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“Riding up forested mountain sides, in wide open spaces, and with walls”: developing an ecology of horse-human relationships

Introduction: Setting the Scene. Human-animal relations have recently become revitalized as topics of interest among social scientists. Variouslly called anthrozoology (Herzog 17), multi-species ethnography (Haraway, *Species Meet 1, Companion 3-10*; Hamilton and Placas 253), anthropo-zoo-genesis (Despret 113), and multispecism (Wolfe 1), these approaches, along with posthumanism (Wolfe xxiv), emphasize innovative ways to bring non-human animals into the realm of cultural analysis. They share a critical approach to what they characterize as traditional, western notions of a nature-culture divide, and seek new ways to grapple with the complex kinds of relationships that humans form with nonhuman animals (Ingold, *Humanity 14,15*), or as Pálsson states, “new ways of seeing things mixing” (*Biosociality 290*). These attempts to grapple may be expressed in more general, macro terms of species meeting as forms of co-being, being with, contact zones, or areas of entanglements among humans and other species (Haraway, *Species Meet 301*; Ingold, *Humanity 23*) where “crossing species boundaries does not threaten identity but defines it” (Pálsson, *Biosociality 306*).

Relations between individual members of two species overwhelmingly feature rather generic expressions of relationships between humans and their domestic pets, mainly cats or dogs (Herzog, King, Schaffer). An exception here would be Haraway’s highly personal and detailed depiction of her relationship with her agility sport dog, Cayenne Pepper (*Species Meet 205*). Yet, horses both as a species and as particular individuals have captured the imagination of a number of social scientists. A number of studies feature rider and horse as a pair and describe the roles of embodiment and bonding in developing a sense of partnership between horse and rider that challenge hegemonic dualisms of horse as nature and human as culture (Game, Hook, Wipper). Others grappling with a nature culture divide feature styles of relating to or more grounded (literally) interactions with horses, such as a gendered mutual corporeality (Birke and Brandt 189), embodied intersubjectivity (Brandt 299, 300), and the comparison of new American styles of natural horsemanship to British traditional horsey worlds (Latimer and Birke 21, 22). Casting a much broader net, other equine studies have related horse-human relationships to more far ranging cultural and environmental contexts, such as

the development of horse cultures on the American Great Plains (Wissler) or in Indo-European cultures (Anthony) or ecological and land management issues raised by wild mustangs in the American west (Dalke). Less attention is paid to potential roles that the local physical environment or terrain where riding takes place can play in the development of particular horse-human relationships. Rose refers to the ownership of contiguous properties among wealthy fox hunting enthusiasts in Pennsylvania, and Helmer provides us with insights into the backstage cultural geography of backstretch culture at a harness racetrack. Perhaps the author who features landscape the most in her cultural analysis of a horse culture is Lawrence, whose book on rodeos analyzes the importance of landscape in the development of ethos in the cowboy horse culture in the American west.

On a more micro level, among analyses that focus on individuals of different species meeting, or focus on specific interspecies pairs, terms like deep engagement and forms of we (Haraway, *Species Meet* 11), partnerships, shared personhood (Fuentes 125), significant others or otherness (Haraway, *Companion* 16), sensations of closeness (Smuts 108), and companion species come into play. Two viewpoints emerge as central to the presentation of data and analysis that follows. First, as Hayward, an advocate of multispecies ethnography notes, animals should be viewed as acting on us in “surprising and nuanced ways” rather than just as passive reflections of human intentions (584). And second, as Tallbear (2), also a proponent of multispecies ethnography, states, any anthropological approach to studying the social relations between human and non-human animals must take into account their location within their physical and social habitats. This account of horse and rider pairs who participate in well-established but differing equestrian sports pays special attention to “contact zones” by viewing non-human animals (horses) as acting not “on” but with us (as humans) across a variety of physical habitats, specified as terrains ridden upon and social habitats expressed as shared horse rider sport cultures and identities. Not only do attributes of horse and rider construct each other; landscapes ridden also have a kind of engagement or encounter value generated in mutual adaptation (c.f. Pálsson, *Biosociality* 301, who does not speak of horses), in that they play active thematic roles in shaping paired identities.

Theory and Method: Communalism and Biosociality. Working over thirty years ago, Lawrence, in her excellent book *Rodeo: An Anthropologist Looks at the Wild and the Tame*

grappled with American hegemonic dualisms concerning humanity's place in nature. The dilemma for Lawrence was that while her ethnographically thick data showed that cowboys, in relation to various types of rodeo animals — most particularly horses — both reified and transgressed dualisms of wild/tame, nature/culture, mutuality/control, and free/not free, there was little theoretically that enabled her to deal with these transgressions. More recent approaches, like Pálsson's 1996 paradigm of communalism (*Communalism* 72-76) for the study of human-environment relations—which in its 2009 guise becomes "biosociality" (*Biosociality* 289) — dismisses dualism by rejecting radical separations of nature and society, and object and subject.¹ These approaches share a number of features that guide the present study of entanglements between humans and their horses. First, Pálsson's (*Communalism* 68, 69,73; *Biosociality* 203) view of humans as being at an interface with or in nature invokes notions of contingency, reciprocity, and exchange, and draws on a language or dialogues of personhood and close personal relationships. Second, humans (and, we would add, their horses) are seen as engaged in situated practical acts and actions within the wider communities to which they belong. This means that tacit everyday knowledge and direct engagement with everyday tasks trumps abstract separations of body and mind. The proper unit of analysis is no longer the autonomous individual separated from the social world by the surface of the body. Rather, the importance of empathy, connectedness, and trust is stressed. Third, communalism and biosociality dismiss dualism. Both approaches call for complicated and contextualized forms of thick description and the avoidance of simplistic or rigid classificatory schema (Pálsson, *Biosociality*; see also Fuentes). Fourth, biosociality invites the invention of new distinctions, where dualisms can take different forms that do not carry the main connotations associated with nature-culture discourse. Communalism and biosociality, thus, decenter analysis by calling for new classificatory schema that may involve a reshuffling of nature and society (Pálsson *Communalism* 72; *Biosociality* 391).²

When we began this study our intention was to examine horse-human relationships as points of entanglements, most particularly forms of bond or bonding in a variety of environmental settings and equestrian sports. What we did not anticipate was the degree to which discourse on environment, as terrain traversed by horse and rider together, would be used to construct a shared sense of identity between horse and rider. This takes the form of self and other that serves to pair horse and rider in a shared sense of personhood and uses open and closed spaces and terrains ridden as a marker in the self and significant othering (c.f Haraway, *Companion* 129) of horse-human pairs in different equestrian sports, in ways that both decenter and reshuffle interrelations among human, horse, and environment. With Pálsson's four features in mind, our goal

is to move beyond general statements about horse-human relations to identify and elucidate the various permutations and combinations that horse, human, environment; horse-human environment; and human, horse-environment may take, as is illustrated in narratives of practice in a selected sampling of equestrian sports, which feature and give importance to different “grounds” to be covered.

This article constitutes an analysis of narrative data collected in sixty open-ended interviews³ with US Midwestern and north Norwegian horse people who participate in different equestrian sports and ride within a variety of local settings. This approach serves not only to decenter analysis, challenge, deconstruct, and reconstruct boundaries between nature/culture, horse/human, and self /other. A grounded, practice-theory approach also focuses on privileging our informants’ own words, experiences, and understandings, even if they elude more standard forms of categorization or dominant discourses (Wardlow 5). Our open-ended interviews generate narratives that reveal what Naomi Quinn (2), a cognitive anthropologist, calls “culture in talk” — as Quinn states, “Discourse is duplex; it both enacts and produces culture.” In this study we focus our attention on different cultures of horsemanship (Patton 87, Wipper 49, 50) among dressage riders, eventers, endurance riders in the Midwest United States, and Icelandic gaited horse riders in north Norway. Although we are primarily concerned with terrains ridden and how they affect horse and human personhoods, we are sensitive to the fact that we also elicit national differences. We are all accomplished equestrians⁴ and have collected our data at a variety of venues, including local barns and riding facilities, competition events and clinics, and riding clubs. We have all used our common-interest, friendship groups to recruit participants for this study.

Identity, Co-agency, and Terrain. We start with a sense of personal identity and interactive agency with their horses that was expressed in the all the narratives of our rider-informants. But within these narrative domains of agreement or overlap, in everyday practice signifying differences emerge. While by far the most distinguishing feature of the horse-rider experience was whether one rode (in circles) within the confines of walls, or a fenced arena, or in the great outdoors, the types or features of terrain and actual spaces involved also emerged as crucial to identity-making within different equestrian sport cultures in the narratives of informants. Moreover, some terrains ridden receive minimal alteration for the sport and remain “natural,” while

others are civilly engineered or “cultured” at great expense, or kept in shape (literally) with a fine-tooth comb.

All of the riders in this study share three common features of relationship and ecology. The first is a sense of identity, in that association with horses, whether life-long or a relatively recent, shapes a sense of self or personal identity for the rider (Davis and Davis, Lawrence). Second, a sense of shared identity with the horse, as well as interactive agency or partnership, also comes through in all the narratives (Argent 159). Third, in each case environment or ecology is referred to more in terms of situated practical acts, as in terrain covered or the ground beneath a horse’s feet, rather than abstracted visions of getting to scenic vistas. Each of these is considered briefly in turn.

As we will see, identity construction in equestrian sports can take a series of different and differentiating turns. Yet when it comes to the “who am I” questions of construction of self (Neisser 3,4), informants state that riding, or the association with horses, is a defining feature of their selves. For some it is a simple statement of identity. Sky relates, “I’m not much of a people person. I like animals better.” Hester, an eventer, states, “Riding is a very important part of my identity of who I am.” Similarly, Judy, an eventer turned dressage rider, says, [Riding] “is the person I am. If somebody says ‘what do you do?’ I say ‘I ride horses.’ You ask someone else and they say ‘I’m a doctor or an accountant;’ I never said that I did anything but ride horses. That’s what I do.” According to Xena, a dressage rider, “Horses are who I am. They become such a part of you they make you who you are.” Black Bear, an endurance rider, is more explicit about the making of self. “My daughter Kate is who she is today because of her relationship with horses. It made her a young woman who is not afraid of anything, is willing to take on any challenge and simply refuses to be told something can’t be done.” Tee, another endurance rider, humorously says, “We board horses so my life is poop.” If Black Bear’s statement sounds quintessentially, egocentrically US/American (Lindholm 393), the Norwegians are less inclined to be self-revelatory. Ola, for example, in the sample, remarks, “Since childhood the horse has been stuck to my skull.” These statements of self show how (cf. Pálsson, *Communalism* 72; Biosociality 391) the language and positioning of personhood and identity becomes integrated into human-horse nexus.

Haraway (*Species Meet* 11) refers to multispecies ethnography as an exploration of new forms of being “we.” Argent (159) states that a horse is not just an object of study but a co-agent in creation of culture and identity. Despret (111) refers to anthropo-zoo-genesis as two forms of interspecies body-to-body attunement. Birke and Brandt (188), Hook

(18), Brandt (299), and Game (1) refer to the practice of riding, using terms like intercorporeality, embodiment, interactionist communication, and embodying the Centaur to bridge the horse-human boundaries. Patton (88) refers to dialogue and negotiation between horse and rider (trainer). Speaking specifically of a prominent eventer and her horse, Wipper (62, 63) refers to a partnership as a potentially fragile combination of compatibility, mutual respect, trust, confidence, and close communication between horse and rider that sometimes needs to be rebuilt.

These kinds of references also flow through all the narratives evoking notions of contingency, reciprocity, and exchange. Empathy, connectedness, and trust, rather than autonomy, become stressed (c.f. Pálsson *Communalism* 77; *Biosociality* 296). Bodies of horse and rider merge or connect. Lynn and Morgan are both dressage riders. According to Lynn, riding “is a kind of mutual and natural (w/horse) multi-tasking. You focus in with two bodies.” And Morgan: “It’s amazing when you and your horse can work together without a species barrier.” As he became more experienced, Ola admits that “at first it was just riding sputtering around the forest on a horse. It was fun but later it becomes more interplay (between horse and rider).” Trust is also an issue. Judy has this to say about riding the cross-country phase of eventing: “On the cross-country, to do it, you just have to trust him and he has to trust you. You both have to have the mindset that you’re going for the next fence, whatever it is. One of you doubts or hesitates, it’s all over.”

Co-agency as expressed by Sky and Fefe becomes more explicit when discussing the terrain or environment. The narratives from Sky, Fefe, and Chisum demonstrate (cf. Pálsson *Communalism* 72; *Biosociality* 289) challenges to rigid classifications or boundaries between nature as horse and environment, on the one hand, and culture as the rider on the other. Sky becomes tearful as she says,

In endurance you and the horse are doing it together and it’s natural. In endurance you’re a team ... You do it for a sense of accomplishment, against yourself, against the trail and with the horse. It’s about the bond ... I think we have a telepathic connection (he knows what way I want him to go); if you don’t have that you need another horse.

Fefe, a Norwegian, speaks of how he and his horse navigate the terrain:

I ride to get out in nature in a very different way. There are strong legs that can carry me on the back. I can walk terrain that I do not usually encounter. I can walk in the forest, mountain, paths, jump over ditches, walk around lakes, move farther than I can walk in a much shorter time. My horse and I, we both enjoy it being out in the forest with nature to see to observe and to listen, we do that together.

On a more psychic level Chisum relates how “horse people develop a kind of ‘sixth sense’ while learning and feeling what the horse is experiencing.” He goes on to say that humans could benefit from this type of interaction themselves.⁵ Within their discourse, these riders tacitly reinvent or recreate their own dualisms when it comes to macro, basic level distinctions that are drawn between two types of riding environments, having the net effect of joining horse and rider as defined by the kinds of grounds or terrain (environment) they move over together.

Walls: Nesting Equestrian and Equine Ecologies. Although it was not asked for or anticipated in any of the discussion format questions, the predominant theme that distinguished types of riding environment was the mention of arena riding, most commonly and derogatorily referred to as “riding with walls,” contrasted with riding “in nature” as a less confined or unconfined setting. Felix, an endurance rider, bluntly states, “We don’t ride indoors.” Others, like Norwegians Aurora and Henrietta, learned to ride indoors as preparation for going out. Henrietta says that she needed to learn “in the arena so I can ride outside of it. For example, in the woods there are all these trees and I am hysterical about having my knees bang into trees. It surely helps knowing how to steer the horse. It’s more fun spending time in the woods.” Aurora expresses a similar notion: “I learned to ride in a ring and then got outside. At first it was inside walls around, around and around in the riding hall. That did not give the same joy as being allowed to ride the path through the forest, to get out in nature. I never was a skier. I preferred to be carried up the mountain top.” Ola, who conducts tours for an international clientele, says that, “we have people who have been riding 20 years and they have never saddled a horse, or ridden outdoors. They have been riding in a riding hall. We ride out here. There is a slope down to the sea. They can barely sit in the saddle.” Sky and T, endurance riders, compare endurance terrain, which they see as natural, with the unnatural terrain of other horse sports. Sky says, “If you’re going around the show ring it’s repetitive for the horse, whereas on the endurance trail you are always seeing something new...if it’s the same trail you’re riding out there is always something new, and it’s totally like I say, natural.” According to T, in “the arena you

trust the arena to hold you in. Hunter-jumpers ride in a very controlled environment in the arena.” Rigmor refers to the complications of riding in arenas with lots of other horses. Dressage riders, however, are the prototypical and unapologetic arena rider. Yet even for them the arena as terrain to be ridden, though largely unstated unless asked specifically about it, is extremely important.

Narratives also show that horses and their humans are engaged in practical situated actions within wider communities in which they belong and with which they are identified or identify (cf. Pálsson *Communalism* 64; *Biosociality* 290). As Sky and T’s comments illustrate, riders have an elaborate sense of how the navigation of different terrains relates to different cultures in different equestrian sports. In fact, Susanna states that, “different sports have different cultures.” Although others have tackled cultural differences among horse sports,⁶ Wipper (50) and Patton (92, 93) both do comment on how these fail to deal with horse-human relationships; however, terrain as a major component of enacting horse cultures, and of creating new categories of self and other, receives no mention at all. Once we move beyond riding, with or without walls, we can also see how “fields of action” literally and figuratively become domains revealed in the narratives that link terrain to a shared experiential psyche of the horse-human pair. For example, Ajay, now a dressage rider, states that, “eventers live on the edge, but they are looser, freer and more laid back (any horse will do). Dressage riders want the perfect 20-meter circle. Endurance riders go for the fun. It’s not so much about results.” Ajay, like many of the other informants in this study, has participated in multiple equestrian sports. These include dressage, saddle seat, endurance, and trail riding. We now turn to elaborate on these differences with special attention of the roles of terrain in shaping the entanglements and histories of horse-rider pairs.

Horses & Terrains Traversed. Terrain emerges as an important element in the entanglements of nature-culture, horse-human relations and paired horse-human identities, mentioned in the narrative that goes well beyond the set piece of ‘walls’. Examination of narrative data shows that different equestrian sport activities and cultures find distinguishing expressions in talk. Each sport has its own characterization or classificatory schema of how terrain — whether artificially engineered as in dressage and eventing or natural as in endurance and Icelandic horse riding — affects the horse-rider pair and the riding experience.

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Tropes or schemas of identity, shared personhood or “we” (both as horse-human pair and sport culture) as they relate to terrain covered, are presented within each of the following sections. We start with dressage riders, who ride on the most constructed terrain and move through eventers to endurance, to gaited riders who engage terrain at more and more “natural” levels. By describing how the practitioners of different equestrian sports represent themselves, their horses, and the terrain they traverse through discourse, we aim to present a more complicated and contextualized (c.f., Fuentes 128) or nuanced (cf., Hayward 584) view of the areas of entanglements (c.f., Haraway, *Species Meet* 301) or reshufflings (c.f., Pálsson, *Biosociality* 290) among humans, horses and the environment.

Dressage — Arenas and Deep Thinkers. Technically, the French term dressage means training of the horse. The Australian dressage trainer and philosopher, Paul Patton (86), describes dressage as a sophisticated kind of language where the rider and horse communicate through subtle (to the point of invisible to the observer) movements and gestures. It is an ongoing conversation that relies on the horse’s extremely fine sense of touch.

Dressage riders, more than in any of the other sports mentioned, ride in arenas or with walls in an engineered or constructed environment. Dressage riders are especially concerned with “the footing,” or quality of ground underneath their horse’s hooves. A decent dressage arena will cost between 8 and 20 thousand dollars to make. Arenas must be level, and there are exact standards for expensive and artificial footing. There are three layers of material used, and the arena should be dragged and watered every day. If it is not up to acceptable standards, riders will refuse to ask their horses to work on it. Particularly at the upper levels, a horse may be injured if he places his foot, during a complex movement like *piaffe*, on uneven soil. The arena itself is circumscribed in letters that mark specific points in the performance space. Complex tests must be memorized outlining specific patterns to be ridden that will utilize all the ground space of the arena. A sense of micro-management defines the sport, and riders must be familiar with all points in the arena marked by these letters. Circles are required to be round and exact, as specified by meters, gait transitions or movements must take place at specific letters or between them. Dressage riders consider themselves and their horses to be highly schooled. It takes long periods of intense and highly structured training to produce a dressage horse and rider.

The self-identified dressage riders of this study are largely at the lower levels of the sport, even though some have been riding for many years. Still their comments

exemplify key elements of their sport's culture in terms of how they characterize the horse rider relationship as cerebral and the "environment" as being in the "zone."

Missy makes the following observation on mutual concentration of horse and rider with an example of their experience at a recent show.

It was a hot and humid day. When my turn came I was ready to enter the ring. Horse and I started our test. We came down the center line and were entirely in the zone. It was going to be a good ride. As we came to a halt to salute the judge, I noticed the judge was waving her hand and all the other people were waving their hands too. I kept riding and people started yelling "Stop!" A sudden storm had started and there was lightning all around us. I hadn't noticed any of it.

Morgan, who refuses to take her horse out on the trail because he is so unpredictable outside the arena, refers to an interior or mental "aha moment" when riding her dressage horse. This defines the zone or contact zone. "I like the times when I have 'aha moments,' when my horse and I figure out something together. It's amazing when you and your horse can work together without a species barrier between you." Morgan actually describes one of her horses as pedantic, and she means it in a positive sense. She describes herself in this manner.

I approach riding the same way I approach everything else. I'm very curious. I want to understand. Not just technically but philosophically and theoretically what I'm doing. To make it more intellectually challenging and fun for me I have to say "what is this horse thinking? What does this horse think about what we are doing to him?" I do a lot of visualizing when I ride.

Lynn also refers to the focus and intensity of dressage riding that she seeks, as compared with what she describes as the sociability of riding on the trail.

I like the intensity — that focus factor — that thinking where I have to put her haunches, what foot is striking and is she bearing her weight correctly? Am I shifting my weight correctly? I like that feeling of being

focused on what I'm doing — as opposed to eventing where you have to trust the horse to do it. Even when I was little, I didn't want to trail ride. I wanted to learn technique.

Lynn goes on to say that she is drawn more to the horse's brain than anything else (such as its breed or physicality).

The horse-rider relationship in dressage is the most interior or cerebral in equestrian sport; given a predictable environment the horse and rider will perform together. Patton refers to dressage as a "sophisticated language" or "ongoing conversation between horse and rider" (86), where the horse and the horse's performance answer the rider's questions. Dressage relies on the horse's "extremely fine sense of touch" and the rider's sensitivity to his or her own body. Missy speaks of this in terms of being in the zone, establishing a sense of mutual purpose between herself and her horse, where the outside world, as a given, can be ignored. Morgan describes her dressage rides with her horse as mindful activities. She is a philosopher in the saddle, thinking with and through her horse. Intensity, focus, touch, technique, and micromanagement, similarly, find mention in Lynn's narrative.

Mutual focus, intensity, attunement, interiority, and micromanagement emerge as words that dominate dressage-speak about the horse-human relationship among dressage riders. There is a kind of bounded interiority to the sport. Horse and rider interacting and moving together are the environment. The physical world outside the pair demands attention, because where you are and where you are going in the arena counts. To say that the terrain or ground is unimportant misses the fact that it is supposed to be well groomed to exacting standards, in order for the horse and rider to focus attention on the task at hand. Within a predictable and clearly marked arena, horse and rider can concentrate on each other and not be distracted by whatever goes on in the immediate environment outside of the arena.

Although it is supposed to be good for the dressage horse to have days off in the guise of trail riding, unlike the endurance, eventing, and Icelandic horses, they are not expected to traverse demanding terrain. These horses are highly bred and very expensive. Riders do not want to risk injury.⁷

Eventing: A Pair of Adrenaline Junkies. Like dressage, eventing calls for more technically engineered environments. While eventing goes from beginner, novice levels all the way to the Olympic level, the Midwestern U.S. informants from this study, like

the dressage riders, are at the lower levels of the sport but are already socialized into its major tropes. Events include a fairly low-level dressage test and a stadium or open jumping segment. Fence heights are modest, but even in the stadium part of the competition the terrain is not necessarily even. It is, however, the cross-country section that defines the sport and its human-horse practitioners.

The cross-country segment of the event is considered the major challenge for eventing. Cross-country courses are set out to cover a predetermined distance and involve a variety of fences and elements that present different challenges. Topography makes the sport. Some eventing courses are situated on a varied natural landscape that includes hills, woods, and natural streams or water. But within this natural landscape event courses are peppered with jumps, including challenging elements⁸ such as water, drops, and various kinds of ditches. Colorful, solid jumps come in combinations or elements that test the athletic ability and courage of horse and rider. Eventing is considered an equalizing sport. It does not take an expensive horse to do it. Riders wear safety vests and helmets. Eventing, like rodeo bronco riding, is considered to be a dangerous sport, because the jumps are solid and the pace is fast over uneven ground. Events take place in all kinds of weather (except winter snow and thunder storms), but the ground and water elements (in particular) are very expensively engineered for safety of footing. Various types of spikes or cleats are set into the horse's shoes, depending on ground conditions.

The event riders in Dona's sample of event riders self-stereotype themselves and their horses as adrenaline junkies. For example, Judy refers to a time in her life when she rode and showed Appaloosas as "riding in circles." Eventually she came to eventing. Here is how she describes it. (Note that in the last exchange Judy collapses herself and her horse into "I.")

Judy: I got tired of going around in circles. I have a friend who owns a horse and she's the same as she was 35 years ago. She's never done anything or gone anywhere. She just likes to ride down the road. I just know if I was going to just ride down the road I wouldn't ride anymore. Unless it could be trail riding in beautiful places and camping out, then maybe I could do that.

Dona: What about the environment? You talk about riding in circles. Eventing involves landscapes, varied terrain and stuff; does that affect your enjoyment of it or strategy for it?

Judy: For walk, trot or canter, there's no adrenalin flow. There's a huge rush after you've completed a cross-country course—especially in a competition. Put me in a go box at an event and say go; I'm going. I'm not refusing. I'm not stopping. And the adrenalin rush when you cross the finish line is unlike anything you've ever felt. It's almost like a drug; and it's so much fun. It's not how high did I jump; it's that I got around the course.

Xena and Hester share Judy's sentiments. Xena states, "eventers are the crazy people who want an adrenalin rush and are going to bust their butts no matter what happens to them. They get on and go. They are going to fall off on the cross country course, break a rib, get back on and keep going for the adrenalin rush—that high." To Hester,

Riding is a rush, but when you're on top and you shift your weight or point him to jump over some gigantic brightly-painted carving of a beaver and he does it the two of you become embodied and it's not just the imagination. You have become the centaur. You have become part of him [the horse]. It's not projection. It's happening because you work together and it's really cool. It's a rush. It's a rush even if you've been doing it all your life. It's a rush to do so little and to get so much in return.

Wipper describes eventing, at its advanced levels, as the most grueling test of all-around horsemanship of any equestrian sport. (Endurance riders may well disagree.) Although competing at lower levels Judy, Hester, and Xena would agree. In her article on partnerships formed with accomplished event riders and their event horses, Wipper states that riders do not want an automaton (a subtextual reference to dressage horses) for a partner but a free striding and happy horse with whom he or she can communicate (54). Like Judy and Hester, a key theme Wipper notes is that an eventer's horse and rider must be confident together. The rider navigates the terrain. She chooses the course to be jumped, regulates gait, speed, and direction, but depends on the horse to jump the obstacles. The horse must be brave and want to jump them cleanly. Trust or trusting your horse to do his job and face the challenges of the course is also a theme expressed by our sample of event riders.

Eventers are supposed to be able to event in all kinds of weather except lightning and snow. A great deal of attention is paid to the safety of the footing or ground the horse and rider traverse; for example, high level competition courses include drainage systems that work for the entire course. Jumps that involve water have exacting standards that must be met in terms of footing, since safe grounding works to maintain a horse's (and rider's) confidence. Conditioning is certainly important with the eventing horse, but confidence, trust, and adrenalin are the central themes that emerge in their discourse. Judy recounts that on the cross-country course she concentrates so much on the moments and the flow of the ride, that she actually has little memory of the ride itself once she has finished. When horse and human are traversing a terrain situated or engineered to challenge the sensorium, physicality, and stimulus-response skills of both horse and rider, the pair becomes merged in a fast paced mutual effort in which one becomes lost in the other in a kind of mutual adrenaline rush.

Adrenaline rushes and confidence are also important themes that emerge in the discourse of endurance riders, but notions of conditioning, a respect for and appreciation of nature, along with a sense of rugged individualism predominate in their narratives.

Endurance: Conserving Energy and Logging Miles Together. Endurance is a competitive sport that involves long-distance riding over diverse and difficult terrain. Endurance riders emphasize the naturalness of the sport for their horses. Being in partnership with horses is an essential part of the endurance experience, but so is "being in the environment." Endurance riders train and condition their horses to navigate challenging and sometimes dangerous terrain. Endurance riders and their horses are expected to be strong and stoical to endure and log many miles together. While daily conditioning may be done from home, endurance riders travel widely for competitions, where they ride on mapped-out courses, or over preset trails of varying lengths. Arabians, noted particularly for their stamina, are the preferred breed of horse for the sport, but a wide variety of horses participates.

Endurance rides are conducted in the natural landscape (with permission from land owners), with relatively little manipulation or change of the landscape except for mapping and marking the trails and clearing dangerous spots (for example, trimming branches, and monitoring wet places like bogs) on the day of the race. Endurance riders

expect competition venues to include a range of topographical features, including rivers to cross, steep inclines to climb, rocky ground to navigate, as well as expanses of prairie and forests. Riders travel point to point or in sets of predetermined loops. At set points on the ride horses are evaluated by a vet and held for a determined amount of time before being allowed to continue the race. Condition and conditioning emerge as important themes in the narratives of endurance riders, as do miles ridden. Twenty-five to 35 mile rides are called limited distance, and 50-100 mile competitions are considered to be true endurance rides. Gaits and speed of gait are up to horse and rider to determine, as are strategies for riding diverse terrain, but the first to finish wins.

Hot Shoe Sue aptly sums up endurance riding for Sarah:

Endurance riders ... it's not a sport for whiners. There is congeniality on the trail. The horse is trained as an athlete that does lots of miles. It's not a public sport. It's people who want to see the country and you don't need to dress up or mind being wet or tired. It's finishing, not winning. It's the guts and glory of riding over terrain that is not in the best of conditions. It's a survival sport, not a beauty pageant. It's not so much an issue of skill as it is you and the horse versus the trail and it all comes down to how you manage your horse and what kind of animal he is.

Unlike competition events in dressage and eventing, where “the ride” takes minutes, endurance rides last for long periods of time. For example, the Tevis Cup in the Sierra Nevada Mountains is a length of 100 miles that must be completed within 24 hours. Harriet says, “I did my first 25 at nine, my first 50 at ten and my first 100 at thirteen.” Similarly, Black Bear states, “I train for longevity, not the first 500 miles but the thousands of miles they will do over their lifetime.” Hot Shoe Sue proudly relates that, “my horse is coming up on 7,000 miles. I raised him since he was four—now he is 15.”

Other themes also emerge in the narratives. Felix talks about miles ridden like other endurance riders, but he also how miles and time in the saddle enhance rider-horse communication — or getting to know one's horse. “I've ridden 25,000 miles in the last 20 years. You ride a horse 1000 miles and all of a sudden you start learning what an ear flick means on this horse. When we ride we go 4 or 5 hours and think nothing of it. Few people do that and very few horses can.” Lee refers to goals and the sense of accomplishment that comes with endurance riding. “You set your own goals and they can change depending on what you are doing. It can be getting in the top 10, conditioning the horse or gathering the mileage.” T likes the sense of accomplishment

when you're done. Sky is a bit more explicit as she characterizes endurance riding as a "grass roots" activity that one does for a sense of accomplishment against oneself and against the trail, as well as to form a bond with one's horse. Energy, stamina, and toughness are prized qualities of the horse and rider. Sky says, "I had a horse that was hyper, extremely high energy. I had to ride her and ride her. Somebody joked; you should go on an endurance ride." Black Bear says "I had this horse who was dangerous on the ground but he was the toughest creature I have ever known in my life. He was built of steel. He died just 3 miles short of 4,000 miles." Likewise for Harriet, "I did the Tevis — it took 24 hours. It was scary as heck. I threw up. I was miserable but I did it." Hot Shoe Sue states, "this is not a sport to dress up for; you don't mind being dirty and you don't mind being tired."

Endurance riders prize their sport, speaking of it as a natural activity that takes place in a natural environment and is enjoyed by both horse and rider. According to Hot Shoe Sue, "if a horse likes to go forward they will do this. Most of the horses that do this are successful and enjoying what they do and they'd rather do it than stand around in a stall and go into an arena for an hour or two a day." Sky says,

I like endurance because you're out in a natural area and you're doing what comes natural to the horse — not forcing them to do something that's not natural like reining or jumping. This is something they like to do. You have a connection with the horse and that is probably the main reason. On the endurance trail you are always seeing something new—in the show ring it's repetitive, you see nothing new.

Similarly, Harriet says, "Endurance riders do it for the love of seeing the country, the love of a good horse, and having a horse that will last a long time." Daisy Mae also raises a theme we see among the Norwegians, when she says that with "riding you get to see so many places you can't get to on foot."

Endurance riders, like Hot Shoe Sue, Felix, and Sky speak of miles logged, stoicism, and energy. Conditioning of the horse is central in all the narratives. They also position endurance as the most natural of equestrian sports for the horse. Terrain is varied and can be quite dramatic and involves creeks, hills, forests and occasionally concrete. The course must have access to water. Although races are held in extremes of weather, and

although racing across the Saudi Arabian desert characterizes the epitome of the sport, endurance races are not conducted in ice and heavy snow. In a number of ways endurance riders repeat themes used by Lawrence to describe the American cowboy. The difference is that while the cowboy tames the wild horse to conquer nature, the endurance riders and their horses conquer or tame nature as a partnered pair. In the narratives of endurance riders like Hot Shoe Sue, although nature (literally and figuratively as something to be traversed) is appreciated, it is horse and human who together master or conquer it. The horse and rider relationship of endurance events evoke themes of rugged individualism (being out alone, facing challenges and enduring adversity), heroic stoicism, silent suffering, hard work, and the ability to function in a risky environment. They portray themselves as rugged and durable, values they hold to be quintessentially American. Yet many of these views characterize the North Norwegians and their narratives of the Icelandic horse.

Icelandic Gaited: A Versatile Horse and a Varied Landscape. Terrain is important among the Norwegian Icelandic horse enthusiasts, where one's immediate, natural environment offers a variety of terrains. Although native to Iceland, the Icelandic horse is in a sense pan-Nordically adapted. Icelandic horses are used in competitions that are about showing gaits. The dream of any Icelandic horse rider would be to have an oval track arena meeting international standards for gaited riding competitions. It is in the flat arena that the gaits are shown. The riders in this study, however, have no access to a competition arena, so training for gaited riding must take place in other venues. Smaller arenas are artificially made, but nature is also used. Bushes are circled around to train flexibility, and hills are ridden up and down to strengthen the hindquarters of the horse. Flexibility and strength enables the highly prized rhythm, cadence, speed, and action in all gaits — especially pace and *tölt*.⁹ The horses are also ridden, in all kinds of weather, on tour in the mountains. Physical terrain for riding in arctic coastal Norway consists of sea and mountains divided by small narrow strips of land and forest. Since there is no timber production and the forest is made of small trees, there are very few dirt roads on the terrain. Riders make their own paths, using the area close to where they keep their horses on a daily basis. In addition, riders use the terrain to tour, since Norwegians believe that their horses need to relax from training in nature much as their riders do. Unlike the case of endurance riders who do not race (but may train) in the Midwestern U.S. winter months, gaited riders ride all year round. Snow closes off the forest paths for most of the winter (December-May), but people still ride on roads in snow-plowed areas. Horses' hair is allowed to grow, and they are not covered with blankets but, in the arctic dark time, they are lit with reflectors when riding. Riders also use head lights on their helmets, as well as warm and water resistant clothes. As

Norwegians say “there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes.” On her first ride on a Icelandic horse, Dona was told the horse was naturally hardy, did not need to be conditioned to go up and down hills all day, and was the epitome of sure footed – dependable on any terrain and in any kind of weather. *Tölt* as a gait unique to the breed, is non-jarring and makes Icelandic horses a very comfortable ride.

In coastal Troms (where Anita conducts interviews), one does not have to travel to varied terrains or to engineer them. They are dramatically there for everyone. Standing on almost any road, farm, café, or stable the visual image is varied—lots of sea, a small narrow strip of farmed land, a small strip of forest, trees growing up to about 100-200 meters above sea level, and mountains often covered with snow all year round. The highest mountains range around 1,000 meters. Forests are mainly populated with birch and other minor brushes, natural to the region, as well as introduced pine. Most Icelandic horses are kept between sea and road or road and forest; riding occurs over small hills. Terrain like uneven or soft forest bottoms and rocky seashores are not good for *tölt*. Marshlands can be dangerous; some are crossable and some will sink you. Although none of the informants have indoor arenas, they do have access to a level outdoor riding surface of some kind. Given the steep hills, such arenas have to be artificially made. Machines are used to create a small surface for dressage work, but most riders use nature in ways that both enhance the quality of the gaits and the quality of horse-human relationships.

In the Norwegian narratives nature becomes more elaborately themed—not so much as something to be mastered, but something to be a part of, to be experienced and felt. Among the Norwegians the outside is brought into the inside and vice-a-versa. Fefe says, “It is wonderful to get out in nature and not be like a hard man, one can be a bit soft now and then ... a bit open to new thoughts and ways of being. Being allowed in the forest is like meditation, nearness to animals, birds, which I am interested in, crops ... It’s incredible what you see.” Anita’s informants use the term cozy in a number of narratives to describe the pleasures of riding in nature. Norwegians believe their horses need variety. Susanna states that she rides one day on the trail (for stamina and variation) and the next day practicing for competition. Norwegians believe their horses need variation. She states that “the trail is more cozy.¹⁰ On the trail there is less stress. You load your backpack with food and relax on the top of the mountain.” Similarly Emerita expresses the difference between the riding school and the Icelandic horse

environments: “When one is out in nature on a hike in the woods, fields, and sea shore, it is just the coziness of enjoying nature, being outside, sitting on the horse. When I ride in the arena, just following another person, it is like work. In the arena I get frustrated because I feel I am not mastering it. Taking a hike with the horse outside though is fantastic.”

Ola and Katla both refer to the thrill of establishing a relationship with the horse in which the horse can sometimes take the lead. Katla, whose “parents introduced her to riding so she could get fresh air and run around a bit,” has this to say:

I feel no particular joy when I ride in an arena with others. I do not like being evaluated on the basis of my horse’s achievement or training. I like to establish my relationship with her in the paddock and then ride her afterwards with just my mind. When I ride on the trail, I think “now we stop” and she stops. When we ride in the hills, I do not have to steer her. If she understands what I want she does it. I really enjoy being outdoors. I enjoy being in touch with myself and my horse. When it comes to riding, it is about getting out in nature away from people. I like to ride up in the mountain where the air is fresh. Riding on the trail is a good way of being out in nature.

Katla takes her children out riding so that they can learn this. Ola also points out the importance of letting the horse enjoy some natural freedom and of stimulating him with a variety of places and activities.

You can ride a horse up and down. I think it is important to let the horse run. It is important to let him stretch. It’s important to let the horse fly off and get a real “Yippee!” Kick his hind legs and have full speed. I think that is important. I seldom ride the same routes. It’s much more positive to ride different places. It’s very fun to herd sheep or cows in the forest. You never know where you might go. Horses like that. They like the physical challenges to work themselves a bit.

While the discourse of endurance riders and eventers can detail the challenges of riding in adverse weather, the Norwegians, with their slogan that there is “no bad weather, only bad clothes,” melds with an approach to riding in nature, shown within narratives, that further express a connoisseurship of nature through being open to multiple factors and attuned to a diversity of surroundings. Although riding the same terrain and

performing the same exercises involves some repetition, Agnes is never bored. She says, with a twist of humor, “Today I will ride on the road. Yippee! Of course not every day is fun, the weather may be bad, but it is strange as soon as you are on the horse’s back you forget everything, you just ride.” Isis says, “I enjoy riding in the forest very much, and preferably not talking very much. I’m a nature person also with the horse. But riding the horse in the forest is the whole package. I can ride and bring my fishing pole.” Similarly, Urdur refers to the mixed wildlife that one can encounter, saying,

Riding is about getting out in nature, moving through it with the horse; only that way can you get around more without any disturbing sounds of motors. I compare it to being at sea in a sail- or rowboat, moving through the water without a sound. Riding about being with animals in nature too. Riding a horse, one comes closer to wild animals; we meet a lot of elk and moose, and the horses can stand pretty close to them. You have to be careful not to get between a moose and her calf, and also horses can bolt from moose. Yesterday I experienced a wonderful trip. It was sultry and damp, the forest was dense with nearly tropical scents. I took a long tour around the island and explored a new area in the north, by the seashore ... you can have all the nuances. We cantered a bit and tölted a bit, then we just walked through the forest. Of course, you can experience this on foot, but you can’t reach such great distances as with a horse, plus one would not have the feeling that one is together with the animal on that journey.

The narratives show that the Norwegian informants, although less self-revealing (compared to Americans), speak more about the environment as a “nature” to be seen and experienced in a unique way on the horse than is the case for any of the other sport groups or equestrian cultures in our study. Katla’s statement about riding as a good way to be out in nature and Urdur’s that “riding is with animals and nature too,” are reminiscent of Pálsson’s (*Biosociality* 74) description of ancient Scandinavians as seeing their lands as an extension of their own nature. Maurstad (37) also describes how contemporary north Norwegians open their selves up to and embody the very land- and sea-scapes that surround them. Narratives illustrate how riding a horse in nature engages the senses and the emotions. Katla, savoring the fresh mountain air, allows her horse to take the lead and to go where the horse wishes, and feels good being connected with her horse and with the nature that surrounds them.

In a recent newspaper article (Rein) on the *Nordlandhest/Lyngshest*, a north Norwegian breed of horse, the horse is presented as being a symbol of the Nordic people, mixed and versatile; the same could be said for the Icelandic horse and the mixed ecologies or varied terrains in arctic Norway. Urdur states that “all the time I have been in north Norway I have seen the landscape through a rider’s eye and thought, gee, here would be a nice place to ride.” Horses, humans, and the environment in the gaited sport narratives are themed as varied, mixed, and versatile. Isis, for example appreciates the versatility of a horse in “that it does everything.” Norwegians do not only ride outdoors. They are an outdoors people. As Ernst says, “I was very active outdoors even before I bought a horse. I ski all winter.” Surrounded by the “nature” they seek, unlike the dressage riders and eventers who must have their terrains engineered with predictable elements, and the endurance riders who travel to good and mixed terrains, the Norwegian narratives privilege depictions of a varied terrain or environment that is always there, all year round. The horse becomes a strategy for getting into it, travelling over it, and letting it come over you.

Rounding Up: Equestrian-Equine Ecologies of Personhood. Taking the perspective that a separation between human and non-human interactions can be too sharply drawn (Arluke and Saunders 42), seeking new ways to bring human-horse relationships into cultural analysis, and drawn to exploring new ways of bridging or conflating nature/culture dualisms, we have collected and analyzed narratives from participants in different equestrian sports. Haraway refers to human-nonhuman animal relations as knots “of species co-shaping one another in layers of reciprocating complexity” (*Species* 42). Clearly, a sense of reciprocal partnership both in terms of embodiment and shared task at hand characterizes our horse rider pairs. In all of these equestrian sports the rider identifies and bonds with the horse. The horse, as a partnered “we” through his or her very horsiness, aids in the co-construction of the rider’s identity and sense of personhood. This transgresses the nature-culture divide and also marks horse people as different from non-horse people. Xena’s statement to the effect that horses have made her who she is, or Ola’s statement that horses are stuck to his skull, reflect styles of selving where personhood and identity are reciprocally positioned in a horse-human nexus. What comes through in all the narratives is a deep sense of engagement with the horse and a sense of shared personhood, or we-making, as being in “it” together. This kind of layering or nesting of reciprocal identities or partnerships of significant otherness has already been noted in the horse and human relationship literature (Brandt, Birke and Brandt, Game, Hook).

We attempt to bring another layer of reciprocating complexity to the unraveling of Haraway's knot in which terrains ridden emerge as important, variable, and identity-forming aspects of what actually constitutes the "it" of being in it together. Our aim is to demonstrate complex ways in which terrains traversed by horse-rider pairs affects a complex series of interwoven constructions of shared ecologies of horse-rider relations, identities, personhoods, and psyches. Comparative analysis of discourse from dressage riders, eventers, endurance riders, and Icelandic gaited horse riders reveal thematic differences that distinguish the practitioners of each sport.

As we conceptualized this study of horse-human relationships, we assumed that collecting narrative data from a range of horse sport enthusiasts would provide us with a variety of perspectives, where culture would emerge in talk (Quinn) and data would bubble from the ground up (see note 3). We sought informants who had long-term, first-hand, practical experience with horses. We did not anticipate or recognize the thematic salience or importance of terrain in the narratives until we began to pool our data. Terrains covered, as well as shared equestrian sport cultures, constitute another contact zone, entanglement, or new way of mixing that in the narratives we collected demand, select for, or elicit, similar skill sets and responses from horse and human. Morgan, Lynn and Missy tell us how dressage horses and their riders become mutually and reciprocally attuned, focused, and in-touch as they micromanage their way moment by moment over well engineered, predictable, geometrically detailed terrains. Dressage horses and their riders are deep thinkers. The narratives of Xena, Hester and Judy—all eventers—stress the importance of a shared sense of trust, lack of fear, and confidence with the horses as they speed over tricky jumps and civilly engineered terrain of cross-country courses designed to challenge both of them and get their adrenalin rushing. Endurance riders are rugged individuals, like Hot Shoe Sue, Sky and Felix, who relate how their horses log mile after mile over varied and challenging terrain, where energy, stamina, conditioning, and stoic endurance guarantee survival, if not winning, for both human and horse. The hardy Icelandic gaited horses and their all-weather, hardy Norwegian riders, like Katla, FeFe, and Agnes bring training into a mixed and versatile outdoors, where together they relax, breathe in the fresh air, and open their selves and senses up to becoming immersed in the region's distinctive nature.

By adapting Gisli Pálsson's concepts of environmental communalism and biosociality to the discussion and analysis of the kinds of entanglements that emerge when riders of different equestrian cultures speak of riding their horses in different environments or over different terrains, we have attempted to decenter analysis away from universal, western dualisms. We have also endeavored to show how, although entanglements are situated differently for each equestrian sport culture, horse and human are paired together, defined, distinguished, and identified by the environments they work within.¹¹ Although our data help to move analysis away from a monolithic discussion of horse and rider, new dualisms and categories do emerge. First, all riders draw distinctions between riding within walls and outside of them, and second, they differentiate between terrains ridden in terms of how natural or artificially engineered (for the respective sports) they are.

Notes

1. Pálsson's animal of choice in 1996 is fish. In 2009 it has become the likes of biologically engineered, Alzheimer's pigs. Briefly, Pálsson contrasts communalism to paternalism and orientalism. While paternalism as a human practice and strategy is associated with protecting the environment, orientalism is associated with exploiting it. Communalism, however, rejects the radical separation of nature and society and emphasizes the notion of dialogue. By biosociality Pálsson refers to contemporary biotechnology as it conflates the dualism of nature/culture as in, for example, as in the practice of using animals as spare parts for humans.

2. Similarly, Posthumanism (Wolfe xxiv), as a new mode of philosophy and interpretation, also rejects classic humanist divisions of borderlines drawn between self/other, mind/body, and society/nature, and calls for a decentering of the human as a strategy for engaging problems of anthropocentrism and speciesism. Posthumanism sees bodies as both open and closed, stressing the embodiment and embeddedness of human beings in both a biological and a technical world

3. Anticipating that our data would bubble from the ground up and reflect culture in talk (Quinn 2005), we have all asked the same general questions. They are: 1) Why do you ride? 2) Tell me about your life as a rider. 3) How does this relate to the kind of person you are? 4) How does riding relate to other aspects of your life? and 5) How is your experience the same or different from the experiences of other people? Transcribed interviews are from 5 to 20 pages long, single-spaced. In our quotations we have eliminated para-language such as "um" and "okay" but have transcribed directly from

interviews even if grammatically incorrect. Anita's interviews were conducted in Norwegian. She translated them into English.

4. In this sense we are doing what Patton (84) terms as a kind of double writing or what Jackson calls anthropology at home. Dona has one horse, while Anita and Sarah each have two. Dona trains for eventing, Sarah is an endurance rider, and Anita rides Icelandic gaited horses. Each of us has participated in a number of equestrian sports. Dona and Sarah have been riding since early childhood, whereas Anita began as an adult. Dona has ridden with Anita in Norway and Anita has ridden in South Dakota with Dona.

5. Not one of our informants mentioned the fact that as domesticated animals horses have no agency or choice when it comes to their use in these sports. Yet, as Patton (97) notes, human-nonhuman animal relations should not be regarded as incomplete versions of human-human relations but must be regarded as complete versions of relations between two different kinds of animals. The uniqueness of the horse and the human define the relationship, but a caveat is in order, because all experienced riders may quibble about Black Bear's view of horse intelligence and yet agree that they can be dangerous to humans. Black Bear, like a number of informants, notes that, "Horses can kill you. They are very large and not too bright animals that can kill you. I don't mind loving a horse. I don't mind respecting them. I don't mind just enjoying being around them. But when I am with a horse it is very important that a horse knows who is in charge because they can kill you. If you spoil a horse it will run over you." Lee's approach is certainly more paternal than communal. She states: "I'm a Christian and in the Bible we were given dominion over the animals, so to me that means we were given the responsibility to look after these animals so that is what we do."

6. Various horse subcultures have been explored. Among these are thoroughbreds (Case), saddlebreds (Clatworthy), harness horses (Helmer), and fox hunters (Aversa).

7. Dona went on a trail ride with a dressage rider who did not know that her horse could actually go up and down a 75-degree incline.

8. The amount of civil engineering that goes into an eventing course in the U.S. Midwest can be considerable. It costs thousands of dollars to engineer a safe water jump where

the horse will be confident about the footing, e.g., with sandy, non-slippery rather than muddy bottoms. One event course in Minnesota rises out of flat prairie. All its impressive hills had to be built.

9. Icelandic horses are gaited horses. Four-gaiters do *tölt* in addition to the walk, trot, and canter. Five-gaiters do an additional gait called pace. *Tölt* is a four beat gait, like the walk, only much faster. *Tölt* rapidly covers the terrain and may be easy for the rider to sit. A fourth two beat gait or pace is most difficult to master. The gaits are natural to the horse, but must be further developed through training and mastered by the rider. Dressage work is incorporated into Icelandic horse training, but riders differentiate themselves from dressage riders by emphasizing the speed and action required of Icelandic horses in competition. At competition, action, rhythm, cadence and speed are valued. The idea is for the horse to engage his hind.

10. Translating *koselig* as cozy is close but fails to capture the sense of deeply felt relaxation, appreciation, and camaraderie that comes from being with horses in nature.

11. Because we have chosen to emphasize how these various categories of riders wish to define themselves and their horses vis-a-vis other riding sports we have tried to capture the differences that come through in the narratives. This obscures a considerable amount of overlap, as some dressage pairs trail ride, some endurance riders were once jumpers, and, although they don't use the terms, endurance and gaited groups have their adrenalin junkies, while eventers must master dressage...etc.

Appendix: List of Informants

Informants who participated in the study are listed below. They are listed, by gender and locality, beginning with youngest and ending with oldest age groups—from age 20 to 70 and above. Riding interests are divided into categories: Icelandic Gaited, Dressage, Eventing, Endurance, Trail, and Pleasure/Casual. While informants from the Trail and Pleasure/Casual groups are included in the riding in arenas versus outdoors sections of the article, the paper focuses on the first four groups. Originally we intended to include Midwestern trail riders in this analysis but manuscript length prescriptions prevented us from doing so. There is considerable overlap among the first four categories. Riders move from one sport to another over their life cycles and eventers, for example, my compete at both dressage and eventing competitions. As stated in the article, our informants are largely at the lower levels of expertise and practice in their chosen sports. We identify them by primary interests in terms of training and competition.

Susanna-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Isis-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Olga-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Pixie-F (US Midwest, Trail); Rebecca-F (US Midwest, Pleasure/Casual); Deany-F (US Midwest, Pleasure/Casual); Cleo-F (US Midwest, Endurance); JZ-F (US Midwest, Eventing); Laura-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Blondie-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Xena-F (US Midwest, Eventing); Niki-F (US Midwest, Trail); Harriet-F (US Midwest, Endurance); Emma-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Barbara-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Bella-F (US Midwest, Dressage); HK-F (US Midwest, Eventing); Agnes-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Aurora-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Sophie-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Katla-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Lucy-F (US Midwest, Trail); Halla-F (US Midwest, Eventing); Lynn-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Missy-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Ola-M (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Ernst-M (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Becca-F (US Midwest, Endurance); Rigmor-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Urdur-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Emerita-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Henrette-F (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Kane-M (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Sophia-F (US Midwest, Trail); Karen-F (US Midwest, Pleasure/Casual); Bernadette-F (US Midwest, Pleasure/Casual); Chisum-M (US Midwest, Trail); Tess-F (US Midwest, Trail); Sally-F (US Midwest, Trail); Buster-M (US Midwest, Pleasure/Casual); Black Bear-F (US Midwest, Endurance); Lee-F (US Midwest, Endurance); Nell-F (US Midwest, Pleasure/Casual); Morgan-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Ajay-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Daisy Mae-f (US Midwest, Endurance); T-F (US Midwest, Endurance); Lara-F (US Midwest, , Pleasure/Casual); Sky-F (US Midwest, Endurance); Edie-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Bonnie-F (US Midwest, Pleasure/Casual); Judy-F (US Midwest, Eventing); Hester-F (US Midwest, Eventing); Katie-F (US Midwest, Eventing); Krusty-F (US Midwest, Dressage); Fefe-M (Norway, Icelandic Gaited); Felix-M (US Midwest, Endurance); Red-M (US Midwest, Trail); Hot Shoe Sue-F (US Midwest, Endurance); Doug-M (US Midwest, Pleasure/Casual)

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