"Nothing Tame about Them": Dogs and the Symbolism of Civility in the Jamestown Settlement

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“Nothing tame about them” Dogs and the Symbolism of Civility in the Jamestown Settlement

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A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Dogs were a ubiquitous presence in early modern English life, existing in a variety of forms, from maltese to mastiff, and each holding a different meaning in English culture. The breed and behavior of a dog could reveal much about its owner, from their social stature to their level of civility. Civilized people had well behaved, well bred dogs, because they possessed the God-given ability to control nature, and the Christian desire to do so. Many animals served as examples of this Christian human/animal power dynamic, but unlike horses, cattle, and sheep, dogs existed in America before the arrival of Europeans, making them a potential point of cultural translation for English colonists in America. This thesis attempts to understand how English colonists’ observations of native Virginian human/dog interactions contributed to colonists’ assessment of American civilization.

I approached this issue first by researching the meaning of dogs in early modern English culture, to reconstruct the paradigm through which Jamestown colonists would view relationships between humans and dogs. Then I investigated Spanish and English reports of dogs in America to understand what sort of expectations English colonists held of American human/dog relationships. After establishing expectations I examined Jamestown colonists’ accounts of Native Americans and dogs, and interpreted them in light of the established early modern English human/canine paradigm.

My research of early modern English natural science texts, animal husbandry manuals, and hunting handbooks revealed that dogs were a mirror of English society; certain dog breeds were equated with nobility, while other breeds were associated with working men, and mutts were seen as repulsive. Well bred, hard-working breeds served as proof of the English success in following through with God’s injunction to improve upon nature and use it to benefit humans, signifying piety and high civilization. Colonists’ expectations and observations of Native human/dog interactions revealed that Native Americans in Jamestown had only mutts, no high breeds, and had little control over these dogs. This served to reinforce English beliefs in the superiority of their own civilization, and their need to introduce Americans to English culture and civility.
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This thesis is dedicated to the two dogs I lost in the process of writing it: Roxy & Rigby. Roxy’s sedentary lifestyle was a constant reminder of the importance of sleep and Rigby showed me what it really was to devour knowledge when she ate one of my research notebooks. I am sad that neither of you girls will ever get to read this, though that was always unlikely due to your underwhelming literacy. While your grasp of English was unimpressive, you more than made up for it in love, affection, and companionship.
In the fall of 1608, Captain Peter Wynne arrived in Jamestown as part of the second supply of colonists to the settlement. He was listed as a gentleman, and was one of the first appointed members of the local Virginia Company Council. Wynne was given the post of sergeant-major at James Fort, sent to keep an eye out for Spanish spies and any other foreign influences or agents that might undermine the success of the English settlement. Though he was accustomed to traveling abroad for the military ventures that had taken him to the Netherlands and Hungary, Wynne had been “not so desirous to come” to Jamestown, but his initial lack of enthusiasm eventually gave way to an appreciation of the great potential he felt the land possessed. In November 1608, Wynne wrote to Sir John Egerton, future Earl of Bridgewater and stakeholder in the Virginia company, offering his favorable assessment of North America’s bounty, including the natural resources available to the colonists, such as “tarre,” dye and “sophe ash.” Wynne’s letter then diverges from a discussion of conventional natural resources to an analysis of canines. He wrote:

As concerning your request of Bloudhoundses, I cannot learne that there is any such in this Country; only the dogges which are here are a Certeyne kind of Currs like our wariners hey dogges in England; and they keep them to hunt theyr fowlis, as Turkeys and such like, for they keep nothing tame about them.3

This portion of the letter raises many questions: What was a “wariner’s hey dogge,” and how did it hunt fowl if it was not tame? Why was Egerton hoping for Wynne to find bloodhounds? What did it mean that Wynne did not, and why was it worth reporting?

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Newly arrived Europeans like Wynne wrote frequently about the bounty of the land and the potential wealth to be extracted from it, and indeed this is what the bulk of Wynne’s letter addressed. It is significant, then, that Captain Wynne and Egerton considered dogs a worthy point of discussion. Nonetheless, the dogs were not being commented upon with the same consideration of bounty and worth as organic resources like dye and soap ash, or food stuffs like fish, fowl, rabbits, and deer, because the analysis of dogs was not merely about potential for wealth or available sustenance. In this thesis, I will argue that in English eyes, an assessment of a land’s dogs offered unique knowledge that could not be obtained from an assessment of other animals, because dogs held a special symbolism and could offer a wealth of information and insight into a land and its people. England was renowned for having a superior quality and variety of dogs, and this idea played a special part in England’s self-conception.4 The English people considered their dogs to be representative of themselves and their country, and sent them abroad as ambassadors, feeling their dogs could convey their strength, the superiority of their land and climate, and their ability to master nature.5 Wynne and Egerton’s exchange concerning dogs should be read with an understanding that English assessments of dogs often invoked evaluations of other aspects of a land and civilization: the quality of the land and climate, the potential for wealth to be made from the land, and, above all, the level of civility, order, and intelligence of a people. In this letter from Wynne, a few

5 Ian MacInnes, “Mastiffs and Spaniels: Gender and Nation in the English Dog,” Textual Practice vol. 7 no. 1 (2003): 26-30. The idea of dogs representing humans in England applied on both a personal and national level. In England, there was a “tendency to see dogs as a symbol of nation,” and in English theater, a dog’s personality was often conflated with its owner’s. See Teresa Grant, “Entertaining Animals 1558-1625,” in A Cultural History of Animals in the Renaissance, ed. Bruce Boehrer (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 99-101.
quick sentences about canines served to reinforce opinions the English already held: that the English direly needed to come tame the American land and teach its people civility.\(^6\)

Because the English used dogs as a measurement of several aspects of civility, including intelligence, class structure, and military might, it is important to study colonists’ expectations and impressions of native dogs. Though it may be difficult to do so with great precision, it is useful to study the colonists’ varying views of dogs in Europe and America, because it contributes fresh knowledge to our understanding of how English colonists’ early concepts of Americans were formulated. Perceptions of native dogs helped form or reinforce preexisting opinions of native people and steer the path of English colonization in America. The native dogs and the way natives interacted with dogs were one component of the system that convinced colonists that they needed to bring civility to the American land, people, and culture.

Investigating Canines in the Early Modern Period

In order to proceed with this examination of English opinions of America as drawn from evaluations of native dogs, I will start with an overview of the multiple meanings attributed to canines in English culture. In England, interactions with dogs had a variety of implications; the dominance of humans over dogs held religious significance, the degree of training and breeding to which a dog had been subjected reflected upon the owners’ intelligence, wealth, and military strength, and possession of a certain type of dog could denote a range of social strata, revealing an owner to be either wealthy, well connected, poor but hard working, or merely a vagabond. After broadly contextualizing

\(^6\) John Smith, “A Map of Virginia: With a Description of the Countrey, the Commodities, People, Government and Religion,” (Virtual Jamestown Project, Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia, 2000).
human views of canines in late-sixteenth-century England, I will then more closely
examine five separate categories of dogs the English would have been familiar with,
focusing on their social meaning and typical, accepted human interactions. Within each
category, I will then examine whether or not the colonists anticipated finding these types
of dogs in Virginia, whether they actually encountered them or not, and what it meant to
them that the American land and people did or did not possess each type of dog.

For consideration of what sort of canines the English would have expected to find
in Virginia, I have consulted both English and Spanish accounts of America, because the
construction of English colonists’ expectations of Virginia was influenced by reports
from both. Spaniards had more experience in the New World, and several of their
accounts of America were translated into English and made available in England prior to
the settlement of Jamestown, such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés’s 1535 La
historia general de las Indias, translated into English by Richard Eden, and made
available in London in 1555; Bartolomé de las Casas’ 1552 Brevíssima relación de la
destruyción de las Indias, translated and published in English in 1583; and José de
Acosta’s Historia natural y moral de las Indias, translated and published in English by
1604. Although English colonization occurred a century after Spanish colonization,
English sailors, pirates, and explorers with experience in America also wrote accounts
that circulated throughout England. Given the sparing nature of dogs in these accounts, it
is necessary to pull small pieces from a variety of sources. While this necessitates a more
limited examination of each source, it does create a meaningful mosaic of the
observations, attitudes and thoughts of Europeans in America, rather than the opinions of

7 “Spanish Historical Writing About the New World,” John Carter Brown Library website, exhibition
written by Angel Delgado-Gomez,
a select few. Once I have established colonists’ expectations, I will explore how the natives were perceived to interact with each type of dog, and what that meant to the English. After studying each type of dog, and their acceptable and unacceptable uses according to English culture, I will present a fuller idea of how the English viewed both the presence and absence of certain dogs on Virginian soil. This will show that the colonists’ view of native human/dog relationships was overwhelmingly negative, and would have encouraged colonists’ belief that the native people, culture, and land was inferior to their own, and needed to be improved upon to more closely resemble the civilized culture and society of England.

Breeding Dogs: Art, Social Statement, and Religious Obligation

A particularly revealing component of Wynne’s letter is that Egerton inquires about a specific type of dog. Egerton is able to ask about bloodhounds because the people of England maintained distinct breeds, or “sorts” of dogs. The presence of distinct breeds is a revealing aspect of the English culture because, as animal and social historian Sandra Swart notes, the existence and concept of breeds varies from culture to culture.\(^8\) The English desire to create and maintain separate breeds, to breed for certain traits, and to exhibit preferences for certain breeds, indicates a culture which sought to control and order nature. Wynne’s unsuccessful attempt to identify any specific sort, or breed, of dog

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\(8\) What constitutes a separate breed of a species, or breakdown of a larger category of animal, varies from culture to culture. For example, France acknowledges seventeen types of shepherds, while the Middle East acknowledges three. The English culture leaned heavily towards delineating and labeling different sorts of dogs based on duty, behavior and appearance, resulting in a large number of “breeds.” This distinguishes them from cultures that have only two types of dogs, and choose to establish a difference only between “tame dogs” and “wild dogs.” Sandra Swart and Lance van Sittert, introduction to *Canis Africanis: A Dog History of Southern Africa*, ed. Sandra Swart and Lance van Sittert, vol. 5, Human-Animal Studies (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2007), 281-287.
in America, exemplifies one of many disparities between English and Native American culture.9

Anthony Pagden has argued that feelings of European-Christian cultural superiority in the early modern period were based largely on the belief that man’s ability to alter and use nature in order to meet human needs “was the crucial part of what it was to be a man, for Nature had been given by God to man for his use, for him to transform.”10 This reasoning led to the rationale that native cultures not actively transforming and improving nature were the cultures of lesser forms of men. Pagden also argues that Europeans came to believe Native Americans had the potential to be brought to civility with the right influences, education, and exposure to European culture.11 This belief that Americans merely needed to be civilized meant that any evident diversion of American cultural practices from European cultural practices buoyed arguments that the English needed to establish a settlement in America, in order to educate the native inhabitants and introduce them to European cultural standards.

As something Europeans expected men to have control over, animals, dogs included, were one indicator of American levels of civility.12 Wynne’s unsuccessful search for a specific breed of dog in Virginia indicated that the people of Virginia lacked the skill that enabled humans to maintain separate breeds: the ability to manipulate nature.

12 In addition to assessing the amount of edible game available to colonists for sustenance or sport, and the study of natural history, obtaining evidence of men civilized enough to control animals was one of the many reasons explorers were expected to collect information on all the animals in a given land. Sir Edward Hoby, “Instruction for a voyage of reconnoissance to North America in 1582 or 1583,” vol. 3, *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612*, ed. David B Quinn, et al. (New York: Amo Press, 1979), 239-345.
According to Pamela Long, in the sixteenth century, the ability to execute a technical skill was associated with the ability to reason. Joyce Chaplin argues that the English believed their technology was superior to that of the Native Americans, and the English took their "superior technology" as proof that they were more advanced people who deserved to inherit this "new land." The English viewed their capacity for manipulating dog breeds as a technology of sorts, because breeds took skill to create and maintain, and were used to make labor easier. More so, it appears that to the colonists, English dogs were considered a technology. Their ownership was certainly restricted from Native Americans like modern weapon technology. In 1619, colonists passed a law forbidding the English to trade their dogs to Americans. English colonists' took faith in their ability to control and create superior dogs as evidence of their superiority over Virginians in areas of reason and technical skill, and validation of their perceived need to colonize America.

The English believed that breeding dogs was an art to be learned and perfected. For example, Thomas Cockayne's *A Short Treatise of Hunting* was written to assist people with this, and other exercises associated with hunting. Cockayne, a country

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15 Anthropological studies have shown that European dogs were larger and stronger than dogs in North and South America. Marion Schwartz, *A History of Dogs in the Early Americas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 162.
16 "Proceedings of the Virginia General Assembly, 1619" (Virtual Jamestown Project, Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia, 2000).
17 Pamela Long points out that instructional books such as this were more often written about arts, such as breeding hunting dogs, that were associated with people of power and wealth. She argues that in the 16th century, there was a culture of sharing knowledge of such arts, either verbally or through writing. The written work could be undertaken for many reasons, from a desire to please a patron, to exhibit personal ingenuity, to a genuine desire to share trade secrets that could help others (with the assumption that theory
gentleman from Derbyshire, born in 1519, writes from personal experience about the breeding and training of hunting dogs.\textsuperscript{18} His recommended process of breeding is exacting, calling for complete control of both the male and female dog, explaining that the female should mate with no other dog but the chosen sire, that the sire should “serve her but three times,” and that the chosen sire should first have proven himself in a “farre fled” chase.\textsuperscript{19} Another author describing his method discloses that there is also a preferable time of year for all of this breeding to occur, writing, “let your Dog and Bitch couple when the moon is in Aquarius or Gemini, for these reasons: They that are then engendered will never run mad, and the litter will be of more Dog than Bitch whelps, nay double.”\textsuperscript{20} This author also includes the helpful hint that “a young Dog and old Bitch bring excellent Whelps.”\textsuperscript{21} Once the hound is pregnant, Cockayne advises that the mother “must be kept with meate and water very carefully under locke and key in the kenell, and be walked every day half an houre abroade in a line, and her kennel shifted every week once.”\textsuperscript{22} The implication of Cockayne’s three pages of instruction is that without following these directions, without preparing a dog for mating, overseeing that mating, and supervising the pregnancy, the breeding process will not result in a litter of successful hunting dogs. An effective dog breeder then, needed not only to exercise tight control over the parent dogs, but also to possess knowledge of the breeding process. According to Pamela Long, in the sixteenth century, the ability to execute a technical

\textsuperscript{19} Cockayne, \textit{A Short Treatise of Hunting,} B3.
\textsuperscript{20} Anonymous, \textit{A Treatise of oxen, sheep, hogs, and dogs; with their natures, qualities and uses,} (London, 1683), 50. Although written around 150 years after Cockayne’s work, there appears to be little variation in breeding method for dogs over this period of time.
\textsuperscript{21} Anonymous, \textit{A Treatise of Oxen, Sheep, Hogs, and Dogs,} 50.
\textsuperscript{22} Cockayne, \textit{A Short Treatise of Hunting,} B3.
skill was associated with the ability to reason. When a high quality dog was produced, it reflected well on the breeder, emphasizing his intelligence, technical skill, and mastery of nature.

The act of breeding was not only important for signifying intelligence, or talent with this specific skill-set, it could also denote social status. In breeding, choosing and gaining access to “good” dogs in order to mate them was not always an easy task. The mating process should not begin with a random choice of two dogs, because not all dogs were seen as equal. There were desirable traits to breed for, depending on the sort of dog. For example, when breeding hounds, ideal parents were “durable, well mouthed, cold nosed, round footed, and well let downe there, with fine steames and small tayles.”

But a breeder also had to carefully consider the age of the dog, and what attributes he was most interested in, be it “hardie fighting” or “swift running.” Once the type of dog was chosen, procuring the future parents could involve some legwork and finagling. Ideally, one would already own dogs worth breeding, but if that was not the case, one must borrow the dogs. Cockayne advises borrowing from a gentleman or woman, but that advice assumes that one has a good relationship with a member of the gentry who has the sort of dog one was looking for. Wealth also factored into the quality of breed obtained. While dogs did not necessarily have to be costly, the price of “goode dogges” could be very great. The King was said to have the best dogs because he had the money and clout

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23 Long, Openness, Secrecy, Authorship, 223-224.
24 Cockayne, A Short Treatise of Hunting, B3.
25 Ibid., B3.
26 Conrad Heresbach and Barnabe Gogge, Foure Booke of husbandrie (London: Printed by T. Este, 1596), 154. “The Prodigall Men of our lande make hast to fling away Gods treasures...spend yearly an hundred pounds, two, three, five hundred and much more about dogs, hawkes and hounds and such sports.” Alexander Whitaker, “Good news from Virginia sent to the counsel and company of Virginia, resident in England, 1613” (Virtual Jamestown Project, Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia, 2000).
to buy the choicest parents and thereby breed the best. These factors meant that the King's "hounds were held inferior to no mans (through the great choice of whelps which with much care he yearly bred of his choicest braches)."\textsuperscript{27} Because the King's wealth and status made him privy to the best dogs, and those who knew people with enough money to have "goode dogges" could borrow them for breeding comparably impressive dogs, ownership of more spectacular hunting dogs denoted greater wealth, status, and connections.

England took a great deal of pride in its dogs. Though some dogs in particular, like bloodhounds or mastiffs, seemed to garner more attention, all dogs hailing from England were considered by the English to be superior for, as Harrison wrote, "There is no countrie that maie (as I take it) compare with ours, in number, excellencie, and diversitie of dogs."\textsuperscript{28} As for diversity, England laid claim to many dogs. In the husbandry guide, \textit{The Treatise of Oxen, Sheep, Hogs and Dogs}, the anonymous writer claims that England and Scotland exclusively contain dogs that the rest of the world is not blessed with: sleuth hounds, or bloodhounds. The writer also claims that the gaze-hound (beagle), harrier and terrier, leviner, tumbler, grey-hound, and spaniel are "attributed to this country."\textsuperscript{29} While the validity of these assertions is certainly questionable, it is the belief that they were true that matters most; and it does seem that the English, and people from other nations, truly believed that England had more and better dogs than all other places.\textsuperscript{30} France was known to have imported dogs from England, and as Keith Thomas writes, "English dogs had been in demand since Roman times and it was customary to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[30] Ian MacInnes, "Mastiffs and Spaniels," 22-23.
\end{footnotes}
claim that they were better than those of any country.\textsuperscript{31} This reputation helped turn English dogs into emissaries of sorts. Animals frequently served as ambassadors to different countries. In the 13th century, an Egyptian king sent a giraffe to Milan because the giraffe was a symbol of the exotic, wonderful products produced by African soil.\textsuperscript{32}

Similarly, dogs were often considered a symbolic product of English soil. From the late sixteenth century to mid seventeenth century, mastiffs were sent to represent England in foreign countries. Though mastiffs served in England in a variety of capacities for working men as guard dogs and laborers, their talent at bear baiting garnered them international attention and eventually elevated them to a higher social standing in England.\textsuperscript{33} The growth of mastiffs’ popularity and rise in social stature from working dog to gentle dog can be attributed to the fact that they were taken abroad and pitted against bears for the entertainment of royals, as a presentation of English strength and culture. Their success exhibiting English brawn and ferocity turned them into ambassadors of England.\textsuperscript{34}

In addition to representing England as a polity, dogs represented the type of humoral bodies that English climate produced. In his \textit{Description of England}, William Harrison demonstrates his belief in the superiority of dogs produced by English soil. He uses the supposed stupidity of people and animals from cold climates, in this case


\textsuperscript{33} The mastiff’s desirability as a noble dog is clear in a letter written by Sir John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, Wynne’s correspondent. The letter, written to Egerton’s uncle, Sir Peter Legh of Lyme Hall, makes Egerton’s interest in mastiffs evident when he practically begs his uncle for a Lyme Hall mastiff, professing that he would rather have no “bear dogge” at all than to have a mastiff of lower quality. Lyme Hall was said to breed the very best mastiff money could buy. John Egerton, “Letter to Sir Peter Legh,” Legh of Lyme Hall Correspondence, John Rylands Library, Manchester, cited in Ian MacInnes, “Mastiffs and Spaniels,” 32.

\textsuperscript{34} Ian MacInnes, “Mastiffs and Spaniels,” 26-27.
Icelandic dogs and people, as a foil to demonstrate the superiority of English dogs and people. Colder climates were presumed to produce dimwitted creations, a presumption William Harrison supports when claiming that Icelandic people and dogs eat candles, believing them to be a delicacy, because, as cold climate dimwits, they do not know any better. As representative products of the English climate and soil, mastiffs were praised as examples of the strength and ferocity that the English land was capable of producing. Another popular breed of the time seen as representative of the English humor was the spaniel, which was praised for the loyalty of spirit that the British Isle could engender.

While mastiffs and spaniels both exhibited positive aspects of the English humor, such as strength and loyalty, there were, as Ian MacInnes points out, anxieties associated with the production of these dogs on English soil. Many believed that mastiffs, while fierce and strong, were in danger of giving in to idleness, sleeping all day and not working. Spaniels’ natural disposition was also seen as having a negative side, because they were believed to be in danger of slipping from loyal animals to fawning, needy, pathetic animals. These worries were not limited to dogs. English people were products of the same climate as spaniels and mastiffs, prompting concern that the English were prone to exaggerate their loyalties to other countries and leaders to the point of obsequiousness, and had great potential to become lazy. The anxieties raised by consideration of mastiffs and spaniels’ humoral dispositions demonstrates the importance of dogs as representative products of the humors produced by the English climate.

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36 Ibid., 48-49.
38 Ibid., 29-35.
39 Ibid., 38.
Dog breeds were not only products of the English climate, but of the men who were intelligent enough to breed them, and of God, who gave canines to humans to refine and improve upon, and humans the intelligence and power to do so. Breeds represented human's permission and obligation to exercise control over animals, a charge the English believed was given by God. In early modern England, theologians accepted that humans were distinct from God’s other living creations, and stationed above them, citing passages from Genesis as proof that God had created each animal to fulfill one of man’s specific needs. By this rationale, man was allowed and obligated to use animals as God intended. Such was the justification for the consumption of animals as food, observation of animals to learn moral lessons, and the use of animals to perform labor. Dogs were included in this line of reasoning, and thus few humans felt any compunction about their daily interactions with them, from putting them to work, to controlling who their dogs mated with. Such divinely sanctioned human interactions with dogs, from breeding to training to hunting, all demonstrated that man maintained control over animals, a sign of civility. If a man did not exercise control over animals, then he was no better than an animal.

40 Thomas Aquinas “left a legacy of assuming there was a large gap between humans and animals,” cited in Andreas Holger Maehle, “Cruelty and Kindness to the ‘Brute Creation’, Stability and Change in the Ethics of the Man-Animal Relationship, 1600-1850,” in Animals & Human Society, ed. by Aubrey Manning and James Serpell (New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 82. Hooker wrote that animals are beneath men because they lack the ability to speak or reason. Richard Hooker, vol. 1 The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker with an Account of His Life and Death by Isaac Walton, arranged by the Rev. John Keble M.A. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), X.12. William Perkins, The Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the Universitie of Cambridge, Mr. William Perkins. The First Volume: Newly Corrected according to his own copies (London: John Legatt, 1626), 17. 40 “The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you.” Gen. 9:2-3. RSV.
41 Christians claimed a right and obligation to use animals as needed, this included killing animals in order to eat them, though it was not acceptable to kill animals without reason or commit cruelty upon them. Andreas Holger Maehle, “Cruelty and Kindness to Brute Creation,” 82-83.
42 Sir Francis Bacon believed science existed to “restore to man that dominion over the creation which he had partially lost at The Fall,” and the Royal Society encouraged the study of animals to see how they could be of use to mankind. Thomas, Man and the Natural World, 17-27.
Christian theologians believed the only time period during which man had lost control over animals was between the Fall of Man and the Great Flood, which theologians believed had restored human authority. The inability to tame an animal indicated that something was gravely wrong, if an animal had more control than a man, it was an inversion of God’s intended order. Inversion such as this not only contributed to disorder, but was often associated with opposition to God.

Sir Richard Hawkins’ autobiographical Observations contains an example of the Anglo-Christian understanding of God’s desired relationship between humans and animals. The Puritan Hawkins describes his travels through the South Sea in 1593, and reveals an English perspective on the connection between human dominance and hunting. In this paragraph, he describes the way the dolphins and alcatrazes hunt their prey, likening their methods to the hounds and hawks the English use for hunting, except that in the South Sea, the animal, lacking a dominant human, keeps the prey:

The manner of hunting and hawking representeth that which wee reasonable creatures use, saving only in the disposing of the game. For by our industrie and abilitie the hound and hawke is brought to that obedience, that whatsoever they seize, is for their

43 Thomas, _Man and the Natural World_, 17-25.
44 According to Stuart Clark, the “prevailing mentality” of the period was to see things in binary. Either a society had control over animals, or it did not. Not ruling over animals was an example of “misrule: the exchanging of rules or qualities which were themselves opposite or could be reduced to opposites. . . . For wisdom to be opposite to folly, male to female, or authority to subjection.” Misrule was viewed as characteristic of opposition to God, including such things as The Antichrist, demons, witches, and tyrants. Stuart Clark, “Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft,” _Past and Present_ 87 (1980): 98-127. The perception that uncivilized natives were unable to control animals persisted for centuries. In colonial South Africa, the “wild” native African dogs were equivocated with “poor or subordinate” men, associated with a type of misrule, and “could be seen as familiars of witches.” Tim Maggs and Judith Sealy, “Africanis: The Pre-Colonial Dog of Africa,” _Canis Africanis: A Dog History of Southern Africa_, ed. Sandra Swart and Lance van Sittert, vol. 5, _Human Animal Studies_ (Boston: Brill, 2007), 35-49.
master; but here it is otherwise. For the game is for him that seizeth it. The Dolphins and Bonitoes are the hounds, and the alcatraces the hawkes, and the flying fishes the game. In this observation, Hawkins argues that many animals are born well suited to hunting, but only some are, by the industry and ability of humans, forced to bring their captured prey to a human master. According to his description, the English are industrious and able, for they have fashioned themselves into masters, and taught natural hunters like hounds and hawks to bring them, the masters, their game. He points out that the world is different in the South Sea, dolphins and alcatrazes have no master, and keep their flying fish for themselves. As a Christian, Hawkins considers it unusual for “reasonable” humans not to be masters. The idea of animals not submitting to higher beings such as humans was a type of inversion that connoted anti-Christian sentiment.Likeminded Christians assumed that any humans, like the Americans, who did not choose to make themselves into “masters” by taming animals were not only party to inversion of order, but must have either lacked the industry and ability to do so, or were naturally unequipped to be “masters,” and therefore of a lower natural position than the English and other “masters.”

The act of breeding dogs, as well as creating and maintaining distinct types of dogs, held considerable significance within the English culture and the Christian human/animal power dynamic. Colonists had specific ideas of how civilized, religiously enlightened humans should interact with dogs, and the native Virginians did not conform to these expectations. The physical and behavioral inferiority of Virginian dogs served as

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an indicator that the Indians had yet to fully grasp at least one essential element of human-ness: the act of transforming nature, because they were deficient in breeding and training canines. Further, to the English, these unrefined dogs were ambassadors of Virginia, representative of the land and people. Dogs, then, became another way of emphasizing the need for the English to settle Virginia, in order to civilize the Natives.

**Does this Breed Make my Sort Look Low?**

Another important aspect of the exchange between Wynne and Egerton is not only that Egerton was looking for distinct breeds, but the precise breed he was searching for was one of the most prized dogs of the age: bloodhounds. In England there were several different classes of dogs, and at this time, greyhounds, mastiffs, spaniels and bloodhounds were very highly ranked. The ordering of dogs into social classes corresponded to a stratification of the people of England. In early modern England, order was used to give an understandable structure and sequence to every aspect of life. There were ideas of social order, religious order, and natural order, which were so closely entangled as to barely be distinguishable. Every facet of England was placed into an overarching hierarchy that encompassed social, religious, and natural order, in an attempt to mirror the organization of English conceptions of heaven. Animals too were placed

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51 Caius seems to prefer bloodhounds and greyhounds, while MacInnes' investigations led him to believe mastiffs and spaniels were favored. John Caius, *Of Englishe Dogges The Diversities, the Names, the Natures, and the Properties*, translated by Abraham Fleming (London: A. Bradley, 1880), 5-8, 9-10, 40. Ian MacInnes, "Mastiffs and Spaniels," 31-32.

into this hierarchy, with lions above the other animals, because they were believed to be the “king of all beasts,” to which all other animals should show deference. The English concern with maintaining these hierarchies, and order in general, was so great that it is said Henry the Seventh, after hearing a tale of a mastiff assaulting and killing a lion, commanded all mastiffs to be hanged. He felt that the mastiff showed no loyalty to his animal superior, and rebelling against a ruler was a violation of order and law, punishable by death.\textsuperscript{53} The division and ranking of animals like dogs and lions often reflected assumptions about human hierarchies, so that dogs typically owned by people at a specific level of society were accorded the same respect as that level of society. However, this could be problematic because the superimposition of human social order onto canines did not translate into an obvious sequencing of dogs. For example, pet dogs called comforters were owned by gentle women, which should automatically qualify them for gentility, yet they did not perform labor for humans like hunting and working dogs, meaning they could feasibly be categorized as “gentle” or “currish.” This exemplifies the simultaneous fragility and rigidity of the social order in early modern England, in which attempts were made to establish strict, distinct class categories and boundaries in a society complicated by people in possession of qualities which seemingly placed them in multiple classes at once. In such situations, a choice must be made as to what characteristics one values most.\textsuperscript{54}

English social constructs were used to arrange dogs into an ordered hierarchy, indeed, human social constructs were frequently projected onto nature, whereupon that “socialized or domesticated” version of nature was used to legitimize human societal

structures as being predetermined by God.\textsuperscript{55} For example, bees were believed to have had a monarchical power structure with a king in charge, which was taken as evidence that the English monarchy was the natural political structure as God intended it.\textsuperscript{56} Like bees justifying monarchies, dogs were ordered in a way that resembled English society, and then used to justify English social structures as natural.\textsuperscript{57} Dogs were especially apt to be studied, ordered, and then viewed as representative of society, due to their proximity to humans in daily life, and their enormous variety.\textsuperscript{58} The apparent importance of human social order when discussing dogs grows more evident when considering the use of the word “sort” to describe different kinds of dogs. Keith Wrightson argues that during this period, use of the formal terms of “degrees” and “estates” was not widespread; instead the term “sorts” was more prevalent.\textsuperscript{59} “Sort” was also the preferred term when referring to a dog’s breed. Although the notion of controlling the mating of dogs to produce superior offspring was present in this period, the terminology of “breeds” of dogs had not yet come about. Instead, different types of dogs were referred to as “sorts.” John Caius, King James, and William Harrison all use the term “sorts” rather than “breeds.”\textsuperscript{60} This highlights just how closely the division of dog breeds paralleled human social divisions.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.,120. Foucault describes this way of thinking and ordering in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century as analogy, or thinking that nature repeatedly displayed similar relationships. Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (New York: Random House Books, 1970), 23.
\textsuperscript{57} The canine hierarchy closely resembled the human social hierarchy, with some differences due to the fact that dogs were animals, and thus expected to work for humans. Given this expectation, dogs that worked and assisted humans were accorded more respect.\textsuperscript{58} Dog populations were high in England in the early modern period, though their numbers rose and fell with the human population, complaints about their high numbers exist from the 1530’s onward. Thomas, Man and the Natural World, 106.
\textsuperscript{60} Caius, Of Englishe Dogges.; Harrison, “Description of England,” 41-50.; James I, “Where upon our first coming to the succession of this kingdom, at the sute of divers persons, who had or pretended to have from the Queene of famous memory our sister deceased,” (London: Robert Barker, 1605).
The correspondence between divisions of human society and canine populations opened up potential for distance and tension between different sorts of dogs. The perceived social distance among different dog sorts is evident in the way John Caius writes about them, especially from the designations he gives them: “gentle,” “coarse,” “curre,” and “other.”

John Caius, a Cambridge scholar and court physician, took on the task of producing a study of English dogs at the behest of the Swedish naturalist Conrad Gesner. The result of Caius’ work was his 1570 *De Canibus Brittanicos*, translated by Abraham Fleming in 1576 as *Of Englishe dogges*. It was intended to be a contribution to Gesner’s renowned endeavor to chronicle all animals, *Historiae Animalium*. Caius’s individual work on dogs quickly gained respect, and remained the authoritative text on English dogs for decades. His work is paraphrased and directly quoted in works like William Harrison’s 1577 contribution to the Holinshed Chronicles, in Harrison’s chapter concerning dogs, and in Edward Topsell’s 1607 work *The History of Four Footed Beasts*.

Caius organized his book by arranging the various types of dogs in England into categories and placing them in a hierarchy based on their relationships with and use by humans. Caius claimed that “All English Dogges be eyther o f: A Gentle kinde, serving the game. A homely kind, apt for sundry necessary uses” or a “currishe kinde, meete for many toyes.” Within the gentle category, he placed hunters and fowlers on top as the

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62 Caius, *Of Englishe Dogges*, “To the Reader”.
noblest canines, followed by lapdogs.\textsuperscript{66} The "homely kind" of dogs, such as shepherds or guard dogs, made up the next category, followed by the "currishe kind," including mixed species.\textsuperscript{67}

A dog's place in Caius' book was ostensibly determined by the jobs the breed typically performed, but upon closer reading, the social ranking of the dog's owner is more significant, and typically determined which tasks a dog was given.\textsuperscript{68} Just as dogs were assigned a place in Caius's hierarchy based on their owner's social status, human social status was partially defined by the type of dog a human owned.\textsuperscript{69} The "gentle" category was defined as such because the owners of these types of dogs were primarily gentle. Within the "gentle" category, the use of a dog determined its placement. Hunting dogs were the most noble, because hunting was such a noble sport, slightly more noble than fowling. The position of hunters over fowlers is due to the belief that hunting so closely resembled war, and the English culture considered martial valor and chivalry to be noble pursuits. The act of hunting could be an indicator of social status, as could the sort of dogs accompanying the hunt. Many people were not legally allowed to hunt, though many, including clerics, did anyways, for pleasure or sustenance.\textsuperscript{70} Clerics were

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 3-22.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 23-38.
\textsuperscript{68} The jobs performed by a dog were determined in part by the social stature of the owner. For example, a shop owner would likely put a dog to work as a guard dog, a noble woman likely owned a lap dog she would not put to any tasks.
\textsuperscript{69} Thomas, \textit{Man and the Natural World}, 183-245.
forbidden to hunt by the Catholic Church, although that did not always stop them from owning hunting dogs and doing so anyways.\textsuperscript{71}

It was often difficult to gain access to hunting dogs because breed ownership was restricted by law, and limited by wealth. During her reign, Queen Elizabeth mandated that no one living within six miles of any of her houses could own a setting dog, in order to prevent people besides herself from fowling, thereby preserving game for her own enjoyment.\textsuperscript{72} Though Caius lists them as coarse dogs, some considered mastiffs hunting dogs, and as such, the mastiff was often subject to legislation, its ownership regulated by forest law. People restricted from hunting who insisted on owning mastiffs were expected to have their mastiff “expediated,” cutting away part of the balls of the feet, so that the dog would not be able to hunt efficiently. Forest law also dictated who could and could not own greyhounds, and under what circumstances a forester could confiscate them.\textsuperscript{73}

Leisurely hunting necessitated knowledge of the specific style and ritual of “the hunt,” and involved the use of a variety of particular types of dogs, the more the better, which were not cheap.\textsuperscript{74} In Cockayne’s estimation, for fox hunting alone, “you must breed foureteene or fifteen couple of small kibble hounds, lowe and swift, and two couple of terriars.”\textsuperscript{75} Depending on the game, a hunter may best be served by a terrier, a hound, or a spaniel, or a combination of the three.\textsuperscript{76} The Queen appointed men to obtain these dogs for her to keep, and when King James took the throne, he dismissed her men in order to appoint his own, declaring “and forasmuch also as we have good profe that

\textsuperscript{71} Manning, “Hunters and Poachers,” 77.
\textsuperscript{72} Elizabeth, “By the Queene,” (London: Robert Barker, 1602).
\textsuperscript{74} Heresbach, The Foure Books of Husbandry, 154.; Cockayne, A Short Treatise of Hunting, B.
\textsuperscript{75} Cockayne, A Short Treatise of Hunting, B.
\textsuperscript{76} Caius, Of English Dogges, 3-19.
gentlemen and others, who delight in the like pastime of hunting and hawking, have and will be ready at all times of their own good will and respect to our recreations, to furnish us of sufficient number of Dogges of all sorts, which we shall have cause to use when they shall be informed that we have need of them."\(^{77}\) It was important for the monarch of England to maintain access to a wide range of the best hunting dogs, and favor with royalty could give a person cause and permission to own more. With such privilege associated with hunting dog ownership, it is no wonder that it was said, "he cannot be a gentleman who loveth not a dogge."\(^{78}\)

Just as the exclusivity of hunting as a sport was extended to dogs, the exclusivity of nobility was extended to dogs, along with the laws the nobility were subject to. The projected distance between lower and higher levels of canines meant that their interactions were subject to legislation. The mayor of Liverpool felt it was necessary to pass a law mandating that mastiffs be tied up, because they were hurting "gentlemen’s dogs."\(^{79}\) While these attacks could be attributed to a few aggressive roaming mastiffs, someone clearly perceived the owners to be partially responsible for the attacks, at least insofar as their dogs were running loose.\(^{80}\) This perceived canine social dissonance had an impact on human interactions. Indeed, laws were made against the "malicious wounding of animals" because people of the poorer sort were taking out their frustrations with the nobility by attacking "gentle" dogs, who were a symbol of wealth, and were seen to be just as much a part of the nobility/gentry as the nobles themselves.\(^{81}\)

\(^{77}\) James I, "Where upon our first coming."
\(^{80}\) Just as unfavored people were banned from the forest, so were their dogs. Dogs caught poaching were hanged. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 98.
\(^{81}\) Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 183-245.
When taking the hunting dog as an example, we can see that canines played a significant role in early modern English culture, as things to be ordered and controlled, and as a mirror of society. The implications of owning a hunting dog could vary. Simply owning a hunting dog conferred gentility, though some breeds received more respect than others, all hunting dogs were more respectable than a simple, coarse, working dog. The dogs available to a person depended upon the individual's wealth and connections; the sort of person a dog owner was could be decided simply by judging their dog.

The Gentlest Dogs: Hunters and Fowlers

Conceptions of Hunters and Fowlers in England

Within the level of “gentle” dogs, there were three divisions: hunter, fowler, and comforter. I will begin this investigation with the most prestigious: the hunting dog. At the level of hunter, there is yet another ranking system, because certain dogs were prized over others, depending on their method of hunting. For example, in Caius’ account the “tumbler” and “thievish” dogs were placed after the bloodhound because they did not capture prey in an honorable way; instead they hunted through deceit. The hunting category contains several different types of dogs bred to have physical traits conducive to serving their specific purpose in the hunt, from smelling prey to chasing it. These canines possessed many innate talents due to breeding, but were also trained intensively to perform their duties, in order to refine their natural abilities. Breeding and training then, were equally important in creating the ideal hunting dog, and Caius’ hierarchy reflects an

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82 Caius, Of Englishe Dogges, 3-13.
83 “...for deceipt and guile is the instrument whereby he maketh this spoyle, which perricious properties supply the places of more commendable qualities…” Ibid., 11-12.
assessment of the dogs’ natural gifts, as well as the jobs they could perform when properly trained.

The first dog Caius writes about is called the harrier, “that kinde of doge whom nature hath inbued with the virtue of smelling, whose property it is to use a lustiness, a readiness, and a couragiousnes in hunting, and draweth into his nostrils the ayre or sent of the beast pursued and followed.” It is important to note that, according to Caius, the harrier is imbued with the ability to smell by nature, meaning that this is not an ability that can be taught, only refined to better serve man. But Caius spends little time discussing the process of training, and instead focuses largely on describing each hunting dog’s innate strengths. For bloodhounds, he notes their ability to smell blood, and thus track a living, dying, or dead beast. For beagles, or gazehounds, Caius notes that they “excelleth in perspecuitie and sharpeness of sight altogether, by the virtue whereof, being singular and notable, it hunteth the foxe, and the hare…” “Terrars,” or terriers, which were used to hunt badgers and foxes, earned their name because they literally terrorize the fox or badger by sneaking into its hole and nipping and biting at it. Greyhounds are notable for their swiftness, and according to Caius, tumblers excel as hunters because of their “craftes, frauds, subtelties and deceiptes.” For the hunting dogs, Caius not only describes their ideal personality and skill level, but their ideal physical shape, for example, the bloodhound should have “lippes of a large size,” and “eeres of no small length.” There are, then, a wide variety of strengths and physical types that characterize the many dogs that the English considered “hunting dogs.” This means that,

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84 Ibid., 3.
85 Ibid., 8-9.
86 Ibid., 9-12.
87 Ibid., 5.
though the bloodhound may have been considered the most noble by some, the English identified many types of dogs as hunting dogs, and could potentially have been impressed by many dogs besides the bloodhound. Wynne’s letter should not mislead us to assume that the English colonists would have only taken bloodhounds as a sign of Virginian Natives’ gentility and hunting ability.

After hunting dogs, Caius moves onto fowling dogs, which are categorized less by their skills (like the hunting dogs by nose, sight, or hearing), and more by whether they hunt land fowl or waterfowl.88 Setters are praised for “making no noise either with foote or with tounge, whiles they followe the game,” while spaniels are praised for the excellency in hunting water fowl, though they are additionally notable for being able to fetch lost ducks and arrows out of the water.89 Like the hunting dogs, the fowling dogs are born with special traits that make them innately superior for each of their offices, whether because of their natural swimming ability or keen eyesight.90

Each hunting and fowling dog had intrinsic physical traits that enabled them to best perform their duties; however, these traits alone were not enough to prepare them for hunting. A hunting dog needed to be well trained. Though training was not his focus, Caius understood that a good hunting dog was not simply the product of nature and breeding, but of instruction, writing that the water spaniel’s talent for fowling originated “partly through a natural towardnesse, and partly by diligent teaching.”91 As such, the possession of a talented hunting dog signified not only that the dog was bred of excellent stock, but that it was trained by someone skillful. Training a dog necessitated a close

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88 Ibid., 14-19.
89 Ibid., 15-18.
90 Ibid., 16-18.
91 Ibid., 16-17.
connection and understanding between master and animal servant, as noted in Caius’
description of the setters which, “attend diligently upon theyr master and frame their
conditions to such beckes, motions, and gestures, as it shall please him to exhibit and
make.”92 According to the *Treatise of Oxen, Sheep, Hogs, and Dogs*, the training process
differs according to the several ways and customs of the countries.93 A dog trained to
follow the noble, French rituals of the hunt would be more highly regarded than a dog
merely helping his owner hunt for subsistence.94 In any style, the trainer had to develop
an understanding with the animal, and maintain it, which called for control of the animal,
and the intelligence, or skill, of the trainer to understand and execute the process. While
all civilized men were expected to be able to maintain control of animals and train them,
it was still considered a skill to be mastered.

Hunting with a dog not only reflected the good breeding and training of a dog and
the intelligence and dominance of the owner, it reflected the military skill of the master.
A well-trained dog made for better hunting, and the better a man was at hunting, the more
skill he was presumed to have militarily, because hunting ability correlated to military
knowledge.95 In Europe, dogs had long been used for combat; in fact the English prided
themselves on the belief that their dogs were some of the best for this purpose.96 Hunting
in this period, which typically involved a dog of some sort, was known for bearing “a

92 Ibid., 15.
94 “Practical Hunting containeth therein no commendable solace or exercise, in comparison with other
forms of hunting.” Thomas Elyot, *Sir Thomas Elyot’s The Book Named the Governor*, ed. John M Major
(New York: Teachers College Press, 1969), 68; cited in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Renaissance*,
96 John Grier Varner and Jeannette Johnson Varner, *Dogs of the Conquest* (Norman: University of
Oklahoma Press, 1983), 33-34.
certain likeness with warre:" According to the Book of the order of Chivalry, the relationship was simple, "a knight must hunt." Hunting was viewed as the ideal exercise to prepare gentlemen for war, as advocated by Cockayne, among many others, for "Hunters by their continuall travaile, painful labour, often watching, and enduring of hunger, of heate, and of cold, are much enabled above others to the service of their Prince and Countrey in the warres." Thus the human/dog interaction of hunting was thought to endow the human half of the pairing with the physical endurance and military intelligence needed for success in war.

When considering all of the things that it meant to have a hunting dog, then, we see that the implications vary widely. A dog's breed could be of greater or lesser repute, and a dog could be an excellent specimen of its breed, or not. The health, quality and breed of a dog were a reflection of the owner, and the owner's ability to procure a certain specimen reflected his wealth, status, and good taste. Beyond the physical body of the hunting dog, human interactions with hunting dogs carried great symbolism. Ownership of a prestigious hunting dog conferred prestige on its owner. A well-trained, talented dog likewise indicated that its owner possessed one trait of civility: dominion over animals, as well as military acumen and skill with the art-form of breeding and training. All of this symbolism must be considered when inspecting the English expectations and observations of American hunting dogs. Although commentary on dogs is somewhat sparse, it is possible to establish a sense of English expectations of dogs in America by

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99 Cockayne, A Short Treatise of Hunting, A3.
looking at the accounts of the New World that circulated in England prior to the Jamestown settlement.¹⁰⁰

Seeking Hunting Breeds In America

English expectations of Americans and their hunting dogs were established partially through access to Flemish engraver/publisher Theodore de Bry’s “A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia,” based on the watercolors of English artist John White and the text of Thomas Hariot. White’s watercolors were created after he was hired as an artist to accompany an exploratory expedition to Virginia, in 1585, which Hariot also took part in. At the encouragement of Richard Hakluyt, de Bry created copper engravings based on White’s work, and published them alongside Hariot’s text. The resulting product was published in four languages in 1590 and later included in the de Bry family’s thirteen-volume project entitled America. This work was extremely popular and remained relevant as an ethnographic reference into the nineteenth century.¹⁰¹ Those who viewed de Bry’s work could note many images depicting Indians in the background hunting with bows and arrows.¹⁰² Joyce Chaplin speculates that this

¹⁰⁰ Dogs were so ubiquitous that they were not often written about in England, let alone in America. Thomas, Man and the Natural World, 103. With so many exotic animals unknown by Pliny in America, Native dogs, while different, were not different enough to be written about extensively. Varner, Dogs of Conquest, 3-4.
¹⁰² John White’s watercolors did not contain such background illustration. Theodore de Bry imagined and included the backgrounds in his engravings. His understandings or assumptions about how the natives hunted were based on his reading and conversations with people who had been to Virginia. His assumption that the natives hunted without dogs was either based on such “knowledge,” or imagined due to his understanding that the natives possessed limited technology. John White’s watercolor of “The Indian Village of Pomeiooc” contains a dog walking alongside a man, but this was not included in de Bry’s interpretation of the same scene. John White and Theodore de Bry, “Index of White Watercolors and de Bry Engravings,” (Virtual Jamestown Project, Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia, 2000). For more on European understandings of the limitations of native technology, its correlation to
interest in Indian bows and arrows was due to a certain correspondence to the English long bow, and a desire to understand what kind of military strength they possessed, which would best be tested by consideration of their hunting skills. It was also a way to show the bounty of deer and other animals in the land ready to be obtained and enjoyed as food. While the deer are bountiful in the pictures, the dogs are not. In all of the scenes of buck hunting there is not a single image of Indians hunting with dogs. Nor are any dogs present in the scene depicting natives killing waterfowl. Considering all the meaning the English ascribed to hunting dogs, the possible interpretations range widely: do the Virginian land and climate not produce skilled hunting dogs? Do the people not know how to breed hunting dogs? Do the people not exercise enough control to train the dogs? If a land is absent of hunting dogs, the gentlest of dogs, is it also absent of gentlemen?

A work now called “The Drake Manuscript” would have reinforced such negative expectations. It is unknown who wrote and illustrated this account of travel in America and the Caribbean, though some speculate it was French Huguenots travelling with Francis Drake. Like White’s work, none of the images depict natives hunting with dogs, but this work goes a step further by offering a description of American dogs, stating:

one may as well call them wild dogs which are found in the woods and hunt small pigs and calves and eat them, living only on animals. The normally are in the woods to find food... These dogs are difficult to tame being fierce and mean and one can only tame them if one catches them young or kills them.

The way the author describes it, these wild dogs were both a product of nature, and the result of a paucity of human artistry or industry.

lower civility, and the way this was manifest in European engravings, see Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage*.


White and de Bry, “Index of White Watercolors and de Bry Engravings.”

Given the dearth of stories, pictures, or reports containing descriptions of natives having or using hunting dogs, the Jamestown colonists likely did not anticipate finding any. Indeed, John White’s later account of natives hunting does not include dogs. In “The Fourth Voyage Made to Virginia,” John White describes the way the “savages” hunted deer without use of dogs or weapons: “These Savages being secretly hidden among high reedes, where oftentimes they find the Deere asleep, and so kill them.”

This hunting method did not resemble the noble hunting strategy with which the English were familiar. As Caius’ description of the thievish hunting dog testifies, using deceit to catch prey was considered less noble to the English than using skill. The nobler approach was not to trick prey but to best it physically, whether because of a dog’s ability to catch the scent of an animal and lead hunters to it, or the ability to seize it through superior speed. John Smith’s observation of the native hunting style did not simply note the absence of dogs, it went a step further and placed natives in the role of dog. He claimed, “When they have shot a Deare by land, they follow him like blood hounds by the blood and straine, and oftentimes so take them.” With no dogs involved, and with men acting like animals, native hunting styles were perceived as ignoble, and an example of a dangerous inversion of God’s intended order.

Peter Wynne’s account is the only one that offers an example of the use of dogs for pursuit of prey, though it was for fowling, a lesser sport than buck hunting, and he described these dogs as “nothing tame.”

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106 John White, “The Foureth Voyage Made to Virginia with three Ships, in the year 1587, Wherein was transported the second colony,” (Virtual Jamestown Project, Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia, 2000), 392-393.
107 Caius, Of Englishe Dogges, 10-12.
108 Smith, “A Map of Virginia.”
sport, the scene as Wynne described it more closely resembled chaos than the gentle art of fowling as he knew it, because according to his observation, they were not even using fowling dogs. Wynne labeled their dogs “warners,” or “curr dogs.” John White described yet another example of improper hunting in less detail, explaining that he believed the women of Secota killed animals with magic, not hunting dogs. Whichever version of hunting English colonists believed the Americans partook in, from hunting with mutts, to acting as bloodhounds, to using magic, none of them, as far as English culture was concerned, were as noble or as civilized as English hunting.

The English colonists had specific ideas of how hunting dogs should look and act, and how people should interact with them. From stories and pictures, they were primed to believe that the American natives did not own or use hunting dogs. Once they arrived in America, those that witnessed differently, like Peter Wynne, were still less than impressed with the type of dogs they did use, and their level of control over them. Because dogs were a symbol of status, wealth, and military prowess, these assessments suggested that the native people were inherently less gentle than the English gentlemen in Jamestown, less wealthy, less skilled militarily, and on top of that, unable to fully exercise control over nature, which went against God’s command and design. Not only were the dogs unimpressive to begin with, but the native people either did not possess the

110 John White, “The True Pictures and Fashions of the People in that Part of America Now Called Virginia,” (Virtual Jamestown Project, Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia, 2000).

111 This added to the already ongoing European debate over the natural disposition of the Native Americans. Anthony Pagden describes the arguments within the Catholic Church and Spain in general regarding the “nature” of the American natives as a continually evolving argument, from the time the Spanish first inhabited America throughout their first century there. Pagden, The Fall of Natural Man. Likewise, as Chaplin shows, the English were constantly attempting to properly position themselves relative to the natives, with an inclination to, in the end, find themselves in a position of superiority. Chaplin, Subject Matter, 74-85.
God-given skill to improve upon the their inferior animals, or did not understand God’s desire for them to do so, and as such, were wasting the natural world God had given them.

**Comforters**

**Negative Assessments of Comforters in England**

Although the colonists encountered no hunting dogs they were familiar with, and would not consider the native Virginians and their dogs “gentle” on that account, there was another category of dog that was also considered “gentle:” the petite lapdog, or as Caius calls them, “comfortors.” Caius describes them as “delicate, neate, and pretty,” asserting that the smaller they were, the more pleasure they brought their owners, most often gentle women. It seems that it is this characterization of the stereotypical comforter owner that earns the lapdog its gentle status, because Caius chooses to categorize them as such despite an otherwise scathing description of the petite canines. Though gentle, the comforters are inherently lower than hunting dogs, firstly because they do not engage in any noble activities, secondly because they are typically owned by gentle women, and thus seen as feminine and frivolous.\(^{112}\) Caius reports that gentle women can love these dogs more than their own children, though any women who love a comforter so intensely are worthless and most likely barren.\(^{113}\) When describing human interaction with the

\(^{112}\) In contemporary art, dogs represented loyalty, fidelity, reason, and wit, but lapdogs often indicated more than loyalty and wit, symbolizing the seductive nature of the owner. Victoria Dickenson, “Meticulous Depiction,” in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Renaissance*, ed. Bruce Boehler, (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 191-192.

\(^{113}\) Despite his disparagement of people who love their dogs more than their children, or who lavish affection on dogs who do nothing, his critique may not be against any type of affection towards canines. It seems that some canines may be worthy of affection, and people were expected to occasionally exhibit these emotions towards their dogs. In the section of *A Treatise of Oxen, Sheep, Hogs, Dogs* containing medical advice for treating distemper, the author makes a special provision for the owner who feels love or empathy for his dog. His first recommendation for dealing with a distempered dog is to “separate him from the rest of your Dogs, and knock him on the head,” but he admits that some people may not want to do so,
comforters, Abraham Flemming, who translated Caius’ work into English, added a few especially harsh lines, writing,

> these dogges are little, pretty, proper, and fine, and sought for to satisifie the delicatenesse of daintie dames, and wanton womens wills, instruments of folly for them to play daily withal, to trifle away the treasure of time, to withdraw their mindes from more commendable exercises, and to content their corrupted concupiscences with vaine disport

Caius’ overall critique of these animals and their owners is that they produce nothing and have no talent; they must be cared for by humans, while not offering anything in return. Not only is this a condemnation of the unnatural human/animal relationship, it is a condemnation of the owners who have not attempted to improve the dog in any way in order to make it useful. Additionally, as Flemming notes, these dogs distracted women from other exercises. He does not view this as a positive aspect of the female/comforter relationship, though others may have. While playing with their comforters prevented women from engaging in conventionally productive activities like gardening and needlework, it also prevented them from engaging in the sort of activity that may have tarnished their reputation. In some ways then, these dogs served as a way for women to stay busy, inside their homes, and away from more morally troubling activities.

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115 Keith Thomas suggested that one of the reasons eccentric pets were accused of being witches’ familiars in the early modern period was the lingering suspicion of any close relationships between animals and humans. In this period, there was a particular emphasis on distinguishing men from animals and maintaining boundaries between the two. James Serpell, “Guardian Spirits or Demonic Pets: The Concept of the Witch’s Familiar in Early Modern England,” in *The Animal/Human Boundary*, ed. Angela Creager and William Chester Jordan (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 158-160.
116 As Jennifer Munroe points out, staying out of trouble and in the home was a good start for a woman’s reputation, but it was preferable for women to be doing something in the home that didn’t attract negative
While Caius expresses negative opinions of comforters and their owners, he attempts to find positive attributes for the group. It would appear that he does so in order to maintain and justify his canine hierarchy - which is organized foremost by the type of owner who possessed each sort of dog. As such, Caius is obliged to categorize highborn women's comforters as "gentle," and must justify the comforter's gentility in the face of their idleness. To do so, Caius emphasizes the fact that comforters come from Malta, which connects them to the Knights of the Hospitaller, who resided in Malta. Such an association gives the comforters some potential to be protectors, because the Knights of the Hospitaller were "courageous and puisaunt soulidours valliauntly fighting under the under the banner of Christ their unconquerable captain."117 Caius goes on to report a single redeeming use for these dogs, describing their assistance to sick persons, "these little doges are good to asswage the sicknesse of the stomacke being oflenetimes thereunto applied as a plaster preservative, or borne in the bosom of the diseased and weake person, which effect is performed by theyre moderate heate."118 He believes these dogs heal not only by soothing the stomach with their body heat, but through a humoral connection to the owner, actually take the sickness of the human into their body, often killing the dog, but saving the owner.119 Though Caius attempts to prove the comforters gentility by listing what he believes to be their only positive qualities, it is their pampered, idle existence that makes them most believably "gentle." Much like their noble owners, they were meant to spend the day lounging, being fawned over, and being fed by others.

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118 Ibid., 21-22.
They served to live the same lives as their owners, and in doing so, bring them comfort and company.

Negative Assessments of Comforters in America

We can anticipate that the English had a place in their world view to understand if the natives they encountered kept pet dogs, and that is, given Spanish accounts, likely what they anticipated finding. However, much like the kind of comforter dog Caius wrote about, the types of pet dogs described in early accounts of America would have earned little respect. No one credits them with having any redeeming attributes, like those Caius admits the English comforters possess. Jose de Acosta, a Spanish Jesuit missionary, known for writing *La Historia Natural Y Moral de las Indias*, wrote of the pet dogs encountered in the Indies that

> the indians doe so love these little dogges, that they will spare their meate to feede them, so as when they travel in the countrie, they carrie them with them upon their shoulders, or in their bosomes, and when they are sicke, they keepe them with them, without any use, but onely for company.

By his description, these dogs did not earn their keep, they simply existed and ate food that otherwise would have nourished human bodies. And unlike Caius, who found a redeeming quality for English comforters in medicinal use, and gentle status of ownership, Acosta portrays these American dogs as non-working dogs owned by Indians of any social rank, meant only for comfort and company. Though Acosta may not have intended to be critical or negative in this assessment, the passage would have been read and interpreted as such by the English, who would have gleaned, first of all, that neither

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dog nor owner was the equivalent of the comforters and their counterparts found in
England. Second, the English would have understood that the relationship between
Americans and pet dogs was a slightly more disconcerting version of the
comforter/owner relationship that existed in England, because the American pets did not
even possess any medicinal value. The comforters' American counterparts offered no
apparent benefit to humans, and the Americans were content to leave them that way. This
uneven relationship between American humans and their pet dogs, in which humans
seemed to exist to serve their pets, was an inversion of Christian order. To English
readers, the human relationships with them would have suggested a lack of cultural
advancement, since pets were feminine and frivolous in the first place, these people were
allowing the dogs to be in charge, and did not exhibit any effort to make the dogs useful.

When the English arrived in Jamestown, they recorded no evidence of the natives
keeping dogs as pets. When compounded with the deficiency of hunting dogs, the lack of
comforting dogs would have confirmed the absence of any “gentle” dogs in Virginia, and
the neglect of the people to produce any through breeding. Because a dog’s sort could
identify a person’s sort, the lack of gentle dogs in America translated to a lack of gentle
people in America.

**Coarse, Working Dogs**

Uses and Meanings in English Culture

While any assessment of native hunting dogs and pets must have given the
English a sense of cultural and social superiority, an examination of native working dogs
held promise to prove that native people could at the very least control dogs, albeit coarse
ones. Working dogs, or coarse dogs, were viewed in a different light than the gentler dogs. While ascribing them considerably lesser status, Caius held a great respect for their many and widely varying abilities, asking

if any be disposed to drawe the above named services into a table, what man more clearly, and with more vehemency of voice giveth warning eyther of a wastefull beaste, or of a spoilng theefe than this? Who by his barcking (as good as a burning beacon) foreshoweth hassards at hand? What maner of beaste stronger? What servant to his master more loving? What companion more trustie? What watchman more vigilant? What revenger more constant? What messenger more speedie? What water bearer more painful? Finally what packhorse more patient?^122

Caius is impressed not only by the variety of tasks working dogs perform, but by the extraordinary aptitude they show for each task. He asserts that these dogs, though lower than humans, are superior when it comes to serving as a sentry, and more loving, speedy and trustworthy.

The working dogs are divided broadly into two types: the shepherd and the mastiff. Caius first addresses the shepherd, proposing to spend little time discussing their merits and physical types, since he claims they are already so widely known. Though he does keep the discussion short, he still offers a loose physical description of the English shepherd: “Our shepherdes dogge is not huge, vaste, and bigge, but of an indifferent stature and growth, because it hath not to deale with the bloudthyrsty wolf sythence there be none in England...,” and takes the opportunity to congratulate England for being wolf free.^123 Caius acknowledges that a shepherd dog in England need not protect a flock from wolves, but when well trained, can perform other tasks, writing, “this dog either at the hearing of his masters voice, or at the wagging and whistling in his fist, or at his shrill and horse hissing bringeth the wandring weathers and straying sheepe, into the self same

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^122 Caius, *Of Englishe Dogges*, 32-34.
^123 Ibid., 23.
place where his masters will and wishe is to have them.”\footnote{Ibid., 24.} Beyond guiding the sheep, and protecting the flock from beasts, the shepherd dog was expected to be able to “succor against the snares and attemptes of mischieous men.”\footnote{Ibid., 23.} The multiple tasks a shepherd dog could perform on a farm explains why the author of The Foure Bookes of Husbandrie described dogs as being indispensable for the practice of husbandry, and thus a prime example of using nature, including animals, to benefit man.\footnote{Heresbach, “Foure Bookes of Husbandrie,” 154.} But shepherds were not the only dogs useful to have around the farm, since mastiffs served many purposes as well.

Caius describes the rest of the working dogs as variations of mastiffs, which at the time of his writing were still considered working dogs. Physically, the mastiff, in Harrison’s words, is “an huge dog, stubbomed, ouglie, eager, burthenous of bodie,(and therefore but of little swiftnesse) terrible and fearfull to behold, and (oftentimes) more fearce and fell than any...”\footnote{Harrison, “Description of England,” book III, 44-45.} This is its natural form, which certainly predisposed it to perform certain tasks, but these tasks were dictated in the end not by the canine’s shape but by its owner’s profession, who would train it for the duties necessary to be of assistance. As Caius writes, “Our English men... assist nature with arte, use and custome.”\footnote{Caius, Of Englishe Dogges, 25.} Caius initially writes of the terror the mastiff could inspire, and of its use as a fighting, bear baiting dog, but goes on to point out that it could serve man in many fashions, including hunting, though this is not enough to classify it as gentle.\footnote{Ibid., 23.}
Caius writes chiefly of mastiffs' ability to serve as guard dogs. Harrison especially remarked on this ability because of the unusual pairing of mastiffs' dual dispositions: natural ferocity combined with feelings of love and loyalty. He relates a story of his own mastiffs' loyalty, writing,

I had one myself once, which would not suffer anie man to bring in his weapon further than my gate: neither those that were of my house to be touched in his presence. Or if I had beaten anie of my children, he would gentile have assaied to catch the rod in his teeth and take it out of my hand, or else pluck down their clothes to save them from the stripes.¹³⁰

He also points out that some mastiffs, while fierce enough that it took only three of them to kill a bear, treated their master's household so gently that they would even allow children to ride around on their backs.¹³¹ Of the specific varieties of mastiffs, of which there are at least six by Caius' count, many of their occupations are more or less to stand guard, based on their instinct to treat both human and animal outsiders viciously and insiders lovingly. One variety of guard mastiffs were called "keepers," because of their ability to "keep" farmers houses and "merchants maisons, wherin great wealth, riches, substance, and costly stuffe is reposed..." A "keeper" may also be called a "butchers dog," a result of its ability to keep the butchers place, and even to watch over cattle when needed. Farmers' dogs could likewise serve as guard dogs of sorts, reportedly running the farm at night while the farmer slept. The "tincker's cur," or "defending dog" was used both as a pack animal and as a guard dog. It would carry any manner of trade tools on its back "with marveilous patience." As Harrison described, "they beare bigge budgettes fraught with tinckers tooles, and mettal meete to mend kettles, porridge pottes, skellets, and chafers, and other such like trumpery requisite for their occupacion and loitering

¹³¹ Ibid., 46-47.
trade, easing him of a great burthen which otherwise he himself should carry upon his shoulders.” In addition to serving the function of pack animal, the tinker’s dog would, out of loyalty to his owner, protect the possessions from “thieves and villains,” and would also defend his owner from any harm. Yet another type of mastiff served to protect his owner from fire,

Some dogges there be, which will not suffer fiery coals to lye skattered about the hearthe, but with their pawes wil rake up the burning coals, musying and studying first with themselves how it might be conveniently be done. And if so bee that the coals caste to greate a heate then will they bury them in ashes and so remove them forward to a fir place wyth theyre noses.

Their innate dispositions meant that mastiffs were well suited to the position of guard dog, and three of the six types of mastiffs served in this capacity. These natural instincts were undoubtedly seen as proof of the good climate in which they were born, however, there was some human intervention to improve their services and tailor them to specific situations.

Dogs could be trained to perform duties in addition to standing guard. One such assignment was performed by mastiffs called “water drawers,” which were larger mastiffs attached in some fashion to a water wheel in order to turn it and draw water out of wells. Another type carried messages and were called, unimaginatively, the “messenger” or “carrier.” Much like the other types of mastiffs, their merit was due partly to natural size, strength, and ferocity, and partly to human skill in training. They were trained to follow their master’s commands to carry letters or messages fastened to their collar. They were most helpful in situations where a message needed to be carried across dangerous territory, because mastiffs could usually win a fight, and if not, exhibited

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133 Ibid., 31.
“swiftness and readiness in running away.” Dogs like the messengers and water drawers were taught by humans to perform tasks at which their natural form predisposed them to excel. Like the hunting dogs, these worker dogs were a product of nature and artifice, representing man’s right and obligation to utilize nature in order to improve one’s situation, and the English soil’s ability to create helpful dogs.

One of the chief things to take away from the multiplicity of offices shepherds and mastiffs occupied in England is the way in which they fulfilled the ideal Christian relationship between human and dog. People were using an element of nature, the dog, and that dog’s natural disposition: loyalty, in order to improve and ease the office a man performed, be it farmer, tinkerer, butcher, or merchant. God had given man nature to use. Dogs were a part of nature, and as such, man should exploit dogs’ strengths in order to improve upon his own situation and upon nature itself. If a man was not submitting a dog to work, he was not fulfilling God’s intention for that dog or for that man.

Just as with hunting dogs, the training of working dogs not only necessitated a man’s control and power over animals, but because training was considered a skill, it necessitated a man’s intelligence. These processes were not something to be picked up simply by intuition. The *Foure Books of Husbandrie* turns to the Greek historian and philosopher Xenophon to advise an owner on the finer points of training a guard dog. His advice includes instructions on making dogs fiercer, getting them accustomed to being tied up, and adjusting their sleep schedules so that they will stand guard at night and sleep during the day. The training of dogs had to be tailored to the type of dog in question and its purpose, meaning that in order to train a dog well and maintain it, the authors

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134 Ibid., 28-29.
believed that a person had to be skilled. Caring for dogs also called for knowledge of how to protect them, from the medicines needed to heal them to instructions on how to protect them from wild beasts and other intruders. Advice on protection was not always complicated, and may only have involved placing “broade collers about their neckes full of nailes, and iron studdes, lyning it with soft leather within.”\textsuperscript{136} But even such simple instructions were deemed worthy of sharing, illustrating the importance of the techniques that enabled men to control and maximize the usefulness of canines.

Working dogs, much like hunting dogs, could perform a wide variety of tasks and thus could symbolize and signify a wide variety of things for the English. The type of dog an English man owned could reveal the type of work a man did, his wealth, his connections, and thereby his social standing. The behavior of the dog revealed how much control the owner exercised over him, and how well trained the dog was, which reflected on the owner. Because the English believed that much about a person could be determined from observing their dog’s breed and behavior, the English anticipation of working dogs in Virginia contributed to their preconceived notions of the native Virginians.

\textbf{Uses of Working Dogs in America}

Colonists likely anticipated finding tame working dogs in Virginia, given the reports of natives using dogs in place of horses, “like beasts of burden,” outfitting them

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 155. Although Heresbach advises use of a collar, in his \textit{Description of England}, historian William Harrison advises that dogs being trained for bear baiting will become much fiercer if their necks are not protected by a collar. Harrison, \textit{Description of England}, 44-45.
with “light pack saddles” loaded with provisions weighing as much as fifty pounds.\textsuperscript{137} It is unlikely that they anticipated finding any shepherding dogs though, which was indicative of a larger problem: there were no sheep to herd, and no animal husbandry in general. Timothy Silver attributes this to the absence of horses and cattle in North America and to the South Atlantic Native American’s “belief in the spirituality and human volition of plants and animals.”\textsuperscript{138} Native Americans’ belief systems compelled them to allow dogs to interbreed of their own will, and to exercise minimal control over animals in general, due to their understanding of how the spiritual world was structured. They felt there would be negative consequences for controlling animals and forcing them to do things against their will.\textsuperscript{139} From what the colonists were able to learn about the native religion, they believed that either the natives’ gods existed in animal form, or that they worshipped animals, either of which was a gross inversion of the world order as the English conceptualized it. The English colonists seemed unable to conceive that the natives chose to allow dogs to interbreed of their own will, it seemed more likely that

\textsuperscript{137}“They load these dogs like beasts of burden and make light pack-saddles for them like our pack-saddles, cinching them with leather straps. The dogs go about with sores on their backs like pack animals... The load may be from thirty-five to fifty pounds, depending on the dog.” Toribio Benavente, “Relación Posfera de Cibola,” in Narratives of the Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542, ed. George P. Hammond (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 261-262. “They go about like nomads with their tents and with packs of dogs harnessed with little pads, pack-saddles, and girths. When the dogs loads slip to the side they howl for someone to come straighten them.” Pedro de Castañeda, “Castañeda’s History of the Expedition,” in Narratives of the Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542, ed. George P. Hammond (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 261-262. “...they use dogges for that purpose that we do our horses.” George Best, A True Discourse of the late voyages of Discovery: for the Finding of a Passage to Cathaya, by the Northwest, under the Conduct of Martin (London: Printed by Henry Bynnman, 1578), 17.

\textsuperscript{138}Timothy Silver, A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 41-42.

\textsuperscript{139}Men and animals were “not as sharply separated” in Native American cosmology as in Western cosmology. “Their belief in the spirituality and human volition of plant and animals probably helps explain why the natives did not keep livestock. Native Americans believed animals were capable of retaliation if wronged.” Timothy Silver, A New Face on the Countryside, 40-42.
they were unable to control dogs, or at the very least too lazy to do so.\textsuperscript{140} To the English an absence of husbandry or keeping “nothing tame about them” implied that a people were less civilized than the English.\textsuperscript{141} This judgment was not reserved only for Native Americans, in fact, it had first been applied to an earlier English colony: Ireland. The English consistently claimed that the Irish people were barbaric and less civilized than the English.\textsuperscript{142} In his \textit{Briefe Description of Ireland}, Robert Payne argues that the English colonization of Ireland has been a slow but successful process of civilization, pointing out their improvement in the area of animal husbandry as evidence of this point.\textsuperscript{143} Proponents of the Jamestown colony expressed a similar desire to civilize Americans through animal husbandry when justifying their commercial venture.\textsuperscript{144} The lack of shepherds in America, due to the lack of husbandry, then, would have offered further vindication for settlement and colonization of the area.

In addition to an absence of reports of shepherd dogs, there were no reports of any valuable guard dogs. Archaeological work has shown that American dogs were generally smaller than English dogs, and explorers’ reports indicate that their behavior was also dramatically different.\textsuperscript{145} One report claimed that the dogs were practically untamable, claiming “one can only tame them if one catches them young or kills them.”\textsuperscript{146}

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\item Colons believed that the natives simply found dogs in the woods, and avoided the effort of domestication. Virginia DeJohn Anderson, \textit{Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Tranformed Early America} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 34.
\item Barbour, “Jamestown Voyages,” 246.
\item Robert Payne, \textit{A Briefe Description of Ireland made in this Yeere 1589} (London: Thomas Dawson, 1594), A1.
\item Payne, \textit{A Briefe Description}, A1.
\item Schwartz, \textit{A History of Dogs in the Early Americas}, 162.
\item “These dogs are difficult to tame being fierce and mean and one can only tame them if one catches them young or kills them.” Verlyn Klinkenborg, editor, \textit{The Drake Manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library: Histoire Naturelle des Indes} (London: Andre Deutsch, 1996), 262.
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Smith believed that American dogs, because they so frequently interbred with wolves, were unable to bark, meaning that even if they were trained to stand guard, they would be unable to properly alert humans of any intruders or strangers. In addition to being unable to bark, according to Richard Hawkins, the dogs were unable to pursue any criminals, because, “They are all crooked backt, as many as are of the countrey breed, and cannot run fast: their faces are like the face of a pig or an hog, with sharpe noses.”

Given their silence and supposed physical deformities, these dogs were considered by the English to be entirely inept as guard dogs.

Richard Eden’s translation of Oviedo’s *La historia general y natural de las Indias* indicated that American dogs were incapable of protecting the native people from “tigers” found there. The account claims that these “tigers,” or panthers, described as “beastes of greate force with strong legges,” “devour many of the Indians and do much hurt otherwise…. But synse the coming of the Christians, many have been kyld with crossbows.”

According to Oviedo, the jungle cats would have gone on killing helpless Indians, if European Christians had not arrived with their dogs. Because the crossbows alone were not enough, the European hounds and beagles were a key part of the “tiger” hunting process:

As soone as the archer hath knowledge of the haunt of any Tygers, he goeth searchynge theyr trase with his crossbowe and with a little hounde or beagle and not with a greehounde, because this beast would soone kyll any dogg that would

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147 Smith, “A Map o f Virginia.”
149 “A dog that cannot bark is a subdog.” Antonello), 294.
150 “Tiger” is most likely a reference to a leopard or panther of some sort, being described as “russet-colored with black spots.” Ibid., 303-304.
venter on huym. When the hounde hath found the tiger, he runneth about him baying continually, and approacheth so neare hym snapping and grynning... that he hereby so molesteth the beast that he dryveth him to take the next tree, at the foote whereof he remayneth styly baying... while in the meantime the archer cometh... then, within the space of two or three hours or the day folownge, the archurturturneth thither and wyth his dog fyneth the place where he lyeth dead.”152

According to this account, the Indians had no guard dogs of their own, and were completely exposed to the whims of “tigers” until the arrival of European dogs, and Europeans themselves, who possessed the skill to hunt with the use of dogs and crossbows. The idea that the American people had no guard dogs of their own reinforced the notion that the English were coming in as a superior culture to protect a weaker people.

Though the colonists would not have expected to encounter shepherds or guard dogs, there were tales of dogs in northern parts of America performing tasks that the English considered acceptable for working dogs. In Castañeda’s account of the Coronado Expedition, he writes about dogs serving as pack animals for the plains people. This was a duty that the Europeans had precedent for, as tinkers’ dogs were known to haul their goods as they traveled from place to place. Castañeda reports, “they go about like nomads with their tents and with packs of dogs harnessed with little pads, pack-saddles, and girths. When the dogs loads slip to the side they howl for someone to come and straighten them.”153 In an account collected by Richard Hakluyt, George Best reports that while on voyage with Martin Frobisher he observed a native train a European dog “to drawe in a sled as we doe horses in a coach, setting himself thereupon like a guide: so that we might see that they use dogges for that purpose that we do our horses.”154 There were then, at

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152 Oviedo y Valdés, “The Natural hystorie of the West Indies,” 236.
154 George Best, “A True Discourse of the late voyages of Discovery,” 17.
least two examples of dogs properly submitting to American people, and serving in capacities that would have been culturally understood by Europeans.

Observations such as Castañeda’s or Best’s created an expectation that some Americans were capable of exercising control over their dogs, and intelligent and skilled enough to train the dogs to act as load bearing animals. These observations contrast the evidence presented on hunting dogs and pet dogs, which could only lead to conclusions that Americans had no control over any canines. The possibility that Americans utilized dogs to make travel easier established the possibility that Americans had some capacity and desire to control nature. Such people would not need help from the English to learn the how to harness nature and cultivate civility. While stories of Americans using dogs as pack animals would have forced colonists to acknowledge some capability and civility among the Americans, the stories may not have been received entirely positively because the issue still existed that these people were using dogs in the absence of horses.

Upon arrival in Virginia, the English encountered, much as they would have expected from reports, no shepherds or guard dogs. Contradictory to reports, however, they encountered no pack dogs either. Instead of finding trained dogs that served as beasts of burden, colonists found that, as John Smith wrote, “dogges of that country are like their Wolves, and cannot barke but howle; and their wolves not much better than our English foxes.” The promise of working dogs held in reports from Best and Oviedo proved disappointing. Given all the meaning that working dogs held, as symbols of industry, skill, human dominance, and the wealth of the soil, the lack of working dogs present in Virginia indicated inferiority in all these areas. Their absence also suggested that Native Americans were unaware of God’s desire for them to use animals to make the

155 Smith, “Map of Virginia.”
land productive, and were unable to command beasts, which they, as humans, should have naturally been superior to.

Cur Dogs and "Others"

Disdain of Curs and Fear of "Others" in England

The last, and lowest, category of dogs Caius acknowledges are curs. This category includes those types of dogs that have no designated "sort" -- what we would call "mutts" -- and more especially dogs who serve no productive purpose. Harrison and Caius call them "whippets," or "warners," and as Caius describes them:

such dogges... keep not their kinde... are mingled out of sundry sortes not imitating the conditions of some one certaine speic, because they resemble no notable shape, no exercise any worthy property of the true perfect and gentle kind, it is not necessarye that I write any more of them, but to banishe them as unprofitable implements, out of the boundes of my booke, unprofitable I say for any use that is commendable, except to intertain strangers with their barcking in the day time, givin wamying to them of the house, that such & such be newly come, whereupon wee call them admonishing dogges, because in that point they performe theyr office.156

Caius judges these dogs to be worthless, because they have none of the characteristics of the gentle dogs, and offer none of the "commendable" uses of the working dogs. Though these curs were performing the tasks their master trained them to perform, if the task was not admirable, the dog was not lauded for being useful, and the owner was not praised for training a dog and making good use of nature. Dogs trained to steal or "dance in measure at the musicaall sounde of an instrument" for money were not held in high esteem, nor were their owners, who were simply seen as lazy, thievish, and morally corrupt.157 While it would seem that the ability to perform difficult and interesting tasks, like dancing.

156 Caius, Of Englishe Dogges, 34.
157 Ibid., 34-35.
would allow a working dog to gain prestige, this is not the case, because, as established, canine hierarchies were based on existing human hierarchies. Despite the fact that the owners had trained a dog to “stand bolte upright, to lye flat upon the ground, to turn rounde as a ring holding their tailes in their teethe,” which is arguably much more difficult than training a dog to chase a fox, the owners were still called “vagabundicall,” and “idle” by Caius and Harrison. Similarly, even if the native Virginian people had trained dogs to perform some tasks, if the tasks were not approved of in English culture, the colonists observing them in Virginia were unlikely to be impressed by the dog or the owner.

The other type of cur, lumped in with the unproductive dog, was labeled “curre” not because of its lack of occupation or use to humans, but because it was a mutt. For its lack of breed specificity, the “turnspit” was considered a cur, even though Caius declares its kitchen service “excellent,” and reports that when it came to turning a wheel in order to roast meat, “no drudge nor scullion can doe the feate more cunningly.” The turnspit performed essentially the same task as the working mastiff that turned the water wheel: walking in a circle in order to provide something for humans. However, because it was a mutt, the turnspit was still considered a cur. Mixed breeds, or curs, were not only socially and culturally subordinate, their mix of separate categories of dogs verged on repulsive to people like Caius and Harrison. Harrison describes them as vile, and writes, “it is unpossible to describe these curs in anie order, bicause they have no [anie] one kind proper unto themselves, but are a confused companie mixt of all the rest.” This inability to affix curs into an understandable order, because they could not be identified

158 Ibid., 35.
159 Ibid., 34-35.
with any single, specific breed, was upsetting because it violated the presumption that order could be established by arranging discernably different entities. These incongruous canines drew attention to potential for disorder within the system, as well as a failure on the part of the English to tame nature.

Far worse than any curs, but included in their section, Caius writes of the type of dogs who mixed with other species:

I might here intreat of other dogs, as of those which are bred between a bitch and a woolfe, and [called Lycisa: a thing verie often seene in France, saith Franciscus Patricius in his common wealth, as procured of set purpose, and learned, as I thinke, of the Indians, who tie their sault bitches often in woods, that they might be loined by tigers: also] Betweene a bitch and fox, or a beare and a mastiff. But as we utterlie want the first sort, except they be brought unto us... But all of all the rest heretofore remembred in this chapter, there is none more ouglie (and odious) in fight, cruel and fierce in deed, nor untractable In hand, than that which is begotten betweene the beare and the bandog.161

The mixture of the band dog, or mastiff, and bear is seen as the most awful, partially because man cannot control it, which violates the man/animal dynamic as the English felt it should be, but also because, like curs, they could not be classified. These animals could not neatly be categorized as “bear” or “dog,” nor could they be categorized as fully “wild” or fully “tame.” Apprehension of blurring the line between “wild” and “tame” was very prevalent in this period, rendering the joining of a wild fox and a tame dog woeful, not least because of the implications such mixtures held regarding the English ability to control nature. The concern over mixing wild and tame, and the fear of hybrids in general, is evident in the depiction of witches familiars, who were typically described as mixtures of humans and animals, “tailor made to provoke horror, revulsion, and sanctimonious outrage.”162 The existence of unnatural, un-Christian, disorderly creations, could lead to a

161 Ibid., 49.
162 James Serpell, “Guardian Spirits or Demonic Pets,” 181.
loss of order and civility, one of the things that placed humans above animals. That Caius saw fit to put curs and hybrids in the same category serves to emphasize curs’ wretched reputation.

For the English, curs symbolized undesirable disorder in nature, man’s inability to submit these dogs to any order, and a lack of productivity or respectability on the part of man and dog. The types of dogs reportedly found in the West Indies were especially undesirable products of disorder. Early reports indicated the presence of Cynocephali, dog-headed men – both monstrous and unnatural - and later reports described other semi-canine monsters, like the one described by Sebastian Münster, “a four footed beast of monstrous shape, whose former part is like unto a wolf, saving that the feete are lyke unto the fete of a man, with eares like an owle.” Colonists were also prepared to encounter the wild offspring of dogs that had bred with wolves. The untamed, wild offspring of dogs and wolves would signify that the Virginian land produced unnatural dogs that humans had failed to train properly, and failed to submit to meaningful work.

Curs: the only American Dogs

Any suspicions the colonists had about the low quality of dogs in America would have been confirmed upon arrival. There were two reasons for which a dog could be labeled a “cur” in the English language and culture: if it served no commendable purpose, or if it showed no breed specificity. As far as the English observed, the Virginian dogs


were curs on both fronts, they were not used for respectable ends, and they were not bred to create specific "sorts." The Natives did not attempt to improve the quality of their dogs through breeding, and therefore were not following God’s injunction to improve upon nature. Further, Thomas Hariot believed that the Native American people purposefully allowed their dogs to interbreed with wolves, which created the lowest form of dog, and reflected negatively on the Natives, portraying them as party to inversion of God’s intended order.

Native Uses

The English were culturally familiar with a variety of human/dog interactions, some they approved of, and some they merely tolerated. Of the many interactions the English approved of or considered acceptable, Americans only engaged in a few that the English were aware of, and those few were deficient in some way according to English culture. Hunting dogs, the most valued dogs in England, technically did not exist. Virginians only had fowling dogs, and those fowling dogs were neither a specific, respected breed nor were they used in the correct way. Americans either had no pets, or the pets they had served no purpose. As for working dogs, they had no shepherd dogs, and no guard dogs. Their only dogs were warning dogs, classified as curs, and these curs did not serve purposes that the English recognized as acceptable.

One of these unacceptable human/dog interactions was the use of dogs as foodstuffs. Reports from nearly all areas of America claimed that the natives considered

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165 Wynne, "...only the dogges which are here are a Certeyne kind of Curs..." Barbour, “Jamestown Voyages,” 246.
166 Although Native Americans did not believe in animal ownership in the same way as Europeans, the Europeans perceived that they owned the dogs that were with them. Thomas Hariot describes the canines he encounters as “wolves or wolvish dogges” in A Briefe and True Report, while John Smith says “their dogs are like their wolves.” Hariot, “A Briefe and True Report,” 20. Smith, “A Map of Virginia.”
dogs to be comestibles. One report collected by Richard Hakluyt states, “The lesser sort of dogges they feed fatte, and keepe them as domesticall cattell in their tents for their eating.”\textsuperscript{167} The acceptability of consuming dogs varies from culture to culture. Frederick J. Simoons argues that most cultures that reject the consumption of dogs do so because the animal is a natural scavenger, and is considered unclean.\textsuperscript{168} This seems to describe Fray Diego Durán’s opinion. Durán, a Dominican who wrote extensively about the religious and cultural history of the Aztecs, reported observing the natives eating dogs, and wrote about what he deemed the “unclean” act, apparently agitated because he felt there was some sort of pagan ritual associated with eating dogs. He wrote of the event, “I do not understand why this should be permitted, these people are now baptized Christians, therefore, why should we allow them to eat these unclean things which formerly were kept as offerings for gods and for sacrifice?”\textsuperscript{169} However unclean they may have been considered, the Spanish colonists in the West Indies frequently resorted to eating dogs, reportedly decimating the canine population of Hispaniola. But all the reports of Europeans eating dogs emphasize that the dogs were eaten out of desperation, due to a lack of available animals, claiming things such as: their “hunger was so great” that they “bought two dogs.”\textsuperscript{170}

The English colonists reported eating dogs, but likewise emphasized that it was only in times of starvation. English aversions to canine consumption may have been based on views of dogs as “unclean,” like Durán, or because consuming the meat of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Frederick J. Simoons, \textit{Eat Not This Flesh}, 2nd edition, revised and edited, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 251.
\item Álvar Núñez Cabeza De Vaca, \textit{The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca}, transl. Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 171.
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scavengers may “engender melancholy.”  

Ralph Lane claimed that two mastiffs had to be consumed due to lack of food. And reports of the Starving Time in Jamestown pointed to the eating of dogs as evidence of how poor living conditions were, which serves as further evidence that the English would not have understood the choice to consume dogs when other meat was available. Though not English, Frey Duran expressed confusion as to why Natives would choose to eat dog meat in times of plenty, writing

> Most of the produce... consisted of small – and medium-sized dogs of all types, and everyone in the land went to buy dogs there – as they do today.... One day I went to observe the market day there... I found more than 400 large and small dogs tied up in crates.... The buyers wanted [the dogs] for fiestas, weddings, and baptism. I was deeply distressed on seeing that in each village beef and mutton were being sold and that for a real one may buy more beef than [the meat] of two dogs.

Frey Duran proclaims himself ‘distressed’ by the choice. English readers certainly would have agreed, and would have assumed that a people who chose to eat dogs over cows or sheep belonged to a less civilized culture.

The other use of dogs that the Europeans had no cultural precedent for would have been the dead dogs used for silver smelting. “The Drake Manuscript” depicts canine corpses being burned as part of a process to refine silver. The dogs, along with “a stone called tuf,” are added to the silver after it is melted in order to remove the “bad quality of the silver.” This phenomenon was not encountered in Virginia, perhaps because there was no silver discovered in Virginia. However, these tales set the precedent that there were only a few ways dogs were put to use in the new world: as a refinery tool, as food, as

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172 Ralph Lane, "An account of the particularities of the employments of the English men left in Virginia by Sir Richard Grenville under the charge of Master Ralph Lane," (Virtual Jamestown Project, Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia, 2000).
beasts of burden, or as inadequate fowling partners. Only the latter two of these uses were acceptable human/dog interactions in England. Even the acceptable uses of dogs in America signified that Americans were a lower sort of people who, as far as the colonists could see, were squandering a valuable resource by not making the most of the canines in their land.

**Conclusion**

Richard Hakluyt, a man well acquainted with New World travel accounts from throughout the continent, and an important figure in the founding of the Virginia Company, clearly believed that English dogs would be integral to the survival of the colony, specifically for their ability to provide protection and to help obtain food in a way that American dogs could not. He seemed to believe that the only canines they would encounter in Virginia would be curs, pack animals, or monstrosities. In the advisement offered by Hakluyt in his *Treatise on Western Planting*, he recommends that the colonists should bring their own dogs to America for a few purposes: “Greyhoundes to kill deere, &c., Mastives to kill heavie beachestes of ravyne and for nighte watches., Bloude houndes to recover hurte dere.”

Based on his experiences and those of others, Hakluyt believed the English should come to North America with their own gentle hunting dogs and guard dogs, in order to protect and feed themselves.

The insistence on bringing English dogs to America can tell us a few things about English views of American dogs and people. For one, it meant that the English did not

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feel they could tame American dogs in a way that made them useful, or at least could not do so in a timely manner. It would take unknowable generations of breeding native dogs to achieve the specific traits and skills the English looked for in a useful dog. Rather than deal with the sub-par dogs, they felt it was necessary to bring their own dogs to Virginia. Before Jamestown was founded, Hakluyt saw a need for English dogs, and thirteen years after the founding of Jamestown, William Tracy felt he should be allowed to bring “10 or 12 dogs” to Virginia that “would be of gret youse to us.”

Not only would importing English dogs save colonists time and effort, it would give them certain superiority in hunting and military endeavors. Following this reasoning, the English brought their own dogs and never branched out to owning native dogs.

The study of the conventional understanding of canines in English culture, and the way canines were used to analyze and decipher observations of a newly encountered culture and people shows that there is great potential in studying how a substance or species that exists in two separate cultures, but functions differently in each, can be used as a point of translation between them. As has been demonstrated here, dogs held great import for the English in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Through an examination of their significance, we can unpack the meanings of Peter Wynne’s letter to Egerton, and gain insight into how dogs, as animals used to help people understand themselves and others in England, assisted colonists in positioning themselves socially and culturally relative to Native Americans.

176 “I would cari 10 or 12 dogs yt would be of gret youse to us. Let me know yf they will let us cari them.” William Tracy, “A Letter to John Smyth, July 5, 1620,” Records of the Virginia Company of London, (Virtual Jamestown Project, Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia, 2000).

177 The study “Vanishing Native American Dog Lineages” found nearly no traces of Native American canine DNA in modern American canine dog populations, and concluded that it was due to a combination of disease susceptibility and human (Native and European) preference for the newly arrived, larger European dogs. Santiago Castroviejo-Fisher, et al, “Vanishing Native American Dog Lineages,” in BMC evolutionary Biology 11 (2011): 73.
Knowing more about the symbolic meanings of dogs, we can better understand the explicit and implicit meaning of Wynne’s paragraph. His observation that there are no bloodhounds, and that all of their dogs are curs, “warners,” only useful to bark at people, conveys the idea that Americans keep no separate breeds, meaning that they do not know how to control dogs, or nature in general, and more significantly do not accept the biblical injunction to do so.\(^\text{178}\) His statement that the Americans only have cur dogs takes on new meaning as we realize that dogs were a reflection of their owners, and that curs were considered to be the lowest class of dogs, and an affront to orderly society. His observation that Americans keep warners dogs to hunt land fowls, although they “keep nothing tame about them,” reveals that the English had high standards for what constituted “tame,” and implies that the Virginian people were not properly using animals to benefit man, and were unable to submit animals to their mastery, which, in the context of English culture, put these people on the same level as animals.

When read in the context of the English understanding of dogs, this extract from Wynne’s letter transforms into an indictment of the lower civility of the American people, and a simultaneous endorsement of the colonial enterprise. By pointing out the available waterfowl that could be obtained through flawed fowling, he assures that the English would be able to find food and sport in America. By concluding that these people had no good sorts of dogs, he implies that Virginians were a lower sort of people, which emphasizes the need for Europeans to bring civility and intelligence to the Virginians. Wynne’s emphasis on their lack of tame animals invites intervention on religious terms.

\(^\text{178}\) Warners can be distinguished from guard dogs, who not only barked at strangers, but would intimidate or attack them as needed. Warners, as described by Caius, were not useful for defense, and only served to “intertain strangers with their barking in the day time, givin warning to them of the house, that such & such be newly come…” Caius, *Of Englishe Dogges*, 34.
by showing that the Europeans would be doing God’s work if they were to arrive in Virginia and teach Americans how to properly tame nature and put it to good use.

The path the colonists took to having faith in their dogs alone was created by filtering the few reports and observations of native dogs and human/dog relationships through their English understanding of dogs, human/dog relationships, and the symbolism each held. But the purpose of this thesis is not simply to point out that the English were very proud of English dogs, unimpressed by the native dogs, and disapproving of the way the natives interacted with dogs. My argument is that the European judgment that found native dogs wanting legitimized Virginian colonists’ belief that the land needed to be tamed, the people improved upon, and the culture refined. For generations, English people bred dogs to accompany and assist them in the wide variety of activities each level of society engaged in, from work to leisure to idleness; in doing so, they unintentionally created a system that allowed them to look at a foreign culture in a way that made sense to them, even if that system only served to affirm their sense of superiority.
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