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Foxes, Hounds, and Horses: WHO or Which?

ABSTRACT

Writers of English can choose whether to mark a high level of sentience in a nonhuman animal by selecting the word, "who," rather than "which." An examination of texts relating to foxhunting on the world wide web showed that, in reference to the non-human animals involved in foxhunting, writers were most likely to use the word, who, in reference to foxes, and least likely to use it in reference to horses. Those who support foxhunting are more likely to recognize the sentience of the fox than those who oppose foxhunting. Those who support foxhunting link the sentience of the fox to the enjoyment of the hunt by presenting the fox as an active creator of the hunt and a worthy opponent.

A pronoun is a word that refers to a nominal, referred to as the referent or antecedent of the pronoun. A nominal is not necessarily a noun—it can be a clause. In this paper, however, I deal only with structures in which the pronouns can be traced back to a single noun.

In English, the referent of the neuter pronouns (which and it(s)² normally cannot be human (The *hunt ban* is here and this time *it's* real.³). On the other hand, one of the gendered pronouns: (he/him/his, or, she/her) must refer to singular humans in the third

person. The relative pronoun, *who*[m][se] (WHO), is used rather than the neuter pronoun, *which* (The distressed motorist *who* struck the hound can be heard on film as she calls out). The use of the word, *it*, with an adult human antecedent is possible as an insult and sometimes is used to refer to a very small baby when the baby's gender is unknown to the speaker. Inanimate nouns normally are referred to by the neuter pronouns, although the gendered pronouns conventionally are used by some people to refer to some inanimate referents, especially ships and problematic machines. *She's* fixed might refer to a ship; *he's* fixed, to a computer).

When we look at how we refer to nonhuman animate entities (a definition assumed to exclude plants), there is a choice in English, with both the human and gendered terms (WHO, he, she) being used and the inanimate and ungendered terms (*which*, *it*). Dictionaries and grammars often are quite explicit about the areas of choice between (he/she and it). Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (1999) refer to (he and she) as "personal reference," (it) as "non-personal," and indicate the main areas where the speaker has a choice (babies; animals, especially pets; countries, and ships). They attribute meaning to the choice: "Personal reference expresses greater familiarity or involvement. Non-personal reference is more detached" (p. 317).

Jacobs (2004a, 2004b), building on some concepts from Dunayer (2001), has shown that almost all dictionaries, grammars, and style guides do not address the choice of relative pronoun in English where the antecedent is a nonhuman animal. Biber et al. (1999), however, is confusing on this point, indicating,

[t]he relative pronoun *who* is distinctive in that it is used almost exclusively with an animate (human) head" and "[a]t the other extreme, the relative pronoun *which* rarely occurs with an animate head" (p. 612).

A third relative pronoun, (that), can be used with reference to any kind of antecedent ("the girl that I marry"; "the house that Jack built") and is not discussed here.

The word, animate, does not mean the same as the word, human, either biologically or linguistically: Biber et al. (1999) are silent on the treatment of animate, nonhuman referents. A group of us—who began to explore the use of (WHO and *which*) with animate, nonhuman referents—found that using (WHO) "when a close relationship with the animal is suggested" (Gilquin,

personal communication, 2004), makes the choice comparable to that between a gendered pronoun (he/she) and a neuter one (it).

Animacy is not a simple, binary choice. The way in which we use these pronouns establishes a scale of animacy, the normal order of which places humans at the top; other animals second; moving machines (ships, trains and cars) third; and the plant and mineral world at the bottom. It may seem strange that moving machines rank higher in this scale than do living plants, but that is how English usage ranks them.

The notion of animacy also is linked to that of sentience. *New Scientist* (2005) devoted a substantial part of one issue to the relationship between humans and other animals, with an emphasis on the emerging scientific acceptance of sentience in other animals. De Waal (2004) drew a distinction between anthropomorphism, “the projection of human feelings onto animals,” and what he called, anthropodenial, “blindness to the human-like characteristics of other animals and to our own animal-like characteristics” (p. 48): He saw both of these as problematic.

The scale of animacy affects the most likely entity to be chosen as a character in creative writing, especially in children’s fiction where nonhuman characters speak and engage in behaviors associated with humans: anthropomorphism or personalization. Nonhuman animals routinely are personalized in children’s stories. Although almost any inanimate entity can be personalized, moving machines are the most common: the very kind of machine most likely to be referred to as (she) in other contexts. When a nonhuman is personalized, the writer uses the human-associated pronouns (*The little engine who could*) and attributes gender—especially male gender.

We can take it that this scale of animacy reflects and shapes an attitude to the way the world is structured and that where there is a choice—whether with dogs or ships—a speaker’s selection of one alternative or another is meaningful. Treating a nonhuman like a human linguistically raises the animacy status of the nonhuman, signals sentience, and situates the nonhuman closer to the human.

This paper reports an investigation of the world wide web (web) to explore the extent to which writers use (WHO or which) in relative clauses where the antecedent is a nonhuman animal. The searches were made in October

and November 2004, and all examples are taken from the data so generated. After a broad overview, I examine in more detail how (WHO and which) are used in the discourses of foxhunting where emotions run high. In the final part of the paper, I examine two texts selected to illustrate in more detail some of the points in the quantitative section of the paper.

Googling

In several recent papers (Gupta, a, b), I have explored the way in which Google searches can be used to gather statistical evidence on contemporary usage, using key word searches. Sociologists have developed methods of sampling populations and techniques for establishing how representative a sample may be, but we never have had adequate ways of sampling written material. Large corpora—British National Corpus, Cobuild, or International Corpus of English—made an effort to sample printed texts, but the sampling techniques—compared to methods of sampling human populations—were experimental. Inevitably, the texts are out of date by the time they become publicly available. Some corpora are “tagged,” that is, supplied with codes that identify specific structures or form manuscripts; this allows more sophisticated searches to be made for specific structures. However, nothing compares to the size and range of the web.

For the last 10 years or so, the web has grown in size and in social and geographic spread. We just have begun to explore its possibilities as a source of data and only are beginning to establish sampling methods. Yet, the web offers a real possibility of developing techniques that will allow us to sample written texts of astonishing variety with the same degree of statistical reliability that exists for sampling populations. Renouf, Kehoe, and Mezquiriz (2004) emphasize the unequaled importance of the web as a searchable resource for language, especially in the search for relatively rare citations. They also discuss some of the difficulties and the requirement for the researcher to be aware of the nature of the web and the—often hidden—function in methods of the search engines (Lüdeling, Evert, & Baroni, forthcoming).

What is on the web changes every second. Although the web always is up-to-date; it is not the accustomed, fixed corpus used by linguistic researchers. The search engines also change the way they classify and order results. Despite

the problems of using Google to search the web, a straightforward string search can show effectively the big picture of linguistic usage. However, to tease out the more precise information that I need in the paper—who has written the text? what are their political allegiances? what is their attitude to the animals?—I need to view the texts and, often, to explore the site. My aim in doing a search is to reduce the number of hits to a figure that is small enough for me to read and large enough for me to see some patterns.

This is a new way of creating a corpus, but we are dealing with a new source. Readers are invited to replicate my searches: The numbers certainly will have changed, and some sites I used in late 2004 will no longer exist. I think it unlikely, however, that the proportions of the features compared will have changed very much; if they have, it is likely there has been social change such as change in how representative the web is or how animals are represented on it.

The Scale of Animacy

In this study, I first undertook a simple Google search for the strings: noun WHO and noun which (cat WHO; cat which). Then I calculated the proportion of (WHO to which) hits for each noun (Table 1). The search generated (who, whom, and whose), although (whom) is rare. I chose nouns that I thought would illustrate the hierarchy of animacy/sentience and included all the animals involved in foxhunting (hunter, dog, fox, hound, horse). The target in all searches is a string in which (WHO or which) is a relative pronoun referring to the noun immediately preceding it.

The percentage of (WHO) hits undoubtedly is meaningful, and we see something close to the predicted hierarchy of animacy here—from (man) to (brussels sprouts). Unexpectedly, (tomato) appears among the nonhuman animals, and (car) (a vehicle sometimes given a female gender) is lower than (house). Such a crude search is not enough, and there are a number of obvious problems.

Some strings are not the target structure of linked (noun, relative pronoun). (WHO and which) also can be interrogative pronouns (Is your car who you are?). Google was set up for content—not linguistic—searches, so it ignores punctuation: In some hits (WHO) begins a new sentence (Have you got a rental car? Who did you go with? Abel Ferrara, the man. Who cares?). The antecedent of the pronoun might not be the noun immediately before it (We

Table 1: Use of Who and Which in Noun: Wh—Strings

| noun | approx. No. of hits before <i>who</i> | approx. No. of hits before <i>which</i> | percentage of <i>who</i> |
|-------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| man | 8,220,000 | 332,000 | 96 |
| hunter | 113,000 | 9,240 | 92 |
| cat | 294,000 | 59,500 | 83 |
| chimpanzee | 2,600 | 737 | 78 |
| dog | 464,000 | 143,000 | 76 |
| fox | 118,000 | 41,700 | 74 |
| tiger | 24,600 | 12,300 | 67 |
| tomato | 14,400 | 8,930 | 62 |
| hound | 5,640 | 3,910 | 59 |
| rat | 14,500 | 14,500 | 50 |
| cockroach | 684 | 711 | 49 |
| horse | 51,400 | 73,700 | 41 |
| cow | 13,800 | 19,800 | 41 |
| chicken | 7,060 | 21,300 | 25 |
| house | 187,000 | 1,020,000 | 15 |
| car | 55,900 | 485,000 | 10 |
| brussel(s) sprout | 6 | 172 | 3 |

made a *vitamin* for man *which* contains all the vitamins, minerals, and supplements *which* we knew to be beneficial for the typical male.). These non-target hits presumably inflate the figures for all categories equally, probably by not more than 20% (based on the proportion of non-target hits found in the more detailed search of hunting texts reported later).

As predicted, many of the nonhuman (noun, WHO) sites are from children's stories, in which a nonhuman is anthropomorphized: Archy. Don Marquis's famous cockroach; Kipling's "cat who walks alone;" *The fox whose stomach had swollen*; and even "a darling young tomato who falls off an organic produce truck and tries to find his way back to his friends at a natural foods store."

Nouns are applied metaphorically to humans—this accounts for many of the "tomato WHO" examples. Some of these metaphorical uses are routine in sexual chatrooms (especially (*tomato* and *chicken*)). People also have names or pseudonyms that coincide with common nouns for other animals, vegetable, or inanimate objects—Fox and Hunter are common surnames).

Because the web is a complex source of data, it includes texts in the English of earlier periods. Although some examples of “man which” are non-target, others either are quotations from the King James translation of the *Bible*, or Christian texts written in an archaic style, where (which) can be used in reference to (man) (He is like a man which built an house). The web contains texts written in a wide variety of styles of English, including the very informal; however, as I have argued elsewhere (Gupta, forthcoming b), Standard English dominates the web. There was no evidence that the selection of any variety of English (other than seventeenth century) was relevant in the choice of (WHO versus which): It does not seem to be an area in which the formal and informal varieties of English differ. Even a crude count can show the big patterns:

1. The use of WHO with non-human animals is common;
2. Humans, other primates, and animals commonly used as companion animals are most likely to be followed by (WHO); and
3. Inanimate nouns, and animals commonly used as food are more likely to be followed by (which).

Foxhunting in Britain

This very basic quantification would suggest that animals seen as highly sentient, or with whom humans see themselves as being genetically or emotionally linked, are more likely to attract (WHO)—the horse seems to be anomalous. To understand more clearly the reasons why one writer might use (WHO) and another (which), I decided to target texts likely to reveal an attitude to the referent.

In October 2004, a bill to ban hunting with dogs, which had been progressing through the British parliament since 1998, was much in the news. Hunting foxes to the death with dogs became illegal from February 18, 2005. This is an issue with fierce partisanship on both sides and one in which the roles of four animals (hunters, dogs, horses, and foxes) are problematic.

Foxhunting in Britain involved highly organized communal hunts that were embedded into a social system in rural areas. Hunts were social institutions as well as highly ritualized sporting events. In some mountainous areas (such as the Lake District of northwest England), the seasonal hunting was on foot,

but it was on horseback in almost all Britain. Packs of highly trained hounds, who were bred centrally and maintained for the job, followed the trail of wild foxes. Following them was the hunt on horseback and assistants and hunt supporters in vehicles and on foot. Many hunts ended with no kill, and it was a matter for celebration when a fox was killed by a hunt. Since the 1950s, hunts also have been followed by groups of demonstrators, hunters observers and hunt saboteurs who represent various animal rights organizations and use different techniques to end hunting for pleasure. Groups opposing foxhunting continue to attend the drag hunts that have replaced foxhunts—since the legislation against foxhunting—to ensure that they do not pursue foxes.

The hunts were careful to maintain the habitat of the foxes, to ensure that foxes would continue to be available to hunt. When, from 1750 to 1850, hedges enclosed the common fields of England, provision was made in the Midlands of England—where fox hunting already was well-developed in the eighteenth century—for fox coverts, patches of woodland habitat for foxes (Hoskins, 1955, p. 151).

In 2000, foxes deliberately and illegally were introduced into the Australian state of Tasmania—to the great damage of the ecology—presumably in the hope that hunting foxes could take place there (Weeds, Pests and Diseases, 2005). Despite its predatory habits, the hunt has ensured the survival of the fox in rural areas. Those who hunt have supported the maintenance of foxes, observed their habits, protected their habitat, and often expressed affection for them. Page (1986) includes poems, declarations of love for the fox, and a frank discussion of hunting that he, too, ironically sees as, “offer[ing] the wild country fox its greatest insurance against excessive persecution” (p. 123).

Hunting, especially for what is not eaten, is (like warfare) often seen as being validated by a worthy opponent. The more the opponent can be seen as dangerous, brave, clever, and active in the fight, the more the hunter (or soldier) also can be seen as brave and clever. Foxes undoubtedly are—since the loss of wild boar and wolves—the most prestigious prey available in Britain, although they certainly are not dangerous to humans. Foxes feature in many traditional stories, where they take up the role of a cunning and dangerous—mostly to hens—character. As we shall see, the attribution of character, intelligence, and bravery to the fox is part of the discourse of foxhunting.

There is little doubt that the notion of pleasure being obtained from the killing of an animal repels the majority of the population of Britain. There is not the same level of opposition to the killing of foxes by farmers to reduce their predation on stock—and this continues—nor is there the same level of opposition to the killing of animals for food. Foxes are familiar animals in urban Britain, where they are not hunted and where almost all residents take pleasure in observing them. They are shy and present no direct threat to humans. Therefore, those supporting foxhunting have had a number of challenges in putting forth their views. They even have resorted to accusing those opposed to hunting of being the cause of more cruelty with comments such as,

By the time you read this column the anti-hunting brigade will have condemned thousands of mammals and birds to a slow, lingering death in the jaws of the fox whom they perceive as worthy of some sort of protection.

How do these allegiances translate into the choice of pronoun? On the one hand, one might expect those with a concern for animal rights—those who want to extend to other animals the rights that humans have—also would extend to other animals the animate pronoun. However, the hunters also have an interest in personalizing the fox and also might see the hounds and horses as sharing with them the act of hunting, which would lead them to personalize all the animals involved in the hunt. Both sides have the kind of positive emotional involvement with the animals that is likely to lead to the use of the animate pronoun. Are they equally likely to use the animate pronoun? Are those who are not partisan in the hunting debate less likely to use the animate pronoun?

WHO and Which in Foxhunting

In using Google searches for linguistic research, one has to be creative. The basic search string I used to generate Table 1 produces too many urls and too many irrelevant hits of one sort or another. To increase the proportion of relevant hits, a second search string is useful. As I wanted to generate texts that engaged in the hunting debate, I added to every search a second, required string, “ban hunting,” a phrase used by participants of all kinds in the debate. This virtually eliminated hits on urls relating stories with anthropomorphized characters, those in which words such as (fox) or (hunter) were surnames, names of pop groups, or names of specific kinds of sexual partners. I searched

for both singular and plural nouns, which was most important for hounds, who seldom are identified as individuals. I did not restrict myself to sites in the UK domain for two reasons: (a) sites that originate in the United Kingdom do not have necessarily a UK domain; and (b) I was happy to include any non-UK sites engaging in the discourse of hunting. In practice, the vast majority were engaging in the issue of foxhunting in the United Kingdom.

My search therefore was (animals WHO) and (animals which), in sites that also had the string, "ban hunting." The animals for whom I searched were the four classes of participants in foxhunting, which is the main type of hunting under discussion in the United Kingdom. These participants were fox(es), hound(s)/dog(s), horse(s), and hunter(s). Hound and dog both refer to the dogs (foxhounds) who are used for foxhunting in Britain, so I searched for both: There seems to be little difference in the degree of personalization. Another type of dog, the terrier, also is used in foxhunting in Britain to kill the fox after the fox has gone underground. The killing of a fox in this way is seen as peripheral to the sporting activity and seems to be little spoken about in the discourse of hunting. The target for hunter(s) is human: (Hunter) also can be used to refer to a type of horse, although this did not occur in my data. I recorded the crude numbers generated by the strings (Table 2) and examined in more detail the first 10 websites in each cell, which I read to establish the affiliation. Reading the context also enabled me to exclude the websites that did not use the target structure (Table 3).

Table 2: Approximate Number of Google Hits on Ban Hunting with (Animal) Who/Which

| Animal | <i>who</i> | <i>which</i> | percentage <i>who</i> | |
|---------|------------|--------------|-----------------------|----|
| Hunter | 103 | 39 | 73 | |
| Hunters | 232 | 17 | 93 | 86 |
| Fox | 78 | 87 | 47 | |
| Foxes | 55 | 148 | 27 | |
| Hound | 4 | 26 | 13 | |
| Hounds | 80 | 123 | 39 | |
| Dog | 83 | 164 | 34 | |
| Dogs | 61 | 197 | 24 | |
| Horse | 6 | 33 | 15 | |
| Horses | 15 | 39 | 28 | |

Table 3: Use of Who and Which by Attitude toward Hunting (First 10 Websites in Each Search Category)

| | pro-hunting | | | anti-hunting | | | non-partisan | | |
|---------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| | <i>who</i> | <i>which</i> | % age <i>who</i> | <i>who</i> | <i>which</i> | % age <i>who</i> | <i>who</i> | <i>which</i> | % age <i>who</i> |
| hunter | 7 | | 100 | 3 | | 100 | | | |
| hunters | 4 | | 100 | 4 | | 100 | 2 | | 100 |
| fox | 8 | 2 | 80 | 2 | 2 | 50 | | 6 | 0 |
| foxes | 7 | 4 | 64 | 3 | 3 | 50 | | 3 | 0 |
| hound | 3 | 4 | 43 | 1 | 5 | 17 | | 1 | 0 |
| hounds | 5 | 6 | 45 | 4 | 3 | 57 | 1 | 1 | 50 |
| dog | 4 | 2 | 67 | 1 | 3 | 25 | 5 | 5 | 50 |
| dogs | 4 | 3 | 57 | 3 | 6 | 33 | 3 | 1 | 75 |
| horse | 3 | 5 | 38 | 3 | 3 | 50 | 1 | 2 | 33 |
| horses | 8 | 5 | 62 | 2 | 3 | 40 | | 2 | 0 |
| Total | 53 | 31 | | 26 | 28 | | 12 | 21 | |
| | 84 | | | 54 | | | 33 | | |

This confirms the scale of animacy established in Table 1. Once again, unsurprisingly, the human hunters stand out with their high proportion of reference with (WHO). All cases of (hunters, which) appear to be relative clauses where the antecedent is other than the noun immediately before the relative pronoun (*Easements* for hunters *which* stretch over landowners' entire property). Of the other animals, the fox is most likely to attract the animate relative pronoun and the horse, once again, the least likely. There are some differences between the treatment of the singular and plural that are hard to understand, with some animals apparently more likely to be treated as sentient in the plural than in the singular (hounds and horses) and others more likely to be treated as sentient in the singular (hunters, dogs, and foxes). Some of these findings are based on small figures, however, with hounds and horses being relatively seldom referred to in the singular.

It is far more time consuming to examine the partisanship of those discussing hunting, as this requires viewing of the full text (rather than just the extract supplied in the Google results) and examination of its context. Once the websites are read, it is relatively easy to establish the degree of partisanship expressed in the text. On this issue, passions are high and clearly expressed.

I attributed direct quotations to those quoted and other content to those responsible for the web site. Non-partisan sites included contributions by some of the speakers in parliamentary debate, some official documents, some newspaper reports, and some educational material. The smaller sample of non-partisan texts makes comparison of their usage less secure than the comparison of the two partisan groups (Table 3). The following, small scale analysis of a subsection of these websites suggests,

1. Humans are always personalized;
2. Of the other animals, the fox is most likely to be personalized, except by the non-partisan; and
3. Those who are pro-hunting are most likely to personalize foxes and dogs/hounds.

As these examples show, personalizing an animal does not preclude hunting the animal and is not necessary for its defense:

WHO

Before the law, the fit fox, more often than not, always got away. It was the infirm or old fox who was caught. (pro-hunting)

On reaching Redgills they found a dog fox who made for Arresgill. (pro-hunting)

It's not only foxes who are hurt and killed in bloodsports. (anti-hunting)

There is the example of Copper the Fox, who would have died, according to the vet who treated him, who took to ground, bleeding from his penis due to internal injuries after being chased by a pack of hounds. (anti-hunting)

The peace of a wildlife reserve near Linwood in the New Forest was violated (2 October) when hunting dogs of the New Forest Hounds, who were in the area hunting young foxes, trespassed in full cry into the wood. (anti-hunting)

A rescue dog who worked long hours at Ground Zero has some serious medical problems and needs care. (non-partisan)

Which

Consider a fox, which has had a natural life until its last day. (pro-hunting)

Reality is it is the fox which is the victim of hundreds of years of victimisation and persecution and of hundreds and thousands meeting horrendous cruel sickening deaths all because of a few people's bloodlust for here is the reality of all the myths a few enjoy the end result of a chase and bring shame against us all. (anti-hunting)

With around 98% of poultry confined in intensive farming systems, it must be a rare fox which ever gets the opportunity to taste chicken. (anti-hunting)

The horse, which was left in Queen's Road close to Brighton Station, had a stake driven through its chest, supporting a placard reading: "There will be more of this if you ban hunting." (anti-hunting)

Sentencing him, Sheriff Kevin Drummond told Scott: "The manner in which you acted resulted in cruelty to a fox which was not killed outright and took some time to die." (non-partisan)

I have supplied the percentage of use of WHO and which in each category in Table 3; of course, the number of websites analyzed in this detail is very small, magnifying any anomalies. Although the majority of the population of the United Kingdom appears to be opposed to foxhunting, the pro-hunting lobby, currently very much on the defensive, has a larger presence on the web. It seems possible that the group most likely to use the animate pronoun with reference to the nonhuman animals involved in hunting are those who advocate hunting. The least likely to use the animate pronoun are those who take a non-partisan stance. This would support the hypothesis that emotional and personalized ed engagement with an animal is predictive of an animate pronoun.

The Discourses of Foxhunting

I have selected two texts that illustrate how the personalization of the animals involved in foxhunting works in context. Both advocates and opponents of foxhunting write hunt narratives that recount the experiences of an individual day. All four animals commonly appear as individuals in these texts.

I have italicized both the pronouns that refer to nonhuman animals and their antecedents.

Hunt Observer's Narrative: Anti-Hunting

18.02.04: Heythrop Hunt causes accident on A429. POWA monitors capture shocking accident on film (Protect our wild animals [POWA], 2004).

At 3.30 p.m. on Wednesday 18th February the Heythrop Hunt completely lost control of its *pack of hounds*, which ran straight out onto the A429, causing an accident in which a car collided heavily with a hound.

The hunt had found a fox just outside the village of Broadwell near Stow on the Wold. The baying hounds chased the fox across the fields in the direction of the A429 Fosse Way, leaving the mounted field well behind. Totally unsupervised, the hounds ran out onto the busy road. One hound was struck by a car. The impact caused the *animal* to scream in pain and sent *it* somersaulting along the road.

POWA hunt monitors captured the horrifying incident on film. As a hunt official arrived on the scene, the distressed motorist who struck the hound can be heard on film as she calls out to him about the accident. Astonishingly, he does not even stop, but merely calls "Sorry madam."

The woman's anger and distress are obvious. The same huntsman's response to the POWA monitor who is urgently trying to alert him to the fact that a hound has been hit is "Shut up, you." A few moments later the *hound*, who is by now looking dazed and near to collapse, is picked up unceremoniously by a burly hunt supporter, and placed in the back of a Land Rover. He shouts obscenities to the POWA monitor filming the scene. POWA will be sending copies of their film to the police and the RSPCA.

POWA spokesperson Penny Little, who was one of the monitors who filmed the incident, said: "We were deeply shocked by this incident, yet another in a long catalogue of chaos and havoc. It is a miracle no motorists were injured as there could easily have been a pile-up. The hunt are an absolute disgrace, and are not fit to be in charge of any animals. We think the police and the RSPCA will want to investigate the hunt's behaviour in respect of this incident. The film will be sent to the Government and we hope it hastens the completion of the bill to ban this horrible bloodsport once and for all."

Note to editors: 2 years ago almost to the day POWA filmed a Hethrop hound being hit by a car on the A44 at Enstone. Most recent in the catalogue of Heythrop chaos is 24 Jan this year, when hounds ran through Chadlington, causing annoyance and distress to village residents.

This is an emotionally engaged text about a “shocking accident.” There is extensive reference to humans by (who, she, and he). This text is interesting, especially in its focus on the hounds who fulfil two roles in the narrative, reflected to some extent in the choice of pronouns:

They misbehave. They run on the road, causing danger, and causing distress to the motorist who inadvertently becomes the agent of injury to one of them. They run through a settlement causing annoyance and distress to residents (*which, it*).

They are victims. The hound who is hit is injured, and treated without tenderness by the hunt officials (*WHO*).

The real miscreants, however, are the humans of the hunt—the hunters, hunt officials, and followers who are responsible for the loss of control and who fail to alleviate the distress of both the human and the hound—even to the extent of abuse of the hunt observer who draws attention to the injury. Reference to the hounds is inconsistent. It is not surprising that when they are a, “pack of hounds,” reference is made with the impersonal (*which*). The injured hound, however, is referred to both as (*it* and *WHO*). This may be a way of indicating personalization without attributing gender, if the gender was unknown to the writer, or may reflect just the alternation that is possible in English.

Hunter’s Narrative (Pro-Hunting)

Accessing The New Forest Hounds (2003) site, I scrolled down to the following narrative, subtitled, Season 2002/3: February 12th 2003 and signed MARTHA.

We had to change our meet from Tuesday 11th to Wednesday 12th February because many of us wanted to attend the funeral of Nick Smith. Nick being a valued committee member and much missed.

Sadly this resulted in one of the smallest fields this season when about 25 people met at Cadmans Pool. Only sad because the day turned into one of the best ever in recent times for our hounds.

Business began at Broomy Bottom when hounds accounted for a fox within about 3 minutes of being put in to draw. Huntsman then took his hounds into Holly Hatch Inclosure where they soon got on terms with a *fox which* ran out of the Inclosure into Anses Wood and along Dockens Water to South and then North Bentley Inclosures, before going on to Mr. Winters fields at Fritham. Hounds got badly hampered here trying to get through sheep wire and the fox eventually had to be given best.

After the long hack back to Holly Hatch hounds were put in to draw again. They soon picked up another *pilot*—at 11.50 am to be precise. Initially *he* took hounds along Dockens Water it seemed in the footsteps of the first fox, but when *he* reached South Bentley *he* turned up on to Fritham Plain. *He* crossed the Plain and when straight on into Eyeworth Wood and beyond up towards Bramshaw Telegraph. However before the Godshill Road *he* turned right handed down to Howen Bottom and on into Howen Bushes. *He* turned right handed again below the Royal Oak at Fritham and back up to Fritham Plain via Gorley Bushes. From here *he* turned down over Hiscocks Hill into Island Thorns up towards Studley Castle but before the top of the Inclosure *he* turned almost back on himself crossing the gravel track above Fritham Bridge. *He* clipped the corner of Amberwood Inclosure, crossed the driftway and straight up through Sloden. Here huntsman and 1st whipper-in did a flying change on to second horses and followed hounds down across Rakes Brakes Bottom and back to Holly Hatch. Hounds checked for the first time but soon got back on terms running up through the Inclosure into the open of Broomy Plain. After a wide circle on the outside *he* came back into Holly Hatch and eventually to ground. It was now 1.40 pm, we were within a few hundred yards of where the hunt had begun. The 1hr 50 mins in between had been amazing. We've had more interesting hunts watching these hounds but it is a long time since we've had such a lengthy sustained fast pace. Hounds must have covered almost 12 miles with hardly a check. Most of the field had very tired horses and were ready to call it a day but we staggered on for another hour drawing Broomy Inclosure where a brace were roused. Hounds hunted *one* well before putting *it* to ground towards Hasley. At 2:40 we did call end of day and the 45 minute hack back to the boxes gave everyone time to contemplate and wonder how much Nick Smith had to do with such a memorable day in this his favourite part of our country. We'll give him the benefit of the doubt-nice one Nick.

This is a good example of a text that casts the fox in the role of worthy opponent. I will demonstrate how the way it allocates roles to foxes, hounds, horses, and hunters—who in this text are (we)—also shows how it is that the horses are least likely to be personalized.

In a rather breathless style, the text narrates with considerable enthusiasm what is seen as a good day's hunting, with some misprints, including (where) for (were). "Hounds where put in to draw again." The text also substitutes (when) for (went): "He . . . when straight on."

There are five foxes in this narrative, three of whom die, although this might not be apparent at first reading. The first fox gives little sport, "accounted for" (killed) by the hounds "within about 3 minutes." The second fox escapes the hunt by going into fields through "sheep wire." This fox is referred to as (which) and "had to be given best" (got away).

The fourth and fifth foxes are together when "roused" (disturbed) and are referred to as a "brace." Two relevant meanings of brace are invoked here: Brace can refer to a pair of dogs—foxes are from the dog family—but brace also is used to refer to a pair "of other animals, especially certain kinds of game" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). One of the pair escapes, while the second—referred to as (it)—goes into the den (to ground). After the hunt has moved on, this fox is killed by terriers (the killing again is not narrated but is to be inferred).

The third fox, referred to as a "pilot," is the subject of the longest section of the narrative, which recounts the two-hour chase in detail. He also goes "eventually to ground" and is assumed to be killed outside the narrative. This fox is personalized extensively as (he) throughout—there are no relative clauses—and is the agent of 11 consecutive verbs in the 4th paragraph: "He took [the hounds], reached, turned, crossed, when [went], turned [4 times], clipped, crossed." These verbs of movement portray the fox as the leader of the hunt, actively responsible for its quality, and the one who controls the movements of the hounds.

The hounds are presented as actively enjoying this hunt, "one of the best ever in recent times for our hounds." The hounds veer between being responsible for finding, trailing, and killing the fox, being led by the fox, and being under the control of the huntsman: They were "put in," the huntsman "took

his hounds." The huntsman, the professional in charge of the hounds and the management of the hunt, has some control over the hounds. However, the hunt, the humans and the horses, are very passive in this narrative: They follow the hounds who, in turn, are led by the fox. After the long chase of the third fox, they have "very tired horses." In the end, the main purpose of the day seems to have been "watching these hounds" and having a "lengthy sustained fast pace." The most personalized nonhuman animal is the fox, who is hunted for two hours before he is killed.

Conclusion

Those who promote hunting do indeed have the greatest emotional involvement with the animals concerned. The hunters, horses, and hounds are members of the hunting team—with the hounds being especially responsible for a successful hunt—but the role of the fox especially is interesting. The highly animate fox is presented in pro-hunting literature as the leader of the hunt, a worthy opponent, with skills of evasion. The fox also is the only participant in hunting who acts alone. The rhetoric of the hunter/hunted relationship in the pro-hunting literature is one of chivalry. The role of the horse is less personal: The horse acts under the direct command of a hunter and linguistically is treated as little more personal than a motorbike.

In the anti-hunting literature, foxes are the victims of an immoral, human behavior, a role that apparently is less likely to lead to personalization than their role as active creators of a hunt. The lower animacy attributed to dogs and hounds by those against hunting may be a result of a rather ambivalent attitude to dogs who, on the one hand, are the agents of the fox's death. On the other hand, dogs can be cast as victims because humans breed them for this purpose and, without sentiment, discard them when their working life is over. The pro-hunting groups also engage in this rhetoric of victimhood, claiming that horses and dogs will lose their lives if hunting ends and they become redundant. Then, foxes will be killed in worse ways: This is an appropriation of the argument from animal rights. It also relates to the central dilemma of the discourse of foxhunting. Foxhunting involves physical cruelty to foxes, dogs, and horses; however, it also maintains foxes in Britain and partly is responsible for aspects of the landscape that the general population finds attractive.

The appropriation of the styles of argument and protest of their opponents by the pro-hunting lobby has been a striking part of their highly organized campaigning. Appropriating the rhetoric of the anti-racist and gay rights lobbies, they also have begun to cast themselves as a minority group against which there is societal discrimination. Every week (even now, 6 months after the ban), I pass a Countryside Alliance billboard in a field next to a motorway that reads, “Fight discrimination. Fight the ban.”

Those who advocate hunting with dogs have the harder argument to make, given the widespread repugnance in Britain about taking pleasure in killing. Perhaps as a result, however, the pro-hunting lobby appears to have the greater rhetorical skills. The lobby’s commoner use of *WHO*, especially in reference to the fox, signals the personalization of the prey, a respect for it, and emotional closeness to it. Animal rights advocates might like to consider that a consistent use of the personalized pronouns could help signal to the reader that those animals are sentient and could convey emotional closeness. This is important, especially where the argument most likely to succeed is based on an instinctive repugnance to the suffering of sentient beings.

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Notes

- ¹ Correspondence should be addressed to Andrea Fraser Gupta, School of English, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK. Email: A.F.Gupta@leeds.ac.uk
- ² The pronouns have different forms depending on *case* (the way in which they are used in the grammar of a sentence). At the first mention of the pronoun, I list all the case forms; after that, I will use the common case form (also known as the nominative) in capital letters to stand for all of them, as is common practice in linguistics. So, *WHO* means, who and/or whom and/or whose. Which has only one form, so does not need to be capitalized in this way.
- ³ Underlining added by me, in this and other examples when the two are not adjacent, identifies pronoun and referent.

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