Grenfell's association to raise money for the mission in Canada. Despite being taken long after our period (probably in the 1930s), they demonstrate perfectly the dual identity which Grenfell embodied throughout his career. The balance between heroic, masculine explorer on the one hand and sensitive missionary doctor on the other is perfectly demonstrated in these two images, the first entitled 'Sir Wilfred Grenfell down North on the Labrador' and the second 'Sir Wilfred Grenfell and a Little Hospital Patient'. Both printed for the Grenfell Association of Great Britain and Ireland, 82, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1. <https://tuckdbpostcards.org>

Grenfell's worldview was not an unusual one. By 1914, most other sportspersons of his class would have viewed their activities in a similar light. The famous war hero and creator of the Boy Scouts Sir Robert Baden-Powell encouraged his young readers that they should never kill 'an animal unless there is some real reason for doing so', while the big game hunter Clive Phillips-Wolley argued that

[1] R. G. Martin, *Knight of the Snows: The Story of Wilfred Grenfell* (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1966), p. 10.

'the hunter… if he be one of the right sort… never wastes his game'.[2] Such descriptions allow us to pinpoint the image which the elite blood sports fraternity aimed to create. To become one of 'the right sort', one had to embrace the correct rules and rituals in order to create the right image. Although he rarely comments on rituals, Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined community' is still useful in explaining how elite hunters united by carrying out the same rituals together.[3] In many ways, these hunting rituals can be viewed as cultural transactions; by following them, elite sportspersons benefitted from the authority which these rituals gave them. Following a code gave hunters moral authority, thereby protecting themselves from allegations of cruelty as the social landscape changed around them. Moreover, by following the code and rituals created by the fraternity's upper echelon, their fulfilment gave the community's upper echelon more power both to set more rituals and to dictate the behaviour of the rest of the group. This symbiotic relationship meant that all parties benefitted from the relationship, keeping the community united and the authority of the community at a premium level.

The Moral Hunter and their Place in the Social Landscape

In order to understand how hunters were able to balance this moral authority with an interest in hunting, it is important to understand exactly how nineteenth century society came to view the question of animal welfare. The idea that animals had some kind of sentience and could feel basic emotions like fear or pain was not an inherently new concept. Various people, from puritan clergymen to romantic poets had already expressed these ideas whilst protesting society's mistreatment of animals. However, the idea that an animal's sentience demanded that it should receive more privileged treatment than an inanimate object was still routinely ignored, even amongst the elite, until the nineteenth century where the social consensus that most animals were worthy of humane treatment gradually increased throughout the period. By the Edwardian era, the idea of kindness to animals was so ingrained in the popular consciousness that it was widely viewed as a national trait, frequently used as an example as to why the British were inherently more moral and civilised than other nations. Late in her reign, Queen Victoria commented with approval that 'the growth of more humane feelings towards the lower animals' was one of the 'marks of the spread of enlightenment' whilst the Nobel Prize nominee George Meredith wrote in 1901 to congratulate the Humanitarian League, praising the fact that by helping to abolish the Royal Buckhounds, 'you make steps in our civilisation'.[4]

However, as Anna Feuerstein has already explored, nineteenth century society still saw animals as less important than humans.[5] Throughout this period, legislators would frequently put human needs for recreation and entertainment above those of an animal's right to live. Sir William Pulteney's

[2] Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction Through Good Citizenship and Woodcraft* (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd, 1932), p. 135; Clive Phillips-Wolley, 'On Big Game Shooting Generally', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. I*, ed. by The Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 2, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Revised Version (London: Verso, 2006), pp. 9-36 <https://hdl-handle-net.chain.kent.ac.uk/2027/heb.01609>

[4] Quoted in John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 26; quoted in Henry S. Salt, 'Note', in *Killing for Sport, Essays by Various Writers*, ed. by Henry S. Salt (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1915), p. vii, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

[5] Anna Feuerstein, 'I Promise to Protect Dumb Creatures', Pastoral Power and the Limits of Victorian Nonhuman Animal Protection', *Society & Animals*, Vol. 23 Issue 2, 2015, 148-165.

attempt to ban bull baiting in 1800 received vigorous opposition, with the prime minister George Canning famously commenting that 'the amusement inspired courage and produced a nobleness of sentiment and elevation of mind'. Although social attitudes had widely changed by the end of the century, it was still possible in 1902 for a peer like Lord Durham to argue successfully in the House of Lords that it was highly unfair to ban rabbit coursing as it was a prominent entertainment for the working-classes.[6] Throughout the period, it was thus perfectly acceptable to put human needs for sport and entertainment over that of an animals right to live, even if the margin between the two did shrink as society became more welfare conscious. Nor were humanitarians entirely immune from such sentiments. According to an RSPCA pamphlet from 1839, animals were 'creatures of mere instinct', making human who were governed by reason eminently superior. The author – Anglican clergyman John Styles – goes on to argue that 'all the creatures with which man is surrounded, feel instinctively that he is their sovereign'.[7] Of course, the line of argument adopted by Styles differed slightly from that used by Canning and Durham; while seeing humans as superior, the clergyman urged his readers to be responsible, to only take life when absolutely necessary and to generally treat animals well. However, the general acknowledgement that humans were superior, helps to explain how British hunters could balance hunting with moral authority. The societal consensus that human needs outranked those of animals meant that the hunters desire for sport was still permissible provided that it was framed as moral using the correct forms of cultural rituals.

The most important of these rituals was in how the story of the hunt was told. By ritualising the narrative, the elite community could help to ensure that the right tone of moral authority was evident amongst sporting memoirs. As kindness towards animals started to become more entrenched in the social landscape, so the necessity for elite hunters to emphasise their sportsmanship also increased. A good example of this can be seen in attitudes towards wounding animals in hunting memoirs throughout this period. In the first half of the century, when animal welfare concerns were still in their infancy, most hunters showed little concern towards wounding quarry when describing their hunting exploits. 'Asmodeus', a British sportsman hunting in India, typified this reaction when writing about a hunt after water buffalo, casually mentioning as an aside that 'the rest went off – many of them desperately wounded – to the forest'.[8] With ballistics still comparatively inaccurate, hunters were used to injuring their quarry and treated the matter as a mere inconvenience. The almost proud tone of 'Asmodeus's' narrative is completely different from the one demonstrated by hunters later on in the century. In complete contrast, Frederick Vaughan Kirby exhibited the totally opposite reaction when catching up to a wounded giraffe, over whom he waxed almost lyrical in his sympathy:

'Poor brute! I can tell by the swaying neck, the trembling knees, and the slackly-hanging tail that his end is near… I honestly felt at that moment that I would have smashed my rifle there and then to fragments on the stones, if I could have said, 'Go free and unhurt… never shall rifle of mine be raised against you!'[9]

Nor was Kirby the only hunter to express such emotions. Big game hunter K.C.A.J. reflected similar emotions after wounding a blackbuck whilst hunting in India; he claimed that he 'was truly sorry at having shot him so badly, and wished to put him out of pain; the pleasure of shooting had vanished

[6] Quoted *Independent*, 23 October, 2011; *The Times*, March 4, 1902.
[7] John Styles, *The Animal Creation: Its Claims on Our Humanity Stated and Enforced,* pp. 19-20. Retrieved July 1, 2012, from <http://books.google.com/books>, quoted in Feuerstein, 'I Promise to Protect Dumb Creatures', p. 161.
[8] *The Bengal Sporting Magazine*, vol. xv, 1840, p. 10.
[9] Frederick Vaughan Kirby, *In Haunts of Wild Game: A Hunter-Naturalist's Wanderings from Kahlamba to Libombo* (London and Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1896), p. 356.

when we saw his sad plight'.[10] While the personality of the hunters obviously played some part in their widely differing reactions, the ritual of writing a hunting narrative must have played a major part in the change as well. The authors' contrition keeps their reputation as moral hunters intact; by demonstrating genuine remorse at their mistakes, both hunters' preserve their authority as moral sportsmen.

By popularising this ritual, the fraternity could not only protect individuals but also itself. By showing the true hunter as a humane individual, the fraternity could condemn those who strayed from its rules making themselves authoritative and self-regulatory. Societally unacceptable behaviour could be branded deviant and not expressive of the community as a whole. For example, Col. Cook argued that 'nothing is more despicable, or held in greater contempt by real sportsmen than the practice of hunting bag-foxes', referring to the occasional practice of releasing a captured fox for the hounds to chase.[11] Such behaviour – while not exactly advocated – had at least been tolerated by the previous generation of fox hunters. The famous fox hunting author Robert Smith Surtees objected to hunting bag foxes, not on moral grounds but because 'drag runs are, beyond all measure, unsatisfactory… the mere retaking of an animal that one has had in hand before is not calculated to arouse any very pleasurable emotions'.[12] By contrast, maintaining a moral aspect was integral for later foxhunters in keeping up an image of moral authority; by arguing that the behaviour was hated 'by real sportsmen', Cook was able to distance the community as a whole from any charge of wrongdoing, protecting it from the threat of societal backlash.

Nor was fox hunting the only area where this emphasis on self-regulation was an accepted part of the hunting narrative. By the 1900s, British big game hunters were equally concerned with maintaining their image, desperate to overturn the reputation the previous generations of big game hunters had garnered for over-hunting. This meant that when they did encounter such behaviour, they were keen to highlight their authority as moral sportspersons by being as scathing as possible. Famous hunter Frederick Selous was particularly adept at this, writing about the local hunters he met in Canada that 'it is the men who live in the country, and who of necessity are killing the game… who will gradually bring about its extinction; not the casual sportsman looking for few good heads'. It was even blunter after witnessing their method of ambush hunting, writing in disgust that:

'I felt thoroughly disgusted with the whole business… although under favourable conditions it may be a deadly way of killing caribou, it is not a form of sport which would appeal to me under any circumstances… I could see no redeeming point in it whatever'.[13]

In both these passages, Selous moral authority is on show for all to see. He casually dismisses the casualties of his own hunting, nonchalantly describing them as a 'few good heads' while laying stress on the misdemeanours of local, non-British hunters by portraying them as interested only in killing rather than sport, underlining this with his use of barbed adjectives such as the word 'deadly'. Not only is Selous' authority stressed by his word choices, it is also illustrated in his tone which portrays himself as a fit and competent person to sit in judgment over the morality of the others actions.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, such narrative rituals thereby allowed the elite sportsperson to both have their cake and eat it. By portraying themselves as morally authoritative, they could

[10] K.C.A.J, *The Sportsman's Vade Mecum for the Himalaya: Containing Notes on Shooting, Outfit Equipment, Sporting Yarns, etc.,* (London: Horace Cox, 1891), p. 65.
[11] Colonel Cook, *Observations on Fox-Hunting* (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1922), p. 105.
[12] R. S. Surtees, *Mr Sponge's Sporting Tour* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1853) no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[13] F. C. Selous, *Recent Hunting Trips in British North America* (London: Whitherby & Co., 1907), pp. 10-11, 69.

enjoy the thrill of the hunt whilst not appearing to dishonour their social duty of showing kindness to animals. This dual identity was so successful that many keen hunters were perfectly capable of inhabiting both worlds without appearing hypocritical. Many hunters took the idea of improving the treatment of domestic animals extremely seriously. The fox hunting M.P. Richard Martin was instrumental in steering the first ever piece of animal welfare legislation – directed towards the ill treatment of cattle – through parliament, a bill that relied on the direct support of many of his fellow hunting M.P.s. The next generation of sportspersons were even more voracious in their support. In 1901, a letter in *Country Life* supporting the RSPCA's campaign to ban the bearing rein was signed 'Handley Cross' – the name of one of Surtees novels – while British traveller and keen sportsman Heywood Seton-Kerr criticised animal welfare in Persia, observing that 'a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals… would find a colossal work to be done'.[14] Such behaviour was only possible thanks to the rules and rituals which gave elite hunters the moral authority they needed to continue their sport in a way that was in keeping with societal consensus. However, the complex code and rituals of sportsmanship did not spring up overnight. It was based on both new and previously existing values held within the sporting community, coupled together with more general social values held by the rest of elite society. It is now time to examine these values of sportsmanship in more detail to understand exactly how this moral authority was directly administered both to other members of the fraternity and the public at large.

Sporting Authority and the Importance of Fairness

Unsurprisingly, the complex code and rituals of sportsmanship did not spring up overnight. The values evolution can best be illustrated by charting the etymology of the word 'sporting' across the period as the rules of sportsmanship evolved and solidified. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* the start of the period saw two definitions of the word 'sporting' relating to blood sports, with a third one being developed midway through the period. The first was simply that the person involved had 'sporting' tastes in the sense that they were interested in hunting for sport. In his 1858 novel *Virginians*, Henry Thackeray used this meaning when describing how a character was away shooting 'with some other sporting friends'.[15] The second definition described a piece of geography suitable for hunting like the advert describing the sale of 'the capital sporting estate of Tarvie', published in the *Evening Telegraph*.[16] Both these definitions began to be gradually superseded by the third definition, which became the most popular by the end of the century.

Under this definition, to be 'sporting' meant following a particular code of conduct by hunting in a sportsmanlike manner. First used in 1867, the phrase seems to have caught on fairly quickly, illustrating the widening popularity of sportsmanship in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[17] This definition could even be used in a more general sense as a term of approval, such as in Rudyard Kipling's book *Stalky and Co.* where a British officer refers to a prisoner he approves of as 'an awf'ly sportin' old card'.[18] Use of the word as a term of approval shows the growing popularity of the concept of sportsmanship as a way of endowing someone with social authority. However, as the

[14] *Country Life Magazine*, 30 November, 1901, p. 701; Heywood Seton-Kerr, *Ten Years Travel and Sport in Foreign Lands* (London: Chapman and Hall Limited, 1890), p. 366.
[15] William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Virginians* I. vi. (2 vols.; originally published in 24 parts, 1857–9), p. 46, as quoted in 'Sporting, adj.', *Oxford English Dictionary*, <https://www.oed.com> [accessed 6/1/21]
[16] *Evening Telegraph (Dundee)*, 5 December, 1904.
[17] 'Sporting, adj.', *OED*
[18] Rudyard Kipling, *Stalky and Co.* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1994), p. 263.

emergence of this definition halfway through the period suggests, what the code of sportsmanship actually stood for also took some time to develop.

At the start of the nineteenth century, the idea of sportsmanship was still very much in its infancy. In his *Rural Sports* published in 1812, the Rev. William B. Daniel spoke with approval on a particular set of rules which he had encountered in the 'Breakfast-Room of a Shooting Lodge in Sussex' which he argued should be implemented on every sporting estate.[19] The values contained in these rules will be discussed shortly but as a general overview, Daniel's attitude suggests two things. First, the idea of a set of sporting rules were not entirely novel; both the estates institution and Daniel's enthusiasm shows that even early on, there was a desire to codify a set of ethical values which hunters could follow. On the other hand, the author's argument that such rules should be universally implemented shows that such enthusiasm was not as complete as it would later become. It was left up to the individual to decide how these rules should actually be implemented. Over time, the amount of fraternal pressure over what rules to implement began to increase, with the community as a whole recognising that such rules not only helped to protect elite privilege but also safe guarded their sport from the rest of society.

However, despite this trend individuals within the fraternity were still given a certain amount of freedom in how to implement these rules. It was the message they were displaying rather than the rules they were keeping which became most important. This is most clearly seen in the theme of fair play which was the first and arguably most important rule in the sportsman's code. The quarry should always be given the chance of escape, making the hunt more exciting and displaying the morality of the hunter in a ritualised format. While writing on the British attitude towards blood sports, Sir Samuel Baker explained that 'our pleasure consists in the chance of the animal escaping' while Col. Cook described that what made fox hunting so compelling '*is the wildness of the animal you hunt,* and *the difficulty in catching him*' [original italics].[20] By framing the performance of the hunt as being more compelling when executed fairly, sportsmen like Baker and Cook were able to emphasise that their endeavours were about sport rather than simply a lust for blood. By doing so, they emphasised their moral authority and conformed to a shifting social landscape which now saw kindness to animals as an important part of elite etiquette.

Many sporting rules and rituals emphasised fairness, due to its reinforcement of these key messages. A good example of this comes from the female master of harriers, Frances Slaughter. She explained that properly conducted, hare hunting 'should be done fairly and honestly, inch by inch, till the quarry has been run down'.[21] This meant that the hounds should be left to conduct the hunt by themselves, with the hunt staff interfering as little as possible. The way Slaughter describes the hunt gives an excellent example of the importance sportspersons placed on keeping these rules. The use of words like 'fairly' and 'honestly' not only convey the impression that the contest is on equal terms but also that it is morally right. This is further enhanced by the way the hunt is framed as being between two equally matched competitors, each of which have a good chance of winning. In

[19] Rev. W. B. Daniel, *Rural Sports, Vol III* (London: B & R Crosby, 1812), p. 62, quoted in Hugh Gladstone, *Record Bags and Shooting Records, Together With Some Account of the Evolution of the Sporting-Gun, Marksmanship and the Speed and Weight of Birds* (London: Witherby, 1922), p. 29.
[20] Sir Samuel White Baker, *The Rifle and Hound in Ceylon* (London: Longmans, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854), no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>; Colonel Cook, *Observations on Fox-Hunting* (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1922), p. 105.
[21] Frances E. Slaughter, 'Hare Hunting', in *The Sportswoman's Library Vol. I*, ed. by Frances E. Slaughter (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1898), p. 79, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

this way, the hunt is seen less as a matter of life and death and more like a conventional sport with clear rules and equity between the contestants.

This emphasis was equally apparent within sporting ritual. In hare coursing, there was a ritual where the dogs – usually greyhounds – were kept leashed until the hare had travelled between eighty to one-hundred yards. Known as fair-law, the ritual emphasised the moral authority of the hunter by juxtaposing it with the baser instincts of the dogs. By holding them back until the hare had a good chance of escape, the hunter was able to emphasise that the sport was not simply about killing but the contest itself. This ritualization glorified the hunter's sporting credentials and celebrated him as a morally superior being. Coursing as a sport was incredibly old, easily stretching back as far as the Greeks and Romans, and had been popular in Britain – with all sections of society – for centuries. The concept of fair-law therefore existed long before the nineteenth century but it was only now that the rules of coursing were fully codified and a group, the National Coursing Club, appointed to watch over them.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to see in both these rules, and the rituals that surrounded them, a clear statement of the confidence much of the nineteenth century blood sports community was imbued with. This confidence in their own morality was crucial to their ethical authority and is a recurring theme throughout much of their ritualization. Fairness was an integral bulwark of this identity which probably explains why it was such a constant throughout the period. By contrast, the concept of restraint was created during this period as a direct response to changes in the social landscape and to ensure that hunting continued to survive.

Restraint, Control and the Bureaucracy of Slaughter

By the end of the nineteenth century, illustrating restraint was a pivotal part of any sporting narrative. In order to maintain the right attitude of moral authority, it was important to show that hunting was as much about the experience as it was about the kill. Whilst hunting Caucasian auroch in 1891, St. G. Littledale came:

'face to face with a grand old bull, bigger than my first victim. We were hidden in the bush and he stood in the open wood, and grand indeed he looked. I laid my rifle down, for the temptation was great, and I would not have slain him for 1,000l. I took off my cap to him out of respect for a noble representative of a nearly extinct species. I had got what I wanted, and mine should not be the hand to hurry further the extermination of a fading race for mere wanton sport'.[22]

Littledale's restraint was obviously affected by his concern over game numbers which controlled his itching trigger finger despite the close proximity of 'a grand old bull'. However, the use of the word 'temptation', imbued as it is with negative religious connotations, transports the scene into a kind of moral test. Overcoming such temptations added kudos to his credibility as a moral sportsman. Also, Littledale's empathy and respect towards this particular animal shines out from the page; the 'old bull' is described as both 'grand' and 'noble' while the phrase 'I took off my cap to him' demonstrates Littledale's consideration of his quarry as a kindred spirit, worthy of being spared. Such expression also worked both ways; by seeing the quarry as an equal and showering him with compliments, Littledale was also complimenting himself. Thus, the doctrine of restraint could allow a hunter to enhance their own authority, both by staying his hand and comparing himself to a magnificent animal.

[22] St. G. Littledale, 'The Caucasian Auroch', *in Big Game Shooting Vol. II*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 71, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

Nor was such a trend limited to men. The Hon. Mrs Lancelot Lowther was similarly insistent when addressing her female readers, arguing that hunting with restraint was more important than achieving success. As she herself put it:

'there always seems to me to be some special enjoyment in sallying forth with the object of replenishing an exhausted larder, and with the certainty of having to work one's hardest to accomplish the task. Every shot then becomes of importance, and the comparative scarcity of the prey redoubles one's vigilance and activity. In shooting, as in so many other pursuits, it is quality not quantity that should be sought'.[23]

The idea that it was not the quantity of the game shot but the quality of the experience itself, shows an alternate light on the rule of restraint. Rather than being framed, as in the case of Littledale, both as a moral prize and as a way of complimenting oneself, restraint is outlined by Lowther as actually embellishing the experience, increasing the overall quality of the hunt. In addition, her phraseology of 'replenishing an exhausted larder' suggests a homelier image which she may have felt more suitable given her gender and social position; a more competitive attitude might have been seen as characteristically unfeminine. Whilst used to convey different messages, authority is still key to both narratives. Littledale confidently triumphs over the temptation to overindulge whilst Lowther makes it clear – thanks to her authoritative tone – that those who do not embrace restraint are somehow morally weak. Overall, both these examples show that by the late nineteenth century restraint had become an accepted part of sporting culture and had been successfully incorporated as a key facet of the fraternity's make-up. This hides the fact that restraint was really a recent addition to the canon of sporting rules. Earlier hunters in this period had shown little restraint and had, if anything, been more interested in excess.

This trend is best illustrated by the exploits of British big game hunters in their travels abroad. Whilst the theme of authority was very much a part of their narrative and ritual, the idea of moral authority was not. Examples of their extremely gun-ho attitude abound but are perhaps best encapsulated in the sportsmen who visited Africa between 1820 and 1860. Whilst visiting southern Africa on his 1836-7 expedition, Capt. William Cornwallis Harris exhibited all the trends of a sportsman of his generation. Across the entire trip, Harris accounted for over four hundred heads of game with local Africans tailing his waggons for miles due to the superfluity of wounded and dying animals he left in his wake. He did possess a softer side referring with regret to the 'eloquent and piteous appeal' in the eyes of a wounded eland and admitting that the distress of an elephant calf on seeing its dead mother made him 'half resolved never to assist in [the death of] another'.[24] Despite this, he soon recovered from this stab of remorse and continued with his strategy of shooting large bags of game.

This competitive desire to shoot high numbers of game was a common occurrence in the expeditions of many nineteenth century hunters. As late as 1860, hunters like William Charles Baldwin were quite comfortable with indulging in behaviour that later hunters would have found abhorrent. Baldwin related how he spent an evening watching a waterhole, recording afterwards how 'three buffalos, one white rhinoceros bull, one quagga, a lion and an elephant fell to my rifle that night, my best nights shooting'. Hunters at the end of the nineteenth century would have seen such behaviour as tasteless and unrestrained, just as they would have looked askance at one of Baldwin's earlier

[23] Hon. Mrs Lancelot Lowther, 'Shooting', in *The Sportswoman's Library Vol. I*, ed. by Frances E. Slaughter (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1898), p. 118, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[24] Captain William Cornwallis Harris, *The Wild Sports of Southern Africa* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1839), pp. 73 and 209-10.

boasts of how he had 'shot six camelopards [giraffes] the last few days, having been very successful in finding them'.[25]

By contrast, later hunters – especially those who were serious sportspersons – exhibited a strong dislike for such excesses. During his 1901 trip to Abyssinia, Maj. Percy Powell-Cotton reacted with considerable distaste when his travelling companions shot a large number of elephants. He explained: 'As none of the natives here eat the flesh, it seemed a pity to have killed so many for the sake of such small ivory, and I was sorry I had taken part in the hunt'.[26] Although not the only reason, there seems little doubt that the incident encouraged Powell-Cotton to break away from the group and head his own expedition north through Abyssinia. In his diary written up the night following the incident, the major was much clearer in his disapproval, mentioning that 'JJ [the leader of the expedition] & I had words appropo of shooting elephants whether with tusks or not, he had 2 bulls & 3 cows' and specifically stating later on in his journal that 'I drop out of trip as JJ & I can't hit it off'.[27] His final comments upon the subject can be found in some private notes, written after his return to England. Scribbled down in slightly incoherent fashion as questions for a legal hearing in connection with another disagreement from the trip, he wrote:

'Unsportsmanlike Conduct. Did H. [probably refers to J. J. Harrison, the J. J. mentioned above] having a number of small tusks with him in the capital. Did you get the impression that H intended to defray expenses by ivory & in other ways & as a result you took special reasons to prevent his killing a large number of elephants. Did you consider it sportsmanlike of H. to give orders to his shikaris to shoot as much game as possible while he was away at the capital, especially having regard to the usual bad shooting of Somalis [sic]'.[28]

The major's horror both at his companion's thoughtless killing of game simply to make money marks a clear distinction with the prevailing attitude held only a generation previously when killing a large number of elephants would have been quite commonplace and profiting from ivory one of the major incentives behind an expedition. For scientifically minded hunters like Powell-Cotton, restraint was now a clear part of their identity which gave them both personal and communal authority; it set them apart from mere trophy hunters as men of science, determined to further the bounds of knowledge by collecting new specimens. The idea of deviating from this identity was so unthinkable that it was enough to cause Powell-Cotton to break with his former companions completely. However, while this change from a culture of excess to one of restraint is plain to see, explaining why it happened is far more of a challenge.

At the heart of this change of heart lies the question of game management. Early hunters to Africa did not worry about preserving game; the numbers they encountered were so vast that they had no qualms about shooting as many animals as possible. By contrast, their successors took the question of game numbers very seriously indeed. William Cotton Oswell, one of the first hunters to penetrate into the interior of southern Africa, mourned this change in circumstances saying 'I am sorry now for all the fine old beasts I have killed… Africa is nearly used up; she belongs no more to the Africans and the beasts [sic]'.[29] Other sportspersons were just as concerned by this change; Capt. H. E. Mosse spoke with some warmth on 'the great diminution of large game in various parts of the world' for

[25] William Charles Baldwin, *African Hunting and Adventure from Natal to the Zambesi* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1894), pp. 229 and 390.
[26] P. H. G. Powell-Cotton, *A Sporting Trip Through Abyssinia* (London: Rowland Ward Limited, 1902), p. 51.
[27] Tuesday 19th December 1899 and Wednesday 3rd January 1900, Abyssinian Journal 25 October 1899 - ? July 1900, Powell-Cotton Museum.
[28] Points that it may the useful the having out in Col. Harrington Evidence, P:\Archives\Trips\Abyssinia 2 1899 to 1900, PCM.
[29] W. Cotton Oswell, 'South Africa Fifty Years Ago', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. I*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), pp. 34-35, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

which he blamed 'those who have killed for profit, as well as to the introduction of fire-arms among native races'.[30] Therefore game preservation was mostly about necessity – without exercising restraint, hunters ran the very real risk of having no more game left to hunt. The insertion of this new value to the sporting code was therefore strongly based on practicality, enforced on the basis that without it, big game hunting would go extinct. As much as hunters like Powell-Cotton might grumble about the 'annoyance' of the 'responsible officials' charged with overseeing the game laws, it was the bureaucracy rather than the concept which infuriated them; enshrining the principle of restrained hunting in law was seen as essential for protecting the game from non-elite outsiders who had no code of restraint.[31]

However, necessity was not the only reason for this introduction. The idea of being restrained fitted in nicely with the etiquette and morality which late nineteenth century sportspersons saw themselves as imbuing. Thus, it was included even when preservation of game for practical reasons was no longer an issue. This was observable even in sports which seemed the antithesis of restraint like lowland game shoots. By the Edwardian period, the size and scale of these events had become colossal with game shoots becoming a status symbol for those wishing to flaunt their wealth. Given the huge bags of game shot during these hunts, it may seem a strange place to look for restrained conduct.[32] However, whilst appearing on the surface to represent unrestrained carnage, such occasions were actually bound up in a myriad of sporting red tape. Despite the huge numbers of quarry killed, game shooters had to maintain at least the image of restraint if they wanted to continue to be seen as good sports with the required air of moral authority.

This is demonstrated by returning to the rules which the Rev. Williams listed in his *Rural Sports*. By the end of the nineteenth century, most the rules listed by Williams had indeed become accepted as standard shooting etiquette.[33] Williams rules also contained a list of fines, which allows us to pinpoint which behaviour was seen as the most deviant and how participants were expected to behave. Among the most heinous crimes were 'killing a Hen Pheasant' and 'shooting at a Pheasant on the Ground or in a Tree', which would both set the offender back £1 1s. 0d. Lesser crimes included 'shooting at a Hare in her Form' and shooting at a pheasant 'at more than Forty yards unless before wounded', which would cost the miscreant 5s. There were also more unusual crimes such as 'shooting Two or more Partridges at one shot' which was punishable by a fine of 10s. 6d.[34]

What these rules illustrate is that, despite the huge numbers of birds being killed, restraint was still at the forefront of the sports ritualisation. Many of the rules listed above required immense self-control with sportspersons expected to identify a pheasant's sex, judge its range or wait till it moved before squeezing the trigger. Not only does this illustrate a preoccupation with fairness, it also shows that hunters were expected to be able to restrain their desire to succeed even though

[30] Captain H. E. Mosse, *My Somali Book: A Record of Two Shooting Trips* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, Ltd, 1913), p. 210.
[31] P. H. G. Powell-Cotton, *In Unknown Africa* (London: Hurst and Blackett, Limited, 1904), pp. 121-124.
[32] The size of some of these events can be gauged from the record, achieved on 18 December 1913 where seven guns (including King George V) shot a total of three thousand nine hundred and thirty-seven pheasants, three partridges, four rabbits and one various. Bags over three thousand strong were by no means uncommon and those of over two thousand pheasants so familiar that Hugh Gladstone considered it unnecessary to include them in his account of shooting records. See Gladstone, *Record Bags and Shooting Records*, pp. 33-133.
[33] There were some slight deviations, mainly over the killing of hen pheasants. By the end of the nineteenth century, game rearing was such an industrialised process that killing hen pheasants was seen as less of an issue than it had been previously. However, the destruction of young birds – known as 'cheepers' – was still shunned so the idea that some types of birds should not be shot was still very much a concept hunters subscribed to.
[34] Daniel, *Rural Sports*, p. 62, quoted in Gladstone, *Record Bags*, p. 29.

following the rules actually made hunting much harder. Even the law against shooting two animals at once shows restraint, with shooters expected to control their desire to stand out or to show-off unnecessarily. Controlling one's actions was therefore an integral part of an elite sportspersons persona and was not just a moral front. Further evidence of this can be seen in the reaction of game shooters when they were accused of lacking restraint.

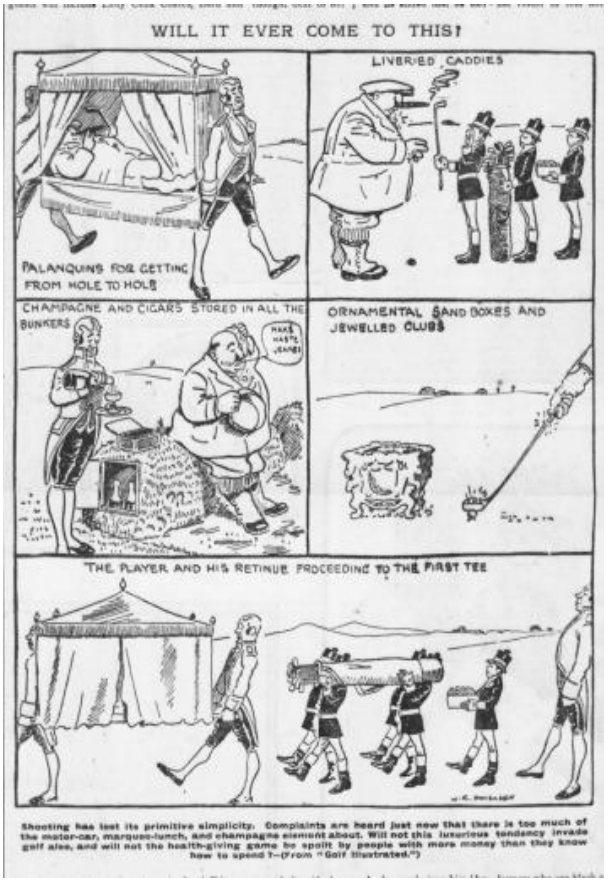

Figure 2: Entitled 'Will it Ever Come to This?', cartoonist W. K. Haselden humorously poked fun at common game shooting tropes, showing mock concern that 'this luxurious tendency' would 'invade' golf and ruin the game forever. While obviously intended to be funny, the cartoonist wished to make a point about the evolution of driven game shooting; he observed: 'Shooting has lost its primitive simplicity. Complaints are heard just now that there is too much of the motor-car, marquee-lunch, and champagne element about'. Thus, it is a good indication of how the elite fraternity was seen by certain sections of society as having deviated from the standards of sportsmanship which it was supposed to uphold. W.K. Haselden, *Daily Mirror*, 26 August, 1912, ref no: WH3455, *British Cartoon Archive*, University of Kent, <https://archive.cartoons.ac.uk>

Despite frequent criticism that driven game shoots were a clear departure from the values of good sportsmanship, (see figure 2), the elite community hugely resented the idea that they were acting hypocritically. Experienced game shot G. T. Teasdale-Buckell argued that 'it is often said that big bags have ruined the sporting spirit. That is not so: big bags are necessary proofs that the science of preservation of game is on the right lines'.[35] In a similar manner, 'Snaffle' openly mocked critics, saying 'it really is too amusing to read the diatribes they [the newspapers] publish against 'feather-bed sportsmen' and 'farm-yard game'. I should like to take one or two of them to a place I know and where I often shoot… I… lay a good bet that they would not in the whole beat touch as much as a tail feather'.[36] 'Snaffle's' bemusement at how anyone could consider game shooting unsporting shows to some extent how insular the elite fraternity could be when it came to fielding criticism of their actions. However, it also shows how restraint had become integral to the authority of any fieldsport by the end of the century. Hunters were well aware that there was little authority to be garnered if the public saw driven game shoots as akin to shooting fish in a barrel; it was therefore important to reinforce the idea that driven game shooting was difficult and that the birds were given a fair chance

[35] G. T. Teasdale-Buckell, *The Complete English Wing Shot* (London: Methuen and Co., 1907), p. ix <http://gutenberg.org>

[36] 'Snaffle', Gun, *Rifle and Hound in East and West* (London: Chapman and Hall Ld, 1894), p. 250.

of survival. In doing so, the successful sportsperson could reinforce their own reputation by both representing their sport as challenging and showing that even when shooting large amounts of game, they still possessed the core values of restrained sportsmanship.

Showing some restraint gave the fraternity the necessary moral integrity to indulge in more elaborate blood sports, whether that was hunting elephants in Africa or partridges in Kent. Despite seeming totally contrary to the very idea of large-scale driven shoots, the rituals of sportsmanship were so ingrained that it gave the fraternity the moral authority to justify their actions, even when they appeared to be doing the exact opposite. Similarly, it helped to preserve big game shooting even after the populations of many game animals had suffered a huge drop in numbers. Restraint became incorporated into the canon of sportsmanship because it was necessary, both practically and theoretically. On the one hand, it prevented sportspersons from shooting their sport into extinction and on the other, buttressed the community's ethical claims. In many ways, restraint was similar to the third aspect of sportsmanship. While authority could be garnered from controlling one's actions, it could also be gathered by regulating emotions. Strongly influenced by contemporary ideas in etiquette, hunters emphasised their emotional stability through both their written narratives and their participation in group rituals. How they did this forms the subject of the next section.

Guilt, Revenge and the Importance of Emotional Self-Control

Like the other aspects of sportsmanship, controlling one's emotions strengthened the narrative of authority which the elite fraternity aimed to reflect. By illustrating calmness under pressure and confidence in their own morality, the elite enforce the idea of moral authority which helped to bind their community together. Although participants were capable of reviewing their actions and analysing them accordingly, this was always within the ritualised framework of the narrative, designed to strengthen the moral authority of the community.

It was not unusual for hunters to express some pangs of remorse after a successful hunt although they seldom exhibited such emotions for very long. Isabel Savory's attitude towards tethering out bullocks to attract a tiger was typical of this; she admitted: 'Of course, it seems cruel to the unfortunate bullock; but, as a matter of fact, if you kill the tiger in this way, you save the lives of a number of other bullocks… Besides, how else is a tiger to be found at all?'[37] Clearly this was not just the case with sportswomen; their male counterparts were often just as quick to dismiss regret. Selous described how after he had shot a pair of nyala antelope, he 'stood admiring them for a long time before I could bring myself to skin them'. However, he had no overall regrets about killing them, going so far as to describe his quick success as 'a most glorious and exceptional piece of good fortune'.[38]

Such mild expressions of regret served a dual purpose. It helped to illustrate that the elite sportsperson was not a heartless monster who killed without any regard for the consequences; Savory's sympathy for the bullock left out to die and Selous's admiration for his quarry's beauty demonstrated that the good hunter did not take life lightly. However, portraying themselves as ultimately content with their actions helped to display their moral authority. By portraying their

[37] Isabel Savory, *A Sportswoman in India* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1900), p. 258 <https://archive.org>
[38] Selous, *African Nature Notes*, p. 243.

performance as triumph tinged with regret, they made their authority all the more convincing by showing that they had counted the cost but ultimately considered their actions worthwhile.

Occasionally, hunters could dwell a little more lingeringly on their feelings after the death of their quarry. An anonymous contributor to *Country Life* author described how – after killing a roe deer – 'there is guilty silence, as of Nature's consciousness that a great sin has been committed'.[39] His guilt is phrased in quasi-religious overtones, not only in the use of words like 'guilty and 'sin' but also in the sense that he is being judged by higher power – in this case 'Nature' – which is capitalised as if it were the word 'God'. However, even here the idea of moral authority is quick to assert itself with the writer justifying his actions by observing that a goldcrest foraging in the trees above is 'committing similar crimes as it hunts for insects'. This way of theming the hunt as simply part and parcel of nature is a common one amongst the sporting elite. The sporting essayist John Watson described how 'the bee-bird captures the butterfly, and is stricken down in the act by the hawk; the keeper kills the raptor, and the keeper's hobnobbing with death is delayed but a while'.[40] Thus, moral authority is retained with the thought that the ritualised violence of the hunt is every bit as natural as the life and death struggle viewable in nature. Therefore, the 'crimes' of taking a life for one's own benefit are sanitised by the idea that killing is a natural part of life rather than deviant behaviour. The blood sports community could therefore retain its moral integrity by reflecting conventional social ideas about nature and the environment and by framing their own sport within those lines. In this way, they were able to suppress any feelings of unease concerning the morality of their activities which might otherwise have weakened the narrative of morality they were trying to tell.

However, maintaining this moral authority was not solely based on repression of guilt. It also dictated that they avoided other emotions like hatred or revenge. Most hunters showed no dislike when their quarry attempted to fight back, even seeing it a subject for humour. Selous argued that it was unfair to criticise big game as aggressive when wounded as 'it seems like adding insult to injury to speak of it [reacting in self-defence] as vindictive'.[41] Cultivating this ritual in narrative writing was crucial to maintaining their authority; to complain if an animal fought back would be an admission of weakness, damaging the impression of control. It was also important to identify positive traits in one's opponent; after an encounter with a wounded buffalo, Jackson described the animal as 'cunning, savage, yet plucky'.[42] Complimenting such a foe not only aided the idea that the hunt was a fair fight between two equally matched opponents but also enhanced the image of the hunter. By being able to defeat such an opponent, the hunter was lauding his own abilities in a manner that was socially acceptable and further strengthened his claim to have authority over his own story.

The only occasions where a desire for revenge did become an acceptable part of the hunter's narrative was when facing a man-eater. While defending your life was seen as a noble thing to do, actually preying on humanity – particularly women and children – was seen as an act of indescribable barbarity and worthy of a swift reprisal. Reginald Percy typified this in his description of man-eating tigresses as 'crafty she-devils' suggesting not only negativity but deviancy, due to their deviation from acceptable female values. This deviant behaviour was also a threat in other ways as it challenged the hunters claims to have authority over the hunt; by becoming a genuine threat, it threatened to take agency away from the hunter. To combat this, British sportspersons frequently

[39] *Country Life*, 9 November, 1901, p. 597.
[40] Watson, *Poachers and Poaching* (London: Chapman and Hall Limited, 1891), pp. 223-4.
[41] Selous, *African Nature Notes*, p. 196.
[42] F. J. Jackson, 'The African Buffalo', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. I*, ed. by The Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 234 <http://www.gutenberg.org>

endowed man-eaters with negative emotions characterising them as lazy or cowardly; these portrayals seeped into popular culture, most famously with Shere Khan in Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*.[43] By doing this, the narrative of the hunt was changed from a fair contest of sport to a veritable crusade for justice. This meant that the revenge motif could be admitted into the story without breaking with the code of sportsmanship; the hunt could still be portrayed as honourable due to its purpose in defending the weak. It also allowed hunters to seize back the authority of the narrative by portraying themselves as actively engaged with a dangerous adversary. This not only highlighted their bravery and courage but also their moral authority with the sportsperson frequently posited as the last line of defence between a dangerous animal and a theoretically helpless native population.

All these elements come together in Jim Corbett's description of his hunt for the Champawat Man-Eater, a tigress who killed an estimated four hundred and thirty-six people in northern India and Nepal. The righteousness of Corbett's cause is first exhibited through detailed examinations of the tiger's victims, highlighting the case against the animal. Corbett makes it clear that these were often women and children and further justifies his actions by detailing 'the state of abject terror' the villagers were in when he arrived. By doing so, he was not only presenting himself in a morally blameless light but also presenting his authority over the situation. Unlike the villagers – who are presented as having no agency – Corbett is thoroughly in control of his own destiny, fully focused on achieving his objective. All this early set dressing culminates in Corbett's first meeting with the tiger where he half wished she would charge to 'enable me to get even with her for all the pain and suffering she had caused'. Such outspoken hatred is no longer contrary to the ritual of the sporting narrative, due to the preliminary work done setting the scene.

However, in contrast to his native Indian companions, Corbett's dislike is not presented as an unthinking hatred. After doing his duty and killing the tigress, he reverts back to traditional sporting values, in sharp contradistinction to the Indians who have to be dissuaded from mutilating the carcase. Corbett's account thereby subtly shows the difference between the elite British sportsman who is confident, in control and restrained by contrasting him with his Indian allies, portrayed as helpless, frantic and emotionally unstable. Corbett is thus able to demonstrate his morality by defeating a dangerous animal apparently due to humanitarian zeal while also illustrating his authority through the ritual of story-telling. Even in this extreme example, the values of fairness, restraint and self-control were still critical for portraying the elite hunter as a person of principle rather than just a stony-hearted killer.[44]

The possession of moral authority was thus an important part of the identity projected by the elite blood sports community. By reinventing their sport around the ideas of fairness, restraint and emotional self-control, they could successfully inhabit both conventional society and the landscape of the chase. This allowed them to remain socially acceptable as attitudes towards animals slowly began to change. However, morality was far from the only kind of authority which the blood sports community sought to exhibit. Sporting rituals frequently stressed other areas such as gender, class and national identities. In order to gain admittance to the fraternity, hunters had to show that they had these key facets which helped to keep them exclusive. The ways in which sportspersons exhibited these traits is the subject of the next chapter which examines the phenomena in greater detail.

[43] Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2007), pp. 12-15.
[44] Jim Corbett, *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944), pp. 1-29.

Chapter 2 - Elite Identity in the Field: Gender, Class and Cultural Authority

As we saw in the previous chapter, conveying moral authority through the ritual of narrative writing was one of the main ways hunters justified their actions. However, sporting memoirs could be used to convey more than just moral authority. This chapter aims to take three of these areas – gender, class and culture – to illustrate how authority was essential to the ways in which elite sportspersons viewed themselves. In order to illustrate these values, hunters adopted a wide range of techniques some of which will be explored during this chapter. Explorations of hunting identities have to some extend already been examined, especially the theme of masculinity. Rob Boddice has looked at how foxhunting was used as moral training by Britain's rural elite while Harriet Ritvo has examined how the narratives of sportsmen's' memoirs were specifically designed to enhance their identity as manly men.[1] In a similar manner, Karen Wonders has examined the use of taxidermy in enhancing the masculine image while Tara Kathleen-Kelly has focused on the exploration of masculinity through planning and self-control.[2]

While themes of femininity, class and culture are less commonly explored they have still encouraged some interest. Karen Jones devotes an entire section of her work to American sportswomen, Emma Griffin is interested in the themes of class and elite control while Greg Gillespie has observed some of the ways British sportsmen in Canada brought their own hunting culture with them.[3] Despite this, there are still plenty of areas which have yet to be explored. This thesis therefore hopes to build on previous research by looking at how the theme of authority ties all these disparate identities together. As we explored in the previous chapter, the elite blood sports community was a select and exclusive club which admitted members only if they were able to follow the stringent social and cultural demands in place. In return, these rituals granted the participants authority which they could use to boost their gender, class or cultural status. This transaction of cultural capital – performing rituals for the privileges they granted – is key to understanding the mindset of the elite hunter and why they behaved in the manner that they did.

Masculine Authority in the Narrative of the Hunt

Of all the different facets of a British hunter's identity, the one where authority is most in evidence is in the gendered identities. One of the key elements of any hunting narrative was a focus on the thrill and violence of the hunt. Big game hunters, whatever the time period, were especially keen on adopting this approach. After Gordon Cumming dispatched a lioness, he explained how:

'In the struggles of death she half turned on her back, and stretched her neck and fore arms convulsively, when she fell back to her former position; her mighty arms hung powerless by her side, her lower jaw fell, blood streamed from her mouth, and she expired'.

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[1] Rob Boddice, 'Manliness and the Morality of Field Sports': E. A. Freeman and Anthony Trollope, 1869–71', *The Historian*, Vol. 70 Issue 1, 2008, 1-29; Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 263-66.

[2] Karen Wonders, 'Hunting Narratives of the Age of Empire: A Gender Reading of Iconography', *Environment and History*, 11, 2005, 269–91 (pp. 273-283); Monica Rico, 'Tara Kathleen Kelly. The Hunter Elite: Manly Sport, Hunting Narratives, and American Conservation, 1880–1925 (review)', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 124 Issue 3, June 2019, 1084-1085.

[3] Karen R. Jones, *Epiphany in the Wilderness: Hunting, Nature and Performance in the American West* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015), pp. 109-133; Emma Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain Since 1066* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 110-123 and 129-133; Greg Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840-70* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), pp. 35-59.

Or his account of hunting an elephant:

'I was loading and firing as fast as could be, sometimes at the head, sometimes behind the shoulder, until my elephant's fore-quarters were a mass of gore, notwithstanding which he continued to hold stoutly on, leaving the grass and branches of the forest scarlet in his wake'.[4]

Equally, Percy Powell-Cotton could describe how, when killing a lion:

'At the first shot he [the lion] stopped and turned, the second sent him spinning round in a towering passion, the third showed him where they were coming from, and he stood facing me, growling savagely. At the fourth bullet he came to the conclusion that the locality was unhealthy and slunk off up hill, while the next knocked him over. Uttering a roar of mingled pain and rage, and fiercely biting his own paw, the brute rolled back and died'.[5]

While they may not have had much in common when it came to established ethical values, both narratives specifically forward both Cumming's and Powell-Cotton's masculinity by reinforcing their authority in these potentially dangerous encounters. Cumming uses words that express his superiority over his vanquished opponent – phrases like the 'mighty arms' of the lioness 'hung powerless' showcases the strength of the hunter whilst the words 'my elephant' foreshadows the inevitability of the creature's demise. Powell-Cotton's account emphasises his control of the situation; the systematic listing of the shots and the powerlessness of quarry to do anything in retaliation shows that his authority over his quarry is complete. Both accounts fit very neatly into Karen Jones' ideas on ritualised performance; both men are heroes of their own stories, fearless, mighty, all powerful, effortlessly defeating and outwitting their quarry.[6]

By following this narrative ritual, the hunter uses this violence to embellish his masculine image by showing himself as both hunter and soldier. By successfully doing battle against nature, he demonstrates not only his authority over the natural world but also that of his fellow sportsmen who are not been as successful as he is. Such a narrative reflects the cultural trend of the Victorian era where masculinity and heroism were frequently portrayed using violent or militaristic language. John Tosh has noted the correlation between violence and masculinity in the writings of nineteenth century imperialists while Michael Brown has studied how the writings of the medical profession were often endowed with martial imagery.[7] Such language could be used both to celebrate their own achievements and to boost the authority of their communities as a whole. By playing up to the martial masculine image so popular at the time, elite sportspersons could represent themselves in a positive and powerful manner whilst simultaneously boosting their own authority.

This ritualised narrative which associated masculinity with violence, was common throughout the fraternity, whatever the geography. Whilst on a shooting expedition to India, Reginald Heber Percy described a particularly impressive barasingh stag, as an 'old chieftain… singing his war-song' while 'Snaffle', after a day's shooting in England, talked of how 'when the beaters reached me, I had a regular fortification of rabbits and a couple of hares piled all around me'.[8] Visceral descriptions of

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[4] Both quotations taken from the Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming, *Forest and Frontiers or, Adventures Among the Indians* (Chicago: M. A. Donohue & Company, 1852), no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

[5] P. H. G. Powell-Cotton*, In Unknown Africa* (London: Hurst and Blackett, Limited, 1904), p. 100.

[6] Karen R. Jones, *Epiphany in the Wilderness: Hunting, Nature and Performance in the American West* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015), pp. 3-23 and 77-103.

[7] John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), pp. 200-201; Michael Brown, 'Like a Devoted Army': Medicine, Heroic Masculinity, and the Military Paradigm in Victorian Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 49 Issue 3, 2010, 592-622 (pp. 592-595).

[8] Lieut.-Col. Reginald Heber Percy, 'Indian Shooting', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. II*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 276, <http://www.gutenberg.org>; 'Snaffle', *Gun, Rifle and Hound in East and West* (London: Chapman and Hall Ld, 1894), p. 42.

violence were also popular. Arnold Pike – whilst hunting polar bears in the arctic – noted how 'one of my shots had almost filled the abdominal cavity with torn entrails and débris' while J. G. Millais described how a shot bear 'turned completely over like a shot rabbit, and, roaring and moaning, fell headlong some twenty feet down the hill'.[9] Whilst the Percy quotation suggests a willingness to connect with the quarry as a fellow example of masculine virility, such respect did not exclude the wish to kill or to demonstrate superiority by overcoming the quarry. Such visceral descriptions therefore reflect more than just a desire to shed blood. They form an important narrative purpose, showing the power and authority wielded by the writer. Such language also implies a kind of respectful awe for the weapons they carry, with the realization that such objects conferred extra power upon their owners. This connection between masculine identity and martial iconography is frequent both in narratives of sport and the portrayal of hunters when not engaged in their pursuits.

This link was apparent even in sports which did not use weapons. Sir Robert Graham relates how, while he was serving at the Rifle Depot at Winchester, his commanding officer Col. Macdonald was 'very good' at giving his junior officer's leave to go fox hunting, presumably because it was seen a manly and profitable sport to indulge in.[10] Likewise, Surtees' most famous character Jorrocks, made the pithy quip that fox hunting was 'the sport of kings, the image of war without its guilt, and only five-and-twenty per cent of its danger'.[11] To such minds, fox hunting was a safer, more enjoyable alternative to military endeavours but still created skills (like bravery and good equestrianism) which were transferable to a military context. Nor was Surtees the only fox hunter to make this connection. Robert Thomas Vyner, writing on the correct breeding of hounds, quoted the following poem with approval which spoke of how:

'As some brave captain, curious and exact,
By his fix'd standard forms in equal ranks
His Gay battalion; as one man they move
Step after step, their size the same, their arms
Far gleaming dart the same united blaze…
So model thou thy pack, if honour touch
Thy generous soul, and the world's just applause'.[12]

This poem combines military iconography and the desire to compete in order to create a picture of the ultimate masculine hunter. Not only is the master of hounds (in this case, presumably Vyner himself) referred to as 'some brave captain' but the pack of hounds itself is seen as a military force. Just as a good army 'forms in equal rank', moves 'as one man' and 'united blaze', so a good pack should be well disciplined and work well together. Hence, Vyner takes the military metaphor a step further than other writers, arguing that not only can hunting give benefits to those pursuing a military career but also that a huntsman will find it beneficial to copy the military model. Breeding and hunting with hounds are portrayed not just as a pursuit but as a science which benefits from a disciplined and militarised approach. Vyner's masculine identity is therefore dependent not just on appearing 'brave' but also on other military characteristics such as being a good strategist and a firm

[9] Arnold Pike, 'Arctic Hunting', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. II*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 28, <http://www.gutenberg.org>; F. C. Selous, J. G. Millais, Abel Chapman, *The Gun at Home and Abroad: The Big Game of Africa & Europe* (London: The London & Counties Press Association Ltd, 1914), pp. 266-7.
[10] Sir Reginald Graham, Bart, *Fox-Hunting Recollections* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1908), p. 6, <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>
[11] R. S. Surtees*, Handley Cross or, The Spa Hunt*, Vol. 1 (London: A. K. Newman and Company, 1846), p. 130 <http://access.bl.uk>
[12] Robert Thomas Vyner, *Notitia Venatica: a treatise on Fox-Hunting. To which is added, a compendious Kennel Stud Book* (London: Rudolf Ackermann, 1847), p. 100, <http://explore.bl.uk>

disciplinarian. By doing so, the poet assures his audience that not only is this honourable – another key masculine ideal – but will serve the prospective huntsman well and assure him of success. The theme of authority is once more in evidence here, not just in the confident tone but also in the idea of strong discipline and the need for military levels of control. It also plays into the idea of competitive masculinity with the reader being guided towards the correct method with the assurance that it will allow them to excel over others. Such military metaphors fitted neatly into the social landscape of the time and hunting – encouraging as it did a similar skill set – was a good way of boosting this kind of identity.

These themes of masculinity and competition can further be seen in Wonders' research into the ritual of taxidermy where the displaying of a specimen became the ideal way of broadcasting triumph over the vanquished quarry.[13] However, the ritual of trophy taking could also be about conferring honour and authority both upon the successful sportsperson and the community itself. In her work on amateur sportsmen in the nineteenth century, Christiane Eisenberg notes how it was not the prize itself but the honour and prestige which such trophies conveyed which made them valuable.[14] Unsurprisingly, hunting trophies can be slotted into a similar role in the social landscape with the trophy conveying both honour and authority on the successful hunter and helping to uphold the established order. A good example of this is the fox hunting ritual of presenting the brush to the first hunter to reach the kill. By receiving it, the hunter was being singled out from among his peers by highlighting his courage, horsemanship and other manly virtues. However, the ritual also reinforced the authority of the master of hounds who presented the trophy, acknowledging him as one worthy of conferring honour upon another.

This transference of cultural capital was therefore not just about glorying in the vanquishment of the quarry. Such rituals helped to reinforce the identity of the fraternity, drawing them closer together and giving them a sense of cultural unity. The importance of such rituals can clearly be seen in the hostility displayed when they were not adhered to. Experienced hunters like Vyner poured scorn on those who refused the brush as a memento of the hunt, referring sarcastically that it had 'now become by far too dirty and odoriferous for the white gloves of the modern fox-hunter'.[15] Such language shows how ritual, authority and masculinity were all bound up together; by using the phrase 'white gloves', Vyner tries to force 'modern' fox hunters into conforming by attacking their identity as true men. By framing these rituals as manly acts, the blood sports elite could coerce their members into following them and thereby help to preserve their own authority intact.

Nevertheless, the presentation of authority by the individual hunter could also be expounded in a gentler, more self-deprecating manner. Building on conventional ideals of gentlemanly humility, many hunting narratives of the latter half of the nineteenth century used euphemisms and humour as an alternate way of presenting themselves. These were sometimes used to soften scenes of graphic violence; Henry Bailey described how he had successfully 'grassed' several elephants while Capt. F. A. Dickinson used the phrase 'bit the dust', to describe killing a lion.[16] However, euphemisms can also be linked to the elite sportsman's obsession with appearing modest and humble at all times. While writing of his hunting exploits in southern Africa, Oswell used them frequently, describing how

[13] Wonders, 'Hunting Narratives', pp. 282-283.
[14] Christiane Eisenberg, 'Playing the Market Game: Cash Prizes, Symbolic Awards and the Professional Ideal in British Amateur Sport', *Sport in History*, Vol. 31 Issue 2, 2011, 197-217 (pp. 203-4).
[15] Vyner, *Notitia Venatica*, p. 109.
[16] Bulu N'Zau (Henry Bailey), *Travel and Adventure in the Congo Free State and its Big Game Shooting* (London: Chapman and Hall, Ld., 1894), p. 113; Captain F. A. Dickinson, *Big Game Shooting on the Equator* (London: John Lane, 1908), p. 95.

he 'knocked over six [buffalo] at exceedingly close quarters' whilst Heywood Seton-Kerr also followed suit, explaining how he 'discharged the right barrel of my gun and immediately 'sent on the left' when hunting for ducks in Italy.[17] The phrases 'knocked over' and 'sent on the left' illustrates how the ideal hunter was expected to appear modest at all time – describing oneself as 'knocking over' large game or 'sending on' the charge of shot added a casualness to the narrative, avoiding the appearance of boasting. However, they also help to express the hunter's authority in a subtler manner; by appearing to ridicule their own achievements, sportsmen were not only adhering to conventional social values but illustrating their confidence by down-playing their own successes.

This became such an important part of the sportsman's make-up that it became an integral part of the narrative template. Because of the consensus that only weak sportsmen boasted of their achievements, many hunters took extra pains to appear humble by emphasising their modesty to avoid appearing either conceited or inaccurate. This started the trend of prefacing sporting memoirs with either an apology or an assurance of their accounts truthfulness in order to make the author appear more modest. In the preface to his famous book *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo*, Col. Patterson typified this diffidence. He wrote:

'I have no doubt that many of my readers… will be inclined to think that some of the incidents are exaggerated. I can only assure them that I have toned down the facts rather than otherwise, and have endeavoured to write a perfectly plain and straightforward account of things as they actually happened'.[18]

Similarly, Oswell commenced his narrative by explaining how he had often been asked to write his memoirs 'but have hitherto declined, on the plea that the British public had had quite enough of Africa, and that all I could tell would be very old'. Likewise, William Charles Baldwin began by explaining how 'it is only now, at the earnest solicitations of friends… that I am induced, with some diffidence, to publish'.[19] Such prefaces are typical of a great number of sporting author's: Bailey, Kirby, 'Snaffle' and Selous all began in such remarkably similar fashions that such an opening can be quite accurately described as a sporting ritual. Like many elite traditions, it was all about possession of authority with author appearing self-deprecating and humble, however skilful a hunter he might actually be, in order to keep to the gentlemanly ideal which all sportsmen aimed for. This can be seen in Patterson's explanation that he had 'toned down the facts' rather than exaggerated them, in Oswell's 'plea that the British public had had quite enough of Africa' and in Baldwin's assertion that he had only put his recollections into print 'at the earnest solicitations of friends'. For these sportsmen, appearing too keen to publish their experiences was the very opposite of what they should be striving for as it lessened the authority of the narrative by cheapening the sportsman's voice. Therefore, a sportsman could only appear to be in possession of his narrative (and thus live up to the proper masculine ideals of the true sportsman) when he fulfilled the rituals that showed his conformity to the ideals of modesty espoused by the fraternity.

Both these facets of the elite sportsman, the aggression and the humility, were brought together in one facet of their culture that appears frequently as part of the hunting narrative, irrespective of geography. Just as with euphemisms, humour made an excellent tool for the sporting writer and one that was frequently used to represent humility. A good example of this can be seen in the writings of

[17] W. Cotton Oswell, 'South Africa Fifty Years Ago', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. I*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 55, <http://www.gutenberg.org>; Heywood Seton-Kerr, *Ten Years Travel and Sport in Foreign Lands* (London: Chapman and Hall Limited, 1890), p. 50.
[18] Lieut.-Col. J. H. Patterson, D. S. O., *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1907), no page, <https://gutenberg.org>
[19] Oswell, 'South Africa Fifty Years Ago', p. 32; William Charles Baldwin, *African Hunting and Adventure from Natal to the Zambesi* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1894), p. 1.

Jackson, describing his experiences in East Africa. Relating his attempts to shoot a rhino with a powerful rifle, he recorded how:

'The result was rather more startling than I expected with regard to myself, as I was knocked over by the recoil of the rifle, and sent flying backwards to the bottom of the ant-heap, where I nearly turned a complete somersault, but quickly recovering myself I had the satisfaction of seeing that the rhino was still more completely knocked over than myself'.[20]

Similarly, Anthony Trollope observed rather caustically that – in contrast to the most fox hunting portraits – 'the traditional five-barred gate is, as a rule, used by hunting men as it was intended to be used by the world at large; that is to say, they open it'.[21] Both these authors, while detailing very different blood sports, were using very similar techniques. Jackson uses humour to off-set his success; describing how he 'nearly turned a complete somersault' made him immune from the charge of boasting about his exploits. In a comparable manner, Trollope used his wry comments to show that fox hunters like himself were no braver than non-hunters, again protecting himself from charges of blowing his own trumpet.

Secondly, humour could also be used to enhance a hunter's masculinity by allowing himself to appear casual in the face of danger or hardship. Whilst shooting in Russia, Maj. Algernon Heber Percy recalled how 'the bear sprang up with a loud roar, and, looking round to see 'who hove that brick,' charged straight up the bank, getting my second barrel as he came'.[22] Similarly, Bailey remembered a dangerous encounter he and a friend had with a wounded buffalo where 'thinking more of Glave's safety than my own, I called out. 'Make for a tree!' Rather an absurd thing to do, as there were none near, only some small scrubby bushes, which could have given little protection'.[23] Some sportsman even used illustrations as a way of humorously depicting scenes of danger and violence. Frederick Vaughan Kirby used this extremely effectively, inserting a sketch of himself and a guide trying to avoid a charging bull wildebeest whilst encumbered with camera equipment, to which he attached the humorous label 'A Blue Wildebeeste [sic] objects to being Photographed' (see figure 3).[24]

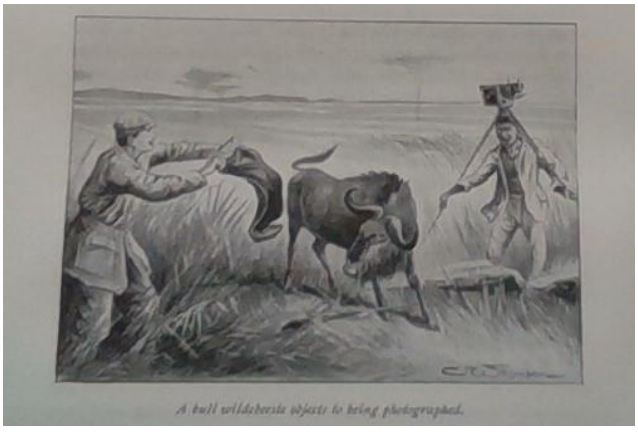

Figure 3: 'A Blue Wildebeeste [sic] objects to being photographed', demonstrating how illustrations and labels could also be used to reinforce a sportsman's masculine authority through his self-deprecation and humility. Published Frederick Vaughan Kirby, *In Haunts of Wild Game: A Hunter-Naturalist's Wanderings from Kahlamba to Libombo* (London and Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1896), p. 296. Curtesy of the Powell-Cotton Museum.

[20] F. J. Jackson, 'The Rhinoceros', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. I*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 263, <https://gutenberg.org>
[21] Anthony Trollope, *Hunting Sketches* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1865), no page, <https://gutenberg.org>
[22] Maj. Algernon Heber Percy, 'European Big Game', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. II*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 158, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[23] N'Zau, *Travel and Adventure in the Congo*, p. 257.
[24] Frederick Vaughan Kirby, *In Haunts of Wild Game: A Hunter-Naturalist's Wanderings from Kahlamba to Libombo* (London and Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1896), p. 296.

Again, humour is important to these constructions. Percy's humorous comparison between a wounded bear and an enraged householder makes him appear nonchalant rather than afraid, thereby not only making his narrative amusing but also reinforcing the heroism of his performance. Similarly, Bailey's wry analysis of his hastily shouted, rather unhelpful advice, underlines his confidence despite the apparent chaos of the situation as does Kirby's decision to immortalise his discomfort through the medium of art. On a deeper level though, the subject of authority was once again integral to this method of shaping masculinity. The confidence of the narrator was implicit as part of the humour; what makes both Percy's and Bailey's descriptions of danger funny is that, despite the excitement, the reader feels assured that both authors are in no real danger and is in full control of the situation. Similarly, the art in Kirby's book depicts him in heroic pose, brandishing the camera cloth like a matador to distract the animal's attention allowing his guide to escape to a safe distance with the camera.

These incidents therefore become excellent ways for sportsmen to show off their capability and bravery which the veneer of self-deprecation made permissible. This can further be seen in the good sportsman's dismissal of the physical hardships encountered in pursuit of his quarry. While hunting along the River Setit, F. Cecil Cobb wrote of the delights of negotiating the difficult terrain, noting that 'the journey back in the dark… was not exactly a pleasure trip. I consoled myself with the thought that the sportsman must take the rough with the smooth – this was decidedly rough, not to say prickly'.[25] Not only did the humour emphasise the hunter's humility and ability to laugh at himself, it also showed that his expedition was being conducted in an ethical manner. By enduring hardship, Cobb was illustrating that his hunts were conducted in a manner befitting the values of fair play espoused by the elite fraternity. Likewise, his ability to laugh at himself showed that he was of the right moral character and was able to live up to the values of self-control also expected from the perfect sportsman. Once again, the humility which causes him to admit that he found the terrain difficult made it permissible for him to portray himself as capable and upbeat despite the difficulties.

However, as well as emphasising the more gentlemanly values of masculinity like humility, humour could also help to emphasise the more aggressive and competitive side of masculinity discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Humour was often used at the expense of other sportsmen by representing them as either less successful or less competent than the narrative's writer. Remembering his exploits snipe shooting as a boy, 'Snaffle' wrote with both humour and venom about an occasion when he found someone else shooting on the land he thought of as his own. He wrote: 'Imagine my disgust one Christmas holiday on finding a son (or grandson) of the celebrated Shrapnel… whose gun had done as much execution on my bog as ever his progenitor's shells did amongst the French'.[26] In a completely different setting, novice big game hunter R. Forsythe gently mocked his friend and fellow sportsmen Rollit, recalling how 'Rollit calmly proposed to sit in the stern and shoot over my head! To this I strongly objected, whereupon he hinted angrily that there was something sordidly mean in my love of life'.[27] Both authors, whether it was 'Snaffle's' humorous disgust at his adversary's success or Forsythe's gentle mockery of his accomplice's accuracy, were aiming to build up their own authority at the expense of another's. By describing his foe as committing 'execution' comparable to that of an explosive shell, Snaffle was intimating that his opponent was not really a true sportsman and that his success was somehow unearned. For Forsythe, the authority of having sole control over the direction of the sporting narrative was a great

[25] F Cecil Cobb, *Sport on the Setit: The Narrative of a Sporting Trip Along the Rivers Atbara and Setit* (Canterbury: Cross and Jackman, 1911), p. 77.
[26] 'Snaffle', *Rifle and Hound*, p. 5.
[27] R. Forsythe, 'Our Hippopotamus Hunt in Sierra Leone', *Wide World Magazine*, Jan. 1908, p. 395.

way for him to embellish his own success whilst downplaying the skill of his friend. Moreover, by using humour, both sportsmen were able to do this openly without seeming to have become too competitive. They therefore were able to preserve their own authority as good sportsmen whilst downplaying their opponents as somehow less worthy.

This competitive attitude was often extended to include their quarry. After spotting a bear in Northern India, K.C.A.J. commented that it 'looked like a lady's tiny muff' while after shooting another bear, he noted how the noise the bear made as it ran away 'sounded much the same as a human being shouting 'I'm off! I'm off! I'm off!'.[28] Nor was this an isolated series of incidents. Dickinson, relating how a rhino attacked his caravan, explained how the animal 'came across my own roll of bedding, and actually charged it from a distance of exactly two yards… He tossed it, and finished by sitting and rolling on it, thinking, no doubt, that there was one man less in the world. I laughed immoderately'.[29] This mockery of one's quarry might seem out of place with the ideals of sportsmanship but the prism of humour made it acceptable, just as it did with mocking one's competitors. It acted as a more extreme way of demonstrating confidence and authority, acting as an excellent vehicle for showcasing virility and courage in an acceptable manner. Comparing a bear to an article of lady's clothing, mocking the quarry for failing to show fight or demonstrating that one was unafraid when it did were all excellent ways of preserving the sportsman's authority and through that, his claim of living up to the masculine ideals of sportsmanship. Through this, hunters could demonstrate their sporting worth and their right to belong to this elite set of blood sports enthusiasts.

By creating this complex weave of ritual, which expected its proponents to combine masculine militancy and courage with humility and gentlemanly conduct ensured that entry to this select group was kept exclusive and allowed the elite to retain close control over the community as a whole. Just as in the case of euphemisms, meeting danger with a smile, laughing at hardship and mocking both human and animal opponents was all part of the narrative template which readers expected to see. Appearing too frightened or serious when threatened with danger dispensed with the appearance of control hunting narratives were supposed to radiate. Thus, dispensing an air of authority was essential to the masculine image most sportsmen wished to portray, whether that was through the aggressive use of militarised imagery, trophy taking and ritualised violence or the subtler means of euphemisms and humour. Control was at the core of the sportsman's masculine identity while the associated rituals of trophy taking and storytelling helped to bind it all together. This gendered identity was not simply limited to male sportspersons. If anything, the image of control was even more important for female hunters as they battled to be accepted amongst a community which was both exclusive and patriarchal. To do this, they had to illustrate that they could follow the established rituals of the community without losing their authority and integrity as conventional models of femininity.

Femininity, Authority and the Challenge of Convention

As Martin Danahay has commented, the prevalent nineteenth century attitude towards women undertaking male roles was one of hostility. He notes that women working in industrial, male orientated jobs were frequently subjected to gendered and sexualised criticisms which portrayed

[28] K.C.A.J, *The Sportsman's Vade Mecum for the Himalaya: Containing Notes on Shooting, Outfit Equipment, Sporting Yarns, etc.,* (London: Horace Cox, 1891), pp. 110-111.
[29] Dickinson, *Big Game Shooting*, p. 79.

them as somehow soiled by their contact with the male sphere of work and labour.[30] Female hunters therefore ran a similar risk of upsetting this cultural paradigm once they attempted to join the patriarchal hunting fraternity (see figure 4). The fact that sportswomen faced far more obstacles when wishing to partake in the hunt is reflected accordingly in the narratives of sport they chose to create. Whilst the idea of authority is still in evidence, female hunters were forced to alleviate patriarchal fears by doing a great deal more to show that they were worthy of holding it. This may explain why female hunting narratives tended to be far more serious than that of their male contemporaries. There is far less use of humour and euphemisms suggesting that they lacked the confidence to indulge in such self-deprecation. By contrast, female hunters tended to borrow certain male tropes, like using no-nonsense descriptions of violence, to construct a feminine identity that made light of hardship and showed a respectful attitude to existing tradition. By doing so, they showed that their claims to the authority of these rituals were well and truly earned. However, this also led to conflict with more conventional ideas of femininity, which tended to focus on gentleness and nurturing rather than emotional resilience.

Figure 4: This cartoon published in *Punch Magazine* demonstrates perfectly the social problems many early sportswomen faced. Asked by the Vicar's wife whether she has had 'good sport', the female hunter replies that she has 'only shot one rabbit, but I managed to injure quite a dozen more!'. The inference is that as a woman, she does not understand the importance of good sportsmanship or of traditional values. In order to successfully overcome this prejudice, sportswomen had to prove that they were worthy of entry into the elite fraternity by showcasing their authority and proving that they could conform to the same standards as their male peers. George Du Maurier, *Punch Magazine*, 8 September, 1894, <https://punch.photoshelter.com>

A good example of the no-nonsense narrative structure is illustrated by Frances Slaughter, the master of harriers we examined earlier. As well as being a strong supporter of the values of sportsmanship, Slaughter also used her narrative to reinforce her stoicism in the face of violence. When discussing what to do with a hare after the hounds had caught it, she advocated 'to let [the] hounds break her up themselves without any fuss'.[31] For Slaughter, it was possible to be both feminine and retain an interest in the more violent parts of her sport. The language she uses is simple, unembellished and dwells solely on the practical rather than the emotional. Slaughter's

[30] Martin A. Danahay, *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture: Literature, Art and Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), pp. 49-65.
[31] Frances E. Slaughter, 'Hare Hunting', in *The Sportswoman's Library Vol. I*, ed. by Frances E. Slaughter (London: Archibald, Constable and Co., 1898), p. 79, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

narrative thus stresses stoicism, competence and responsibility as cornerstones of her identity, in order to demonstrate that in spite of her gender, she is just as capable of holding the office of master of harriers as any man. In a similar vein, the narratives of many sportswomen abroad emphasised their calmness when in dangerous or exciting situations. Whilst on a hunting expedition to Russian Lapland, the wife of Maj. Algernon Heber Percy recorded in her diary how her husband came face to face with a large brown bear when his rifle was unloaded. She remembered how:

'A. was unable to see the bear on account of the scrub (though we could see perfectly well from our elevated position), and before he had time to reload, old Bruin appeared fifteen yards from him. Both were equally surprised at the meeting. A. stopped loading to pull out his hunting-knife, putting it into his teeth, expecting a charge, and then went on loading, and there they stood, man and bear, looking at each other for a full minute; but before A. had time to get his muzzle-loader capped, the bear had seen enough—had turned, and was off'.[32]

What stands out here is the lack of emotion the description of a potentially very dangerous situation. At no point does Mrs Percy examine her feelings when watching her husband unaware of danger approaching or when he had to face a large predator armed solely with a knife. Despite the fact that the encounter seems to have lasted for some little time, the account is entirely factual; the only comment the author made upon the situation was that 'it was a great pity that A. did not get him, for he was a very large bear'.

Explaining why this narrative is so matter-of-fact requires some thought. It seems to have been a deliberate choice – possibly to show that despite her status as a woman, Mrs Percy was not going to give in to hysteria whenever her husband was in danger. The fact that she makes clear that she could see perfectly well but conveys no emotion on the subject seems to confirm this. Awareness that some readers might assume that a big game hunting expedition was no place for a woman may have exaggerated her response, hence the non-conveyance of emotion throughout the story. By contrast, her husband's own account shows far less concern over appearing stoic, humorously remarking that during the encounter he was unsure whether 'that inconvenient change was not going to occur when the hunter begins to be the hunted'.[33] Such differences in approach highlight the dissimilar challenges which male and female hunters each faced. For Algernon Percy, humour was an ideal way of illustrating not only his bravery but also his authority over the situation. By contrast, his wife needed to do the exact opposite; by presenting a stoic and unemotional front, she demonstrated that she was more than capable of handling a similar scenario. This disparity highlights how much harder it was for women to convey the necessary authority through their use of rituals; there was far fewer techniques available to them, possibly because female hunters were only just starting to emerge at the end of the nineteenth century.

This difficulty in showing that sportswomen were worthy of the authority broadcasted by existing ritual can be seen even more strikingly in the narratives of other female hunters. Stag hunter Edith Curzon is a good example of the extreme approach some sportswomen adopted to clearly demonstrate a lack of sentiment. Writing about the ethics of her sport, she exclaimed that 'my advice to those who cry out about the cruelty to 'the poor dear stag,'… is to stay at home, so that their feelings may not be hurt by the sight'.[34] Here Curzon is demonstrating an attitude of moral authority similar to that of her male contemporaries; by using similar narrative tropes, she is able to stake her claim to being an authoritative member of the blood sports community. In addition, referring scornfully to 'the poor deer stag' makes her unsentimental attitude plain, thus helping to

[32] Percy, 'European Big Game', pp. 159-160.
[33] Ibid, p. 160.
[34] Edith Curzon, 'In Red Deer Land', in *The Sportswoman's Library Vol. II*, ed. by Frances E. Slaughter (London: Archibald, Constable and Co., 1898), no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

distance herself from the idea that her gender might exclude her from partaking fully in all the rituals of the hunt.

Further evidence for this can be seen in their occasional adoption of martial metaphors and visceral description when describing their hunting activities. Lady Boynton once labelled a shot rabbit as 'a corpse on the field of battle' while on another occasion, she described the hunter causing a stag to 'bow his lofty head and lower his colours at their bidding'.[35] Nor was it only sportswomen in Britain who followed this trend. Mrs Jenkins was extremely graphic in her description of a kangaroo hunt, describing the:

'Kangaroo ripping and wounding the hounds with his powerful hind claws; but the plucky beasts keep their hold, and amid yelps of rage and pain, the splashing and reddening of the water, and the shouts of the huntsmen to encourage the hounds, the victim sinks, after a vigorous struggle for his life'.[36]

It seems likely that the copying of such narrative tropes was in many ways deliberate, possibly from a desire to conform to existing rituals of story-telling. By playing by the rules, sportswomen could use the same rituals as men to stake their claim to the same level of authority over their memoirs. There may also have been a desire to try to blend in to avoid upsetting the boat, in an endeavour to show that they were not a threat to the existing order of the fraternity. Nevertheless, while it may have helped with establishing their authority over the narrative, the use of such intense language clashed with more conventional interpretations of feminine behaviour. This led most female hunters to walk an uneasy line, demonstrating their stoicism and authority on the one hand whilst seeking to convey their adherence to conventional feminine values whenever possible.

Lady Violet Greville discussed this at length in the preface to an anthology on female blood sports, analysing what she termed the 'witchery of legitimate sport, which need not be slaughter or cruelty'. Such phraseology – particularly the word 'witchery' – suggests that part of the charm of participating in blood sports is that it felt a little risqué, making them feel daring and bold. However, the vast majority of women were not content to obtain this rush by blackening their social prestige. Lady Greville makes this plain, arguing that 'women who prefer exercise and liberty… can yet remain essentially feminine in their thoughts and manners'.[37] Obtaining this narrative balance – between the conventional feminine role of nurturer and home maker and this new outlet for excitement and physical activity – was at the core of their identities. Greville was not the only female hunter who attempted to balance social conventions with a desire for thrills, as other accounts testify. The Hon. Mrs Lancelot Lowther, after describing in vivid detail the shooting of one hundred and twenty-three brace of partridge, made it clear that 'it was not that I took actual pleasure in the numbers killed, but I had never before seen so many birds which afforded such sporting shots'.[38] Similarly, keen fox hunter Alice M. Hayes wrote that 'tearing a poor fox to pieces is a sight which very few women would care to watch, except those manly ones who take a delight in killing wild animals themselves'.[39]

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[35] Lady Boynton, 'Covert Shooting', *Ladies in the Field, Sketches of Sport*, ed. by Lady Violet Greville (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894), no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[36] Mrs Jenkins, 'A Kangaroo Hunt', *Ladies in the Field, Sketches of Sport*, ed. by Violet Greville (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894), no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[37] Lady Violet Greville, 'Preface', *Ladies in the Field, Sketches of Sport*, ed. by Lady Violet Greville (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894), no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[38] Hon. Mrs Lancelot Lowther, 'Shooting', in *The Sportswoman's Library Vol. I*, ed. by Frances E. Slaughter (London: Archibald, Constable and Co., 1898), p. 137, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[39] Alice M. Hayes, *The Horsewoman: A Practical Guide to Side-Saddle Riding* (London: Hurst and Blackett, Limited, 1903), p. 346, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

Therefore, while making sure that their narratives had the correct authoritative tone, female hunters had to be careful that they did not overstep the mark and put themselves open to charges of impropriety. Hence, Lowther's statement that she did not take pleasure in the act of killing and Hayes 'othering' of the women she referred to as 'those manly ones' to distance herself from any accusations of impropriety. This indicates that while it was seen as permissible for men to indulge in violent behaviour, for a woman to do so would have been distinctly unfeminine. Such an idea would have seemed so unthinkable to the contemporary mind that some female hunters even made the idea the subject for humour. Mrs Jenkins joked that 'it has been said 'An Englishman is never happy unless he is killing something,' and nowadays, at any rate, his happiness seems increased if members of the weaker sex share this propensity with him'.[40] Jenkins uses the humour trope to state – in an amusing fashion – her right to participate in the sport, inferring female hunters are now so common that it is foolish to object to them. However, the idea that killing is actually what drives the hunt is the centrifuge around which the humour revolves. As explored in the first chapter, few of the blood sports fraternity actually saw a desire to kill as what drove them to hunt, instead seeing the thrill and excitement of the chase as motivation enough. Therefore, Jenkins' tongue in cheek statement backed up by her gender, is not only an amusing way of opening her essay but also a clever way of showing her allegiance to the ideas which bound the blood sports community together, demonstrating her authority as an authentic hunter.

Similarly, sportswomen would often couch radical new behaviour in terms of traditional values. The example of the famous female fox hunter Maud Cheape is a good example of this. Despite gaining fame as the only female master of foxhounds in Britain, this departure from normality was put forward in terms of conventional values. She was referred to by her friends as 'a charmingly pretty woman', 'a lady of many parts' and as someone who had the 'art of the of promoting good relationships among neighbouring hunts'.[41] All this suggests a desire to pass off this unconventional behaviour as simply one facet of her identity; even her trailblazing role as a female M. F. H. was conveyed as her wifely duty, covering for her husband during his frequent bouts of ill health. This shows that it was possible to conjoin the ideas of stoic, authoritative huntress with the more domestic ideals of conventional femininity. Nor was Maud Cheape alone in being portrayed like this. As her hunting contemporary Lina Musters emphatically described it, 'if there is one calling in which a real helpmate can be of more use to a man than any other, it is in that many-sided and arduous undertaking called 'hunting a country'.[42] Thus, it seems as if this was a deliberate narrative trend, designed to cover the fact that the wife of an M. F. H. could be extremely influential by comparing it with what was socially expected female behaviour. Consequently, although it was desirable for sportswomen's narratives to carry the requisite note of stoic capability, unlike their male peers it was important not to overstep the mark. Such authoritative tone was only socially acceptable if hidden beneath the guise of more conventional feminine virtues.

Attitudes of Class in the Elite Narrative

For elite sportspersons, authority was intrinsically linked to their social status. Whether at home or abroad, hunters carried their class position like a badge of honour, seeing it as the reason for their

[40] Jenkins, 'A Kangaroo Hunt', no page.
[41] Maudie Ellis, *The Squire of Bentley (Mrs Cheape), Memory's Milestones in the Life of a Great Sportswoman* (London: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd, 1926), pp. ix, 84-85 and 299.
[42] Lina Musters, 'The Wife of the M. F. H.', *Ladies in the Field, Sketches of Sport*, ed. by Lady Violet Greville (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894), no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

continued right to hunt. However, it also gave the fraternity certain responsibilities which were integral to their continuance as part of this exclusive club. Not only did many hunters see their social position as giving them a paternalistic duty to protect those lower down the social chain, they also felt responsible for setting a good example. Class authority was thus seen as equating to moral authority, with the elite regarding the sporting rules they adhered to as being a product of their class position. Hunting rituals could even be used as a means of broadcasting elite power to those they ruled although this was a far commoner facet in imperial hunting than it was back home.

In order to highlight their authority, many hunters made a clear link between their class status and their adherence to the correct values of sportsmanship, independent of the geography they were in. W. A. Baillie-Grohman, discussing the population of chamois in the Alps, argued that the Austrian region was better for hunting as:

'The latter region, with its large estates and sport-loving landed aristocracy, offers a much more inviting field than does Switzerland, where the republican spirit and peasant proprietorship make the preservation of game by individuals almost impossible, and the chase in consequence uncertain and difficult'.

Such language conveys a natural distrust towards both the alien notion of not preserving game and an affiliation with the Austrian nobility who held similar values to himself. For Baillie-Grohman, the idea of 'sports-loving aristocracy' possessing the correct moral values is not surprising; to him, class and sportsmanship are synonymous. Although he praised the authorities in the Swiss cantons for trying to limit overhunting, his distrust of democratic hunting is still firmly on show. As he explains later on, one can see that 'the democratic spirit of republics' is bad for the preservation of game by the 'dire results it has worked in the Great Transatlantic Federation, where some species of *feræ naturæ* have practically become extinct'.[43] As MacKenzie notes in his study of colonial blood sports, there is a clear connection between worries about overhunting and the preservation of sport for the elite. Whilst MacKenzie's work shows that colonial sportsmen often worried about the activities of native peoples, in a European context concern was expressed in a more class-centred fashion.[44] The author's concern is less about game numbers and more to do with elite control over the hunt itself. By democratising the hunt, he infers that the forms and rituals binding the community together are also weakened by making them available to a far larger selection of possibly undesirable people. By forging together morality and class, the fraternity could maintain the façade that ritual was a uniquely elite concept and thus gave them a moral right to keep any sport to themselves. A final emphasis is added with use of legal Latin, highlighting both Baillie-Grohman's education and his class status. In this way, he could showcase his elite status and broadcast his right to hunt.

In a similar fashion, class could be used to express authority in more prosaic ways. Whilst narrating his hunting experiences in East Africa, Jackson condemned professional hunters, arguing that they killed far too many animals and damaged the reputation of hunting with the authorities.[45] While this was partly due to a concern for the environment, it is hard not to discern an air of snobbery in Jackson's attitude. Writing in the days when there was still a clear class distinction in most sports between the professionals and the amateurs, Jackson's denouncement of professional hunters shows a clear distinction between those that hunted for sport and those who hunted for profit. As Jack Williams observes in his study of cricket, the sporting amateur was seen as embodying the

[43] W. A. Baillie-Grohman, 'The Chamois', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. II*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 77, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[44] John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 139-141, 163-164.
[45] F. J. Jackson, 'The Elephant', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. I*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 205, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

values of sportsmanship to a far greater degree than his professional compatriot, simply due to his elite status.[46] In a similar manner, Jackson sees his upper-class status as fostering a greater degree of sportsmanship compared to the lower-class professional hunter. For the elite, failure to follow sporting etiquette by hunting for profit was almost a moral issue. By this period, money was no longer a part of the ritual of hunting; as Jackson's fellow sportsman Phillips-Wolley put it, 'the sportsman hunts for the love of the chase alone and not as a pot-hunter, still less for any reward of 'filthy lucre'.[47] The use of Biblical terminology makes these cultural values extremely clear. According to the sporting code, money and sport were completely incompatible and to mix the two together was almost sinful. This idea helped to keep the values of sportsmanship exclusive and keep the authority to hunt under elite control. It also gave the ethics of sportsmanship an air of mystique and unattainability which helped to heighten their desirability to prospective hunters. Thus, the culture that bound the fraternity together was self-supporting, thereby keeping its authority strong.

This idea was even more apparent in an imperial setting where hunting ritual could project authority not only over people of different class but from other ethnicities. In places like India, there is a clear correlation between an increase in hunting ritual and the escalation of direct British control. While British hunters like Capt. Thomas Williamson had marvelled at the scale of the hunting expeditions carried out by native Indian ruler at the start of nineteenth century, by its close the Viceroy's tiger shoots and competitions like the Kadir cup had similar levels of pageantry and ritual.[48] Such occasions were designed not only to showcase the power of the imperial regime but also inspire confidence by showing people that their leaders were capable and heroic individuals. Even at a lower level, imperial sport could still be viewed through this paternalistic lens. Mrs C. Martelli – the wife of an imperial district officer – described tiger shoots for a British audience, hastening to explain that:

'If, from the description I have given, anyone should be inclined to say that the tiger does not appear to have much chance of escape, the answer is that it is not intended that he should have any. Tigers are shot in India, not as game is in England for hunting, to give amusement to men, horses and dogs, not as in pheasant or partridge shooting, with a remote reference to the demands of the table, but to save the lives of the natives and their cattle. If you don't kill the tiger he will kill you'.[49]

The idea that Indian officials did not hunt for 'amusement' is in itself extremely dubious; going on shikari was a staple of elite privilege. The point is not however, whether Martelli was correct in her pronouncement but that she believed herself to be so. For her, tiger hunting was a paternalistic pursuit, designed to protect the native Indian population from dangerous threats. It was this that gave hunters the moral authority to hunt where they liked, confident that their activities could only have positive outcomes for the people under their charge. The extract also shows how this attitude of paternalism was a little more pronounced in an imperial setting. Martelli takes it upon herself to stress the responsible ethics behind the hunt in order to off-set the charge that the actual hunt itself, with its use of beaters and elephants, might appear a little unsporting to hunters back in Britain more used to less complicated methods of hunting big game. What made these small

[46] Jack Williams, 'The Really Good Professional Captain Has Never Been Seen': Perceptions of the Amateur/Professional Divide in County Cricket, 1900–39, *Sport in History*, Vol. 26, No. 3, December 2006, 429-449, (pp. 435-438).
[47] Clive Phillips-Wolley, 'Mountain Game of the Caucasus', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. II*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 49, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[48] Capt. Thomas Williamson, *Oriental Fieldsports,* Vol. I (London: Edward Orme, 1807), p. xii <https://books.google.co.uk>
[49] Mrs C. Martelli, 'Tigers I Have Shot', in *Ladies in the Field, Sketches of Sport*, ed. by Lady Violet Greville (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894), no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

discrepancies permissible is that they helped 'save the lives of the natives and their cattle'. This shows how well rooted such paternalistic ideals were in the social landscape, illustrating how hunting culture linked into more mainstream cultural values.

Cultural Warfare and the Concept of Britishness

The theme of cultural authority was critical to the way in which British sportsmen and women viewed themselves, specifically in juxtaposition to those from outside their cultural circle. As with the class-based identities they constructed, these were based on a strong degree of snobbery with the British perceiving their sporting code as the epitome of fair play and anything else as distinctly second best. The best documented examples of this are displayed in the British attitudes towards native hunting techniques during their visits to far flung corners of the empire. Both MacKenzie and Gillespie have commented on the derogatory way imperial sportspersons viewed aboriginal hunters, frequently blaming them for declines in game numbers.[50] Baker referred to the 'deadly warfare' waged against game by the native people of Ceylon while Selous argued that 'many hundreds of native hunters… must have taken part in the practical extermination of both the black and the white rhinoceros'.[51] Such remarks completely ignored the implications of British hunting expeditions and were based on preconceived dislikes which made local hunters ready scape goats.

Part of the problem was that aboriginal and British hunting cultures had very different ways of viewing the ritual of the hunt. To the British hunting for sports, the performance of the hunt was a competition both against nature and with other hunters over who could obtain the best trophies. By contrast, native peoples tended to hunt for more prosaic reasons like food or money which, as we have already examined, went against the principles which bound the hunting elite together. This cultural divide meant that British hunters frequently compared indigenous people by British standards rather than their own values. Whilst on an expedition in East Africa, Powell-Cotton remarked that his guides 'were… not bad trackers. But they were lazy in the extreme, for as long as they knew there was food enough for them in camp, they would not budge an inch without a good deal of persuasion'.[52] Maj. Gerard Leather experienced similar problems when, after failing to shoot an Ibex in Spain, he attempted to buy a trophy off a local peasant. He recorded how: 'I tried afterwards to buy the head, but the gentleman with his mixture of Spanish pride and laziness, refused to entertain any offer I made. He said that he preferred to keep the head, as it would make good soup!'[53]

To the people they met, such decisions made perfect sense, tying into their traditional culture of subsistence hunting; to Powell-Cotton's trackers, there was no need to hunt again if they had already been successful. However, such was the confidence of British sportspersons in their own authority that they not only saw such behaviour as wrong but also deviant. Powell-Cotton's dismissal of his guides as 'lazy in the extreme' and Leather's anger at the peasant's 'Spanish pride and laziness' (together with his ironic use of the word 'gentleman') highlights their obvious frustration when their cultural superiority was not acknowledged. This superiority was really just an extension of the confidence expressed by many British travellers when venturing abroad where they expressed their

[50] MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, pp. 79-81, 209, 298-299; Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire*, pp. 56-59.
[51] Sir Samuel White Baker, *The Rifle and Hound in Ceylon* (London: Longmans, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854) no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>; Frederick Courtney Selous, F. Z. S., *African Nature Notes and Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan and Co, Limited, 1908), p. 189, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[52] Powell-Cotton, *In Unknown Africa*, p. 177.
[53] Major Gerard Leather, *A Week After Ibex from Gib* (Dover: St. George's Press, 1905), p. 42.

patriotism by criticising foreign rituals and customs which contradicted their own. By doing so, they were expressing the authority of their own cultural values which set them apart from the people they were observing and which therefore gave them the right to criticise.

This strong belief in 'Britishness' and the superiority of British values clearly made an impact in the narratives created by many elite sportspersons. In a wonderfully partisan piece of prose, Baker described how:

'The love of sport is a feeling inherent in most Englishmen, and whether in the chase, or with the rod or gun, they far excel all other nations. In fact, the definition of this feeling cannot be understood by many foreigners… the character of the nation is beautifully displayed in all our rules for hunting, shooting, fishing, fighting, etc.; a feeling of fair play pervades every amusement. Who would shoot a hare in form? who would net a trout stream? who would hit a man when down? A Frenchman would do all these things, and might be no bad fellow after all'.[54]

This patronising juxtaposition of English and French values is a clear statement of cultural and moral authority as well as patriotism. In a similar manner, Kirby made the connection between Englishness and the values of courage and good sportsmanship, arguing that 'none with any real English grit in them will pretend that they derive from the fall of one of these harmless creatures [giraffes] the same amount of satisfaction afforded by the death of a lion or buffalo'. For Kirby, being English is synonymous with being brave, strong and fair – the phrase 'with any real English grit' suggests that to not possess these values sets you apart as alien and not properly English. The decision to market these values as 'English', rather than British, also shows something of the partisan and exclusive nature of elite culture at the time. During the nineteenth century, the other home nations of the British Isles, particularly the Scots and the Irish, were often characterised as inherently brave but wild individuals. By contrast, being English was seen as synonymous with calmness and even suavity under pressure; of understated bravery rather than reckless courage. That, together with the fact that most of the elite community would have actually been English, rather Scottish, Irish or Welsh, may have played a part in their labelling and designating of these values.

However, the portrayal of these values was not just about creating opportunities for the English elite to score points over the rest of their countrymen. It was also about showcasing their superiority over their European equivalents. Given the imperial rivalry which existed between many of the great European powers during this time, the decision to showcase British/English sporting values as being of superior quality allowed British readers to revel in the greater moral authority which their cultural values possessed. British sportspersons abroad would seldom miss an opportunity to criticise the behaviour of their sporting rivals if such an occasion presented itself. Whilst shooting in Norway, Millais launched a scathing criticism of German sportsmen, commenting that:

'With the invasion of the Germans the sport of elk hunting has rapidly deteriorated in quality… whether it is that Germany sends her most indifferent sportsmen to try their 'prentice hands on the poor old elk I do not know, but (with one exception) a more unlikely-looking lot that assembled at the Namsos hotels at the end of the season I have never yet seen. Ye gods! What tales of hairbreadth escapes from bears did they not tell! Their mode of hunting, too, they gloried in: the top of a hill, two rifles, two or three bottles of beer, a copious commissariat (including unlimited cigars) and some energetic Norwegians to drive the wood, seemed to be the chief essentials of their happiness'[55]

Given that the work was published in 1914, the militarised language and the general dislike of German culture in the description is probably not a coincidence. The use of words like 'invasion' and 'commissariat', together with the clear disapproval of their drinking and boasting, all attempt to paint the Germans in a negative and unsportsmanlike fashion. What Millais infers through his

[54] Baker, *The Rifle and Hound*, no page.
[55] F. C. Selous, J. G. Millais, Abel Chapman, *The Gun at Home and Abroad: The Big Game of Africa & Europe* (London: The London & Counties Press Association Ltd, 1914), pp. 262-3.

criticism is that British sportspersons are the complete antithesis of these traits; they are modest, quiet and hunt their quarry in a restrained and fair-minded manner. Without having to explicitly state it, Millais describes British culture as eminently superior to its German alternative. Moreover, by setting himself up as an individual with the right to judge, Millais showcases his own authority as a pillar of the elite establishment and a sportsman who has kept the rules of good sportsmanship flawlessly throughout his own career as a hunter.

Such narratives are even visible in popular fiction as authors explored what made Britain unique when compared to its European rivals. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle used his character Brigadier Gerard to humorously comment on the differences between British and French hunting culture in several of his short stories. Most of the stories' humour derives from the Frenchman's complete ignorance of British sporting customs and his misplaced confidence in his ability to master British sports. He relates how 'I triumphed over the English at the fox-hunt when I pursued the animal… and alone with my own hand I put him to the sword' while he considers his host foolish for shooting flying pheasants and instead waits until dusk when he can shoot them whilst they're asleep. Underneath their humorous aspect, the stories also illustrate just how important the values of fair play and sportsmanship were to accepted ideas of Britishness. Set against Gerard's characterisation as the stereotypically suave, confident and brave French officer, the British reading public could take comfort in seeing this countered by British characters who epitomised the values of politeness and fair-play which they most admired, even if the aristocrats who Gerard encounters were totally different from the vast majority of the people reading Conan-Doyle's stories. It was enough that they could see themselves and the values they appreciated reflected by the characters within the story. Indeed, as Baker makes clear, British people – whether hunters or members of the public – did not necessarily dislike the fact that foreign hunters possessed different values. While finding foreign attitudes confusing and reserving the right to be quietly patronising, they were content to accept that a foreigner 'might do all these things, and might be no bad fellow after all'. By contrast, if a British hunter – or someone representing British culture – broke the rules, then there was far more of an outcry.

A good example of this cultural backlash can be seen in the revulsion exercised by many British sportsmen when it was announced that during a trip to Coburg, the Prince-Consort, with Queen Victoria watching on, had taken part in enclosed driven shoots of deer and wild boar. To the British blood sports community, such behaviour was a clear deviation from their ideas of good sporting conduct. Whilst driven shooting of gamebirds was acceptable, the hunting of larger animals by such methods was generally not seen as unsportsmanlike. Sir Henry Pottinger, Bart., described shooting driven Scandinavian elk as a 'massacre' while Abel Chapman and W. J. Buck pronounced that it was a 'sport exciting enough in itself, but not to be compared with stalking or still hunting'.[56] The clear consensus was that while such sport might be alright for foreigners, to give them the royal seal of approval was going a step too far. By setting themselves up as morally superior to other cultures, the British blood sports fraternity not only protected themselves from charges on unethical conduct but also created an air of authority over other hunting communities. This is best demonstrated by the idea of control which strongly percolated through many sporting narratives. A good deal of authority could be garnered by being seen as cool and calm under all circumstances; we have already seen

[56] Sir Henry Pottinger, Bart., 'The Scandinavian Elk', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. II*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 136, <http://www.gutenberg.org>; Abel Chapman and W. J. Buck, 'The Large Game of Spain and Portugal', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. II*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 174, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

how humour could be used to demonstrate calmness under pressure and this desire to be seen as in control of their own destiny was just an extenuation of such values.

This desire directly affected how the narrator interacted with people and cultures who they came into contact with on their travels. Even scholarly sportsmen interested in collecting specimens for science fell into the trope of dismissing local advice in order to appear more authoritative. St. G. Littledale – a frequent donator of specimens to the Natural History Museum – dismissed local advice whilst on his visit to the Russian province of Mongolia. He wrote:

'Though anxious to help us, the Russians knew nothing for certain about the districts in which we were most likely to find our game, and such hearsay evidence as they had from the Kirghiz I knew from former experience to be utterly untrustworthy. Our best chance appeared to be to take a line of our own'.[57]

In the same manner, Seton-Kerr also refused to listen to other, saying of one of his shikaris during his tour of northern India that 'this individual turned out to be so noisy, unreflecting, and talkative to the coolies that it was difficult to place one's reliance upon his judgement, and I decided for myself that Wangat looked the most promising nullah'.[58] As well as emphasising racial authority, these passages also radiate the cultural authority which readers would no doubt have expected to hear from the narrator. By dismissing the advice of his shikari, Seton-Kerr in particular was following a common narrative trope amongst sportspersons hunting in India. K.C.A.J. wrote that '*Shikaries* cannot be depended on. A good one with Smith last year will be utterly worthless with Jones this' while 'Snaffle' was even more derisive, dismissing them as a 'generally useless appendage'.[59]

This decision to dismiss guides and portray themselves as in full command of hunting strategy was almost certainly a deliberate device. As Kelly's work has shown, one of the manly virtues sought after by many sportsmen, whether in the American West or the British Empire, was the ability to think and act independently.[60] We have also seen how an authoritative voice was a vital component for anyone seeking to achieve the right kind of masculine tone in their hunting narrative. This explains Littledale's eagerness to prove himself independent from foreign help and clarifies his somewhat dismissive attitude towards Russian officials. It made sense, not only for the construction of his own masculinity but also for his portrayal as a true British sportsman – one that would bestride the narrative like a colossus. As the story's main protagonist, it was important that he should seem to be in control of his own fate, not as a pawn in the hand of Russian bureaucrats. Similarly, it was not so much his shikari's behaviour that was the deciding factor in Seton-Kerr's decision as his desire to appear independent and in control; it would have ruined his portrayal as a truly authoritative British sportsman if he had followed meekly along in the wake of his guides, especially when previous authors had already cast shikaris as unreliable. Therefore, it made sense for British sportspersons to portray themselves as culturally superior hunters as this reinforced their authority as narrators.

So confident were British hunters in their superiority that they could even turn to humour as a means of presenting their cultural authority. Just as masculinity was sometimes portrayed through humorous means, sportsmen abroad frequently found amusement in the reactions of other cultures to their activities. Swayne noted the attitude of his Somali guides, writing how 'whilst I stood admiring the herd… I was reminded by the bloodthirsty Hussein that we had come to destroy

[57] Littledale, 'The Ovis Argali of Mongolia', p. 73.
[58] Seton-Kerr, *Ten-Years Travel and Sport*, p. 295.
[59] K.C.A.J., *The Sportsman's Vade Mecum for the Himalaya*, p. 56; 'Snaffle', *Gun, Rifle and Hound in East and West*, p. 13.
[60] Rico, 'The Hunter Elite', pp. 1084-1085.

elephants, and not to stare at them'.[61] Swayne uses the words 'bloodthirsty' and 'destroy' in a comedic context, words more commonly used negatively. Swayne's amusement at their confusion suggests awareness that it was slightly ironic to enjoy watching the same animals you wanted to hunt. However, the fact that he could laugh at this shows considerable confidence in his personal values whilst his choice of language suggests he considered them superior to those of his companions. The use of the word 'destroy' is deliberately over the top, highlighting the gulf between the sporting code of the English gentleman – which allows him to respect and enjoy the company of his quarry – with the much simpler Somali culture, occupied with the task of finding elephants and killing them. Similarly, although his description of Hussein as 'bloodthirsty' is directed affectionately, it still makes clear the difference between the two men; it infers that Swayne is of a higher moral standard than his guide as he is not consumed with the desire to kill all the time, thus giving him greater authority. Thus, the humour highlights Swayne's belief in the superiority of his own cultural values when compared to those of his companions.

This belief in the superiority of their own cultural values is also noticeable in the few values from other cultures the British did approve of. Baillie-Grohman – despite his distrust for democratic hunting – showed a surprising amount of tolerance for the hunting culture of Tyrolean peasants, arguing:

'The respective methods of shooting chamois—that is, by driving and by stalking; the one being the pleasure of the highest in the land, the other infinitely harder and more truly sportsmanlike method being usually only pursued by the hardy peasant and daring poacher'.[62]

The reason for this surprising tolerance was that such sport conformed closely to British values. The methods employed by Tyrolians were fairly similar to the way British sportsmen stalked red deer in the Scottish Highlands whilst the Austrian aristocracy, whose methods Grohman criticised, were generally viewed by the British as being not up to the highest of masculine standard. Thus, by praising 'the hardy peasant and the daring poacher', Baillie-Grohman was also praising himself and his own exploits, whilst distancing himself from charges of being effete like the Austrian nobility. In a similar manner, Pottinger ascribed the Swedish method of hunting elk with a loose hound as 'a manly, noble sport' not only because such physical pursuits exhibited the masculine toughness of those involved but also because he saw it as 'that species of triumph, so dear to Englishmen, which results from success attained by very distressing physical exertion'.[63] In other words, Pottinger identified with this method because it highlighted the British sporting value of fair play by making things extremely difficult for the hunter. Thus, the sport was worthy of praise because it followed a similar code to that of the British blood sports fraternity by ritually highlighting the manliness and virility of the hunters involved.

So strong was this love for their own cultural values that hunters were more than capable of praising people of different ethnicities, if they conformed to similar values. Gibbons praised the behaviour of his guide Madzimani, describing the latter as 'an indomitable hunter and a natural sportsman, so unlike most of his fellows, who… immediately lose the spoor if they see hard work in front'.[64] Likewise, Kirby wrote how one of his hunters, a man called Muntumuni, was 'an all-round, plucky, skilful, and reliable hunting companion… true to his Swazi traditions, he is utterly fearless, and in the

[61] Capt. H. G. C. Swayne, R.E., *Seventeen Trips Through Somaliland* (London: Rowland Ward and Co., Limited, 1895), p. 63 <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[62] Baillie-Grohman, 'The Chamois', p. 85.
[63] Pottinger, 'The Scandinavian Elk', p. 142.
[64] A. St. H. Gibbons, *Exploration and Hunting in Central Africa, 1895-96* (London: Methuen and Co., 1898), p. 23.

saddle, in the heat of the chase, values his neck at a very low figure'.[65] Again, this praise was directed at British hunting traditions as much as it was the men they were describing; it was not Muntumuni's adherence to Swazi culture that impressed Kirby but his confirmation to British hunting values. Likewise, Madzimani is singled out by Gibbons precisely because he does not conform to the cultural values of those around him but hunts instead for love of the chase. Once again, by applauding hunters from different backgrounds, both Gibbons and Kirby could rejoice in their own hunting culture without appearing to boast. Moreover, by judging the worth of the cultural values of others, British sportsmen were able to reinforce their own authority both as judges of sporting conduct and authorities on what was considered morally right. This made their narrative seem more impressive and could help them gain respect within the elite fraternity as a whole.

All these themes – whether of gender, class or culture – helped to bind the blood sports community of the British elite together under a shared network of cultural values which emphasised their authority. By keeping access to this fraternity restricted, they were able to maintain the illusion that the values of fair play, restraint and emotional resilience they adhered to were completely original to themselves. This helped to hide the truth that similar values were often held by people indulging in very different types of blood sports. It is now time to examine the sport of poachers, gamekeepers and urbanites in order to consider how their culture was both similar and different to that of the elite and how they reacted to changes in the social and environmental landscape across the period. While their sporting culture may have differed to some extent from much of elite hunting culture, the idea of authority was still very integral to their sport and the manner in which they viewed themselves.

[65] Kirby, *In Haunts of Wild Game*, p. 357.

Chapter 3 – Poachers and Gamekeepers: The Other Side of the Fence

On 17 March 1877, *The Sporting Gazette* contained a blistering article which denounced rural poaching in the strongest language. The individual poacher was 'an idle vagabond who wants money without the trouble of earning it by honest labour' while poachers overall were merely 'drunken, mechanic and thriftless agricultural laborers'.[1] In a similar manner, Edward Darwin in his *The Game-Preserver's Manual* raged at the poacher who steals game and 'thinks he has performed a clever feat, rather than a dirty and unsportsmanlike trick'.[2] This nineteenth century view of poaching as being born out of poverty and lacking any of the ritual and culture of its elite counterpart has influenced views on the sport up to the present day. While few academics would stoop to the language employed by the *Sporting Gazette*, it is traditionally viewed as class warfare, with historians like Trevelyan and Hopkins choosing to focus on how poaching epitomised the struggle for rights experienced by the disenfranchised masses of British society.[3] What these studies ignore is that poaching could be as just as much about recreation as it was about survival. While poaching did undoubtedly increase in times of economic downturn, this did not negate the fact that poachers had their own rules and rituals which bound them together as a community. Whilst this structure was looser due to the elicit nature of their activities, there was a genuine sense of tradition and culture behind their actions which is worthy of further study.

As a group, poachers varied almost as widely as their elite counterparts. There were poachers who poached for profit, poachers who poached for food, poachers who poached for business and poachers who poached for recreation. This thesis is mainly focused on these recreational poachers – sometimes referred to as mouchers – as it was these men (and very occasionally, women) who encompassed the widest array of rituals and cultural traits. However, this does not mean that poachers weren't capable of combining these features; most poachers were not averse to getting a little money on the side, however much they enjoyed their sport. Equally, political motivations were in evidence amongst many recreational poachers, even if it was just as a convenient excuse for their activities. Despite these differences, all forms of poaching had one thing in common. They were a direct reaction to the increased industrialisation of the rural environment which occurred during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Legislation like the Acts of Enclosure and the Game Laws caused a dramatic upturn in poaching activity as rural inhabitants sought to adapt their traditions in an attempt to keep their authority in an increasingly alien landscape.

This adaption to a changing environment can also be seen in the rules and rituals of gamekeeping. If the rural poacher has excited a reasonable amount of academic interest over the years, then their adversary the gamekeeper has been virtually ignored. The problem probably lies in the fact that gamekeeping is viewed neither as elite sport nor class rebellion. This means it gets lost between these two traditional approaches which is odd when one considers how essential gamekeepers were for both the narratives of both the elite and the poacher. Despite its close links to elite sport, this study has chosen to analyse it alongside poaching; both groups often shared similar class backgrounds and were radically influenced by the industrialisation of the rural environment. While poaching shows resistance to this change, gamekeeping demonstrates how rural people could successfully adapt to this changing landscape, with the profession benefitting from the opportunities

[1] *The Sporting Gazette*, 17 March 1877

[2] Edward Darwin, *The Game-Preserver's Manual, and Keeper's Assistant* (Buxton: To be had only of the author, 1866), p. 3.

[3] G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History: A Survey of Six Centuries from Chaucer to Queen Victoria* (London: Pelican Books, 1974), p. 519-20; Harry Hopkins, *The Long Affray: The Poaching Wars, 1760-1914* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1985), pp. 5-16.

created by the increase in game preservation. However, such success came at a cost. As a profession, gamekeepers were generally shunned by the rest of rural society. This may explain why they had a very set idea of who they were, what they were doing and why they were doing it. This creation of a distinctly professional etiquette offers an interesting comparison when compared to the more recreational and rebellious culture of the casual poacher. Therefore, this chapter aims to discover how both sides possessed similar and conflicting cultural values which were shaped by the changing social and environmental landscape around them. Both groups endeavoured to impress their authority over their sporting experiences, despite being of lower-class status and having fewer platforms from which to project. Despite this, these contrasting communities managed to create a variety of cultural constructs which symbolised the ways they wished to be seen and remembered by the rest of society.

Wit and Deference: The Juxtaposition of Poacher and Gamekeeper

At the heart of the struggle between poacher and gamekeeper stood the Game Laws. These legislations were themselves a response to the major changes that had occurred to the rural landscape in the previous century. Comprising of the Night Poaching Acts of 1828 and 1844, the Game Act of 1831, the Poaching Prevention Act of 1862 and the Ground Game Acts of 1880 and 1906, these laws gave extra powers to both gamekeepers and the police to clamp down on the increase in poaching which had followed the intensification of game preservation.

The importance of these laws to rural culture cannot be underestimated. On the one hand, they were integral to the creation of modern gamekeeping, allowing for the production of game on a near industrialized scale whilst giving keepers the power to stop and detain poachers without a warrant. On the other hand, this radical change to the environment of the countryside provided the moral justification behind many poacher's actions. Coming as they did soon after the Acts of Enclosure, this further change to the rural landscape caused an outburst of anger amongst rural communities. This hatred was epitomised in the writings of radical journalist William Cobbett who frequently expostulated about them in his *Rural Rides*. Cobbett had a rather romanticised view of poaching, seeing it as purely the result of political oppression. On hearing of a case in Somerset when a poacher was jailed for shooting at a pursuing gamekeeper, he wrote that 'I am well aware that, as this correspondent observes, 'gamekeepers ought not to be shot at.' This is not the point. It is not a gamekeeper in the usual sense of that word; it is a man seizing another without a warrant.'[4] For Cobbett, the fact that a gamekeeper could now arrest a fellow citizen without a warrant was far more shocking than a poacher attempting murder. His writings demonstrate what a radical change the introduction of the game laws made to an already swiftly changing landscape and how alien it seemed that gamekeepers now had powers not vouchsafed to ordinary policemen.[5]

Drawing on such evidence, Ridgwell has argued that the primary directive behind nineteenth century poaching was a dislike of the game laws and the preservation of game in general.[6] This idea is broadly correct, insofar that there was some sense of moral authority behind many poachers'

[4] William Cobbett, *Rural Rides* (London: The Political Register, 1830), p. 226.
[5] The Poaching Prevention Act of 1862 did give the power for constables 'on any highway, street or public place, to search any person whom he may have good cause to suspect of coming from any land where he shall have been unlawfully in search or pursuit of 'game'. However, this act was not yet in existence when Cobbett was writing in the 1820s.
[6] Stephen John Ridgwell, 'On a shiny night': The Representation of the English Poacher, c.1830-1920' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2017), pp. 38-41.

actions. Jim Connell – the famous labour party activist – was definitely one of these, seeing his poaching activities as a way of carrying out deliberate class warfare. Similarly, countryman Frank Sidney Read remembered folk tales of the founder of the Agricultural Labourers Union Joseph Arch who was also a keen poacher, recounting how a former employer 'said about his father and his granddad that he caught Joseph Arch poaching'.[7] This suggests that for individuals already politically minded, poaching became the ideal way to fight back against those they saw as oppressors and as a practical expression of their political radicalism.

Even for poachers not politically motivated, such activities were frequently seen as morally righteous, even if they were technically illegal. One poacher, described simply as 'Old Phil', summed up his motivation with the words 'most country poachers begin by loving Nature and end by hating the Game Laws'.[8] His friend, the sporting writer John Watson, quoted another poacher he called 'the Otter' as saying that just 'because blue blood doesn't run in my veins, that's no reason why I shouldn't have my share [of game]' while Joe Payne, a countryman from Somerset, contrasted the poaching carried out by his poor friends and neighbours with the wealth of the local landowner, summing up by saying 'I think he left about half a million [pounds], just shows the difference you see'.[9] This shows that some poachers did have a political/class based motivation behind their activities which gave them the requisite moral authority needed to break the law; in the face of the wealth and power available to many local landowners, filching a few pheasants was seen as a morally acceptable crime. Equally, there also seems to have been a sense of nostalgia behind these actions. 'Old Phil' spoke of how he and his brothers learnt their craft from their father and it seems highly likely that many other poachers would have agreed with him that their activities were a kind of tradition which needed to be preserved.[10] Such nostalgia, mixed with this love for a vanishing environment, reflects the desire to connect with the past in the wake of substantial change to the rural landscape, together with a desire to reassert their authority over it. Presenting their illegal actions as righteous helped them to appear as a disenfranchised minority rather than common criminals, both though their actions and – more rarely – through their written narratives.

However, this enforcement of moral authority could sometimes be far more straightforward in its presentation. A poacher called Oby recounted in his memoirs how he was cheated out of a promising greyhound he owned by a gentleman who lived in the neighbourhood. Annoyed, he and his friends 'let that gent as bought him have it warm; we harried his pheasants and killed the most of 'em'.[11] Poaching could therefore be more than just a statement of authority; it could also become an act of vengeance against those perceived to have acted unjustly. Such justifications could obviously be tainted by personal bias. As he himself admits, Oby had already started his poaching career long before this act of injustice. Therefore, it was more of a convenient excuse to boost his moral authority and to pursue his poaching career further rather than a direct catalyst for his actions. Oby was far from being the only poacher who acted in this way. Arthur Lane typified this approach to

[7] Frank Sidney Read interview, *Roy Palmer English Folk Music Collection*, 08/07/1971, British Library Sounds Archive.
[8] John Watson, *Confessions of a Poacher* (London: The Leadenhall Press, 1890) no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[9] John Watson, *Poachers and Poaching* (London: Chapman and Hall Limited, 1891), p. 28; Mr and Mrs Joe Payne interview, part 3, *Bob and Jacqueline Patten English Folk Music Collection*, 03/05/1984, BLSA.
[10] Watson, *Confessions*, no page.
[11] Richard Jefferies, *The Amateur Poacher* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1879) no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

poaching, defying the conventional views of his interviewer Charles Parker when asked about his justifications for poaching:

'Parker: But poaching was very necessary, wasn't it, for survival with men working at the sort of wages they were having? It was the only way they could eat, wasn't it? Or get meat?
Lane: Oh, some folk got to have it to have food. But mine was more pleasure, wickedness [laughs]. I had plenty of food but it was fun to do this poaching'.[12]

The dialogue shows the dangers of pigeonholing poaching into a narrow cultural pocket; Lane's honesty and his lower middle-class status shows that it was more than just necessity or rebellion which drove poachers to break the law. It could also give a positive emotional response which shows how poaching was necessary for many poachers' identities as individuals, giving them a feeling of authority when compared to their peers. Judging by his laughter, poaching was evidently something which Lane was very proud of doing for its own sake as it gave him 'pleasure'. This indicates that poaching could have had its own culture and rituals behind it, rather than being an act of pure self-necessity.

In general, poachers would often adopt rituals that projected their moral authority by highlighting how they benefitted the local community. Watson observed how poachers trespassing on farmland would close gates behind them, protect stock and made sure not to damage fences; they also distributed the fruits of their illicit labours both to farmers and poorer neighbours.[13] As Watson must have been aware, there was a practical point to this altruism. For much of this period, most farmers did not own the rights to the game which lived on their land, meaning it meant little difference to them whether their land was poached on or not. Dorset countryman Bill Hunt related an amusing anecdote on what happened after a local farmer he knew caught him poaching on his land. After catching him in the act, there was an awkward pause before 'I said 'Well, what be I to do about it? Do you want the rabbits or what?' 'No' he said. 'Carry on' he said. 'And go on my uncle's ground and catch a few more'.[14] Having no claim over the game on their land, it is unsurprising that most farmers did not object to poachers hunting agricultural pests so long as their own interests were left unharmed.[15] In a like manner, it made sense to conciliate public opinion by being generous to lessen the chances of being reported to the authorities. In the same way elite sportspersons projected their moral authority to protect their hunting from animal welfare groups, proletarian sportspersons pursued a similar policy to lessen their chances of being discovered. Thus, this ritualised focus on morality helped to project a moral authority to both impress outsiders and to bind the community together with a shared sense of belonging.

While poachers used the idea of authority to reflect themselves in a positive light, gamekeepers used this idea to highlight their respectability. To many of these men, the idea of doing their duty whatever the difficulty was the central tenet of their lives. George Kirkland recalled how his father, an Edwardian gamekeeper, viewed his actions in the strictest of moral terms. He described how 'he was brought up in the old ways and the game laws were the holiest laws where he was concerned'. The use of the term 'holiest' portrays a real sense of the commitment needed for the job by comparing it to a religious fervour. Such emotional attachment was not really surprising given the difficulties gamekeepers experienced. Paid to uphold an unpopular set of laws, many keepers

[12] Arthur Lane interview, part 19, *RPEFMC*, 19/04/1974, BSLA.
[13] Watson, *Poachers*, pp. 25-27.
[14] Bill Hunt interview, part 03, *Nick and Mally Dow English Folk Music Collection*, 24/07/1985, BLSA.
[15] This became such a widespread problem that The Ground Game Acts of 1880 and 1906 attempted to nullify it by granting farmers the right to shoot ground game (like rabbits and hares) on their own land.

experienced hostility and suspicion from the rest of their communities. Christian Annersley, a county magistrate during the 1960s, remembered the gamekeepers of her childhood living 'as men apart', due to this simmering resentment.[16] Whether this social isolation was just the case in the area of rural Suffolk where Annersley grew up or a nationwide trend is difficult to determine. Gamekeeping authorities spoke of the desirability 'that the keepers are friendly with the farmers' which would suggest that gamekeepers were not always the social pariahs Annersley portrayed them as.[17] On the other hand, the *Dundee Courier* – writing on the occasion when an innocent tenant farmer had been assaulted by a gamekeeper – spoke bitterly of how 'many gamekeepers seem to regard all their fellow creatures as incipient poachers, who only require the temptation of the wood or a moor to indulge in their propensity to shoot down and inveigle game into their snares'.[18]

This suggest that opinions varied depending on local conditions, the gamekeeper's character and – perhaps most crucially – the attitude of his employer. In his sporting handbook, Darwin wrote how 'a knowing keeper always looks earnestly, though with apparent carelessness, at the pockets of suspicious people he meets on the road'.[19] This suggests that Darwin expected his employees to be extremely suspicious whilst conducting their duties and it is easy to see how this could quickly have caused hostility amongst a tight-knit rural community. Moreover, constant alertness must have been wearisome for all but the most committed of professionals. This suggests that the authoritative attitude created by the profession through attention to detail and rigorous commitment to their job was more important to them than it was for those around them. In order to carry on with such a challenging role, a sense of moral authority was integral to giving them the strength of character to proceed. While poachers used authority to try and elicit the support of their communities, gamekeepers were more about using it to marshal their belief in their own morality. This helps to explain both the moral righteousness and the occasional lapses into extreme behaviour which so annoyed the *Dundee Courier.*

This armour of morality was thus a two-edged sword for the gamekeeping profession. On the one hand, gamekeepers needed this sense of righteousness to carry out their job in the face of hostility. However, this attitude only increased the resentment which caused the hostility in the first place. Despite this, the idea of adhering to a clear moral code of duty and professionalism was integral to the culture of gamekeeping, especially when examined alongside the rituals and transactions they conducted with the elite. Living as this did on the outskirts of elite sport, the participation of gamekeepers in the rituals of elite sportspersons were frequently of vital importance, able to extract surprising amounts of power from rituals meant to confirm their lowly station. It was the gamekeeper and his assistants who laid out the game for ritual inspection at the close of the days shooting, thus allowing elite game shots to demonstrate their prowess whilst still allowing them to appear modest. However, gamekeepers could also play a more active role, participating in cultural transactions with their upper-class associates. A key theme these rituals built upon was respectability. As we have already seen, moral authority was critical to a gamekeeper's sense of self, fitting in well with ideas of doing one's duty and acting respectably.

This mixture of respectability and authority is aptly demonstrated with the ritual of tipping. A staple of elite shooting etiquette – demonstrating their courtesy and generosity – such ritual was equally

[16] Ronald Blythe, *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* (London: Allen Lane, 1969), Kindle locations 1758-1760 and 4991-4992.
[17] G. T. Teasdale-Buckell, *The Complete English Wing Shot* (London: Methuen and Co., 1907), p. 328, <http://gutenberg.org>
[18] *Dundee Courier*, 1 November, 1890.
[19] Darwin, *The Game-Preserver's Manual*, p. 12

important for those on the receiving end. As we have already explored, such rituals were a way for the elite to reinforce the authority of their exclusive fraternity whilst maintaining the cooperation of those lower-class individuals vital for the success of their sport. However, for the gamekeepers themselves such exchanges of cultural capital had a completely different meaning. Jeffries recalls an employer who always tipped his keeper in the same way. The keeper remembered how:

'You had to walk close behind him, as if you were a spaniel; and by-and-by he would slip his hand round behind his back—without a word, mind—and you had to take what was in it, and never touch your hat or so much as 'Thank you, sir.' It were always a five-pound note if the shooting had been good; but it never seemed to come so sweet as if he'd done it to your face.'[20]

Episodes like this shine a light on the way gamekeepers themselves viewed the ritual. This keeper's response that 'it never seemed to come so sweet as if he'd done it to your face' shows that he saw the tip as more than just money. While the employer wanted to avoid overt tipping to maintain his modesty, his employee viewed the exchange completely differently. To the keeper, it was a gift, a thank you for all his hard work which meant far more if it was handed over with a few compliments than if it was surreptitiously passed across in private. Other accounts show that this was far from being an unconventional view. Keeper Owen Jones wrote 'I regard a tip as a present pure and simple, not a tax – a convenient medium by which a sportsman may show his appreciation of the skill a keeper has shown'.[21] He recorded at length many of the tips that he had given with evident affection, proof that – for some at least – a tip was worth more than its monetary value. Gamekeepers could use these rituals as opportunities to embrace the esteem of their social superiors; being offered a tip showed that their authority as providers of the days sport was both acknowledged and appreciated. By contrast, rituals of poaching highlighted the complete opposite showcasing their participants status as rebels and reimposing their authority over their own fate.

While large-scale poaching gangs seem more concerned with money than ritual, many smaller-scale poachers viewed their sport as a kind of ritualised battle of wits between themselves and their enemies which resulted in rituals designed to demonstrate their cunning and skill. For example, poachers routinely adopted various ways to avoid capture which highlighted their anti-authoritarian status in a ritualised fashion. One man, when poaching away from his own parish, always adopted the wide-brimmed hat and frock coat of a respectable Quaker which – in addition to providing a good disguise – made admirable hiding places for his nets and quarry. Contrarywise, the poachers in the Somerset village of Rowberrow turned the fact that they were all well known to their own advantage. On the days when game was transferred to Bristol to be sold, the poachers would gather innocently in the pub to play dominoes. When the gamekeeper came in for his nightly drink, he would be lulled into a false sense of security and would stay in the pub to keep an eye on them. Their wives and children could then safely transport the pheasants to the waiting carts while the keeper was out of the way and their husbands had a cast iron alibi.[22]

The purpose of such strategies was completely practical yet there is a kind of satisfaction to the narrative which speaks to them being more than mere routine. The idea of using the respectable outfit of the Quakers to conceal less than respectable dealings was dictated by more than simple practicality. Rather, it demonstrates a desire to defeat the law in a manner that emphasised not only the poacher's intelligence but by also using the respectable to hide the criminal. In a similar manner,

[20] Richard Jeffries, *The Gamekeeper at Home, Sketches of Natural History and Rural Life* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1880), p. 19, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[21] Owen Jones, *Ten Years of Game-Keeping* (London: E. Arnold, 1910), p. 268, <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>
[22] Watson, *Poachers*, p. 30; Doreen Tovey, *Making the Horse Laugh* (London: Michael Joseph, 1974), pp. 82-3.

the poachers of Rowberrow had the satisfaction of using something that should have been a disadvantage to overcome their enemies, with the poachers in the pub distracting the keeper from where he should have been looking. Given the importance of respectability in rural culture of the time, such deviancy allowed poachers to feel better about themselves whilst also seeming to give them more authority over their own fate. This set them apart from the rest of the rural community, at least in their own minds, making their lower social position more bearable.

Equally, being brought up in a society where deference to social superiors was the norm, ignoring such values gave poachers a distinct advantage illustrating their understanding both of strategy and of the importance of ritual in general. 'Old Phil' recounts how – rejoicing in his 'gentlemanly appearance' – he successfully poached a pheasant preserve by pretending to be a friend of the owner. In order to do so, he dressed up in the typical tweeds of an upper-class sportsman, took a friend to act as he servant/loader and even bought a hamper containing a typical shooting lunch. So taken in was the keeper by the poachers' recital of elite ritual that he accompanied them around the coverts and even accepted a tip gratefully at the end of the day.[23] Similarly, Trench recalls how a middle-class poacher of his acquaintance used to poach hares with two greyhounds from a pony and trap, shouting abuse at them whenever the keeper appeared to whom he would then effusively apologise.[24] These cases show that many poachers were fully capable of twisting the image of respectability to their own advantage, fully alive to the possibilities that an accurate recital of elite ritual could give them. Such accounts imply that being successful was only part of a poacher's aims. In order to properly fulfil the ritual of the hunt, they had to demonstrate their skills and wit to a degree that demonstrated that they had authority over their own fate which was superior to that of the ordinary man. Thus, poachers' accounts of their own exploits emphasise these stories above the more prosaic, everyday escapades that must have made up the majority of their expeditions.

The following case studies highlight this ritualised aspect of the poaching narrative in particular detail. The sporting writer Thomas Johnson related his meeting with a miner called Siddall, a man so addicted to poaching that he came close to destitution through his refusal to give up the sport. Johnson described how 'Siddall related many of his adventures to me – his frequent pursuits by the keepers and watchers, his hair-breadth escapes, his having repeatedly lay concealed (at an advanced period of the season) till he was nearly stiff with cold'.[25] It is interesting that these were the tales that Siddall appeared to focus on and enjoy re-telling; words like 'frequent pursuits' and 'hair-breadth escapes' suggest the heroic escapades from a suspense novel with the poacher presenting himself as the story's hero. It was these occasions, relatively few though they probably were, that the poacher entered fully into the performance of his role as scoundrel and rogue, outwitting the cleverest officers of the law whilst living dangerously, outside the bounds of respectable society. In contrast, Siddall obviously chose to ignore the far darker aspects of his poaching career avoiding his frequent imprisonments and fines, the effect this had had on his wife and children and his consequent bankruptcy, which might have weakened his claim to have authority over his destiny.

Similarly, Arthur Lane remembered how he was once investigated by the local gamekeepers after reports circulated about his poaching activities. Lane recounted how the keepers came:

'An ask me whether I heard anyone shooting thereabouts last night. And I said, 'What time?' 'Oh about ten minutes to five' they said. 'Oh', I said. 'Well' I said, 'Not as I noticed'. 'Well, do you ever shoot?' 'Ooh, I've shot lots of times' I said, 'But not

[23] Watson, *Confessions*, no page.
[24] C. C. Trench, *The Poacher and The Squire. A History of Poaching and Game Preservation in England* (London: Longmans, Green and Co Ltd, 1967), p. 183.
[25] Thomas Johnson, *The Sportsman and Gamekeeper's Directory, and Complete Vermin Destroyer* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 1835), p. 3.

just lately'. I told them a lie then, that was the only lie I did tell in it. Not just lately. Well, there had been the night and the dinnertime the next day, so it wasn't all that, well you know'.[26]

In creating this narrative, Lane clearly chose to focus on certain aspects of the experience. He builds up tension with the tight, question and answer session, all the time emphasising that despite the danger, he maintained clear control over the situation. The frequent use of the word 'oh' emphasises Lane's calmness under pressure; it illustrates that he is not intimidated nor even slightly perturbed by the keeper's question or the chance that his misdemeanours may be exposed and found out. Lane's annoyance at having to lie is also interesting; his attempts to point out that it was only a half-lie show the importance of wits to the narrative of sport. For him at least, the real test of one's wits was to be able to tell the truth and still get away with the crime. What both examples show is that the ritual of retelling one's exploits was as important as carrying them out in the first place. Despite the difficulties imposed by the illegal nature of their hunts, recounting the story of them in a manner which emphasised their wits, cunning and success at evading the minions of the law were all part of poaching ritual. By doing so, they could weave a narrative which reflected their achievements and emphasised their authority and skill at the craft.

Such a narrative shows that in approach at least, proletarian sportspersons shared some similarities with their elite counterparts. Elite hunters could even be tempted to turn poacher themselves, despite the huge risks to their reputation if they were caught. Whilst stalking chamois in the Tyrolian Alps, Baillie-Grohman came across a prize buck grazing two-hundred yards over the border into Bavaria. He commented in frustration:

'My glass soon told me that it was a prize worthy of every effort, nay, almost worth turning poacher oneself. How unjust that this animal, which passed the greater part of the year on Tyrolese soil, should, because it happened to stray across an invisible boundary line, become the property of the King, just at the very time when the big royal chamois drives would, perhaps, cause him to run up to the rifle barrels of some pampered sportsman sitting on his camp-stool behind a bush, and anything but deserving the luck of bagging such a rare old buck, who was worthy of the hardest stalk man ever had!'[27]

The fact that Baillie-Grohman, a man capable of describing British poachers as 'evil', could think of stooping to poaching was an irony that evidently escaped him. In addition, his justification for such speculation is based on the authority invested in him by his recital of elite sportsmanship and ritual. The idea that he 'was worthy' of killing such a fine animal, having followed the correct rules and rituals of fair play and hard stalking, juxtaposes itself against the unfitness 'of some pampered sportsman' who is inferior to him as a specimen of manliness. Here, poaching is portrayed as morally justified even if it is technically illegal, ironically using similar concepts used by working-class poachers. He later described with childish glee how, after successfully bagging a chamois, 'more than one many-jointed German oath came as echo from the angry keepers' – an attitude that once again parallels that of the poachers he so despised back home.[28] Such satisfaction was presumably due to having outsmarted the keepers, drawing parallels to the anti-authoritarian attitude of many working-class miscreants and their desire to use their wits. It shows that the desire to poach and the reasons for doing so was fully capable of crossing class boundaries, even with the unlikeliest of proponents.

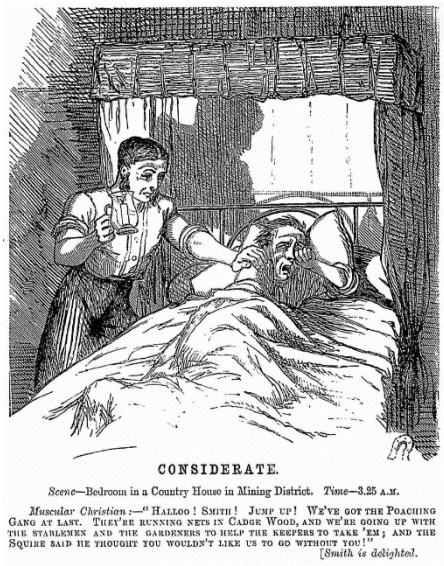
Perhaps this can best be explained by the cross-over which frequently occurred between elite and proletarian values. Despite the best efforts of upper-class sportspersons – keen to emphasise the exclusivity of their code – the values of fairness, restraint and emotional self-control did sometimes

[26] Lane, RPEFMC, BLSA.
[27] W. A. Baillie-Grohman, 'The Chamois', in *Big Game Shooting Vol. II*, ed. by the Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), p. 95, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[28] Ditto, pp. 80 and 97.

cross over into the activities of both poachers and gamekeepers. Even when they did not, the complexity of their moral codes show that such complicated systems of values were by no means the sole monopoly of the elite.

Fairness and Restraint: Conflict and Resignation

The concepts of fairness and restraint were interpreted far more loosely by both poachers and gamekeepers. Poachers tended to prioritise methods which sacrificed fairness for silence. Snares and nets were frequently used, together with more unorthodox methods like peas laced with horsehair which would catch in a bird's throat and cause it to suffocate. Such methods were seen as perfectly acceptable as they reinforced the key concepts of hunting via stealth and one's wits which poaching ritual encouraged. The reason for this stealth and intrigue is obvious; poachers relied on escaping detection to prevent getting caught. Failure to do so could have significant consequences which meant sacrificing sportsmanship for practicality. Equally, most gamekeepers battled with similar problems. Ensuring that game numbers remained steady was integral to keeping their job and therefore necessitated a serious approach towards stopping anything which might become a threat to those numbers. Therefore, being fair or restrained was also frequently ignored by the gamekeeping fraternity if it meant they got results.



CONSIDERATE.

Scene—Bedroom in a Country House in Mining District. *Time*—3.25 A.M.

Muscular Christian:—"HALLOO! SMITH! JUMP UP! WE'VE GOT THE POACHING GANG AT LAST. THEY'RE RUNNING NETS IN CADGE WOOD, AND WE'RE GOING UP WITH THE STABLEMEN AND THE GARDENERS TO HELP THE KEEPERS TO TAKE 'EM; AND THE SQUIRE SAID HE THOUGHT YOU WOULDN'T LIKE US TO GO WITHOUT YOU!"

[*Smith is delighted.*

Figure 5: Cartoons like this one demonstrate how poaching was often linked with violence in the minds of the general public. There was some truth to this perception but many poachers did also exhibit a moral code of sorts; albeit a rather unusual one. *Fun*, 4 January, 1862.

This ensured that encounters between gamekeepers and poachers were often violent. Poaching gangs were famed for being violent with references even appearing in the popular press. A cartoon in the humorous magazine *Fun*, entitled 'Considerate', typifies how such people were viewed as dangerous criminals (see figure 5). A man is seen waking another smaller man at 3.25am with the words 'Halloo! Smith! Jump up! We've got the poaching gang at last… we're going up with the stablemen and the gardeners to help the keepers to take 'em; and the squire said he thought you wouldn't like us to go without you!' We are told in brackets underneath that 'Smith is delighted'.[29] This cartoon clearly shows that by 1862, when it was published, such men had gained a real reputation as dangerous criminals. The fact that one would not wish to face them is obviously implicit in the humour, together with the more subtle detail that the squire – who is so anxious for his staff to aid in their capture – is not coming on the expedition. Although it is clearly exaggerated

[29] *Fun*, 4 January, 1862.

to increase the comedy, the situation being described was obviously common enough for the cartoonist to be confident that his audience would be familiar with the reference.

However, even encounters between recreational poachers and gamekeepers could sometimes end in violence. Estate steward Robert Dawson recounted in a letter to his employer Lord Dartmouth how the gamekeeper Kettle had successfully dealt with two poachers he had met. Dawson recounted how Kettle 'having caught one, the other returned to rescue him when Kettle held his man with one hand and knocked the assailant down with the other, who got up & ran away'.[30] Some landowners could be equally aggressive with Frank Read remembering how when a local landowner caught Joseph Arch poaching, 'he got onto him, you know, and he cursed him and struck him with a stick'.[31] Even when violence was deliberately abstained from, it was more about self-preservation than it was adherence to a particular code of honour. Oby talked of how 'they used to try and get me to fight the keeper when they did catch me with a wire, but I knowed as hitting is transporting, and just put my hands in my pockets and let 'em do as they liked'.[32] All these incidents show that results by any means necessary were the order of the day when it came to most encounters between poacher and gamekeeper in the field. The industrialised working environment and associated stress of gamekeeping in particular was enough to ensure that fair-play was never a luxury that most gamekeepers could afford to employ.

However, when it came to the actual courtroom an element of fairness was more self-evident. Most poachers exhibited little resentment at being punished and took their fine or short imprisonment philosophically. Unlike the strong resentment that most exhibited towards gamekeepers, they remained surprisingly fair-minded towards those charged with actually sentencing them. Watson observed how most poachers spoke extremely politely in court and revealed a kind of grudging respect for the magistrates that went beyond the merely cynical desire to avoid a severer sentence.[33] A poacher called Everett recorded several of the conversations he had with the bench when called to account for his crimes. Though disapproving, there was an almost fatherly air to some of these discussions. On one occasion, during which he was fined £1 15s:

'I remember saying to one of the magistrates, Sir, I hope you do not sit here to encourage people to swear to lies, and to permit a witness to swear to a man's identity when he is a mile away. The magistrates replied, 'We do not; neither do we sit here to allow you to judge to your own cause'. I said, no sir; I do not suppose that you do'.

On another occasion, Everett reminisced on how a magistrate greeted him with the phrase 'Well Everett, what's all this about?', which hardly suggests the overwhelming hatred exhibited by most members of the sporting elite.[34] Equally, such acceptance of punishment does not seem to fit with the anti-authoritarian attitude exhibited by many poachers. A possible explanation is that such acceptance was all about preserving authority through dignity. The act of being sentenced was fundamentally unbalanced in terms of the power being displayed, leaving the poacher distinctly vulnerable; in contrast to their encounters with the gamekeeper, where they could choose to fight or run away, the poacher had virtually no opportunity for escape. By accepting their fate with dignity, poachers were able to hang onto the appearance of still having some control over the eventual outcome even if that was not actually the case. However, the attitude of the landowner is

[30] Robt. Dawson to Lord Dartmouth: poaching incident, 30 May 1837, D853/A/3/12, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service: Staffordshire County Record Office.
[31] Read, *RPEFMC*, BLSA.
[32] Jeffries, *The Amateur Poacher*, no page.
[33] Watson, *Poacher and Poaching*, pp. 26-8.
[34] Z. Everett, *A Sketch of the Life of Z. Everett* (Norwich: Phillip Otty, 1867), pp. 12-13 and 15, <http://access.bl.uk>

equally striking. This paternalistic attitude towards poachers is somewhat unexpected, especially when viewed through the lens of class-conflict adopted by authors like Hopkins.[35]

However, this attitude becomes more understandable when considered in terms of the symbiotic relationship between poacher, landlord and gamekeeper that developed over the course of the nineteenth century. At the start of the period, poachers were prosecuted with an almost militant zeal and – even by the end of the century – many keen sportsmen exhibited an understandable dislike towards their misdemeanours. However, those landowners less keen on shooting sentenced casual poachers like Oby or Everett with far more restraint. They seemed to realise that such characters were unlikely to change and that it made good sense not to prosecute too severely. Even Oby himself recognised this relationship to some extent. He explained how:

'They all knows me now—my lard and the steward, and the keeper and the bailies, and the farmers; and they don't take half the notice of I as they used to. The keeper he don't dare, nor the policeman as I telled you, and the rest be got used to me and my ways'.[36]

Oby may possibly have exaggerated their tolerance to enhance his own authority. The phrase 'the rest be got used to me and my ways' emphasises his pride in having forced the authorities into accepting him. On the other hand, the idea that he had become part of the furniture and treated as a key element of the rural landscape is not by itself that remarkable. Siddall, the poacher interviewed by Johnson, ended his days as a gamekeeper after the local landowners, despairing of ever stopping his activities through punishment decided to make use of his talents by employing him instead. Such leniency was acceptable to help keep the peace. Jeffries speaks about a case of the tiny hamlet of Essant Hill, where an old estate was bought by those whom the locals described as 'town-bred'. Beset by an increase in poaching:

'There followed a succession of prosecutions and fines, till the place began to get a reputation for that sort of thing. It was at last intimated to the steward by certain gentlemen that this course of prosecution was extremely injudicious. For it is a fact—a fact carefully ignored sometimes—that resident gentlemen object to prosecutions, and, so far from being anxious to fine or imprison poachers, would very much rather not'.[37]

Therefore, while serious poaching endeavours could not be ignored, most landowners preferred to remain fairly lenient when dealing with casual poachers. Such action was prudent for maintaining a peaceful coexistence between the landlord and his tenants which, in the long run, actually prevented more harm being caused. As Patrick Martin explained, 'the best mode of preserving game, is to be on good terms with the farmer' as those who felt kindly disposed towards their landlord were less likely to poach themselves and more likely to help in preventing it.[38] Thus, it made sense for both sides to act with restraint in order to preserve their stock of moral authority. Poachers who poached too much might appear greedy and lose their claim to be acting morally while landowners who prosecuted too vigorously looked vindictive. It therefore made strategic sense to act with restrained fairness in order to preserve peace in the local community.

Fairness and Restraint: Results and Morality

[35] Hopkins, The Long Affray, pp. 1-16, 109-124 and 263-316
[36] Jeffries, *The Amateur Poacher*, no page.
[37] Ditto.
[38] Patrick Martin, *Martin's Sportman's Almanack, Kalendar, and Travellers' Guide, for 1818* (London: W. Smith, 1818), p. 8, <http://access.bl.uk>

Similarly, some gamekeepers had a personal code that emphasised a kind of authoritarian restraint when it came to dealing with poachers. We have already seen how most gamekeepers reacted aggressively towards poachers, especially if forced to act in self-defence. However, experienced keepers did demonstrate fair-minded restraint when it came to dealing with poaching in abnormal circumstances. Trench recalled a certain gamekeeper who explained that when he caught young boys poaching eggs, he preferred to humiliate or scare rather than have them arrested.[39] Such behaviour was normally motivated by high spirits and he knew that a successful prosecution could have negative ramifications on their futures. This kind of hard but fair interpretation of the rules was clearly the result both of experience and a personal code that did not want to mar someone's life merely for the sake of justice. As with 'Old Phil', such behaviour helped to project the image of moral authority which was integral for the gamekeeper's sense of self. The idea that he was wielding his authority in a sensible manner, bending the rules rather than sticking to them rigidly, was probably deliberately designed to keep the peace between himself and the rural community he was a part of. As we have already explored, an overly zealous attitude was treated by the rural community with both contempt and annoyance. Jeffries remembered how as a boy, he and his best friend regularly poached on the land of a nearby gamekeeper, despite the fact they were able to shoot legally on the land of a local farmer. The reason for this was partly the desire for excitement but also because they hated the keeper's over protective attitude towards his game.[40] This demonstrates how a keeper's authority could be enhanced by acting with restraint when the circumstances allowed it.

Equally, a poacher's authority could be strengthened if he gave the impression that he followed a general moral code rather simply poached game wantonly. As with other poaching rituals, there was often a practical purpose as well as an abstract one to acting with restraint during one's poaching activities. Jeffries talks of how a good poacher, 'if he gets three hares a night... he is well repaid' while Lane emphasised that 'all poachers should not do, go to the same place two nights together [sic]'.[41] Such rules also made poachers seem more responsible, acting along lines of a preconceived code of conduct rather than being motivated by greed or money. Not all poachers followed this trend of course; the poaching gangs which were more common nearer to large towns and cities were far more likely to make big hauls, as their larger size made them more intimidating and less easy to stop. They also seem to have sometimes diverted themselves into other criminal activities; the poachers of the New Fordham Gang who operated near Chelmsford were charged with stealing 'sheep, fowls, and corn' in addition to their other poaching activities.[42]

Elite sportspersons tended to reinforce this view, seeing all poachers as nothing more than common criminals. Johnson argued that 'they [poachers in general] cannot chalk out the line of wrong beyond which they will not pass. Confining their nocturnal excursions to the snaring of hares and netting of partridges... they are [soon] tempted to compensate the deficiency by plunder of some kind'.[43] For Johnson, there was no difference morally between a poacher and a thief and – according to him – committing the former was bound to lead to the other.[44] Restraint was the very last thing that recreational poaching would encourage. On the other hand, 'Old Phil' was once again very keen to portray himself as acting within a clear set of moral guidelines. He argued that recreational poachers

[39] Trench, *The Poacher*, pp. 159-163.
[40] Jeffries, *The Amateur Poacher*, no page.
[41] Jeffries, *The Gamekeeper*, p. 155; Arthur Lane, part 36, (19/04/1974), *RPEFMC*, BLSA.
[42] *Chelmsford Chronicle*, reprinted in *Bell's Life in London*, 26 March, 1826.
[43] Johnson, *Directory*, p. 139.
[44] There was a legal difference though, due to wild animals not being seen to belong to anybody. Poachers were prosecuted for trespass rather than theft; they were only arraigned for theft when they stole game birds yet to be released into the wild.

like himself were just as capable of acting with the restraint of elite sportspersons, arguing that 'we have almost invariably observed close times, and have rarely killed a hare or game-bird out of season'. He also claimed that he never took the eggs of game birds as 'my father give it the ugly name of thieving'.[45] His argument that ordinary people – even poachers – were just as capable of creating rules similar to those of the elite flew right in the face of everything these upper-class hunters stood for. As we observed in chapter two, conforming to these sophisticated rules and rituals was how the elite community defined themselves and how they endowed themselves with the authority to continue to dictate sporting protocol. Johnson's argument that poachers were simply common criminals fits into this framework very nicely; by divesting them both of morality and the ability to follow any distinct moral guidelines, Johnson was attempting to destroy the suggestion that they had any authority whatsoever.

Therefore, for 'Old Phil' to suggest that he was just as capable of following such ritual was distinctly radical, whether he realised it or not. His claim that he did not take eggs shows the ability to moderate his behaviour, in contrast to Johnson's claims that poaching inevitably led to the committing of more serious crimes. Which author came closest to describing the general mindset prevalent amongst the poaching fraternity at the time is difficult to say and – in a way – almost beside the point! The fact that some poachers were capable of creating a kind of moral framework is enough to show that rituals and morals were not the monopoly of the elite. Therefore, although not exactly the same as the elite framework of sportsmanship, there was a kind of moral code which did surround the activities of the poaching community. However, unlike the strict rules adopted by the elite, the moralities of poaching were more fluid. They could be circumvented, provided that the poacher was still able to recite other rituals which showcased his authority.

When the rules of restraint and fairness were bypassed, the most common reason seems to have been to enable the poacher to gain an advantage over their enemies. The idea of gaining even a small victory over their social superiors was so strong routed in their cultural DNA that even recreational poachers would sometimes go to the very limits of what constituted poaching over straight up theft. Their excuse seems to have been that they were still using their wits, an activity which already garnered them cultural credit as individuals of authority. This gave them more freedom when interpreting the other rituals. The writer 'ϕ.ɾ.' related a story told to him by an old poacher named Moody which illustrates this flexibility. Deputised by the Warden of Huntingford to obtain some trout 'as big as those tame trout in my stream which the ladies feed', the old poacher readily agreed to the task. Then – when the Warden and the other lodge staff were attending chapel – Moody 'slipped through the lodge and got into the Warden's garden… and… took out four of the finest trout you ever saw; and the next evening… took them to the Warden, who gave half-a-crown apiece for them'. Such trickery was not unusual, even amongst very young poachers. Henry Barter recalled how, as a young boy, he and his friends use to poach rabbits and then sell them to the man who delivered the Sunday papers. Barter remembered how, after selling him some rabbits at the top end of the village:

'Then he go down and deliver his paper on his way down to Lower Anstey and they used to creep up and take a couple or three rabbits out of the cart again and go on down again to the pubs children down there and sell them to him again! [both laugh] Oh, the bloody games they used to get up to!'

Johnson would have argued that both these acts of theft highlighted his point that poachers were as criminally minded as other felons. However, Moody and Barter's motivations and reactions seem to point in a different direction. On the one hand, both were clearly very pleased with the boldness of

[45] Watson, *Confessions*, no page.

their deceptions, Moody finishing his account with the roguish phrase 'but mums the word!' and Barter laughing heartily at the climax of the story. This is hardly surprising given that the narrative of the crime fitted in nicely with the ritualisation of wit and ingenuity which the poaching fraternity prioritised in their accounts. However, both also portrayed regret at having betrayed the confidence of someone who had trusted them. Moody punctuated his account with the phrase 'God forgive me!' which suggests mixed emotions about his own actions; likewise Barter used the more earthy phrase 'oh, the bloody games they used to get up to!', conveying both pride and the admission that such actions were not very honest.[46] Over all, both men obviously had mixed feelings about their past actions; they had evidently dined out on the stories for years, recalling the values of cunning and intelligence that all poachers aimed to show. Nevertheless, the fact that they also exhibited regret as well as assurance shows that – while restraint and fairness may have featured less highly in their priorities – they were still virtues that poachers saw as important.

By contrast, restraint was less of a factor for gamekeepers when in the exercise of their duties. The reason for this however, was less ethical and more practical. As Annie Coleman has discussed with reference to American guides, the latter part of the nineteenth century saw the transference of ideas surrounding industrialisation to the rural sphere. However, while Coleman sees this in terms of transmission of skills, industrialisation can be applied far more literally to game shooting.[47] The running of an estate was not dissimilar to running a factory with emphasis on hierarchy amongst the keepers and a paranoia over meeting production targets. This dictated attitudes towards the quarry, especially vermin. The warfare gamekeepers waged against nuisance species is only too apparent when reading sporting treatises. Vermin were frequently embodied with negative human characteristics by the elite, often being portrayed as the natural equivalents of human poachers. Teasdale described how 'the fox is the worst partridge poacher' while Watson argued that 'compared with the doings of human 'mouchers,' vermin were 'tenfold more destructive'.[48] The fact that these animals were described as comparable or worse than human criminals must have made it easier to kill them whilst it also bolstered the authority of the keeper as a morally righteous individual. Equally, the uncompromising attitude of their employers made any show of restraint when dealing with the problem distinctly limited.

Nevertheless, gamekeepers were able to turn this social and environmental change to their advantage when it came to endowing themselves with authority. By proving themselves prolific vermin hunters, they could show off both their prowess and professionalism through newly created rituals. The institution of the gibbet – where deceased vermin were displayed openly – was a common cultural transaction that occurred between the elite and their staff. For the employer, the ritual was all about ensuring that their employees remained on top of the situation and did not slacken their protection. For the keeper, the ritual was about gaining recognition. There was little difference between the vermin strung up on the gibbet and the taxidermic specimens on the walls of most stately homes. They reinforced the masculinity of the keeper in a similar manner, showing his authority over the natural world by demonstrating his continued success at his job. The central difference between the two was that the keeper's trophies were not taxidermized, meaning that they were transitory rather than long lasting testaments. This burden to maintain standards meant that gamekeepers were under continual pressure to uphold their performance levels. This explains

[46] *Baily's Monthly Magazine of Sports and Pastimes, and Racing Register*, Vol. XXXVIII, Issue 263, 1 January, 1882, pp. 47-48.
[47] Annie Coleman, 'Rise of the House of Leisure: Outdoor Guides, Practical Knowledge, and Industrialization', *Western Historical Quarterly,* 42, no. 4, 2011, 436–57, (pp. 438-440).
[48] Teasdale-Buckell, *The Complete English Wing Shot*, p. 262; Watson, *Poachers*, p. 223.

most gamekeepers lack of restraint. It was not that such concepts were beyond them – it was simply that they did not have the luxury of performing it themselves. Indeed, it was entirely due to their staff that the elite could live up to their own standards of sportsmanship while still continuing to preserve game. By contrast, gamekeepers were not able to indulge in the extravagance of such an identity which explains why they had to show their authority through their commitment and professionalism.

Emotional Self-Control: Risk and Servility

Perhaps the closest similarities between gamekeepers, poachers and the elite were demonstrated by their self-control, especially when actively engaged in hunting. There is no evidence that poachers felt guilty about their activities; 'Old Phil' might describe the sound made by a hair in distress as a 'piteous squeal' but appeared more worried that the noise would attract unwelcome attention than that his quarry might be suffering.[49] While some poachers showed an interest in their quarry that went beyond the merely practical, it is clear that they had no moral qualms that their behaviour as a whole. Where they did differ was in their attitude towards excitement. As we have seen, elite sportspersons tended to emphasise their authority over the hunt by expressing an attitude of calm which showcased their control over the narrative even when it appeared dangerous. By contrast, recreational poachers tended to emphasise the danger to try and make the narrative as exciting as possible. Doing this enhanced their identity as rule breakers as well as making their success look all the greater; rather than accentuating their authority through calmness, poachers highlighted their wits and skill to create a similar outcome.

Examples of this approach abound in the narratives created by successful poachers. A. B. Taylor – a prominent nonconformist minister in Manchester – described how, before his conversion, he dabbled in poaching back in his native Scotland. After describing how he and a friend successfully shot around a dozen pheasants, he then dwells on the excitement they felt after they returned the next day and saw the gamekeeper posting up wanted posters for the arrest of the perpetrators. [50] In a similar fashion, Jeffries remembered how as an adolescent, he frequently poached 'out of pure mischief' because it involved a 'little spice of risk'.[51] The emphasis on these aspects of poaching was made for two reasons. The first was that it provided a useful escape clause; both writers had long since abandoned the indiscretions of the past and it helped their social credibility to frame these misdemeanours as acts of youthful 'mischief'. However, it also made the author feels more approachable and human; rather than the superior confidence enhanced by the elite narrative, the reader feels a deeper level of empathy towards the narrator. This is key not only for portraying the poacher as different from an ordinary criminal but also in highlighting their authority. By being able to risk 'that little spice of danger' and triumph over their enemies, poachers were creating an authority also based on self-control but in an entirely different fashion. Keeping calm under pressure was just as important to them as it was for the elite but by emphasising the excitement and danger, they seemed all the more capable when they successfully overcame it.

By contrast, self-restraint was a much greater part of the identity of the gamekeeper, perhaps because of their closer connection with the elite. The cultural transactions that went on between employer, gamekeeper and guest were complicated, with both sides expected to conform to a

[49] Watson, *Confessions*, no page.
[50] A. B. Taylor, 'Memoirs', in *Six Remarkable Ministers*, ed. by B. A. Ramsbottom (Harpenden: Gospel Standard Trust Publications, 1994), pp. 84-137, (p. 96).
[51] Jeffries, *The Amateur Poacher*, no page.

particular standard. Jones was unusual for a gamekeeper in that his middle-class upbringing placed him on a social par with many of sportspersons he worked for. Despite this, he wrote that 'I made it an inflexible rule never to presume in any way, or to take the least advantage of the fact that in private life I was perhaps not greatly inferior to those with whom I sometimes was brought into official contact'.[52] It is interesting that despite his social status, Jones felt the need to conform to gamekeeping type which suggests there was a certain template that respective gamekeepers were expected to follow. Confirmation to this type of behaviour was an expected part of the keeper's role, emphasising his position as a respectable and polite employee in the eyes of the elite.

Politeness however, was not the same as servility. Most senior gamekeepers had no hesitation in speaking their minds if they thought what they had to say was important, knowing that their views would be treated with respect. In popular culture, it was widely acknowledged that gamekeepers and ghillies had a lot of soft power when it came to directing the activities of visiting sportspersons, irrespective of their superior social position. In a *Punch* cartoon published in 1860, the artist John Leech poked fun at this relationship in a piece entitled 'Partridge Shooting in the Highlands'. Coming face to face with one of his hosts pet bison, the nervous sportsman asks the keeper 'I trust, my good fellow, this is not the season you spoke of which these creatures – you know – eh – what – a – a – are dangerous'. By contrast, the keeper looks relaxed and even amused by the animal's presence. Despite the sportsman's attempts to maintain his superior social station with his use of the phrase 'my good fellow', the cartoon makes it plain that he is completely dependent on his companion's knowledge and expertise (see figure 6).[53]

PARTRIDGE SHOOTING IN THE HIGHLANDS.

On his way to that Turnip Field, our dear Old Briggs passes through the Park in which his Friend's favourite Bisons are kept. He says to Geordie the Keeper: "I trust, my good Fellow, this is not the Season you spoke of in which these Creatures—you know—eh—what—a—a—are DANGEROUS!"

Figure 6: A cartoon by John Leech, demonstrating the acknowledgement that, despite their inferior social status, a gamekeeper's knowledge and experience frequently put them in a position of authority over visiting sportspersons, as demonstrated by this keeper's casual attitude in the face of apparent danger. John Leech, *Punch Magazine*, 15 September, 1860, <https://punch.photoshelter.com>

This situation was mirrored in real life. In a letter to an enquirer about partridge rearing, head keeper Robert Ball wrote with masterly deference to one much higher up the social ladder. '1. Do I pick up first-laid eggs? No, unless she [the hen partridge] lays more than 24, then I reserve them for another nest; sometimes I allow them 26, not more. 2. Yes, she would lay again; but I believe strongly in early chicks.'[54] Here, Ball remains true to the idea of the polite employee with his short, deferent responses whilst clearly demonstrating his superior knowledge over that of his correspondent. Senior gamekeepers could thus impart both their knowledge and their authority over those technically above them, simply through their use of language. In a similar manner, Diane

[52] Jones, *Ten Years*, p. 5.
[53] *Punch Magazine*, 15 September, 1860.
[54] Teasdale-Buckell, *The Complete English Wing Shot*, p. 259.

Chasseresse[55] noted that her ghillie Sandy strove to remain as polite as possible despite her frequent mistakes at deer stalking, whilst still remaining in charge. Her account is peppered with phrases like 'Sandy moves on again' and 'Sandy says nothing more' after some slight error on her part. Chasseresse noted with amusement how after failing to shoot a stag after a long stalk, the ghillie made a rare outburst, muttering behind her back that she 'jist mak' him seeck.'[56] However, such direct speech was unusual and probably more permissible from a ghillie who, in addition to having a tougher job, had the advantage of being Scottish which meant that he could conform to the Scottish stereotype of gruff independence. Chasseresse was obviously not offended by his criticism, considering her apologetic recognition of Sandy's expertise.

Such a ritualised understanding between keeper and employer was pivotal to their continued relationship. By appearing deferential, the gamekeeper played up to the elite fraternity's ethos of authority and superiority. However, by accepting that their employees frequently had more knowledge than they did, the elite were able to take advice while simultaneously boosting the keeper's ego by recognising his authority as an expert. By complimenting each other, the relationship between the elite and their estate staff flourished, irrespective of the cultural and societal problems many gamekeepers experienced. By contrast, the culture of poaching thrived by pitting itself against the elite. By seeking to control the narrative of their stories and ritually emphasising their morality and intelligence, many recreational poachers showed an impressive use of cultural theory, using values normally associated with the elite to emphasise their authority. At times, both these fraternities even threatened to interfere with the elite monopoly on hunting culture, showing that social position was not integral to creating cultural authority or complex rituals.

Like it's rural equivalents, urban blood sports also possessed rituals designed to enhance the authority of those taking part which were every bit as complex as those of the elite. However, unlike the areas we have already examined, urban blood sports were far less successful in presenting this authority to the rest of society as they declined in popularity and became outlawed mid-way through the period we are examining. Despite this, it did possess many similarities with its rural equivalents and frequently used rituals to express similar aspects of authority even if the rituals themselves were distinct from those of other blood sports. This culture proved surprisingly resilient even as the social and environmental landscape rapidly changed around it. The next chapter will attempt to explore both these phenomena in greater detail as well as attempting to explain why urban blood sports ultimately became socially unacceptable despite possessing these complicated cultural constructs.

[55] A pseudonym meaning 'Diana the Huntress', a reference to the Greek goddess of the hunt.
[56] Diane Chasseresse, 'Deer Stalking and Deer Driving', in *Ladies in the Field, Sketches of Sport*, ed. by Violet Greville (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894), no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>

Chapter 4 – Baiting and Fighting: The Culture of Urban Blood Sports

On 16th May 1822, the celebrated humanitarian and keen fox hunting MP Richard Martin launched a petition in the House of Commons denouncing the sport of dog fighting. Prompted by a recent fight which had pitted a large monkey against a renowned fighting dog, Martin referred to the sport as 'the savage and abominable treatment of animals' and 'brutality for the sake of gain'. He urged for the creation of legislation banning a sport which he argued 'could not be called amusement'.[1] Martin's views were a fore runner for what by the end of the nineteenth century would become the default way of examining urban blood sports in general. There was a clear split in the social landscape between blood sports that were respectable and those that were not. Elite blood sports and the profession of gamekeeping were not only legal but seen as beneficial by large portions of British society. Even poaching, while not strictly legal, had an element of social acceptability due to the romanticism which many poachers were able to surround their misdemeanours. Thanks to rituals and narratives which emphasised the casual poacher as witty, humorous and having a basic code of values, such sportspersons were able to present themselves in a likeable manner which, as Stephen Ridgwell has explored at length, became firmly intrenched in popular culture.[2]

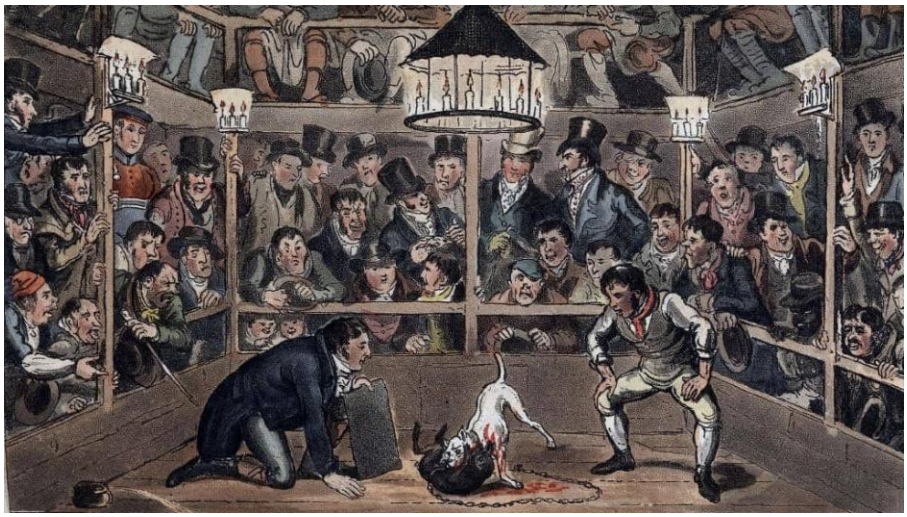


Figure 7: A caricature created by George and Isaac Cruikshank, illustrating the fight which so angered Richard Martin. Interestingly, Cruikshank concentrates less on the fight itself and more on the people observing and taking part. The frequently brutish expressions of those involve reinforce the idea that such sports have little in the way of either rules or rituals and are simply an excuse for excessive behaviour. Such artwork illustrates nicely how opposition to urban bloodsports was as much about social control as it was about humanitarian values. Illustration found in *Life in London* by Pierce Egan (London, 1821).

By contrast, the public image of urban blood sports like dog fighting, bull running, cock fighting and badger baiting was very different. Support for such pastimes was fairly strong at the start of the nineteenth century but it ebbed away with surprising speed, leaving the sport to be patronised by a small, tightly knit community which had a strong sense of identity but no public authority. Commenting on a source from the time of Queen Anne, the legal commentator Francis Frederick Brandt observed in 1871 how 'the notion of classing cockfighting with cards and races' seemed 'singular' by modern standards, thus showing how low the sports prestige had sunk.[3] Urban blood sports were stigmatized as poorly organized, bastardisations of their legitimate rivals with few rules and no rituals. As well as causing cruelty to animals, they were also seen as morally destructive to

[1] Morning Chronicle, 17 May, 1822

[2] Stephen John Ridgwell, 'On a shiny night': The Representation of the English Poacher, c.1830-1920' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2017), pp. 116-155.

[3] Frances Frederick Brandt, *Games, Gaming and Gamesters' Law* (London: H. Sweet, 1871), pp. 18, 76.

their human participants; this, combined with existing class prejudices, made them much easier to ban than their rural counterparts as they could be portrayed as entirely focused on cruelty and bloodlust rather than about competition and sportsmanship (see figure 7). Those that pursued the sport lacked both the tools and the desire to stamp their authority over its public image which ultimately explains their eventual dissolution.

As with poaching, such responses are still discernible in the academic scholarship today. The overwhelming majority of academic works centre around the moral dilemma created by such sports and the legislation which banned them. Harriet Ritvo and Emma Griffin both chart the rise of this humanitarian debate, choosing to focus on why baiting and fighting sports were banned when elite blood sports were not.[4] By contrast, Monica Flegel and Anna Feuerstein looks at the humanitarian movement through a more modern perception, analysing the philosophical ideas behind this change in public opinion.[5] There is nothing wrong with either of these approaches but it does mean that the historian is bogged down by the issue of morality which tends to overshadow this area. It also means that such sports are viewed not from the position of the people who practiced them, but rather through the eyes of those who abolished them. This means that the historian examines the history surrounding such sports, rather than looking at the sports themselves and the culture they created. As a counterpoint, this thesis aims to build on the work of Guy Woolnough and Neal Garnham who have both explored blood sports from a more cultural perspective over small geographical areas.[6] The ideas they explore about how blood sports were frequently linked with existing cultural practices in working-class areas is a useful model on which to explore how the culture of urban blood sports was created.

In addition, ideas created by sociologists to try and explain deviant behaviour in modern sports is equally useful when unravelling the rituals instigated by the blood sports community. Eric Dunning, Amanda Keddie and Ilan Tamir each offer a different perspective on violence in sport, linking it with concepts of community, gender and communication.[7] These dovetail nicely with the work of gender historians like John Tosh and Pamela Walker who have explored ideas of working-class masculinity and authority in nineteenth century Britain.[8] Utilising the ideas and techniques created by this disparate set of academics helps to uncover some of the cultural constructs and rituals created by

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[4] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 130-157; Emma Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain Since 1066* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 124-151.

[5] Monica Flegel, 'How Does Your Collar Suit Me?': The Human Animal in the RSPCA's Animal World and Band of Mercy', *Victorian Literature & Culture*, Vol. 40 Issue 1, March 2012, 247-262; Anna Feuerstein, 'I Promise to Protect Dumb Creatures' Pastoral Power and the Limits of Victorian Nonhuman Animal Protection', *Society & Animals*, Vol. 23, Issue 2, 2015, 148-165.

[6] Guy Woolnough, 'Blood Sports in Victorian Cumbria: Policing Cultural Change', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2014, 278–294; Neal Garnham, 'The Survival of Popular Blood Sports in Victorian Ulster', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, Vol. 107C, 2007, 107-126.

[7] Eric Dunning, *Sports Matters: Sociological Studies of Sport, Violence and Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1999); Amanda Keddie, 'On Fighting and Football: Gender Justice and Theories of Identity Construction', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Vol. 18, No. 4, July-August 2005, 425-444; Ilan Tamir, 'The Object is the Message: Sports, Violence, and Throwing Objects onto Fields', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, Vol. 51, March-April 2020, 1-5.

[8] John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005); *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*, ed. by Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991); Martin A. Danahay, *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture: Literature, Art and Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005); Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual, Authority and the English Industrial City* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

the urban blood sports fraternity and helps us to understand what ideas they were chasing. Perhaps surprisingly, there was a certain amount of overlap between the elite and the proletarian fraternities with similar values like authority and fairness being explored through quite different rituals. Therefore, despite a number of challenges facing the prospective historian of urban blood sports, unravelling the rituals and concepts which made up the sports culture is definitely worthwhile.

The first problem that confronts the historian seeking to examine the culture of blood sports is one of source material. The difficulty lies primarily in social acceptability. Not only were such sportspersons frequently lacking in the wealth and position needed to get memoirs published, the sports they were involved in were so socially unacceptable that by the end of the nineteenth century, it was highly unlikely that books advocating such pursuits would have been published. The additional factor that they were also illegal undoubtedly added to their covert nature and means that even oral interviews with proponents are comparatively scarce. This means the historian is often forced to fall back on newspapers and court records which – although helpful – give the merest glimpses into the worldview of those taking part. For example, a report of a prosecution for dog and cockfighting in Southwark, London, listed some of the occupations of those involved including a potman, a carpenter, a tanner and a coffeehouse keeper which gives us a tiny peep into their world while only giving the smallest clues as to what motivated such a disparate group of people to unite around such entertainment.[9] This means that the historian is forced to turn detective, piecing together the culture from a limited and fragmented body of sources. Despite this, there is enough material available to make a reconstruction of this culture not only possible but academically stimulating.

A further problem encountered is the almost complete erasure of urban blood sports from the narrative created by the elite blood sports fraternity. Such sports, with their greater emphasis on competition and violence, did not fit in well with the image of morality and sportsmanship which the community were seeking to create. The elite fraternity removed this threat to their authority by simply excluding it from the conversation and combatting any suggestion that their sports were similar. When Lord Young suggested in court that cock fighting was no worse than hunting or racing, he was immediately challenged by blood sports enthusiasts in the local press. A contributor to the *Dundee Courier* was outraged by the suggestion, arguing that this was unfair as 'it [cockfighting] is much more degrading than either of these two amusements'.[10] After the *Morning Advertiser* made similar comments, this time arguing that hare coursing was far crueller than cock fighting, the *Pall Mall Gazette* published a stinging reply, asserting that this was an 'extraordinary specimen of dogmatism and ignorance'.[11] According to a letter published in the *Birmingham Daily Post* in 1863, the difference between hunting and baiting was that 'in the one case the brutal fight is the pleasure – in the other the chase only'.[12] As Griffin notes, there was an element of hypocrisy in this; competition and violence were both integral to elite blood sports albeit in more sanitised forms.[13]

However, the comments also demonstrate the elite fraternity's social awareness concerning changes to the social landscape. In order to save their own sport, it was necessary to divorce themselves from similar activities which might destroy their reputation. However, in doing this they successfully eradicated any claim that urban blood sports had to similar cultural constructions. Against a changing and increasingly challenging social landscape, these enthusiasts continued to try and assert

[9] *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 19 January, 1867
[10] *Dundee Courier*, 24 December, 1892
[11] Reproduced in *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 19 January, 1867
[12] *Birmingham Daily Post*, 6 May, 1863
[13] Griffin, *Blood Sport*, pp. 149-151.

their authority with a variety of rules and rituals every bit as complicated as their elite and rural counterparts. This created a culture that was similar, yet distinctive, when compared to both elite and working-class hunting cultures.

Authority, Power and Excitement at the Stamford Bull Running

As with most blood sports, urban blood sports had been a prevalent feature of the British sporting scene for hundreds of years prior to 1800. However, their strong link with urban centres meant that they were possibly more integral to the culture of local communities than their rural equivalents. Unlike the latter, class was far less of a divisive issue within the sport which meant that urban blood sports could become issues around which whole communities could unite. Such cultural identification can best be seen in the long history of bull running in the Lincolnshire village of Stamford. Since 1389, the people of Stamford had held a yearly event where a bull was released, chivvied through the town, baited with dogs and then slaughtered for its meat. Becoming something of a cause celebre in the 1820s and 30s, the practice did not die out until 1839 after the local mayor was forced to involve local army units to help keep order. Our concern however, is not the morality of the sport but the ritualization involved and how this was used to try and propagate the authority both of the individual townsperson and the community as a whole.

Central to this theme were ideas of celebration and enjoyment which made the bull running a prime example of 'festivalisation'. Similar to Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of carnivalization – where the sacred is turned into the profane – 'festivalisation' describes the process where the mundane is transformed into the exciting. At its core, the object of the Stamford festival was fairly prosaic. During the Middle Ages, meat was a seasonal commodity and the slaughtering of animals would have been a yearly event which occurred every autumn. However, the process of slaughtering an animal is not particularly exciting. What was needed were rituals which turned the killing into an exhilarating mock hunt by enraging the bull, driving it through the streets and then attempting to toss it over the bridge into the river. What might pass away unnoticed is that this was a surprisingly radical construction for the time. During the Middle Ages, hunting was strictly preserved for the elite and even in the nineteenth century, it was still a closely guarded monopoly. By actively creating their own hunting experience – albeit through using a domestic animal – baiting enthusiasts were seeking to assert their own authority by creating similar sports as well as trying to enjoy themselves.

In a similar manner to recreational poaching, urban blood sports often used comparable types of concepts and rituals to the elite but for dynamically different reasons. Unlike elite blood sports, where the spectacle was all about dignifying the hunt and showcasing the morality of the participants, the purpose of ritual in Stamford was far more ordinary. Just like poaching, entertainment was a key part of the ritualisation but the crucial difference was that enjoyment made up a far bigger part of the sport's ritual. Shocked by the brutality, commentators from outside the town frequently saw the event as nothing but an organised riot with a bit of cruelty thrown in for good measure. A correspondent for *Bell's Life in London* described how they saw 'the hivie, skivy, tag and rag, men, women, and children of all sorts and sizes, with all the dogs in the town, promiscuously running after him [the bull] with their bull-clubs' while *The Sunday Times* observed how 'the poor animal was driven by about 200 ruffians, armed with bludgeons'.[14] Judging by their use of words such as 'hivie', 'skivy' and 'ruffians', their analysis of the situation seems to have been that it was only the very lowest and most immoral members of society who would degrade

[14] *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 22 November, 1835; *The Sunday Times*, 27 November, 1836

themselves in this way. However, it is easy to understand why such ritualization was so effective in garnering local support from Stamford's poorest residents.

Sociologists like Eric Dunning have hypothesised that the reason sport is such a popular part of many people's lives today is because such voluntary activity acts as a break from the monotony and routine of everyday life.[15] Such a theory can be easily applied to the nineteenth century especially when one considers the even greater social divide which existed during this period. For the town's citizenry, the event was essentially a yearly holiday; businesses closed, workers were given a day off and people flooded into the town from the surrounding area. The event was therefore a release for many of the town's poorer inhabitants from the hum-drum and poverty of everyday life, crowned by the feeling of power which the sport gave them. This, together with the holiday atmosphere and longevity of the occasion, means that it is altogether unsurprising that the event gained such a strong cultural fix in the affections of Stamford's inhabitants.

Unsurprisingly, when attempts were made to ban the festival from the early 1820s onwards, the result was widespread hostility from all sections of society. In 1831, the town elected two MPs partially on their promises to maintain the bull running while any active attempts to combat the event by humanitarians caused violent backlash. As the *Stamford Mercury* commented on the 1833 bull running – after attempts were made by the SPCA to stop the proceedings – 'there was rather more excess on Wednesday than on a similar occasion for some years before; and this [is] attributable to the very efforts which had been made to prevent it'.[16] In other words, it was not the bull running itself that had caused them to sally forth in support. As Garnham has observed in relation to Ulster, it was this attack on their cultural heritage that caused such an eruption of emotion from all sections of Stamford society.[17] This demonstrates how successful the ritualisation was in making the event integral to the life of the local community by giving them power and the opportunity to unwind. However, they had been far less successful in broadcasting their moral right to continue the sport. This is a recurring theme throughout the ritualization of urban blood sports; enthusiasts were extremely good at creating a culture which bound the enthusiasts together but far less effective when it came to balancing this with an outward persona of morality.

Communal Authority and the Power of Ritual

The link between community and blood sports was not just apparent in Stamford. In the north of England, sports like bull baiting were essential parts of working-class culture, the associated rituals becoming an important part of daily life in the early part of the century. In such communities it considered a social affront if a bull were not baited before being killed. One ritual from the town of Kendal – stated to be quite common before bull baiting was outlawed there in 1790 – illustrates this point nicely. If any bull had been killed un-baited, then the seller was required to hang a lantern, permanently lighted, illuminating a large sign that said 'bull beef' on in it in readable letters as long as the meat was on sale. This exposed them to the social ridicule of their fellow townsfolk and presumably acted as an effective deterrent to those who might wish to forego the ceremony. While slightly outside our time period, it does give some perspective on how socially authoritative blood sports could be. Nor was this an isolated incident. In Penrith, the local meat market allegedly

[15] Dunning, *Sports Matters*, pp. 2-3.
[16] *Stamford Mercury*, 15 November, 1833, p. 3.
[17] Neal Garnham, 'The Survival of Popular Blood Sports in Victorian Ulster', pp. 118-125.

rejected any bull carcasses where the animal had not been baited right up until the sport became outlawed in the 1820s.[18]

This close link between blood sports on the one hand and local communities on the other is worthy of further attention. As at Stamford, the primary emphasis of the sport was on entertainment. Witnesses describing the crowds which thronged to bull baits frequently emphasised their excitement; accounts of bull baits in Wokingham noted how 'the crowd applauds vociferously' when a dog was successfully tossed.[19] However, entertainment alone was not the only reason for such impressive authority. There were genuine reasons why bull baiting was seen as a positive thing to encourage amongst cattle destined to be eaten. Not only was there the widespread belief that vigorous exercise immediately before slaughter would tenderise the meat, it also meant there were many witnesses to the state of the bull before it was killed, stopping butchers from passing off older specimens as prime beef. Therefore, these rituals served a serious regulatory purpose which explains why whole communities would unite to ensure that the sport was maintained. Nor was this simply the case with bull baiting. In an interview recorded in the 1970s, retired Staffordshire policeman Tony Langley remembered how 'if a cock was a runner or got beat, then they [the local cockfighters] used to ring his neck straight away… and very often, of course, they'd take him home and then they would stew the cockerel'.[20] This utilitarian mix of sport, ritual and practicality differed markedly from elite ritualization but makes sense when one considers the social and monetary status of many enthusiasts. Unlike the elite, the blood sports community saw nothing wrong with combining sport with subsistence and making money or providing food through their sporting activities was seen as beneficial rather than disreputable.

By contrast, other social benefits were derived through more abstract concepts. In contrast to elite society, where physical confrontation would have been seen as extremely deviant behaviour, further down the social hierarchy violence was far more culturally acceptable. Pamela Walker has already explored how drinking, gambling and fighting were fundamental parts of working-class culture at this time and served as both a release and a way of broadcasting one's masculinity to one's peers.[21] The violence of the bait was therefore seen in a totally different manner through the eyes of its patrons compared to that of an elite bystander. To an enthusiast, the bait was the ultimate test in masculinity, with both bull and dog having to exhibit courage and resilience in order to be successful. This idea that the contest might have been seen as inspirational is further supported by anecdotal evidence. According to Jacob Robinson and Sidney Gilpin, there was a tradition in many Cumbrian towns called 'shaking the bull ring' where a man would stand outside the arena and challenge any passer-by to fight him.[22] The fact that these contests took place at the bull ring suggests that there was a definite link between the bull bait and this aggressive assertion of masculine authority. Therefore, bull baiting was really more than just a casual pastime. It was seen as providing useful social functions and helped to set and encourage the correct standard of masculinity for those watching on.

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[18] Jacob Robinson and Sidney Gilpin, *North Country Sports and Pastimes* (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1893), pp. 230-232.

[19] Rev. Canon Sturges, 'Bull Baiting in Berkshire', in *Bygone Berkshire,* ed. by P. H. Ditchfield (London: W. Andrews & Co, 1896), p. 252.

[20] Tony Langley interview, part 04 (recorded 17/04/1970), *The Roy Palmer English Folk Music Collection*, British Library Sounds Archive, <https://sounds.bl.uk> [accessed 22/05/2021]

[21] Pamela J. Walker, 'Men and Masculinity in the Salvation Army, 1860-90', in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*, ed. by Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 92-112, (pp. 101-102).

[22] Robinson and Gilpin, *North Country Sports*, p. 233.

Bull baiting was by no means the only bloodsport which helped to foster this kind of community spirit. This strong spirit of fraternity was equally apparent in institutions like the army where sports like cock fighting and dog fighting were used both for mutual bonding and methods of relaxation. Moreover, British soldiers serving abroad in places like India had the advantage of receiving less scrutiny than they would at home, meaning that they could indulge in such pastimes more openly. The importance of sports like dog fighting to the ordinary British soldier is illustrated nicely in Rudyard Kipling's *Soldiers Three* stories. Despite the pastime's illegal nature back in Britain, the story's narrator (frequently identified with Kipling himself) describes it in vivid detail without hesitation. He describes how:

'There had been a royal dog-fight in the ravine at the back of the rifle-butts, between Learoyd's Jock and Ortheris's Blue Rot—both mongrel Rampur hounds, chiefly ribs and teeth. It lasted for twenty happy, howling minutes, and then Blue Rot collapsed and Ortheris paid Learoyd three rupees, and we were all very thirsty. A dog-fight is a most heating entertainment, quite apart from the shouting, because Rampurs fight over a couple of acres of ground'.[23]

Kipling's fictional narrative – probably based on real life incidents he had witnessed – makes the fraternal aspect of this bloodsport at the centre of his account. When describing the ordinary British soldier, Kipling was keen to emphasise not only his subject's humanity but also the spirit of brotherhood which bound individual soldiers together. What this account makes clear is that it was not the small-scale gambling which made the contest worthwhile but the shared enjoyment of a communal activity and the socialisation which occurred afterwards; in the next paragraph, the 'very thirsty' soldiers retire to the canteen to slake their thirst with beer. Oral interviews suggest that this is also what united blood sports enthusiasts back in Britain. When Staffordshire chain maker and folk singer George Dunn remembered the blood sports enthusiasts he had met as a young man, it was their community spirit and love of socialising which was foremost in his mind. He recalled of the local dogfighters how 'you wouldn't believe the pleasure they got out of winning two bob or half a crown or something like that' and that the local cockfighters had 'no money but they liked the sport… they'd cockfight for just a few bob'.[24] Equally, he remembered the celebrations which occurred when the fighter backed by the syndicate was successful; he recollected 'if we won, we'd have a party… we'd spend it all in beer… it was ten to one then they'd invite me in here to sing for them'.[25]

Both these examples show the importance of conviviality and friendship to the culture which grew up around these urban blood sports, regardless of the geography in which they occurred. Within the social landscape of Victorian Britain, the ordinary British soldier was frequently looked down on by society, even by members of their own class demographic. This made these mutual bonding sessions of vital importance in allowing the soldiers to preserve their self-esteem and confidence in who they were. Likewise, the industrial workers of the English midlands worked long hours in tough and inhospitable conditions and needed an opportunity to unwind and relax from the hard grind of everyday life. As in Stamford, it was not so much the sport itself but the opportunities it offered which made it so irresistible to many working-class people. As well as providing them with social and leisure pursuits, the sport also helped them increase their personal authority both in a cultural and gender specific manner. As with their elite counterparts, it was this security and comfort they were chasing; being seen as authoritative within their chosen sport was ideal for this.

[23] Rudyard Kipling, 'The Solid Muldoon', in Rudyard Kipling, *Soldiers Three* (Toronto: George N. Morang & Company, 1899) no page, <http://www.telelib.com>
[24] George Dunn interview, part 15 and part 52, *RPEFMC*, BLSA.
[25] Ditto, part 15, *RPEFMC*, BLSA.

Given this emphasis on socialising and public displays of masculinity, it is unsurprising that bloodsporting events could sometimes become extremely rowdy. Witnesses frequently commented upon this aspect, both before and after the sports had been legislated against. The Stamford bull running was notorious for the violence of its crowds; in 1826, the *Stamford Mercury* referred to the crowd that gathered as a 'mob' whilst in 1830, *The Sunday Times* termed participants 'human brutes'.[26] In a similar manner, in 1863 an illegal cock fight near Barnsley was raided by the police only for the crowd to react violently with some of them throwing stones at the police while others 'endeavoured to prevent their approaching'.[27] However, this active participation seems to have been a part of the sport which many people actively enjoyed. As Keddie observes, peer culture is often integral in formatting social attitudes, especially ideas of gender and sexuality.[28] The crowds could thus form an important part of the event, pressurising the reluctant to conform to the established culture of overt masculinity and stoic courage.

In addition, the rowdy nature of the affrays was all part of the fun, allowing people to exhibit their personal authority by taking an active part in the proceedings. An account of a bull bait in London illustrates this graphically with a witness relating how:

'What delighted me & Bob Jewell was the situation & foolish looks of certain dog owners whose dogs… ran furiously at the bull, & then turned short off on one side & went wagging their tails to their friend in the ring, hooted as well as their owners by all'.[29]

By cheering the victors and mocking those who failed, spectators could achieve two things. First, by judging the success of the contestants, those watching could boost their image as experts on the correct attributes of courage and stoicism which those involved should possess. It was also a way of publicly showcasing that they themselves possessed these attributes by deploring the lack of it in others. Moreover, by being part of the crowd, watchers could feel that they were part of something larger, united in shared values and a shared identity. This enhanced the sense of community which such events fostered in a similar way to modern sporting events. By reacting in a turbulent, sometimes violent manner to the blood sports they were watching, enthusiasts of the sport could create a clear line between themselves and the rest of society. Tamir notes that modern sports fans frequently use their fandom in this fashion, with sport being one of the few arenas where individuals and groups can battle against each other in a societally acceptable manner.[30] Equally, bloodsport enthusiasts could use their sport to enforce their sense of collective identity, particular if they belonged to a part of society which felt alienated or underprivileged. Thus, blood sports could provide a useful opportunity to let off steam while fostering a shared sense of identity with one's peers, leading to an increase in feelings of personal authority and vindication. It was these rewards that were ultimately what participants and spectators were chasing and what brought them back, again and again to compete, irrespective of their sports' legal status.

Shared Values? A Comparison of Urban and Elite Blood Sports

As we have already mentioned, elite sportspersons looked down on urban blood sports as repulsive imitations of their pastimes with none of the etiquette or rituals which made their sports morally

[26] *Stamford Mercury*, 17 November 1826; *The Sunday Times*, 29 August, 1830
[27] *Sheffield Independent*, 24 January, 1863.
[28] Keddie, 'On Fighting and Football', p. 427.
[29] Personal Letter to Philip Gell signed 'Anacharsis', 1810, *Gell Family of Hopton Hall, Wirksworth – 1200-1905*, Derbyshire Record Office, D258/50/37.
[30] Tamir, 'The Object is the Message', pp. 2-3.

acceptable. An in-depth exploration of this idea reveals that there was some truth to this accusation but that the answer was far more complicated than the simplistic view laid out by the elite community. Urban blood sports did have a rich culture of rules and rituals, often markedly similar to their rural counterparts. The difference was in the ways they chose to portray the authority these rituals garnered. While elite hunters – and their working-class contemporaries – used this authority when interacting both with outsiders and insiders alike, bloodsport enthusiasts tended to direct their authority primarily towards each other rather than the outside world. There was also far less of an emphasis on morality than there was in elite blood sports, although the concepts of fairness and restraint was integral to some of their rituals.

One of the most obvious parallels between both communities was in their consumption of alcohol. Whilst an overt drinking culture declined in elite blood sports as the nineteenth century progressed, it was definitely still part of their culture especially amongst the younger members. Likewise, the drinking of alcohol performed a similar purpose in the culture of urban blood sports although consumption was frequently more overt. In the public eye, foxhunting was strongly connected with alcohol, as demonstrated by *Daily Mirror* cartoonist W. K. Haselden's depiction of a stereotypical fox hunter, complete with bow legs and a red nose (see figure 8).[31] Such an idea was based to a certain extent in fact. Col. Cook was described approvingly by Lord Willoughby de Broke as 'a prince of good fellows at the dinner table, who could carry any quantity of claret with impunity' while Sir Reginald Graham, writing about his fox hunting exploits during the 1870s, was quite open about the moderate gambling and drinking that went on after the ladies had retired after dinner.[32]

Figure 8: A stereotypical picture of a fox hunter by W. K. Haselden, cartoonist for the *Daily Mirror*, illustrating how the fraternity was still linked with the overconsumption of alcohol well into the twentieth century. Originally part of a larger cartoon entitled 'Some Other Academy Pictures'. Published in the *Daily Mirror*, 4 May, 1908, ref no: WH4741, *British Cartoon Archive*, University of Kent, <https://archive.cartoons.ac.uk>

However, this was a private persona and one that later hunters would seek to downplay. Anthony Trollope, writing in the 1860s, wrote that just because someone was a fox hunter did not necessarily mean that 'they usually go to bed drunk'.[33] This complete U-turn was almost entirely down to changes in the social landscape. During the regency period, public displays of drunkenness were comparatively common and being able to drink copious amounts of alcohol viewed as a positive, manly achievement. By contrast, Tosh argues that the Victorian period saw a gradual shift in social behaviour where masculinity became more about morality and work rather than appearance and

[31] *Daily Mirror*, 4 May, 1908
[32] Lord Willoughby de Broke, 'Introduction' in Colonel Cook, *Observations on Fox-Hunting* (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1922), vii; Sir Reginald Graham, Bart, *Fox-Hunting Recollections* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1908), p. 20, <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>
[33] Anthony Trollope, *Hunting Sketches* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1865), no page, <https://gutenberg.org>

display.[34] Public drunkenness was seen as the ultimate social failing; it is unsurprising that Flashman, the villain of the morality tale *Tom Brown's Schooldays* is dismissed for that very misdemeanour, highlighting his failure to live by the correct gentlemanly standards.[35] Heavy drinking was no longer consistent with the public persona of the upper-class gentleman which prioritised values like humility, coolness and bravery instead which fitted in better with the more moral social environment which had emerged.

However, in the landscape of working-class culture authority was still expressed through more overt means with proletarian masculinity being built around deeds rather than words. This meant that like fighting, drinking became an important way for working-class males to demonstrate their masculinity. Richard Jeffries described a farm labourer he knew as 'a sober man too as men go, that is he did not get drunk more than once a month', a quotation that demonstrates the importance of drinking to a working-class man's social reputation.[36] Being enthusiastic about sports which advocated toughness amongst its mammalian and avian contestants, it is hardly surprising that these sportsmen looked to emulate such virtues in their daily lives. The ritual of drinking large amounts of alcohol communally showcased who was the toughest and most masculine specimen, engrafting authority onto that particular person. Such ritualization may also explain why many urban blood sports often took place in pubs; they not only gave enthusiasts the opportunity to engage in competitive drinking but also a chance to enjoy a sport which embraced similar values. Consequently, while both fraternities engaged in the ritualised drinking of alcohol, the blood sports fraternity took it far more seriously as a way of establishing authority within the community itself.

Another similarity was the desire for fair play which existed amongst both fraternities. An essential tenet of the elite's code of sportsmanship was that they should always give their quarry a fair chance. With urban blood sports, things were a little more complicated but the idea of a fair fight did play a key part in many fighting sports. To dog or cock fighters, the spectacle of an uneven encounter would have been no more enjoyable than a first-round knockout to a modern boxing fan. Some contemporaries even made this connection themselves; an enthusiast arrested at a dog fight in Darlaston protested to the police that he saw nothing wrong in the dogs having 'a bit of a box'.[37] As in boxing, dogs and cocks were matched according to weight and the contestants weighed before a fight; any dog that was over or under the agreed weight range would be automatically disqualified. While cheating did occur, the fraternity attempted to limit it as much as possible with rituals like 'tasting' where an owner could wash a competitor's animal in milk and then lick it to check it hadn't been rubbed with acid or alkali to make it harder for an opponent to get a grip.

Similarly, despite the chaotic crowds which flocked to watch the proceedings the idea of restraint also made an appearance in sports like Stamford's bull run. The most obvious of these was in the construction of the participants bull clubs, with one observer noting 'that none have any iron upon their bull clubs, or other staff with which they pursue the bull'.[38] To some extent, both these rituals can be explained by the desire to produce good entertainment. Just as two evenly matched opponents would produce a more exciting fight, so wooden bull clubs meant that the bull would remain stronger and produce better sport for longer. Accordingly, one can see how elite values of

[34] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, pp. 83-102.
[35] Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's School-Days* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1911) no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[36] Richard Jefferies, *The Amateur Poacher* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1879) no page, <http://www.gutenberg.org>
[37] *Birmingham Daily Post*, 21 October 1891
[38] *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 22 November, 1835

sportsmanship were present in some blood sports but were adapted to fit into existing proletarian and blood sports culture. In elite culture, being sporting meant giving the quarry a fair chance at escape. However, this did not sit well with the way urban blood sports were implemented, nor with attitudes towards toughness and stoicism already present amongst working-class society. This meant that they had to be adapted slightly; nevertheless, as Ritvo has commented in her analysis of sporting memoirs, the idea of a fair fight between two evenly matched competitors was integral to the way in which many elite sportsmen imagined their hunting encounters.[39] The difference was that whereas elite hunters were personally involved in the fight, blood sports enthusiasts were content to merely spectate. Notwithstanding this, the basic philosophical underpinnings were essentially the same with both fraternities praising courage and frowning on behaviour that considered cowardly or weak.

However, despite these similarities, urban blood sports were always going to be challenged by both elite sportspersons and upper-class society in general. At the start of the century, urban blood sports had been viewed fairly favourably by much of the elite; in 1800, bull baiting had even been publicly defended by the prime minister during a debate in the House of Commons. However, as the juxtaposition between the culture of blood sports and prevailing social conventions widened, such pursuits became increasingly frowned upon. Graham in his memoirs, admitted to having regularly attended cock fights when a young officer but he referred to them as licentious or 'Corinthian pursuits', passing them off as mere youthful indiscretions.[40] More than the violence, it was this that aided in urban blood sports descent into social decline. When commenting negatively on events, humanitarians would focus as much on the unruly nature of the contestants and spectators as they would on the sufferings of the animals taking part. Edward Barry, writing in a foreword to a sermon he had preached against bull baiting, sarcastically commented that 'if this sport were in danger of abolition, *Publicans* might naturally be supposed to say, in the words of Demetrius the silversmith, *'Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth'*.[41] In a similar manner, Thomas Hall saw gambling as one of the major evils caused by cock fighting, telling his readers that it was 'an evil which is productive of the most ruinous consequences to yourself and your family.[42]

Efforts to ban blood sports were therefore mixed up in many other social campaigns, which aimed to legislate against other aspects of proletarian culture such as drinking and gambling. Barry's quotation from *The Bible* – not to mention the religious platform he used to publish his views – also reminds us that blood sports could frequently become mixed up in religious campaigns, aimed at reforming working-class behaviour along more middle-class lines. The debate over the morality of urban blood sports was therefore more than just a humanitarian crusade; it was a clash of class cultures, centred around ideas of what it meant to be both manly and moral. Blood sports both created and were patronised by communities which valued toughness and strength; this was ingrained in the rituals of their sport which encouraged determination and imperviousness to pain. They became so deeply rooted in popular culture that they even produced common idioms – in both dog and cock fighting, the contestants had to 'come up to scratch' which meant launching their attack by crossing a line scratched or chalked across the centre of the ring. If any dog failed to commence the fight, it was automatically disqualified and lost by default. This rule which encouraged bravery over discretion, was thus publicly celebrated in the English language by being

[39] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, pp. 263-5.
[40] Graham, *Recollections*, pp. 4-5.
[41] Edward Barry, *Bull Baiting! A Sermon on Barbarity to God's Dumb Creation* (Reading: Smart and Cowslade, 1802), p. iv.
[42] Thomas Hall, *National Brutality: Containing Reflections & Admonitions Relative to Cock-Fighting, Pugilism, &c.* (Manchester: Joseph Pratt, 1819), p. 6.

deployed to describe someone living up to a high standard, demonstrating how these values were seen as positive and even educational by the sports enthusiasts.

By contrast, the elite community valued humility and restraint as well as courage; they tended to shun the more overt showcasing of masculinity shown in proletarian circles which they would have seen as extremely crude. To a working-class man, exhibiting masculinity in this manner was an important way of displaying authority whereas to the elite, such behaviour was nothing more than showing off. This, together with their desire to appear moral and to retain sporting authority within their select circle, meant that elite sportspersons decided to distance themselves from their urban equivalents. In doing so, they established the dominance of their sporting culture resigning that of their rivals to the dustbin of history. Without the necessary means of establishing their authority within the rest of society, urban blood sports simply lacked the necessary means to survive in a rapidly changing social environment. Their extinction was assured, not because of their crudity, but because of the changing social landscape which they proved both unable and unwilling to adapt to.

Conclusion

For all blood sports enthusiasts, whatever their sport, culture or class, the possession and management of authority was something they were constantly chasing. Whether through sporting rituals, group activities, oral storytelling or written narratives, the idea of community was essential to how the landscape of British blood sports developed throughout this period. Increasing one's authority within the community was vital for many sportspersons' sense of self-esteem. Elite sportspersons often did this through written narratives, emphasising positive attributes of gender, class and morality through their ritualised retelling of their exploits, while proletarian sportspersons participated in more direct types of proving rituals, asserting their authority through masculine activities like fighting and drinking or through oral storytelling that emphasised their wit and cunning. It was also equally important for communities as a whole to portray themselves as authoritative with the elite emphasising their moral authority through the code of sportsmanship, the poaching fraternity asserting their customary right to take game and the gamekeeping community through their portrayal as experienced, morally righteous experts. Despite their otherwise varied differences, in these two areas the different blood sports communities thought along broadly similar lines.

The central tenant at the core of this thesis has been that class was no barrier to sportspersons using ritual to portray their authority. Elite ritual was very complex, frequently being explored through written narratives as well as physical enactments. The pageantry and complexity of elite ritual has already been explored by a large number of historians who have looked at how it was portrayed in a wide variety of different settings. John MacKenzie, Greg Gillespie and Emma Griffin have all explored how ideas of culture, ethnicity, class and morality have been explored through both written and active recitals of ritual with excellent results.[1] This thesis has aimed to try and build on this research by showing that not only were working-class sportspersons equally adept at ritualising facets of their sports, their participation was also integral for elite identity as the participation of gamekeepers helped to create opportunities for the elite to additionally boost their authority. Rituals like the laying out of game after a day shooting allowed sportsmen in particular to boost their authority as masculine and competent hunters; likewise, their employees gave elite sportspersons something to juxtapose themselves against which helped to enhance both their class and cultural authority. While unfashionable urban blood sports were sometimes viewed as threat to their upper-class counterparts, elite hunters could use this to their advantage by comparing themselves favourably to them, emphasising their moral authority. As Harriet Ritvo has already explained, this elite alignment helped to keep their sports safe whilst correspondingly helping to ensure that their urban counterparts would eventually become banned.[2]

However, this interaction was not simply one way. The elite were equally important for working-class sportspersons and how they framed their rituals. Gamekeepers and poachers alike used the elite as a frame of reference, albeit in very different ways. For keepers, the elite gave them the opportunity to participate in rituals which emphasised their expertise and knowledge. Cultural transactions such as tipping were essential not only to their self-esteem but also to their authority as valued and respected members of the estate staff. Equally, poachers used the elite to create their

[1] John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 163-4, 179-182, 190-196; Greg Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840-70* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), pp. 26-28, 40, 48; Emma Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain Since 1066* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 110-123 and 129-133.
[2] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 130-157.

identity as moral rogues; without the elite monopoly on game, it would have been difficult to garner the moral authority necessary to portray themselves as participants in a righteous cause. Even enthusiasts of urban blood sports used similar constructs to the elite and emphasised similar parts of their personalities. Both were equally keen to emphasise masculinity, frequently indulging in rituals that emphasised virility, toughness and stoicism even though the actual ritualisations were unalike. Equally, elite ideas about fairness, restraint and emotional self-control did filter down to proletarian enthusiasts and these were implemented when practical. Poachers would emphasise their restraint to set themselves apart from common criminals, gamekeepers maintained a ritually deferential manner when talking to their employers and even urban enthusiasts adopted ideas of fairness and restraint to increase the entertainment value, just as elite hunters used sportsmanship to make hunts more exciting. Thus, despite the many and varied differences, rituals were an important part of all these blood sports, helping individuals to project their personal authority while enabling communities as a whole to react to cultural and environmental transformations happening around them.

These changes in the social and cultural landscape frequently affected the culture of blood sports with changes in ideas of morality, class and nationalism all being reflected in the culture of blood sports, irrespective of position in the social hierarchy. The elite community were obviously affected by changing social attitudes towards animals and, as the century progressed, reflected a progressively moral attitude through increasing the rituals of sportsmanship and emphasising their restraint when in the field. As Harriet Ritvo has explored, this was partially due to the changes in social etiquette during the latter half of the nineteenth century.[3] Kindness to animals had become strongly associated with elite ideas of gentlemanly conduct and was almost seen as inherent to the upper-classes. Therefore, elite sportspersons adapted their rituals of hunting to emphasise their sportsmanship in order to retain this moral authority so necessary for their social identity, also using it to emphasise the exclusivity of their community through ideas of class superiority. According to Jack Williams, the elite saw the ideals of sportsmanship in general as inherently linked to upper-class status.[4] This idea was widely apparent in elite ritualisations which allowed the community to identify itself with an exclusive kind of moral authority, one which was positively juxtaposed against professional hunters, poachers and urban sportspersons.

Sporting authority could also reflect other cultural changes, such as the increase in nationalism. As the nineteenth century progressed, British society became increasingly patriotic as fears over degeneration and European conflict gathered pace. Elite hunting culture reflected these fears with sportspersons using sportsmanship to highlight what they considered to be typically British traits. This often centred around critiques of other hunting cultures they encountered, using these opportunities to deplore behaviour they saw as deviant while praising acts which conformed to their standards of good conduct. It also provided useful opportunities to criticise rival countries with many elite sportspersons choosing to use the supposed lack of sportsmanship of French or German hunters as vectors through which to highlight more serious defects. Such ritualisation became an important way for late Victorian hunters to highlight their moral authority as good sportspersons, using perceived defects in other sporting cultures to highlight their own personal authority. By illustrating their own commitment to sporting values, they furthered their own status in evaluating

[3] Ibid, pp. 130-135, 152-157.

[4] Jack Williams, 'The Really Good Professional Captain Has Never Been Seen': Perceptions of the Amateur/Professional Divide in County Cricket, 1900–39, *Sport in History*, Vol. 26, No. 3, December 2006, 429-449, (pp. 435-438).

the nuances of others by setting themselves up as judges on what was correct sporting conduct and therefore worthy of dictating how others ought to behave.

Continuing this theme of personal authority, elite hunting culture also reflected changes in other social concepts like elite masculinity where hunting narratives showcased a balance between emphasising their authors courage and skill with appearing modest and humble. As we have already seen, literary vehicles like humour and euphemisms proved ideal for retaining this balance and reflecting the 'right' levels of masculine authority without seeming overly confident or morally bankrupt. Similarly, elite sportswomen also reflected contemporary attitudes as they sought a balance between new found social freedoms and adhering to an existing standard of feminine conduct. As Colin and Sian Pooley have noted, young women in the late nineteenth century had a surprising amount of social freedom as long as they did not deviate too noticeably from existing ideas of femininity.[5] This explains why female hunters became increasingly common by the end of this period while also explaining their portrayal in the field. By emphasising their stoicism and emotional self-control, sportswomen were able to use the rituals of the chase to prove their authority in belonging to a hunting community which was overwhelmingly patriarchal. However, they still sought to portray a feminine side where possible in order to become accepted within the hunting community and not appear socially deviant. Thus, hunting culture reflected gender changes within elite society, as sportspersons of both genders sort to increase their authority within the community whilst also trying to adhere to conventional social standards.

By contrast, proletarian sportspersons were affected in a subtly different manner by the cultural changes going on around them. While elite hunters paid lip service to the idea of moving with the times, proletarian blood sporters were much more stubborn in adhering to long established traditions. As Guy Woolnough and Neil Garnham have explored, many communities held onto their traditional pastimes long after they were considered cultural anachronisms by the metropolitan elite.[6] This clinging to tradition rather than evolving with the times was undoubtedly influenced by the rapid cultural and social changes which occurred throughout the late eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries. Against a backdrop of the socio-economic change caused by industrialisation, together with cultural changes as to what it meant to be both manly and moral, both rural and urban sportspersons relentlessly clung to their pastimes, using them as an anchor point through which to negotiate this new world. As case studies like the Stamford bull running illustrate, many communities formed strong bonds with their local traditions and fiercely resented any intervention from outsiders seeking to change them. This reflects how strongly rooted many urban blood sports were whilst also supporting the idea that the sports were not simply wanton violence but served useful personal and social functions, acting in place of food standards regulations as well as allowing participants to exhibit their authority as courageous specimens of masculinity. This was so even when such versions of masculinity became societally unacceptable in upper-class society, showing how many working-class people fought against being shaped by the elite into conforming with changes to the social landscape.

Rural poaching can also be viewed in a similar light; as Annie Coleman has explored in relation to America, the nineteenth century saw increased industrialisation of the rural environment, both

[5] Colin G. Pooley and Sian Pooley, 'Constructing a suburban identity: youth, femininity and modernity in late-Victorian Merseyside', *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol. 36 Issue 4, 2010, 402-410, (pp. 406-8).
[6] Guy Woolnough, 'Blood Sports in Victorian Cumbria: Policing Cultural Change', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2014, 278–294; Neal Garnham, 'The Survival of Popular Blood Sports in Victorian Ulster', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, Vol. 107C, 2007, 107-126.

physically and culturally.[7] These ideas fit in nicely within the British rural landscape where the industrialisation of the countryside caused by the enclosure acts helped to bring about the increased preservation of game. This created increased conflict between poacher and gamekeeper epitomised in legislation like the game laws which shaped the culture and rituals created by both communities. Gamekeepers were unusual in that they embraced the changes that were occurring around them and used it to boost their personal authority. By contrast, poachers and urban blood sports enthusiasts set their faces against this transformation, adhering to traditional values in an attempt to keep hold of a semblance of authority in a fast-changing landscape. Rather than resisting change covertly like the elite, proletarian sportspersons were far more obvious in their refusal to follow conventional social norms, continuing to indulge in their sports long after they had become socially unacceptable. This decision ultimately made these communities weaker, resulting in the banning of urban baiting sports and the gradual decline in rural poaching which occurred across the period we are examining. However, it also illustrates that there were definitely unique cultures which occurred within these different blood sports communities. Despite the violent acts which played a part within these different rituals, they demonstrate that proletarian sportspersons were just as eager to shape their identity and culture as their elite counterparts in order to create bulwarks against the fast-changing landscape which surrounded them.

Overall, this thesis charts the use of rituals within the cultures of the different blood sports communities across a period of one-hundred and fourteen years. During that time, both the social and the environmental landscapes evolved a good deal which duly shaped how many of these communities chose to represent themselves. However, the one constant was the theme of authority which these different communities were chasing. Across different hunting cultures, authority was a key part of sporting ritual, designed both to promote the community as a whole and the reputation of the personal protagonist. Whether it was enacted through the mechanisms of gender, class, culture or morality, appearing powerful and in control was what all blood sports enthusiasts seemed to wish for, whatever their social background. Authority bound these communities together as well as exalting individuals, making them feel protected and accepted in an oft-changing world. Despite the different social demographics, moral standards and geographies over which they indulged in their sports, these feelings of community and authority was what drove them all and continued to inspire their love for the thrill of the chase.

[7] Annie Coleman, 'Rise of the House of Leisure: Outdoor Guides, Practical Knowledge, and Industrialization', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 42, no. 4, 2011, 436–57, (pp. 438-440).

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