ABSTRACT

This article concerns the related ideas of “presentation” and “representation” with regard to animals and suggests that the prefix “re” indicates a directing agent with its own concerns about the nature and status of animal presence. It further suggests that the representation of animals is perhaps always an expression of human concerns, desires, and imaginings. As with other domesticated nonhuman animals, foxhounds are not present in the world to fulfill their own purposes but there to fulfill these human desires and imaginings and are celebrated as the realization of a complex engagement of humans with the world of animals. The foxhound is central to English foxhunting and is given cultural meaning because of this context. The article offers a close anthropological interpretation of the production of this animal - a complex, cultural creation based on a canine form.

Foxhounds are unusual nonhuman animals in terms of their relationships with both humans and other animals and in terms of the location and purposes of animals in English rural spaces. Hunting hounds have a unique existence poised between the worlds of humans and wild animals. Although a docile and domesticated dog, foxhounds are not companion animals (“pets”) - animals created for close emotional relationships with individual humans. Nor, despite living in large groups in purpose-built animal.

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shelters in rural space, are they livestock - animals created for the exploitation of their bodies or bodily products. The Huntsman and his assistants have close, emotional, and enduring relationships with the hounds, but such relationships are not personalized into an individual pet relationship. In a sense, the relationship of care is close to that of the husbandry associated with the care and management of livestock: They must be housed, fed, watered, and exercised, their living quarters cleaned, and the sick attended to. In terms of the specific culture of dog-keeping in England, they are also curious animals. Foxhounds are, as it were, single purpose dogs. Individuals of other breeds of dogs might find themselves related to the human world in many different ways. Labradors, for example, might become pets, guard dogs, or seeing-eye dogs. They might work with the police, the military, the rescue services, or alongside a gamebird shooter. This never happens with foxhounds; they never transfer out of the context of hunting world into which they are born; they are only ever hunting hounds. These are working animals. Their task is to hunt foxes, not a simple utilitarian task - it is one that is construed by humans as a performance. No other dogs are kept in such large groups in England: Hounds are domesticated dogs, but they are expected to interact as a pack and, to some extent, exhibit behavior similar to that of a pack of wild dogs. They constitute a culturally created *pack*, a pack created for performance; each hound is specially bred for its role in this performance.

Central to this article will be an exploration of how hounds are selectively bred, how they are thought about and responded to in the context of foxhunting in modern rural England. The article also will explore how this attention depends on and constitutes a series of representations of the animal. What is offered here is part of a larger anthropological project - to explore and interpret foxhunting as a cultural practice. Fundamental to this is the need to understand how animals - both the hunters and the hunted - are represented by the human participants and what such representations give rise to, or allow for, in terms of practice. Such an understanding, albeit an incomplete one, has been developed by the author as a result of many years of participant observation with several Hunts in England. The aim of this research method has been to develop anthropological interpretations of foxhunting as a cultural practice from the everyday accounts of those who participate, from conversations with participants, and from the direct experience and observation of hunting activities in their natural settings.
**Presentations and Representations**

Although it is impossible to engage here with the complex philosophical issues relating to the nature and status of representations of animals, it is, perhaps, worth offering some general comments before beginning what will be a grounded ethnographic account of specific representations in a particular context. It seems that a major problem for scholars writing about animal and human relationships is what is “present” and what is “represented” in terms of the animals that are the part of such relationships. Can there ever be an “objective” animal, an animal unmediated by, undistorted by, the optics of cultural perspectives? Is it possible for a human to gain access of any kind to animals beyond their cultural representation? Perhaps disciplines such as biology, zoology, taxonomy, ethology, and animal psychology might claim to come closest to an engagement with the unmediated animal as they seek to understand and explain animal bodies, animal behaviors, and - more contentiously - animal minds. But even such scientific accounts and analyses need to be treated as interpretations and representations, for they are cultural practices and the accounts of their practitioners, expressive of particular human interests and concerns. They may claim, in the name of Science, a certain authority, but not a timeless, true, objective or privileged set of representations. If there are difficulties with such scientific representations, how much more complex it is with those produced by scholars writing from within the disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences. The very notion of what constitutes an animal, what an unmediated, an “unrepresented,” simply “present” animal might be, and whether it is possible to access this and write about it, is troublesome and intellectually challenging. In recent years, a variety of writers from these latter disciplines have tried to tease such issues (Crist, 1999; Fudge, 2000; Ingold, 1994; Lippit, 2000; Steeves, 1999).

A guiding concern in this article is with the related terms, “presentation” and “representation” with regard to animals. This article suggests that presentation might be taken as indicating a first level of embodied, immediate, unmediated being in the world - animals present in the world for their own purposes, whereas the addition of the prefix “re” indicates or suggests the necessary presence of a directing, active other - an agent with its own concerns about the nature and status of what is present. Representations are one remove from a presentation; they are present in another register and, necessarily,
suffused with cultural meaning. This position then suggests a set of specific questions. Who is engaged in the representation, of what, for whom, to whom, to what ends, and in what contexts?

In the ethnographic account that follows, foxhounds are not simply *there*, present, in the world. They have been created, brought out of a domesticated canine form that once existed as a naturally occurring, wild form. This representation, a particular representation of general “dog-ness,” as with the creation of all domesticated animals, is a cultural production. Foxhounds are never merely dogs; neither are they simply hounds. Their physical presence in the world depends on processes and structures of human significances. They cannot be perceived, thought of, spoken about, or have any meaning outside the cultural context in which they exist and without which they would not exist at all.

The fascination with attempting to understand the representations of animals is with what an animal is made to be (the nature of the identities given to them) and how these identities or representations might be expressive of human concerns. It is also with understanding the practices of engagement between humans and animals that are predicated on such representations. Discussion about the representations of animals has often been focused on the idea of representation in terms of depiction and image. In the ethnographic account that follows, however, the intention also is to pay close attention to other uses of the terms “represent” and “representative” - the ideas of “to stand for,” “to substitute,” “to be an agent of,” “to embody,” “to correspond to,” and “to be a specimen or exemplar of a type.” Foxhounds are not present in the human world for their own purposes - they would not exist at all but for humans - they are there to fulfill human desires and are celebrated as a human achievement. The nature of this achievement and this celebration within the complex drama of foxhunting are central concerns in this article.

**Hunting the Fox**

Although this article will not be concerned in any detail with hunting per se, it is necessary to give some context for understanding the role of the foxhound. There are some 200 officially recognized and registered Hunts\(^2\) in Great Britain, and they hunt, usually twice a week, in a season that lasts from
autumn until early spring. The main participants consist of horse-mounted riders, a pack of hounds, and a group of people who follow on foot or in vehicles. Although there are several officials in any Hunt, the most important in terms of the practice of hunting is the Huntsman. He is the person concerned with much of the breeding and care of the hounds and with sole responsibility for how they actually hunt the fox. In terms of the interpretation of foxhunting developed through this anthropological research, it is argued that humans are not themselves directly hunting - they have no immediate relationship with their prey. They do not attempt to find, track, pursue, and kill foxes - these are the tasks of the hounds. The human participants are actually only following hounds, described by the hunting expression as “riding to hounds.”

On a hunting day, the mounted riders, the officials, the foot followers, and the Huntsman with his hounds (he will usually have 20 or so hounds with him) will meet, by the invitation of the owner, at a farm, countryhouse, or pub and will be served drinks and snacks by the person hosting the “Meet.” This is a short, convivial, social event in which all the participants mix. When the day’s hunting begins, there is a separation of these participants. The Huntsman will lead the hounds away from the Meet to the place it has been decided to begin hunting, and the riders follow some distance behind. The Huntsman will encourage the hounds to begin exploring a hedgerow, wood, or field for the scent of a fox. It is important to emphasize that foxhounds work mainly through their sense of smell - they are scent hounds and do not look for foxes. If some find the scent of a fox, they will begin to cry excitedly, sounds that draw other members of the pack to them. They should then all set off in pursuit of the scent. The Huntsman will follow them, and, allowing him some distance, the mounted riders will follow. If the hounds are able to follow the scent successfully, they will begin to close the distance between themselves and the fox, who may have crossed the countryside some time before realizing that he or she was the object of attention. Becoming aware of the hounds, the fox will actively flee - with the hounds now in direct pursuit. A moment will come when they are able to see their prey. They will increase their pace, surge forward, and the leading hounds will seize and kill the animal. The Huntsman and the mounted field, if they have been able to successfully negotiate the obstacles of the countryside - fences, hedges, walls, and impassable fields - will arrive at the spot where the hounds are tearing
at the carcass of the fox. After a short pause, the Huntsman will call the hounds to him, and they will set off to repeat the process.

This short description is very much one of an “ideal hunt,” and it is rare that actual hunts proceed in such a linear fashion from finding a scent to the death of the animal. Most hunts develop in an infinitely more complex way, and it is the very complexity and its attendant uncertainties that, in part, generate the interest, excitement, and emotion in the human participants. There may not be any scent where the hounds search; there may be a scent that is faint and too quickly evaporates for the hounds to follow it; they may successfully follow a strong scent but suddenly lose it in difficult terrain; the hunted fox may successfully disguise his or her scent or take evasive action that confuses the hounds; even at the last moment, the fox may seek refuge in a place they cannot reach. At the center of this processual complexity, difficulty, and uncertainty is the intricate connectivity of the skills and abilities of the Huntsman and the hounds. Foxhunting can be interpreted as a challenge that the human participants have set for themselves - a challenge of attempting to engage with, and develop a relationship with, a free wild animal whose role is to evade being the focus of attention and, if drawn into a relationship, to attempt to disengage. But, as has been said above, the challenge is not one of direct engagement between human and fox but one enacted through another animal - the foxhound - who has been created for that purpose. The human participants come to this event not to hunt foxes but to see how creatures who are the product of human will, ingenuity, expertise, and imagination, hunt foxes: a contest between a wild animal and a culturally created one. They participate as active spectators in an event - part drama, part ceremony, part ritual - that has, at its heart, a celebration of the animal in a variety of forms (fox, hound, and horse) and, in particular, of an animal who is of human creation.

**Distinction, Creation and Pedigree**

“Game and hounds are the invention of the gods, of Apollo and Artemis. They bestowed it on Cheiron and honored him therewith for his righteousness. And he, receiving it, rejoiced in the gift, and used it” (Xenophon, 1968, p. 367). These are the opening sentences of *On Hunting* by Xenophon, perhaps the earliest treatise on the subject of hunting with hounds. He represents hunting and hounds as a gift from the gods given to the centaur Cheiron,
who then imparts the art to illustrious heroes such as Theseus, Odysseus, Achilles, and Aeneas. From the mythic times of Greek gods to the present, a variety of historical records, literary sources, and visual representations (see Figure 1) from different societies and cultures show that domesticated dogs classed as hunting hounds have occupied a privileged status in the households of monarchs, aristocrats, the nobility, and the landed gentry (Ahl, 1989; Cummins, 1988; De Quoy, 1971; Edward, Duke of York, 1406; Longrigg, 1977; Markham, 1611; Phæbus, 1787).

In the hunting world today, the hound continues to have an elite image, compared with other dogs. Hunting hounds are always referred to as hounds and never dogs - unless one is referring to male hounds. It is a mark of ignorance, outsidership, or a direct insult to ask a hunting person about the dogs, and any such use will bring a swift comment of disapproval and correction. The use of the term dog in this way reveals, in terms of those who hunt, a failure to understand the special nature and status of the animals and their place in the event. This distinction is also clearly marked in the use of the contrasting terms hound and cur. A cur is any dog - even one who has an illustrious pedigree - who is not a foxhound. Although this is a term for marking and distinguishing hounds, the use of cur does not have the normal disparaging sense of a despicable or vile dog in this context. Indeed, most of those who hunt and often make such a distinction are owners of pet dogs who are not in any sense regarded as vile or despicable. The most common use of the distinction is heard when hunting and a group of people is listening for the sounds of a distant group of hounds. If one hears canine sounds far away, he or she might ask “Are those hounds?”. To which a more knowledgeable person might reply, “No, those are curs barking.”

The breeding, management, and training of hunting hounds has been written about for centuries. From Xenophon and Arrain (Phillips & Willcock, 1999) in classical times through the medieval writers such as Phæbus (1787) to the first texts such as Beckford (1781/1993) concerning foxhunting in England, and into the twentieth century with now classic books such as those by Gilbey (1979) and Buchanan-Jardine (1937), and the scores of articles in modern specialist hunting magazines (here, noted authorities would include the 10th Duke of Beaufort, Captain Brian Fanshawe, Captain Ian Farquhar, Sir Newton Rycroft, Martin Scott, and Captain Ronnie Wallis), writers have
debated the nature and style of the breed and the ideal qualities of the foxhound. The modern foxhound is the product of some 250 years of careful selection and breeding: Individual Hunt records from the eighteenth century and the Foxhound Kennel Stud Book from the mid nineteenth century chart the history of the breed and celebrate notable exemplars of it. The aim here is not to explore the history of the breeding of this animal, but it is important to stress the perhaps obvious point that the creation of the foxhound is, as with the creation of any domesticated animal, the result of cultural ideas in combination with a natural form.

Those responsible for the breeding of hounds⁴ are involved in a continual play, in a series of play-back mechanisms, between representation and presentation, between an ideal and the actual embodied presence - a continual becoming. Hounds are unable to have a first order being in the world without human intervention. They are not permitted to embody, reproduce, and re-embody themselves of their own volition. Each hound is a representative

Fig. 1. A Couple of Foxhounds (George Stubbs, 1792). © Tate Gallery, London.
of an image, perhaps only a part image, which each breeder has in his mind. The reproduction of and for the particular form is also intimately connected with the knowledge or experience of past and present representations of embodied hounds. It requires vision, imagination, knowledge, and skill to attempt to mold the processes of biological reproduction to bring about the forms they would like to produce. All hounds produced are not only themselves but are situated in a continuum from the past and become the basis for other potential hounds; or not. Breeders can control the nature of the present animals by refusing their presence - the breeders will kill them if they do not conform to their idea or ideal - and the breeders can reject their potential for the future by refusing to breed from them.

Of first concern to the breeder is the production of the body of the hound. As an athletic, working animal who will have to run maybe 50 miles twice a week on hunting days, the body of the hound should be fit for the purpose. Here, great attention is paid to the relationships between length of leg, the chest, feet, tail, size of body, and the proportions of the head - this is the physical conformation of the animal, the basis of the hound's athletic quality of speed, drive, and stamina. Each breeder will have a clear idea, based on some generally shared cultural notions, held within the world of hunting, of what this physical conformation ought, ideally, to be. Each will have views about how the physical attributes relate to the hunting quality of the hound and will strive to bring them into an harmonious relationship of form. Close attention will also be paid to the color of the coat of the animal - different Hunts favor different color combinations and markings - a physical attribute, but one related more to aesthetics than to hunting ability.

In this creation of a canine form, foxhound breeding shares something with the breeding of any pedigree dog - the continual approximation to an ideal. Where it differs significantly, though, is in who controls the image of the ideal and the acceptability of any individual representation of the ideal. Unlike the setting of standards for other pedigree dogs that are generally set and controlled by specific Breed Clubs in association with national associations (such as The Kennel Club in the United Kingdom and American Kennel Club and the United Kennel Club in the United States), there is no such attempt at breed standardization for working foxhounds. Although there is a Foxhound Kennel Stud Book (for the registration of hounds) controlled by the Masters
of Foxhounds Association, there is no authoritative organization that defines the appropriate or any acceptable standard of the physicality of the foxhound. The physical appearance of the hounds of any pack will depend on decisions made by those responsible for their selective breeding to express the ideas they have of what and how a foxhound should be. The breeders of each Hunt work toward forming or maintaining a “type” for their pack, which means that each hound included in the pack is a representative of that type - a point that will be further explored below. Breeders will have clear ideas about their ideal of the foxhound and will express this in terms of the size, shape, density, and overall conformation of the animal. This ideal is not only related to aesthetic concerns but also will be closely related to the practicalities of how the body of the hound ought to relate to the physical demands of the terrain over which the hound will hunt. Breeders also seek to breed for a uniformity of “look” within the pack. This is not an idea that all the hounds should be as nearly as possible exact replicas of each other but rather that the diversity of individuals should come together in an aesthetic of unity - something that is expressed as a “level pack” - which then becomes the distinguishing expression of the identity of the pack belonging to a particular Hunt. Beckford, in his eighteenth century treatise on hunting, wrote: “... to look well, they should be all nearly of a size; and I even think they should all look of the same family: Facies non omnibus una, Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororum (1781/1993, p. 18). And Beaufort (1980) brings together the aesthetics and purpose of “level” when he comments: “There is something particularly pleasing to the eye in the sight of a level, symmetrical pack. To breed a pack of hounds, perfect alike in appearance and in work, is however, the labour of a lifetime.” (p. 24; see Figure 2).

**Nose, Voice, and Fox Sense**

Apart from the concern with the physical body of the hound, breeders are also seeking important, but less tangible, qualities - qualities that they hope to develop in all members of the pack but which cannot be selected for in terms of any ideas of the scientific breeding for inherited characteristics. There is an attempt to link the physical body of the hound to that of the hound's purpose and performance as a hunting hound. Such qualities include “nose,” “voice,” and “fox sense.” “Nose” is basically the scenting ability of a hound and is fundamental for this style of hunting, for, as Beaufort (1980), a recog-
nized authority on hounds, put it, “a pack can only hunt as fast as their noses” (p. 29). Hounds must have the ability to find and, as it were, fix on the scent of a fox and keep it in their nostrils as they move at speed across the countryside. All hounds should be able to do this, but particularly admired are those who demonstrate that they can find a very weak scent, who can follow it in adverse conditions (when the scent dissipates in rain, wind, or the warmth of sunshine, or on difficult and confusing scenting surfaces such as asphalt roads), or who can follow it despite the evasive tactics of the fox. Huntsmen will also speak with pleasure and admiration of individual hounds who can do this when the majority of the pack are experiencing difficulties.

A hound who finds the scent of a fox begins to make a “yipping” or “squeaking” sound that becomes a fuller “baying” as the animal becomes more convinced by what the sense of smell communicates. These sounds excite the other hounds and draw them to the hounds who are “proclaiming” the scent. Once they, too, pick up the scent, they join in the general chorus. Hounds should never act as individual, silent hunters and set off after a fox on their

Fig. 2. *A Level Pack* (Photograph by the author).
own - this is a collective venture, and hounds should communicate with each other. There is, thus, an intimate connection between “nose” and “voice” - the former should stimulate the latter. The notion of “voice” is highly elaborated in the discourse of foxhunting. Not only are hounds spoken about as having “voices” but they also “speak,” and as soon as the pack begins a definite baying chorus, the human participants will excitedly comment, “Listen, hounds are speaking” and will be fairly certain that the hounds are in pursuit of a fox. The qualities of “voice” and “speaking” are also features that distinguish hounds from curs who merely “bark” - such dogs are never referred to as “speaking,” and the quality of their barking is never attended to by hunt participants.

The interpretation, understanding, and appreciation of “voice” is wonderfully complex in hunting. As this author has pointed out elsewhere: ‘(“Voice”) . . . is not something that is interpreted anthropomorphically - although they “speak,” this does not suggest that they have anything to say. What the Huntsman must be certain of, though, is that they are “speaking” “truly” - that they really do have the scent. As one Huntsman commented, “it must be ‘meaningful,’” and “they should speak authoritatively.” The Huntsman must know that the first voices he hears are true so that he can encourage other hounds, who are perhaps some distance away and cannot possibly have the scent, to go to those who are speaking. Some hounds, however, will use their voices without really having the scent - often they are merely imitating others who might have caught the scent of a fox. As the same Huntsman commented, “You don’t want those who are too liberal with their tongues - babblers.” Just as being “mute,” refusing to use the voice, is undesirable, so is a hound who “speaks” for no good reason’ (Marvin, in press).

There is another, purely aesthetic elaboration of the sound made by foxhounds. Hounds are regarded as having soprano, tenor, or bass voices, and these are highly appreciated by Huntsmen. They speak of attempting to develop a range of such voices in their pack to create a pleasing and melodious chorus, and all aficionados of foxhunting will refer, explicitly, to “the music of hounds.” Here the basic vocalizations of an animal are responded to in a cultural register.

The final quality of interest to the breeder and to the participants in the hunt is that of “fox sense.” This refers to the ability of a hound to establish, through
scent alone, a relationship with the absent fox. This becomes especially important when, after following the scent for some time, it seems to disappear or perhaps becomes confused by other scents and smells. At this point, the hounds stop running, they mill around the point where they lost the scent, and often they become confused. A hound with good fox sense will begin to move away from this area and begin to search once again for the scent of the same fox. A hound who begins to do this very deliberately and who appears to be thinking of where the fox might have gone, given the type of terrain and the micro-climatic conditions (such as wind direction), is referred to as exhibiting good fox sense. Such behavior is interpreted by humans as though the hound was engaging in an animal version of anthropomorphism - thinking like a fox. It is as if the hound, attempting to follow a difficult scent line, was saying, “From what I know of foxes and given these conditions and the nature of this place, what is this one likely to have done?” Fox sense is always tied to the presence or absence of scent. It is not a quality associated with any apparent tactical ability - hounds should never, as it were, attempt to second-guess the fox, to plan, and attempt to outwit the fox. Hounds should only follow a scent; the fox should determine the passage across the countryside. The fox sets the agenda for the hunt, and the hounds should follow this as closely and directly as possible. They should never, for example, try to circle ahead of the animal and appear from a direction the fox is not expecting, nor should they lie in wait or attempt to ambush the fox. There is no space here to explore the structures of hunting as a cultural practice in terms of rules of engagement, appropriate relations between the animal and human participants, and notions of fair play. It is worth suggesting, however, that the notions of appropriate and inappropriate fox sense indicate that the event is predicated on ideas of “natural” rather than “cultural” abilities. The hound is culturally created to participate in the event, but it is expected that such participation will be directed by the hound’s immediate senses rather than by intellectual processes.

The Foxhound on Show

Returning to the physical embodiment of the foxhound, it is necessary to consider another important aspect of representation. Here, the focus is away from the hunting field and the practicalities of hunting, although it is intimately connected with both. The context is that of the arena of Hound Shows
and refers us to issues of pedigree and the celebration of breeding as a cultural practice. Hound Shows are held throughout the country, and those responsible for breeding hounds will select the best dogs and bitches of the pack for showing. In the premier shows, Hunts from across the country will be represented; in the minor shows, only those from the immediate area will attend. In each show, the hounds are not judged by representatives of a controlling authority of the breed but by Masters of Foxhounds and Huntsmen from different Hunts who have reputations as skilled and knowledgeable breeders.

Once again, there is not the space here to consider the issues in great detail, but, in terms of representation, it is worth offering a few comments about the relationship between Hound Shows and other pedigree dog shows. In pedigree dog shows, the animals are presented in a competition that has, at its heart, a contest between the image of an ideal type of a particular breed (established and controlled by the recognized authorities or “guardians” of the breed) and individual representatives of it presented by individual breeders. The concern is for perfection in terms of an embodied aesthetic and a recognized and approved “standard.” Such a notion of “standard” does not exist in the context of Hound Shows. The judges will be concerned with standards in terms of the nature of the physical conformation and a general aesthetic of the look (which includes coat color) of hounds, but there is no notion of a nationally approved or authoritative standard. Hound Shows are a celebration of the breed and of the breeding achievements within particular Hunts, but the real focus of concern is outward from the show ring to the practice of hunting. As one commentator expressed it: “The modern English Foxhound is heavily influenced by breeding policies of Masters who seek honours ‘on the flags’ of the show ring. Yet there is still a remarkable diversity in the hunting field and long may this continue” (Foxford, 1996, pp. 44-45).

The aim is not, as with the production of other pedigree dogs, simply to create the perfect body, a body that has no other purpose than that of expressing embodiment, but rather to produce an animal who expresses the possibility of performance. Richard Greville Verney (Lord Willoughby de Broke) writing early in the twentieth century captures this difference when discussing the merits or otherwise of Hound Shows:
The most valid argument of a Hound Show is that it gives prominence to the value of symmetry. Symmetry in Foxhounds should be aimed at not because it is good to look upon, but because a certain physical structure enables a Hound to do his work for the longest time and in the quickest and easiest manner. Other things being equal, the good looking Foxhound on the flags (i.e. in the show ring) should certainly, in the long run, beat the ugly one in the field. This is the value of symmetry, and nothing else is. Immediately that a fashionable standard of looks becomes an arbitrary affair, presented . . . to satisfy caprice with no reference to utility, then the show-ring becomes dangerous. (1925, pp. 100-101)

What many hound breeders regard as the over-aesthetic, effete, and foppish interests of pedigree breeders is nicely alluded to in Beaufort’s (1980) remark, “. . . we have kept the brush and comb out of the hound rings, reserving them for pedigree dog shows!” (p. 59). During the research on which this article is based, the author sometimes heard some Hunts criticized for paying too much attention to breeding hounds primarily to win prizes at Hound Shows. Such a concern for “look” rather than “purpose” was regarded as moving the foxhound too closely toward other pedigree dogs and contained the implied criticism that this was something of a degenerate practice.

The Hound Show is the celebration of representation that here has two facets - that of each animal’s representing foxhoundsness itself and also that of each hound’s representing the skill and imagination of the breeder in bringing about its existence. All of this brings us back to the relationship between representation and cultural practice mentioned at the beginning of the article. Foxhounds in the show-ring are representative of the foxhound breed, but they only become fully meaningful, only become complete foxhounds, when they behave as foxhounds, and this they cannot do until they are reunited with their fellow hounds of the pack and engaged in the performance of hunting.

**The Pack - Natural Instincts, Cultural Performance**

The hound breeder not only creates individual animals, but he must bring these together in a series of close relationships that form a harmonious ensemble. Each hound is known individually and each will have individual skills, but this individuality must be merged into the collective. The Huntsman cre-
ates the pack, its purpose and its performance. Although people in the hunting world often comment on the pack sharing similarities with a naturally occurring pack of wild canids, it has a very different social construction and set of behavioral practices from such a pack. As has been shown above, such a pack does not come about through natural selection. Members of a pack of foxhounds are often closely related, but there are no family or other social groupings; neither are any hierarchies allowed to develop as they would in a wild pack. Most Huntsmen comment that it is they who are, and must be, “top dog.”

Although foxhounds hunt using their natural senses, their purpose in hunting is cultural rather than natural. It is humans who seek an engagement with wild foxes through hunting; it is they who both create the hound for this purpose and they who decide on which other animals the hounds should or should not pay attention to in their world. Unlike a wild pack, they are not hunting a prey that is a potential source of food for them (nor for their human masters), for the fox is not eaten - they are hunting a particular prey that has been decided for them by the Huntsman. Hounds must hunt purposefully, but this purpose has been established for them. Huntsmen comment that hounds should be willingly and enthusiastically engaged in hunting, but a careful balance must be maintained - they are both hunting for themselves and as agents of someone else. “Natural instincts” are shaped, controlled, and given meaning by human desires. The relationships between presentation and representation become complex at this point. Those interested in the hunting performances of hounds will talk about them as behaving in certain ways because they are foxhounds. This, however, is not spoken of as though the hound is merely unconsciously revealing natural qualities but rather in terms of the hound’s knowing what is expected because this animal is a foxhound - who has, as it were, an awareness of foxhoundness - a human construct. The hounds, then, actively present themselves in terms of their representation, a process generated by some form of understanding of that representation.

Such performances, both individual and ensemble, are shaped and maintained through complex mechanisms and relationships of discipline and control between the Huntsman and the hounds. On the hunting field, he must maintain a delicate balance in his relationships with the hounds between con-
trol and freedom, between direction and improvisation. Ideally, hounds should be able to find and follow a scent without commands from the Huntsman, and if they lose it, they should not immediately look to him for help in redirecting themselves. The Huntsman should understand and sense his animals so well that he should know when they need to be encouraged to move along because there is no scent or when they need more time to work carefully and uninterrupted at a faint scent. Although he directs the hunt, it is felt by most Huntsmen that they must demonstrate trust in their hounds; as one Huntsman commented to the author, “The dimmest hound usually knows more than the best Huntsman.”

It is the expression and enactment of these relationships that many who follow the Hunt come to observe, experience, and comment on. Throughout the day, there is a multi-voiced commentary on how the hounds are performing, how the Huntsman is relating to them, and how both are relating to the challenges presented by the countryside and by the absent or present fox. Hunting people refer to the “invisible thread” that unites hounds and Huntsman - a thread that slackens and tightens and sometimes breaks. This metaphorical thread does not simply attach hounds to the man and the man to hounds in a linear fashion, but it turns and twists, it crosses and re-crosses to bind them into a web of mutually reinforcing and meaningful representations. Neither makes sense without the other; both have presence only in terms of the other; each represents the other.

It is impossible to search for any meaning of the foxhounds as foxhounds out of this context of hunting. Presence, in terms of their immediate being in the world, is only meaningful and can only be known or understood in terms of the relationships they have with humans and with the representations they have, or make, of it. Human observations of, and thoughts, feelings, experiences, beliefs, and imaginings about, animals bring about the representations of them. As with all domesticated animals, the foxhounds are not in the world to fulfill their own purposes - to be themselves. They are present as a result of human imaginings and human desires. Once present, embodied, and able to perform, they are represented and celebrated as the realization of a complex engagement by humans with the world of animals.

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Correspondence should be sent to Garry Marvin, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Surrey Roehampton, 80 Roehampton Lane, SW 15 5SL, United Kingdom. Email: g.marvin@roehampton.ac.uk. As ever, I would like to acknowledge the kindness and patience of those were willing to share with me their deep knowledge of hounds - in particular, I would like to thank Terry Richmond and Martin Scott. Steve Baker and the anonymous commentator of the first draft of this paper offered invaluable comments that forced me into much clearer thinking about the issues. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers was distracted from far more important concerns to give stimulating suggestions for making sense of much of this.

The word Hunt with a capital letter is used throughout the article to refer to a social entity or association officially registered with, and recognized by, the Masters of Foxhounds Association, rather than to the activities that constitute hunting as a practice.

For example, each Hunt will have one or more Masters of Foxhounds who have overall responsibility for the Hunt, and each will have officials such as a Chairman/Chairwoman, Secretary, Treasurer. In some Hunts, the Master may also be the Huntsman in the sense of taking the hounds out to hunt, but in the majority the Huntsman is a paid employee of the Hunt.

Speaking officially, it is the Master who is responsible for the breeding but it is often the advice and decisions of the Huntsman that are crucial.

I am indebted to Margaret Kenna who, when asked if she could think of a suitable Greek term for this, came up with the imaginative suggestion of *synagrio-morphism*.

The idea that the hounds on show represent the achievement of the Hunt rather than that of a particular individual is emphasized by the fact that the Huntsman and his assistant who present the animals in the arena are dressed in their particular Hunt livery and the prizes are awarded to the Hunts and not to individual breeders.

Young hounds must learn, from watching older hounds and from praise or punished bestowed by the Huntsman that they may not search for or chase any other animal they come across when hunting.

References


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