

‘A good ramble in quest of game’?
Sports Shooting and the Limits of British Power in
H. C. St. John’s *The Wild Coasts of Nipon*

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Abstract This article examines the politics of sports shooting in Japan during the Bakumatsu and early Meiji periods. While Japan was often praised by British travellers for the quality and quantity of its wildlife, shooting conditions were substantially more restricted than in other non-European countries because of the Meiji government’s unprecedented maintenance of control over the interior. The inaccessibility of game increased the value of a successful shooting mission, allowing foreign hunters to assert both personal and national power. On the other hand, these regulations also suggest ways in which Japan’s unique position, not only as a non-colonised non-European nation, but as a burgeoning empire in its own right, demands a rethinking of conventional postcolonial conceptions of nineteenth-century hunting and imperialism. This reading of Royal Navy Captain H. C. St. John’s *Notes and Sketches from the Wild Coasts of Nipon* (1880) thus proposes that the neo-Darwinian representation of sports shooting within the text both underlines and undermines the wider political significance of his mission. In particular, the popular hunting destination of Yesso (Hokkaido), modern Japan’s first colony, and the indigenous Ainu, modern Japan’s first colonised subjects, work as a focus for the anxiety that Britain is not fit enough to survive in a newly competitive regional geopolitics.

Introduction

The publication of John MacKenzie’s *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* in 1988 firmly announced hunting as a significant theme within postcolonial approaches to imperial and colonial history, contributing to further cross-disciplinary conceptions of how the British overseas empire was expanded and maintained. Defining it as a highly formalised practice in which the consumption of game is played down, this and subsequent works have demonstrated how hunting was reconfigured as a national sport in nineteenth-century Britain, buttressing an ostensibly confident national image centred on the English gentleman, and potentially functioning as justification for white racial superiority, European colonialism, or even British

superiority over competing European powers (MacKenzie 1988).¹⁾ Blaine’s *Encyclopaedia of Rural Sports*, a contemporary reference guide to which we will return, lists the various benefits of hunting, including health, communality, and personal and national martial prowess :

It was from the war which man necessitates in his own defence, made on animals, that he learned the art of offence ; and it is to this practice he must look for the means of keeping up a similar character, by which alone he can make the inhabitants of every country at once respect and fear him. (1870 : 154)

Not everyone in Britain necessarily shared these

sentiments: vegetarians and animal welfare groups often opposed hunting; and even many supporters would have refrained from such jingoistic expression; furthermore, social and gender stratification meant that, apart from elite or professional middle-class men, few directly participated in hunting. Nevertheless, as MacKenzie continues, by the second half of the century, what he terms the 'cult of hunting' was a complex and pervasive part of British culture, affecting such spheres as topography, architecture, natural history, painting, and literature. Significantly, its values and customs percolated down to all levels of society and were disseminated throughout the empire by colonial administrators, imperial soldiers, professional and recreational hunters (1988: 21–2).

MacKenzie, in assessing British hunting practices and their overseas impact, necessarily focuses on India and southern, central, and east Africa, because of their value as colonial and hunting sites within the Empire. In both regions, animal resources contributed towards colonial expansionism, as an objective and means of funding. Later, hunting became a valuable disciplinary apparatus, allowing officers to survey territory, and adopt a paternalistic attitude towards local people. Local hunting traditions were also appropriated and used for exhibitions of British power, as in the grand imperial hunts that took place towards the end of the century in India. Differently, British sports and their regulatory principles were introduced, and local hunters delegitimated (1988: 170–1).

That Japan has featured little within such histories of nineteenth-century British or, more generally, EuroAmerican hunting seems axiomatic. Yet, not only did magazines, guidebooks, and travelogues valorise Japan for the quality of, particularly, game-bird shooting during the 1858–1899 treaty ports period, but it was an important pastime for foreign residents and some visitors. Additionally, the case of Japan provides an

interesting comparison with the areas of direct colonial rule that MacKenzie, for example, examines: first, because of the specific conditions of hunting and gun use within the Edo period; and second, because of the unprecedented transformation of relations between Japan, east Asian neighbours, and Western nations from the 1850s. These points of divergence are fascinating for the way they extend, even challenge, post-colonial approaches to the subject of hunting. How did it function, for example, in a non-colonised, non-European setting? How was it legislated, and who regulated it? What cultural or social significance did hunting in Japan have for foreign participants? How was it represented in published writings, especially the ever-popular travelogue, for readers back at home? How, within these writings, can it be understood politically?

This paper will consider these issues through a reading of shooting in H. C. St. John's *Notes and Sketches from the Wild Coasts of Nippon*, published in Edinburgh by David Douglas in 1880. The memoir opens in Hakodate, towards the end of April 1871. We know from the preface that St. John (1837–1909) spent seven years working on a hydrological survey of the Japanese archipelago, and this first chapter tells us that he has visited Yesso²) twice before, in 1855 and 1863. The text gives few other details, though, and the precise reasons behind these and the varied other journeys around Japan (and, less extensively, Korea and China) that it later recounts are, for the first half of *Wild Coasts*, left largely unclear. Indeed, in that the first person singular is commonly used, and recreational objectives given precedence over official ones, the narrative—remarkably, given the presumably fairly constant presence of his survey vessel and its crew—manages to foreground an image of St. John as a solitary and independent traveller in a natural paradise untouched by Westernisation.

While such claims are hardly unusual in contemporary travelogues, St. John's utilisation of the abundance of game as proof of the unspoiled state of the interior, its value as 'ground never visited by Europeans' (2004 : vii), is rarer. He bags his first birds—'wild geese . . . wending their way north' (2)—immediately upon arrival in Hakodate. His second—'[a] swan, which proved to be *Cygnus musicus*' (5)—is killed a little further east. Then, heading inland, 'I shot a couple of spruce grouse, the only birds of the kind I ever saw, not only in Yesso, but anywhere in the East' (6). Later, on Kunashir, he kills a 'grey plover (*Vanellus griseus*) in perfect summer plumage, and I have no doubt the bird was then breeding' (12). Back on Yesso, a long-awaited shot at the famed brown bear misses its target, but 'returning from my walk, I exchanged an old pair of trousers for a [bear] cub' (15) with an Ainu woman; a paragraph later, after growing too large, it is calmly poisoned by St. John (15). As I explore below, this focus on the variety and quantity of game to be killed both underlines and undermines the wider political significance of St. John's mission that is revealed in the second half of *Wild Coasts*; of particular interest, as may be alluded by this introductory attention to Yesso, is the role played by the Ainu in its contestation.

Sports shooting in Bakumatsu and Meiji Japan

St. John was not the first British traveller to realise the varied hunting opportunities of Japan. Rutherford Alcock, British minister plenipotentiary from 1860, exclaimed that in the shops of Hakodate are :

Teal three for an itziboo (or sixpence each), wild ducks somewhat dearer, snipe, golden plover, all were there and I was told, during the previous winter, that the crews of the whalers were chiefly fed upon deer and bear's flesh as the cheapest meat. Think of that, ye

epicures, and instead of a shooting or a fishing season in Norway with its hackneyed fjelds and fiords, come to Japan to catch salmon, hunt the deer, the boar, and the bear; —and if you like it, shoot pheasant, snipe, teal, and wild-fowl without stint. (1863a : 272)

Jephson and Elmhirst, members of the British 9th Regiment of Foot that was stationed in Yokohama during the 1860s, also note the 'deer and bears . . . brought down [to Hakodate] from the Eino country' (1869 : 280–281) and the extensive fish stocks there. Later, Isabella Bird, in *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, makes a similar set of observations (1880 : 8). And Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Japan*, even in 1891, continues to eulogise the variety and quantity of game found in Yesso and elsewhere, concluding that 'Japan, with its rich plains and hills giving ample shelter to game, is naturally a good sporting country' (Chamberlain and Mason 1891 : 14). Similar comments are made in an 1893 article in *Outing*, an American sporting magazine :

Sport in Japan is followed amid the most charming surroundings. Every commanding point gained reveals scenes of exquisite beauty; the wealth of flower and foliage; of mountain grandeur, of land- and seascape, baffles description, and there is quite sufficient game to convince the wandering sportsman there is more to be shot than scenery. (Hartman 1893 : 431)

It all seems so positive : a country hardly known to sportsmen, yet to be commercialised, without fixed shooting butts or managed reserves; a country with large amounts of truly wild game; a natural sporting country. Yet, Murray's vibrant praise for Japan is almost immediately neutralised by the conclusion that, nevertheless, 'a gun case is

a useless piece of baggage to the foreign visitor' (Chamberlain 1891 : 14). In his first edition of *Things Japanese* too, Chamberlain wrote with similar bluntness : 'No one is advised to come to Japan for sport' (2007 : 458). The problem lay in the attempted regulation of shooting for foreigners by both the pre-1868 Bakufu and the post-Restoration Meiji government.

Anti-gun laws of some kind were directly applied to USA and then Britain in the 1850s : article ten of the additional regulations agreed between Commodore Matthew Perry and the Bakufu stated that 'The shooting of birds and animals is generally forbidden in Japan, and this law is therefore to be observed by all Americans' (Hawks 2005 : 457) ; while article three of the Nagasaki port regulations given to Royal Navy Admiral James Stirling, with which the 1854 Anglo-Japanese Convention agreed compliance, prohibited the use of guns, reputedly in accordance with Japanese dietary and firearms laws³ (Beasley 1951 : 128).

Post-1858, the first resident foreigners were informed about a further, more specific prohibition on shooting within 10 *ri* (40 km) of Edo castle that seemed to definitely thwart (at least, legal) sport in Yokohama or its environs. Post-1868, in the earliest years of Meiji, the new government declared its commitment to, if not a ban on shooting, then at least its strict regulation. In February 1870, the Foreign Ministry circulated its first memorandum on the issue, beginning what would be six years of negotiations between the ministry and Western representatives, particularly Sir Harry Parkes, the British minister most vocal in opposing the incorporation of foreigners within Japanese legislation (Gaimushō 1938a : 577-8 ; Gaimushō 1938b : 382-3 ; Gaimushō 1939 : 614-7).

This impasse was only broken in 1876 by a compromise between the two parties : Parkes agreed 'to take measures that [no British subjects]

shall shoot without first taking out a license from the Japanese Government' (Gaimushō 1940 : 631) on the understanding that violators would be liable for civil rather than criminal charges, paying (at least) \$10 to the government and forfeiting shooting rights. Except for its covenant, this permit was remarkably similar to that first outlined in 1870 by the Foreign Minister : it ran from October to 14 March ; cost \$10 (or \$5 later in the season), payable to the prefectural authorities ; and only entitled the bearer 'to shoot and kill game within the Treaty limits around the several Ports or places open under Treaty to foreigners,' an important restriction that was always underlined in guidebooks (Gaimushō 1940 : 633-4).⁴

Throughout this period of negotiation, there had been large-scale disregard for any controls on shooting, both among the foreign merchant community and by the consulates upon whom enforcement depended. And, even after 1876, some unlicensed shooting continued without penalty (Inoue 1955 : 43-4). Outside the treaty limits, of course, the effects were limited : travellers continued to comment on the amount of birds around the Imperial Palace ; guidebooks, as seen, valorised the variety of game to be found in the interior. The ramifications of shooting inside the treaty limits were, however, all too obvious. As early as 1863 or 1864, one foreign merchant asserted the end of the 'good old days' when a clandestine sportsman could 'bag [in the Yokohama marshes] twelve birds before breakfast. Now he's lucky to get two' (cited in Barr 1967 : 93). The familiar lament may, in this case, be somewhat premature, but it does accurately presage the gradual decline, then near extinction, of game near the treaty ports : 'almost entirely shot out,' as Murray's *Handbook* would later put it (Chamberlain and Mason 1891 : 14).

The eventual introduction of the shooting license in these changed conditions gives it new

significance: rather than sanctioning shooting, the permit comes to function as mark of its restriction, delineating the border between the exhausted, overworked port region where the hunter is confined and the still-abundant, inviolate 'wilderness' just out of reach. There are many formal similarities with typical exoticist representations of the Westernised treaty ports as inauthentic, but the sense of belatedness here is obviously more tangible. Furthermore, it is particularly ironic that, as permits for interior travel became easier to acquire during this period, large numbers of tourists were able to leave the treaty ports behind and explore the interior, bearing witness to its abundant wildlife but prohibited by Japanese law from hunting it.

Thus, whatever the freedoms allowed to the foreigner visitor within the treaty ports themselves or, later, in the interior, the shooting license can be read as a symbol, a continuing reminder, of the limits of Western power in Japan. Of course, the lengthy discussions between the legations and the Foreign Ministry, the frank denial of the applicability of Japanese laws, or the indifference of many residents are facts which cannot be swept aside—none of these suggest parity in the eyes of British participants at least. However, as Michael Auslin suggests, negotiation, as first practiced by the Bakufu then early Meiji diplomats, should be understood as a 'form of resistance' to the West, giving Japan a voice in treaty relations at a time when the use of military or economic pressure was unrealistic (2006: 4). Auslin's argument focuses on diplomatic relations until 1872–3, after which Meiji leaders increasingly realised the necessity of transforming Japan in line with Western notions of civilisation; nevertheless, the agreements on shooting can be similarly conceptualised. Though a compromise between Japanese and Western ministers, and Japanese and Western legal codes, the hunting licence was the product of a long process of active negotiation—of dialogue—that

transformed treaty relations in ways not predicted by the original signatories: the 1858 treaties were not 'inviolable . . . rather they proved to be a field of battle' (17).

This has important consequences for a post-colonial reading, in line with that summarised earlier, of shooting in Japan. In contrast with what was occurring in colonial India and Africa, or the situation in semi-colonised China, whose treaties—negotiated after defeat in two wars—were far more acquiescent to Western demands (Auslin 2006: 21), foreign sportsmen in Japan were expected to comply with a regulatory system developed and managed by the Japanese government.

The wider political implications of these circumstances were not lost on British residents, at least in the earliest years of the treaty port system. Note the case of Michael Moss, an English merchant in Yokohama who injured a Japanese police officer when they attempted to arrest him for illegal goose shooting in 1859 (Moss 1863). Rutherford Alcock upheld the original sentence of a \$1000 fine and deportation that Moss had received in the consular court, and added three months imprisonment in a Hong Kong jail. This infuriated the Yokohama merchant community and induced Moss to attempt to sue the British minister for damages in 1863. The same year, in *The Capital of the Tycoon*, Alcock responded with his own criticism of residents, caricaturing their complaints about 'abominable restrictions on the liberty of the subject, really repugnant to the feelings of Englishmen,' which could have no other object than to 'oppress and lower them in the eyes of the natives' (Alcock 1863b: 392).⁵⁾

On the one hand then, Japanese hunting regulations are seen as an attack on British sovereignty, an evocation of an earlier, far less confident period of English involvement in east Asia: once again, Alcock's hypersensitive residents appear to warn, Europeans will be forced to make

obedience before a foreign court.⁶⁾ At the least, the regulations appear to threaten the whole system of extraterritoriality upon which foreign privilege rests. Yet on the other hand, as is revealed in the excited descriptions of Japan's abundant wildlife in Murray's *Handbook*, hunting also gains in value due to the increased inaccessibility. Necessitating legal and spatial transgressions, a successful shooting trip becomes a statement of both personal power, of difference from other travellers, and national power, of the basic right of an Englishman to engage in his national sport.

Recreational shooting in *Wild Coasts of Nipon*

The hunting adventures that run as a connecting thread throughout the first half of *Wild Coasts* can be productively read within this context. Not only is St. John able to travel and shoot with perfect latitude, but he also appears entirely uninterested in passing comment on this freedom: he mentions neither a permit for interior travel, a shooting license or season; nor the legal demarcation between treaty port and interior, or any of the related debates that took place over the twenty-five years spanned by his memoirs. Considered in comparison with the shooting and travel restrictions faced by other foreigners, the extreme sense of entitlement, of which the narrator is either unconscious or leaves unspoken, is obvious. While other foreigners may be responsible for declining numbers in certain areas (St. John 2004: 39, 55), wherever he shoots the game is abundant and his right to do so left unquestioned (103).

Although St. John's privileged status and position in Japan are implicit in all *Wild Coasts's* shooting scenes, the text itself downplays any conspicuous hagiographic function. His hunts are modestly framed as 'good ramble[s] in quest of game' (viii), and he classifies the birds and animals he kills as either food (86) or 'specimens' (104), a term that, though clearly ambiguous,

implies disinterested science more than a flagrant trophy of prowess. Even the 'big game' shoots, where he tracks a bear in Yesso or stakes out a boar in the Tōhoku, for example, often shy away from a rhetoric of aggressive or hubristic masculinity: the first of these two scenes comes to an abrupt end when he sees 'the most perfect gem of a primula I ever beheld' (174); whilst in the second he takes a 'steady aim' only for the 'cartridge [to] go off like a squib!' (168).⁷⁾

Instead, the ease with which St. John is able to shoot registers a holistic, inviolate world, still isolated from the corruptions of both modern industrialised society and the usual touristic concerns—an authentic world.⁸⁾ Just as important is his own role there: because the narrative omits all descriptions of Yokohama or popular sightseeing spots such as Nikko, St. John the traveller is always a pioneer, always first; while, at the same time, as a narrator, St. John is also an insider, in the know and never out of place. It results in a narrative voice of seemingly unshakeable confidence, the voice of the consummate English gentlemen who need defer to no other authority, unruffled by anxieties of belatedness or worries about his own contribution to the 'contaminating' of Japan (143).

Significantly, the text frames its hunting passages in neo-Darwinian terms, as part of a natural system founded on competition and hierarchy. Chapter five, 'A Walk in Kiusiu,' is one of the few chapters in which the traveller-narrator, though he collects some insect and fern specimens, does not shoot anything. Instead, he wanders through villages and countryside eulogising all that he sees, including both the 'comfortable, happy-looking labourer's home' (111) and the pheasants and mandarin ducks, storks and stag who cross his path. As if postlapsarian human and animal have been reconciled, they all, to extend a comment applied to a badger, 'appeared very little astonished' (119)

by his presence. Within these scenes of Edenic accord, death and conflict still exist but not as dissonant objects: the final passage describes a 'fine grey mullet' leaping from a stream, not into an upper pool, but onto a mat lain by a 'quietly watching' Japanese fisherman (121–2). Furthermore, animal, insect and fish are repeatedly depicted in a struggle that, while violent, is nevertheless innate and just: his spaniel 'wages . . . war' with snakes in retaliation for a previous attack (110); trout are kept by villagers to eat the insects (112); later, in the woods, a trout is caught by a kingfisher darting into a natural pool (115).

This is a world at constant war, where hunting is a skill necessary for survival (7, 12, 61, 154, 158). A crucial inclusion in this schema are humans, and not only as hunters. The shallow graves of the Ainu provide 'food for wolves, foxes, and . . . their own half-wild, wolf-like species of dog' (26); elsewhere, St. John describes octopi seizing fishermen, a worm which attacks the bottom of boats (43), and a community of apes dangerous enough, according to a French gunboat captain, to warrant carrying arms: 'such very gros monkeys—so big as me—as myself' (48). In addition, there are the ticks, horse-flies, hornets, centipedes, and mosquitoes who attack during hunting expeditions (150–57); and a pony whose bite results in a cancelled fishing trip and, in a telling metaphor, recuperation '*hors de combat* for a month' (169).

Shooting as duty in *Wild Coasts of Nipon*

When St. John's naval duties are finally introduced in chapter eleven, a case has therefore been made for the naturalness of martial competition, at the very least, and, arguably, the entitlement to carry and use firearms as part of this struggle. This chapter, as its title 'Past and Present' makes clear, marks the beginning of a shift in the second half of *Wild Coasts* that purposefully re-situates

the text and Japan within the contemporary world:

When I first saw Japan in 1855, the inhabitants were in a very different state from what they are at present. They themselves must be struck with astonishment, on looking back, at the extraordinary metamorphosis which they have gone through in the last few years. Two or three little incidents may be worth mentioning as showing how their Government then treated foreigners, and how we amongst those foreigners allowed ourselves to be treated. (202)

Japan's transformation is primarily assessed not only in terms of changing relations with the West per se, but furthermore on the basis of St. John's own experiences. Previously elided details are given about all his trips to Japan: his first in 1855—part of Admiral Stirling's Royal Navy fleet that, during the Crimean War, managed the first limited treaty with Japan; his second in 1863—on the British expedition that bombarded Kagoshima in retaliation for the killing of Charles Richardson by Satsuma samurai, and in Yokohama during the dangerous years of *jōi* antforeigner exclusionism; and then his seven years from 1870 to 1877, in command of the screw sloop *Sylvia*, a British Admiralty survey vessel working in northern China, Japan, and Korea, partly on behalf of the Japanese Army and Navy Hydrographic Department.⁹⁾

Generally speaking, passages of eyewitness such as this assert the authenticity of text and traveller: three decades of naval experience during this crucial period clearly validate the confident narrative voice of previous scenes. Furthermore, because of their concern with firearms, a joint consideration of these passages with sports shooting is also encouraged. Read forward, *Wild Coasts*'s descriptions of the maintenance of British prestige in Japan (or, later, in the wider region)

via gunboat action are implicitly legitimised by the vision of a violent natural world constructed in earlier scenes of hunting. Read backward from chapter eleven, this newly inserted information about early Anglo-Japanese relations reconfigures many of the chapters analysed so far :

as we sailed into Hakodadi [*sic*] harbour, at that time an insignificant Japanese town, the signal was made by the English admiral who was already there, not to salute his flag. We were also ordered not to fire the time immemorial blank musket at sunset, and this simply because the Japanese objected to any foreigner firing guns on their waters. (202–3)

This first address of Japanese gun legislation in *Wild Coasts* has clear parallels with English responses to the Moss trial. St. John is directly critical, not only of the ‘ridiculous and humiliating treatment’ (202) by the Japanese, which compounds their failure to find the Russian Pacific fleet in the Strait (nee Gulf) of Tartary, but also Stirling’s decision to submit to these and other laws. Textually, the naval bombardment of Kagoshima is one way in which English honour is regained: the location of these two episodes side-by-side skips the intervening eight years and makes the events of 1863 read like a direct retaliation for those of 1855; furthermore, the book’s frontispiece of ‘Action of Kagoshima,’ showing five warships firing at a coastline obscured by cannon smoke, is finally given a historical context here in terms of Anglo-Japanese relations and St. John’s life history, and therefore begins to assume a more powerful presence at the opening to the text as a whole. Thus framed, the shooting adventures that take up the first half of St. John’s memoirs appear newly significant too, as an assertion of national power as much as personal: in direct contrast to the humiliating restrictions placed upon the British in 1855, and in clear

comparison with the prefatory illustration, St. John is privileged to shoot where and when he pleases—each shot, each bird, each specimen taken home is a reminder of exactly that mandate.

Wild Coasts of Nipon and the limits of British power

A second shift in the narrative occurs at the beginning of the final chapter eighteen. Here, St. John reflects on his years of naval service and personal maturation, and the attendant growth of Western knowledge and power in the Far East. It seems like a moment of quiet satisfaction on the part of a veteran traveller now returned ‘home’ to Gloucester from ‘wild countries’ (v). Yet, notably for a chapter entitled ‘Résumé,’ the focus here is not entirely retrospective. Rather, for the first time, the narrator abandons the wry tone of previous chapters and gives extended, serious consideration to the future of east Asia, revealing a geopolitics more complicated than previously suggested, riven by a number of new and competing interests: Russian expansionism in the northern Pacific (372–5), the rise of Germany as a trading power in China (366), the insults suffered and not recompensed while surveying in Korea (374–5), and the ‘folly and shortsightedness’ that led to the loss of Sumatra and Java to the Dutch (382). This retraction of the authorial gaze allows for a wider perspective, of course, but it simultaneously invites aesthetic distance where previously, especially in relation to Japan, there had been a distinct emphasis on personal contact and interaction. This is compounded by the renewed representation of Japan as racial other, for the first time since the opening Yesso chapter.

The typically modest expectations of Japan’s regional role in the 1870s and 1880s are here bluntly expressed :

Japan, of course, is to be considered, but in trade it is as a molehill to a mountain when

compared with China; rather may it be thought of as a pleasant, a beautiful country, with charming inhabitants, a fairy-land, where one feels inclined to live without thinking of the morrow, but there, comparatively speaking, it ends. (367)

It is a common enough perception, ostensibly in line with earlier shooting scenes. However, in the pages that follow, this romantic image is frequently compromised by a number of passages that recognise the exceptionality of Japan's continuing independence and acknowledge its ambitions as an emerging empire modelled on the very Western powers which had forced it into treaty: 'Japan, in 1877, singly, and uninitiated by string-pullers, made her own terms in a treaty [of Kanghwa] which they insisted on Korea signing' (374).

Significantly, this early indication of Japan's self-determined transformation into a regional power seems to strike right at the psychological foundations of British colonial dominion:

What will become of [Japan's] extra population is a question not easy to answer. An island without colonies, or ground for her people to stand on, has a difficult problem to solve. She might then, indeed, be ideally compared with ourselves: cut off the safety-valves for the enormous increasing propensities we show, and we should very soon eat each other. . . . When the day comes, if it ever does, that she has to look round for breathing space for her extra population, where will she find it? (381-2)

Here, Japan is not just another potential competitor for 'breathing space,' not simply another possible participant in the hot and cold struggles for influence in the region. Rather, Japan is the double of Britain, its almost-the-same-but-not-quite

mirror image: an island without colonies; or, that which should have remained closed, hidden—sign of what Britain was and what, chillingly, it could become again. ('Where will she find [space]?' St. John replies that the eastern half of New Guinea and the northern part of Borneo are two of the only territories remaining under 'native rule' and thus available for Japanese expansion. Another doubling: for, on the following page, without a word about the overlap, both are earmarked for British occupation). And Britain, in a reverse of the intended comparison, is transformed into its Oriental double, the terminal point of specific comments on China's 'three hundred million' (372) or more generalised Malthusian worries about non-white licentiousness. The resulting population explosion has Briton eating Briton, a tropic reversal of the supreme marker of otherness that clearly reveals the vulnerability of savage/civilized distinctions. A further uncanny return, of a neo-Darwinian logic of competitive survival, is also disclosed here: the repeated motif of Blaine's bellicose *Encyclopaedia*—'take, kill, eat' (1870: 3)—reflected back on the self, as self-consumption of course, but also in terms of a haunting of the text with doubts about the sufficiency of national strength. In short, is Britain fit enough to survive?

Let us keep this question in mind as we return to the travel and shooting scenes of the first chapter. St. John's confident, unembellished definition of the Japanese as 'a true Mongolian type' (2004: 375) assigns a special racial significance—shared neither by Germany or even, to the same degree, Russia—to Japan's intimated role as competitor in the region. Moreover, it enforces an obvious point of difference from Britain, whatever the declarable (or implicit) parallels. In Yesso, however, this seemingly clear racial division is given new, subversive signification through the tripartite relationship of St. John, Ainu, and Japanese.

Wild Coasts's interest in Yesso is understandable given the vast tracts of seemingly virgin wilderness that still remained in the 1870s, allowing it simultaneous function as an untouched, fabulously abundant shooting site and an important survey ground, the primary reason for St. John's visit of course. As is well-known, except for the relatively small Matsumae domain in the southwest and some fishing stations along the coast, the island had only come under *Wajin* control in 1869, after annexation by the new Meiji government. Its new name of Hokkaido signalled this changed political relationship to "Japan," as the northern frontier of a modern nation-state and site of colonial expansion and development (Morris-Suzuki 1999). The *Sylvia*'s coastal survey was only one example of the many surveys and scientific missions that were organised by various national groups throughout the 1870s with the aim of opening up the island further (Guth 2004: 66). Although carried out under British supervision, St. John's findings therefore fit within a documentary corpus that, quite uniquely, aids modern Japan's first colonising project.

Heavily implicated in this project were the Ainu, who, after shooting, are one of the main focal points of the opening Yesso chapter. With annexation, and the definition of the interior as *terra nullius*, their indigenous claims to the land were denied. Subsequently, though the Meiji government often used the political discourse of assimilation, in practice there was a tendency—institutionalised in the 1899 Hokkaido Former Natives Protection Act [*Hokkaidō kyūdojin hogo hō*—to treat the Ainu as *rettō no jinshu*, an inferior race or, said differently, internal other (Oguma 1998; Askew 2004). In *Wild Coasts*, an illustration of an Ainu woman and child precedes the contents pages; thereafter, St. John observes various coastal Ainu, the majority at Japanese fishing stations; this culminates finally in an embedded ethnography, accompanied by further

objectifying illustrations, comprising material from his 1873 article 'The Ainos: aborigines of Yezo' that had been published in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. In contrast to many Western observers, including an opportunistic reviewer of *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (Anon. 1881), St. John withholds explicit criticism of Japanese policy vis-à-vis the Ainu:

although worked and treated pretty much as slaves, they are partially clothed and fed, and not unkindly or harshly dealt with. The race is, I believe, decreasing and will in all probability become extinct before many generations pass. (2004: 19)

The predicted extinction is further naturalised later, in the final paragraph of the last chapter, as 'the inevitable hand of fate': 'The being we call the savage must go down before the other we call civilised' (383).

It is a clear example of 'auto-genocide,' a common nineteenth-century rationalisation for the destruction often wrought by European encounters with non-European peoples: exonerating the invaders of all responsibility, this maintained that 'primitive' people are 'doomed' to 'pass away' as a result of their own 'savagery' (Brantlinger 1997: 43–44). At first, the proposed extinction of the Ainu in the face of Japanese colonial expansion would seem to draw further parallels between Japan and Britain, as respective imperial powers and, more specifically, as collaborators in Hokkaido; by 1886 at least, Darwinian ideas were sufficiently widespread in Japan for the *Hakodate shinbun* to state that the Ainu were dying out 'according to the principle of survival of the fittest' (cited in Siddle 1996: 76). Interestingly, however, contemporary ethnographic thinking about both Ainu and Japanese racial origins, which constituted the Ainu as inferior or savage,

also tended to identify them, not simply in opposition to their colonial masters, but as Aryan or Caucasian. If an affinity is here proposed, it is thus between Ainu and European rather than Japanese and European.

In 1882, a review article in *Nature* announced that 'no fresh discoveries of any moment are likely to be made,' apparently ending decades of debate in Europe about the basic racial classification of the Ainu. Citing physiognomical observations by Heinrich Botho Scheube, Heinrich von Siebold, and Isabella Bird, the author 'reject[s] the Mongol theory' (Keane 1882 : 525) and argues that, on the present evidence, 'there is nothing extravagant in the theory of the Caucasian origin of the Aino race' (526). *Wild Coasts* is more circumspect on this connection ; but it closes its ethnographic observations on the Ainu with the following question :

I have now said enough of these interesting people. Are they Mongolian? If they are, they have none of the characteristics of that race ; and if they are not Mongolian, then they are something like a strange drop of oil in the ocean, being surrounded by Mongols, yet not of them. (2004 : 30)

Remarkably, St. John had all but supplied an answer seven years previously, in his journal paper on the Ainu : 'They resemble the European race, not alone in their features and general contour, but in their expression' (St. John 1873 : 248).

The memoirs omit any such direct statements. Yet these avowed racial similarities nevertheless find themselves woven into the body of *Wild Coasts*, particularly through its central theme of hunting. Although Ainu had once grown small crops of millet and vegetables, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century this practice had been discouraged by Japanese in favour of the hunting and fishing trade, and conventional anthropologies have tended to define traditional Ainu society as

hunter-gatherer (Morris-Suzuki 1998 : 29–30). St. John's article, like the majority of contemporary works, describes their hunting practices at some length. But, written in the objective tone of the ethnographic present, the author's own presence, especially his shooting adventures, are concealed. In contrast, the reiteration of this information in the published memoirs offers a context by which the clear analogies of Ainu with St. John as sportsman can be seen :

I shot one swan, which proved to be *Cygnus musicus*, and excellent eating it was. Numerous skeletons of this bird lay scattered round the margins of the lagoon ; they had been killed by the Ainos for their downy skins. . . . I found a solitary Aino living by himself at a part of the river where others of his tribe usually crossed when passing to and fro from the interior. The grass hut this lonely being lived in was filled with the most extraordinary mixture of things possible to imagine. Dried deer's flesh, skins and robes of the same animal, horns, fishing-lines made of birch bark, swan's wings, and odds and ends of skins, etc. etc. strewed the ground for some distance round his hut. This aborigine savage was most polite. He took me out in his log canoe, after some swans which were feeding in the river, saluted my retriever most profoundly, and offered the dog some dried meat. (2004 : 5)

Slipping from 'I' to 'Aino' to 'aborigine savage' and back again, this early scene foregrounds encounter and exchange—a dialogue, if not of cited words, then of practice between one hunter and another. Obviously significant here is the framing of the scene : first, the Latin nomenclature which, though intended to conceal, serves also to draw attention to the parallel between the swans killed for their plumage by the Ainu and, in

an uncommon reversal, the swan killed by St. John for food; then, at the end of the paragraph, the 'solitary Aino' who guides the solitary English traveller, still not sated, onwards towards more game. As significant is the representation of that Aino's home: in carefully describing the strewn animal remains that, elsewhere, are either obscured or reconfigured as carefully classified specimens, it reads like an over-candid, excessive ('etc. etc.')

synopsis of all *Wild Coasts's* shooting excursions to come.

Although Japan's ostensible role within *Wild Coasts* is as exotic idyl, an inviolate wilderness over which St. John can freely 'ramble in quest of game,' the equivalence between Aino and St. John implied in this and other scenes from the first chapter is one way in which hunting can be read counter to intentions. As I have tried to show above, such counter-readings undermine claims to power implicit in the central (recreational and professional) shooting episodes of *Wild Coasts* and the neo-Darwinian ideology of survival of the fittest that is advocated throughout the text. Yesso, in particular, can be read as a focus for widespread anxieties (made explicit in the final chapter) that Britain, in the end, may not be fit enough to compete within this combative schema of the world. For in Yesso, the relationship between doomed native other and vigorous imperial self that Brantlinger (1997: 49) identifies in British colonial discourse about Tasmania, for example, is unable to confirm the hierarchies so advantageous to European expansion and rule: Yesso is a Japanese colony, and its aborigines—which European sportsmen, naturalists, and amateur anthropologists like St. John repeatedly travelled to observe—an apparent sign of a dying white race. *Wild Coasts*, while it manages to avoid all mention of the shooting licence and its implications, thus nevertheless articulates something of Japan's unique role within postcolonial histories of nineteenth-century empire and hunting, as a

disruption of customary relations between Europe and its others, as a contestation of the securities and confidence usually to be gained by being a white man with a gun in the East.

Notes

- 1) Other relevant scholarship includes part three of Ritvo (1987), Cartmill (1993), and chapters from Lovelock (2008).
- 2) Although the official name changed from Ezo to Hokkaido in 1869, Japan's northern island continued to be referred to as "Yesso," "Yezo" or "Yeso" in contemporary English-language documents. Unless otherwise necessary, I follow *Wild Coasts's* terminology throughout this paper.
- 3) For exceptions to Buddhist prescriptions against the slaughter of certain animals during the early modern period, see Harada (2000). Totman discusses the decline of recreational hunting by samurai during the same period (1995: 381), and shogunate regulations on samurai use of muzzleloaders (120). In more detail, though with questionable conclusions, Noel Perrin focuses on the regulation of guns by Hideyoshi and Ieyasu (1979: 26).
- 4) See also Hoare's *Japan's Treaty Ports and Foreign Settlements*, where he productively discusses this process in terms of the broader mission of the Meiji government to end extraterritoriality (1994: 90–1, 95, 97).
- 5) These scathing comments resulted in a ban on legation or consulate members entering the Yokohama Club until 1865, when Alcock finally departed from Japan (Jones 1931: 54).
- 6) See chapter seven of Markley (2006) for ways in which seventeenth and eighteenth-century Japan challenged European self-conceptions.
- 7) There are tonal similarities here with St. John's contemporaries in, for example, colonial Africa, who, though they were pursuing much larger game, also 'presented themselves with modest, and even whimsical understatement' (Ritvo 1987: 258).
- 8) For some sense of the rarity of St. John's positive outlook, compare his representation of shooting with the complaints of residents noted earlier, or Richard Gordon Smith's worries, privately voiced in the post-treaty ports period, that shooting in Japan is becoming too commercialised. He advises, therefore, that the area around Lake Biwa be set aside as a gentleman's hunting reserve dotted with tea houses (1986: 194, 204).
- 9) It may be pertinent at this moment of intratextual disclosure to add some biographical information about Henry Craven St. John which is not

included in *Wild Coasts*: his family was peerage, and his father, Charles William George St. John (1809–1856), a well-known sportsman, naturalist, and author. Charles's various publications include *The Wild Sports and Natural History of the Highlands* (1846) and *A Tour in Sutherlandshire* (1849); a description of the family's life in rural Scotland is given in the introduction to *Charles St. John's Note Books, 1846–1853: Invererne, Nairn, Elgin* (1901) which his son edited. Sometime after return from Japan, Henry was promoted to Admiral; and was Naval Aide-de-Camp to Queen Victoria between 1887 and 1889. Thanks are due to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the likely connection between Henry and Charles St. John. Some details about the St. John family can be found in *Burke's Peerage and Baronetage, 107th edition* or at www.thepeerage.com.

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狩猟にみる英国権威の限界

—— H. C. St. John の *The Wild Coasts of Nipon* の分析から ——

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要約：本論文は、日本の幕末および明治初期における遊猟をめぐるポリティクスについて検証する。日本に生息する野生生物は、その属性と数の多さによって英国旅行者達の賞賛的となってきた。一方で、明治政府のかつてないまでの内地統制維持のもと、遊猟にまつわる条件は他の非ヨーロッパ諸国に比べて厳しいものであった。気軽には行えないというこのハードルの高さは日本における狩猟の価値を増長させ、外国人ハンターにとって、様々な規制を乗り越え日本で狩猟を行う事、また実際に獲物を捉える行為は、個人および自国の国力を主張しているのと同じ意味合いを呈する様になる。一連の規制はまた、非ヨーロッパ諸国でありながら植民地化されておらず、更には急速に発展する独自の帝国を築く日本特有の立ち位置を暗示するものであり、一九世紀における遊猟と帝国主義に関する従来のポストコロニアル的概念の再考の必要性を迫るものである。英国海軍大佐 H. C. St. John は、*Notes and Sketches from the Wild Coasts of Nipon* (1880年) の中で、遊猟という概念のネオダーウィニズム性を指摘するとともに、同行為がより広義な政治的重要性を有している事を示唆している。特に、近代日本初の内国植民地である北海道とその先住民であるアイヌに関する記述は、競合する東アジアの新ゲオポリティクにおける英国権威の限界に言及していると読み解く事ができる。