BILINGUAL RABBITS, BILINGUAL READERS: *WATERSHIP DOWN* AS A CASE FOR ANIMAL TEXTS IN TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

Richard Adams' *Watership Down* provides readers a unique view of a world that is and isn't their own, a familiar space from the unfamiliar perspective of an animal. Animal narratives like these are at the core of Animal Studies, a school of thought intent on decentering the Anthropos; yet despite this goal, our explorations of these text still must contend with the fact that they are bound to a language incapable of transmitting their experience and a human-privileged system of value still based within the human frame of reference. By viewing Adams' novel as a case study for anthropomorphized texts not as problematic human texts with animal teachers but as animal texts in translation, we can use the principles of translation studies, content analysis, and animal science to shed new light on how we depict animal culture while encouraging a learning-driven empathy for the animal experience in the human reader.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my friends, family, and committee: thank you for being patient with me.

DEDICATION

To the wild places that still exist, if you're looking from the right point of view.

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INTRODUCTION

Within the last several decades, particular attention has been paid to expanding the borders of composition scholarship, especially where the voices of marginalized groups are concerned. Like a living, breathing organism, the study of rhetoric, writing, and literature grows ever-more complex, with long-held definitions for core concept integral to the field occasionally faced with the need to adapt as well. The notion of the *text* is opened with increasing frequency to new media: graphic novels, video games, and digital communities coming to represent new lines of inquiry for scholars of English, Art, and the Humanities. This collective push outward towards inclusivity took many other forms beyond the rethinking of the *text* - with particular attention paid to audience and the effect of the intersections of culture, gender identity, and other factors that we use to group or separate humans physically, linguistically, and textually. One of these other new avenues of inquiry was attention to animal voices and experiences present in literature, composition, and academic discourse.

Animal Studies is, in itself, not an entirely new animal. Grounded in the works of Kari Weil, Donna Haraway, and Peter Singer, the Animal Studies scholar often becomes equal parts critic and activist, tasked with mitigating a divide that humanity still considers insurmountable, the divide between human and animal. This perhaps seems like something not so large, let alone insurmountable; humans themselves are animals after all, scientifically speaking, but this divide is steepened, deepened by a long history of species chauvinism that leaves not the particulars but the *existence* of the animal capacity for pain or reason a contested idea in the public eye. To seek the animal voice in human-produced narrative is to look directly at an ongoing, systemic cruelty and shed a light on it for those that choose not to see, and while empathy and a desire to dismantle anthropocentric behaviors are often at the heart of such work, these are sometimes at

odds with the tendency to want to validate the work we do and align it with a larger human audience.

This essay seeks to explore how we as scholars answer several lingering questions in Animal Studies by redefining not the *text,* but its audience and its value. By decentering the notion of authorship and mitigating the need to find value in a work that directly benefits a human consumer, a reader can approach animal narratives in fiction with not only a heightened awareness of animal agency, culture, and language, but the opportunity to explore these things through what Christiane Nord refers to as a documentary translation model (46). With these changes in place, and with Kari Weil's framework for critical empathy, readers can find value in animal narratives not as human stories that teach us about animals but as animal stories for animals translated for humans that hold weight on their own.

To demonstrate the effects of these changes at work, this essay will focus on Richard Adams' *Watership Down* as a case study for animal narratives made accessible to humans by translation; Adams' novel and related short stories have a unique opportunity to test this method because of the presence of constructed languages, or conlangs, in the texts. These languages capture rabbit culture on their own but play an even more poignant role in allowing the narrative to separate itself from a human perspective while encouraging the reader to actively pursue an understanding of the unknowable by learning to read the Lapine language on their own. Once the interplay between languages in the text is established, evidence of the original animal language and of the translation process will be located, catalogued, and revealed through a content analysis of the original text using Klaus Krippendorff's framework for data collection and cataloguing. Because of its focus not on the overall "intended goal" of the message but on the context in which the text uses a given datapoint, this method is ideal for picking out the rabbits' story,

language, and culture from any anthropocentric value systems a reader might ascribe to the narrative as a whole after translation (Krippendorff 22). This data will be collected to show where a uniquely Lapine substrate lingers in Adams' translation, and to demonstrate how, like naturally occurring languages, even smaller conlangs also do heavy cultural work when placed in a translation scenario.

With this snapshot of rabbit culture and language practices, we can finally explore how the connections Adams had with Ronald Lockley's *The Private Life of the Rabbit* enhanced his depiction of the unknowable animal experience and affected future adaptations of his work in new media. While this method is a case study built around a specific series of texts, this method may be used on other texts with animal characters and richly developed animal cultural material, even if an invented language is not explicitly present[i].

1. THE VALUE OF ANIMAL NARRATIVES

In the first chapter of her book *Thinking Animals*, Weil discusses the 'animal turn' (3), or the turn towards the animal experience as grounds for scholarly inquiry, essentially setting the scene for animal studies as it is today by discussing the major shifts in critical theory that brought the animal question to the forefront (4-5). Weil also talks about the existence and authenticity of human representations of animals by looking at the growth of Women's and Ethnic Studies in academia - human groups with marginalized voices that struggled for their place in the academy. By relating this question back to Spivak's pivotal feminist text, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", she situates animals in a similar position, but also makes a very important distinction: unlike the other aforementioned groups, animals are, at least at present, decidedly non-verbal to our ears – even when theoretically handed the microphone, they remain quiet (5-6). And when we give them our voices to use, they are forced to speak in the language of and with the rhetoric of the oppressor (Spivak 75-76). Language and narrative, Weil notes, are at the core of the question of representing animal narrative via anthropomorphization (6).

A truly voiceless group when compared to humans, these animal characters in the narratives we study pressed scholars with several challenges when they decided how to situate all of these stories that take up an animal viewpoint to encourage empathy and conscientious behavior in their human audiences. Animal tales become didactic lessons for children in particular under this assumption, and they have enjoyed a long tenure as well-loved entries in the canon of popular children's and crossover fiction. But is that teacher role the true function of animals in text and our reason for including their voices in organized scholarship? When we consider this assumption that animals serve their purpose as teachers for humans, with lessons to give on empathy, environmental awareness, and what it means to be human, we find that they are

still little more than a mouthpiece - a human idea with an animal mask, using the image of the animal as a victim of human cruelty or indifference to its rhetorical advantage. And while this point of view, as Kant might argue, does stand to benefit humanity with increased awareness including increased awareness of the plights of animals, this way of thinking as Josephine Donovan describes still keeps those animals from achieving any sort of empowerment, turns animal suffering into a spectacle, and only places value on their stories based on how they benefit the human reader and humanity beyond (202-203).

This has historically been one of the problems associated with anthropomorphism. The technique is common and can be seen in many texts with primarily animal casts of characters, including: *Black Beauty*, *Flush*, *The Wind in the Willows*, and *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*. In these texts, animals have rich inner lives, relationships, and socio-cultural practices that they follow from day to day. Through seeing these aspects of animal life, and through our understanding of animals' thoughts through their use of a language we know, we are able to connect with them more readily on a personal level. Yet despite the prevalence of this technique, a lot of scholarship surrounding anthropomorphism details the problematic nature of how we, as humans, go about trying to write and speak for animals without a true understanding of the other animal's reality. This sentiment is notable, for example, in Nagel's "What is it Like to be a Bat?"; to Nagel, the ultimate answer is that we can't truly know without relying on the imaginary, and without recoloring the other's experience with our own (449-450). This same sentiment can be read into our attempt to represent animal narratives with our human voices – perhaps well intentioned at heart, but inherently problematic and prone to erasing the experiences of those voices we are trying to strengthen. As the article closes, Nagel's tone is defeated but not entirely; to understand what it is like to be a bat, one must be ready to face a reality that

completely overwrites our understanding of the universe as we know it – one's sensory experience, for starters. Here, Nagel argues that the best place to start is to look first within different experiences within our own species. Before we attempt to wrap our minds around the experiences of animals, we could first start with those who have a different sensory experience than ours – how do we explain to someone who has been blind their entire life what it is like to see? (450) We might try a number of approaches, a variety of examples, but our attempts will all be colored by how much we rely on our vision to function. This is the equivalent of the challenges we face when coming to terms with and evaluating animal narratives.

Nagel's argument was rooted in the mind and how it experiences life within the limits of the physical reality of one's situation primarily. In fact, Nagel does not specifically grant the bat or other animals the capacity for consciousness in his example, thus leaving the question animal/reader negotiation as an unknown to be explored in further application of his work by scholars like William Nelles. While many like Nagel argue that we will never truly comprehend what it is like to live as another sort of creature (449), Nelles shows the value of attempting to understand through emulation (189-190). While we may truly never be able to understand the life of another, is it not more valuable to try to understand rather than not try at all, and consign ourselves to dwelling only in our differences?

Still more point to the existence of not only a capacity for consciousness and communication in animals that is worthy of scholarly exploration but also a shared if not uniquely animal rhetorical system of reason and persuasion and seek to explore why we, as scholars, are interested in the idea of animal narratives and the ramifications they pose to composition scholarship. Juliane Prade and Diane Davis are two of these, each reporting on the growing Animal Studies movement and where it stands on the borderlands of established theory.

Both Davis and Prade refer to ancient rhetoricians – Cicero and many others – to highlight and subsequently break down the long-lived claim that the ability to reason and engage in rhetoric is what separates us from other species (Davis 275). When considering rhetoric from this familiar perspective, we might define rhetoric as an act of intentional, persuasive, goal-oriented communication. Davis, citing Kennedy and her own work with meerkats, quickly proves animals capable of this sort of purposeful communication and the intent to persuade, whether it be persuading a potential predator to stay away, or persuading an ally that predators are near (282). Adding to this conversation is Alex C. Parrish, whose exploration of comparative rhetoric ties the origination of this paradigm shift to the "crisis of the Humanities" in the late 20th century and provides current scholars with a means for looking at the persuasive abilities of non-human species as a new rhetorical school (651). Davis, with the help of others, draws attention to the inherently organized and persuasive nature of animal communication, be it vocal or otherwise, to make a case for the notion of animal rhetorics and weighs in on how they might affect our understanding of human rhetoric. To Prade, the exploration of animal narratives and rhetorics provides us with a pivotal point of dissonance in thinking – a need to reevaluate what makes us human, and what makes us similar to the other creatures we share the planet with that we so often distance ourselves from (328). Prade and Davis, when faced with the limit of scholarship on the fringes of the Humanities, point to a certain anxiety about what it is to be human that permeates the discourse and cites a potential solution in coming to terms with that anxiety.

While this presents an interesting case for animal rhetorics and narratives to finally be "taken seriously" as Davis puts it (277, 283), it is of some concern that some within Animal Studies discourse are still assigning value to the contributions of animal voices based on how they can be used to re-define the human or represent the ambiguity of the human-animal border

space without also exploring what value they hold beyond the human interest. The question, then, becomes this: *how can we as scholars interpret, explore, and make space for animal narratives in the discourse surrounding literature without chaining them to a human-centered frame of reference in order to argue for their value*? It is a sticky subject, as many of the texts reviewed here have highlighted.

At present, we are not yet able to fully understand the voices and rhetorical practices of other species at a conversational level; instead, we interpret what we observe, or create animal-centered narratives of our own. Despite this continued apprehension towards anthropomorphized texts, it is important to understand that though potentially problematic, anthropomorphism is – at least at present – somewhat inevitable when representing animal voices. What we need then, as scholars, is a mindful anthropomorphism that acknowledges the faults in our representations of animals and, rather than dismissing them entirely, looks instead at how anthropomorphized texts might bridge the gap between species to encourage understanding rather than simply pointing out difference. Weil's call for a "critical empathy" narrows this gap between human perception and animal experience, while still acknowledging the limits of human understanding in such scenarios not necessarily as impasses but rather as productive critical lines of inquiry (Weil 20). Correct application of this method, to Weil, means "that we… may imagine [others'] pain, pleasure, and need in anthropomorphic terms but must stop short of believing that we can know their experience"; this shrink-able but undeniable difference is then no longer couched in the rhetoric of exclusion, and nor is it ignored in an attempt to level out a place for sameness – instead, it may represent "one [irreducible difference] that is also within us, and within the term *human*" (Weil 20). Through examining these texts with Weil's critical empathy in mind, we become aware of the anthropocentric nature of our own perception and sense of self-superiority;

this increased awareness can be harnessed and put towards improving conditions for animals and encouraging animal equity. Weil's practices serve as the critical foundation for many in decentering the Anthropos, but they still leave us considering changes to the *human* via exploration of the *animal* as we move beyond a text's narrative. This analysis seeks to move beyond this tendency by more closely considering the roles language plays in the communication of source culture transmission and how the presence of Adams' animal languages works to defamiliarize the reader from the world they inhabit, the language they know, and systems of communication they usually take for granted. By bringing together Animal Studies, Translation Studies, and Animal Science, we follow a long tradition of pushing back against anthropocentrism with an interdisciplinary approach that starts at the most foundational of human understanding – the level of language.

2. THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF *WATERSHIP DOWN*

When we consider *Watership Down* as a case for the existence of translated animal narratives repackaged for human consumption, it is important to acknowledge the layers of language use that are present in the text, their function, and at what level in the text each language is represented. In this sense, *Watership* exemplifies the bilingual narrative, but its use of constructed languages instead of known human languages places it in a unique position for readers and translators. Adams' text has not one but three documented languages present: English, the language of the meta-narrative and of the human characters that appear in the background; Lapine, a constructed language used exclusively by rabbits; and Hedgerow, a Creole used to facilitate communication between rabbits and other species in the field. Rather than being relegated to the occasional mention, Lapine in particular is present both visually and implicitly throughout the narrative level, though the transmission of major narrative events relies on English. The rabbits tell their stories, exchange insults, and pepper their otherwise English dialogue with Lapine vocabulary; these words appear in the text untranslated, with either a footnote definition in early chapters or – later in the text – completely unglossed. Instead, readers are encouraged to flip back to the end of the book to find their missing word in the included 'Lapine to English Glossary' and learn the language at their own pace. The use of textual enhancements like footnotes and glossaries, and even the use of conlangs have been described by Denise Beckton as a means of enticing the curious reader to explore beyond the self with the temptation of a rich, detailed fictional world (82, 85). Though despite this, little attention gets paid to the use of these in fiction, particularly smaller examples outside the works of Tolkien.

The value and validity of constructed language art projects or artlangs like Lapine and Hedgerow have been considered in constructed language scholarship, with scholars considering

the languages an interesting footnote in the history of language construction at best, or a hindrance to the narrative that contains them at worst. Though linguists like Thomas E. Murray note the occasional transmission of Lapine words like "silflay" into American English[ii], Adams' languages, as described in Peter Stockwell's 2006 sampling of literary conlangs for *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* or Michael Adams' *DO-IT-YOURSELF LANGUAGE*, are commonly considered fragmentary, half-finished things created by an untrained hobbyist that more often than not receive only a passing mention - a paragraph or two only vaguely describing the functions of both conlangs (185); while these observations are grounded in observable reality in terms of corpus size, to imply that a creative work made by someone outside of academic discourse is not worthy of closer examination leaves an entire field's worth of stones unturned. To remove the work of the common person from the reach of the academic eye is at its heart a desire to move backward from the ever-expanding borders of humanities scholarship and is, in this case, counter-intuitive to the effort to seek a narrative beyond what we consider to be the standard, human, academic concept of narrative.

At the outset of the novel, it is most important to recall the core of Kari Weil's discussion of language and the trouble of human-produced animal narratives. As Weil notes with Kafka's Red Peter, a chimpanzee taught to speak English in "A Report to an Academy", animals that are taught to speak with humans using human language find themselves in an uncomfortable liminal space – they are able to speak with humans, but then must contend with the language's inadequacy in representing their experience and how it has disconnected them from other animals (13-14). Instead, Red Peter finds himself without category: so changed through epistemic violence that he finds the company of other chimpanzees to be disturbing, but is also never able to fully conform to human expectations for behavior and thought because they are not

his own systems of value. Though Adams is also working with anthropomorphized characters and must rely on human language for the sake of the human reader, it is made explicitly clear that the characters are not speaking English with one another at the narrative level. On pages 19 and 20 of *Watership Down,* Adams establishes the language hierarchy present for the rest of the novel; here, we learn which languages the characters know, which languages they don't, and who they use those languages with. When this scene begins, rabbits Hazel and Fiver are talking idly and grazing in the fields beside their home when they come across a strange new object in their environment, surrounded by the foreboding smell of human beings (19). This object is a sign announcing an upcoming construction project that will certainly destroy their home. Both rabbits express confusion at the presence of the new object and at the markings that cover it, but leave the area with a non-specific sense of danger (20). The sign itself is illegible to them, and it reminds the reader that the rabbits in Adams' text do not speak or read English, but Lapine – a rabbit language steeped in rabbit cultural material and its own rabbit rhetoric. This is not an isolated incident, it is merely the first; throughout *Watership Down* and Adams' second text within the same universe, *Tales from Watership Down,* the rabbits repeatedly are able to communicate with other wild animals but note their inability to understand human speech and writing. Beyond this point in chapter one, we may consider any dialogue in Adams' work between rabbit characters to be a viable source for information on Lapine substrate post-translation, drastically increasing the corpus size usually attributed to the conlang.

Within the text, Adams' constructed language plays a multifaceted role in terms of world-building, and this can be seen when we look at where we see the language used in the story. In a narrative sense, the language is an identity marker – a cultural feature or artefact; Adams uses Lapine perhaps most often for his representation of rabbit identity in the use describing cultural

practices, names, and folklore. This idea of "rabbitness" as a term for identity has been credited to James Stone and explored by scholars since the 1980s, particularly by Marion Copeland in 2007 and by Marc Baldwin in 1994 for more recent representations (Stone 37). Both scholars here place focus on the language as a world-building element and a trait that separates the identities and perceptions of our characters from those of humans (Baldwin 40), and discuss its development as described in commentary from the author. Indeed, the language has been described to have purposefully been given a "wuffy, fluffy sound" – the sort of sounds that you might imagine a talking rabbit making (Copeland 290-292). Words like "hrududu" (Lapine word for car) for example are meant to give name to something foreign that a rabbit might not understand, in this case a human vehicle – "hrududu" is an onomatopoeic word meant to mimic the sound a car makes as it runs; this is no different from how we establish a system of meaning in English, and examining Lapine words in a similar way gives insight into how these characters build meaning as a society (Beckton 81-82). It makes sense that rabbits might rely on their keen ears when asked to describe something, and even when relying on sight would still link new concepts with old ones rather than human ideas, as they do when referring to cigarettes as 'white sticks' ('Tales' 86).

But what is perhaps more telling in this sense than the construction of individual words is looking at what words exist in the conlang as a whole. These are things that, in many cases, have no equivalent within our perception of life and reality as human beings, and thus cannot be translated perfectly or, conversely, human ideas that rabbits have no socio-cultural context for. This, in turn, emphasizes the defamiliarizing effect of the conlang at work. Since being defined by Viktor Shklovsky in 1917, the concept of defamiliarization or "остранение" has been closely linked with animal narratives; Anastassiya Andrianova applied this to Tolstoy's *Strider*, a story

concerning a horse and his experience with human cruelty and ownership (88). Tolstoy, at various points, complicates the idea of animal and resource ownership, as well as the idea of death – all things the horse experiences over the course of just a few evenings. He accomplishes this through the use of several techniques, one of these being defamiliarization through language and questioning behavior. Just as the horse questions and is baffled by the idea of material ownership, he is equally baffled by his own death and the act of violence against an animal, also made uncanny and unfamiliar by the language our horse narrator uses to describe the scene (Andrianova 89). The effect is meant to be unsettling, to make a familiar object or concept seem just the opposite, and this uncanny feeling is what causes enough dissonance to make our reader take note.

This is a technique that Adams makes full use of in both his texts, not only in the gut-wrenchingly jarring way as described above (though there is plenty of this as well) but also in a gentler way that encourages readers to learn and pay attention to the difference in perception. Perhaps some of the best examples of this from within the text would be words like ‘silflay’, a Lapine term for the practice of going above-ground to feed. The term is used throughout the text by our protagonists, and also by another society of rabbits they encounter. This group, from a highly organized and regimented warren called “Efrafa”, has a very different idea of how these feedings are supposed to be performed, but because both groups have knowledge of the shared term, a kind of cultural middle-ground can be reached (Adams 319). For English speaking human readers, the term has no exact equivalent, and must often be looked up in the novel’s included glossary and notes section while reading to be understood early on in the text. This example is of particular note due to Thomas E. Murray’s 1985 essay detailing the term’s use in

everyday speech in parts of the United States, describing the behavior of rabbits in the wild – even by those who had never read the novel.

This phenomenon is an echo of another from Adams' earlier text, *Watership Down*. In *Watership,* primary character Hazel reflects on a conversation he had with a character of another species – a seagull named Kehaar. While surveying Watership Down the place, the hill that is serving as the rabbits' new home, Kehaar and Hazel discuss the sky, and the rabbit makes note of how differently he and his companion perceive this shared concept. The narrator remarks that:

> Hazel, like nearly all wild animals, was unaccustomed to look up at the sky. What he thought of as the sky was the horizon, usually broken by trees and hedges. Now, with his head pointing upward, he found himself gazing at the ridge, as over the skyline came the silent, red-tinged cumuli. Their movement was disturbing, unlike that of grass or trees or rabbits. These great masses moved steadily, noiselessly and always in the same direction. They were not of his world. (126)

What Hazel describes here is much closer to how his companion describes the sky, and though he doesn't voice this particular passage out loud, his discomfort is noted within the story and readers are encouraged to acknowledge their own as well as his – this is the effect of defamiliarization at work on a scale beyond singular, untranslatable words. And unlike some of the other examples we have looked at that have been grounded in curiosity, there is an element of disruption or concern in our protagonist's thought process. Clouds that we might consider ordinary and harmless are given alien, almost threatening qualities, and the effect is immediate. When considering how rabbits are built physiologically, low to the ground with their eyes positioned on the sides of their heads rather than forward-facing like humans, this distinction makes sense; of course rabbits might pay closer attention to the horizon, where danger might be

lurking – they might look up less than a bird, who spends their time up in the air and exploring the sky. Not only are these two characters focalized differently, but looking at that difference draws readers' attention to their own perception of the same concept.

For the reader, the work becomes both a language learning opportunity and a conceptual sandbox to explore lived conditions beyond the limits of the human. And, just as importantly, it encourages the reader to take an active role in pursuing this information while leaving narrative agency in the paws of the animal characters leaving their culture, ideologies, and linguistic signature at the forefront of discourse within the novel despite its reliance on English translation to reach a human audience. To explore the effects of this translation, we must first define the nature and the extent of the translation that has taken place.

3. CONTENT ANALYSIS AND DATA COLLECTION

As we build our case for looking at *Watership* as a bilingual, semi-translated text, we will then turn our attention to the nature of that translation and its effect on how we understand rabbit culture as it is presented in the novel. As William Labov points out in *The Study of Language in its Social Context*, the identity- and community-building power that language wields is equally as powerful as its ability to spread and share ideas (15). The power of language to communicate respect, intimacy, and prestige in speech cannot be ignored when exploring the discourse of a closed group, and the presence of a unique lexis must be noted if a text is to undergo a translation. For a working definition of translation types and functions, we will refer to Christiane Nord's work in *Translating with Purpose.* What is the purpose of the translation present in Adams' novel? If the purpose of the Lapine conlang is to preserve rabbit identity, then the purpose of translation is for narrative ease for a non-rabbit audience. Of the translation styles Nord describes, the definition for a documentary translation stands out as a close fit because of its focus on preserving the source culture as well as the intended message for the target culture (47). While transmission of ideas is a primary goal of a translator, the importance of preserving cultural material does not simply happen without mindful attention to the manifestation of that cultural substrate – this makes the notion of perspective an important one to consider on the part of the translator. This will be explored in depth in the subsequent chapter.

The search for a cultural substrate in casual dialogue is mirrored in Krippendorff's method for content analysis, where he notes that the methodology excels in exploring discourse and cultural material because of its focus on contextualizing the data collected by the researcher and the ability of language to hold, preserve, and transmit culture across time and space (75-77). As content analysis can be used on a wide range of media, this method will also allow us to

explore the same guiding questions and collect the same sort of data from both the novel and its subsequent animated film adaptation in 1978 to determine if there has been a transfer of rabbit culture between the two texts. This content analysis seeks to answer the following research questions:

- In what contexts is Lapine used in the narrative?
- Which rabbits are more likely to use Lapine?
- What types of words remain untranslated to English?
- Can we identify translated Lapine substrate in English passages of the text?

Content analysis as a method seeks to answer questions by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. Through content analysis and computer aided qualitative analysis, all instances of rabbit dialogue, monologue, and inner reflection in the text were collected, recorded, and catalogued according to the following closed coding protocol:

- **Purely Lapine Words, Utterances, and Phrases – sub-categories**
    - Singular words [LAP:W]
    - Phrases and idioms [LAP:P]
    - Character Names [LAP:N]
- **"Moments of Translation" – sub-categories**
    - Dialogue with highly English construction – translated for ease of access to plot [lENG:D]
    - Translated Lapine Idioms and phrases – non-traditional use of English words [lENG:I]
    - English half of an English/Lapine pair – English versions of rabbit names, etc. [lENG:P]

These tags allow for data points to be grouped together and for the frequency of various words, grammatical constructions, and word relationships across the entirety of the text to be determined and represented visually - especially when additional data is associated with each point (Krippendorff 15). For this analysis, all entries will also include associated page numbers (if applicable), scene numbers (if applicable), which characters are listening to each utterance, and which characters are speaking. The frequencies of specific character interactions while using Lapine, word correlation, and word type can all be calculated from the saved contextual data (ibid. 59). While simple word frequency calculations can be limiting, the context-based approach of this method allows for more meaningful conclusions to be drawn, particularly when qualitative data is also paired with frequency (ibid. 413). Krippendorff's methodology for content analysis allows for an iterative approach to data collection and provides advice for observers on recording and organizing their data. To ease data transfer between recording and the qualitative analysis software, all raw data collected from the text was kept in a Microsoft Excel document.

After applying this method to the primary text, we are left with over 300 individual data points across all coding categories. The on the next page displays a partial selection of data from the novel: the number of datapoints as organized by chapter and tag. Likewise, a similar chart is available for data from the 1978 film immediately following Figure 1.

Chapter	LAP:W	LAP:P	LAP:N	LENG:D	LENG:I	LENG:P
1	3			12	1	6
2	4	1		**19**	1	8
3	5	1		12	1	12
4	6			**17**		2
5	1			5		2
6	**42**			6	3	
7	3	2		12	1	2
8	2	1		**32**	1	8
9	9		1	**18**		2
10	**17**			**46**	7	3

Figure 1: Lapine Language Data from the Novel by Chapter and Data Tag, 1-10

Section	LAP:W	LAP:P	LAP:N	LENG:D	LENG:I	LENG:P
Intro	14		3	8	2	2
Feature	21	5	12	26	14	26

Figure 2: Lapine Language Data from the Film by Section and Data Tag

Even before analyzing the raw data with the qualitative analysis software, we can see obvious spikes in Lapine usage in particular chapters of the text, namely chapters six and ten; this is noteworthy, particularly chapter six, because it has an unusually high frequency of singular Lapine words including names, honorific titles, and words for other concepts (mostly nouns). In chapter ten, we are confronted with a heavy reliance on an unusual amount of dialogue – this makes sense when we consider the fact that chapter ten has the group of protagonists confronting a road and a car for the first time and this prompts an extended discussion between the rabbits. From the data collected, there also appears to be a strong correlation between the use of Lapine words and storytelling. Major outlier chapters like chapter six are almost wholly dedicated to sharing Lapine myth, and they are shared orally as a story within the overarching narrative; thus, characters that are credited with being particularly gifted storytellers tend to exhibit a more frequent use of the conlang. These chapters boast a large number of untranslated rabbit names and words for other animals, as well as the one of the

largest numbers of translated phrases and idioms – not to mention a number of life lessons taught by the folk hero El-ahrairah. Dandelion, the rabbit that tells the majority of these stories, carries a certain kind of prestige amongst the other rabbits, and they call upon him to tell a story when they meet another group of rabbits that don't seem to share the same cultural practices (102). In this section, they ask Dandelion to tell a story that will impress the outsiders, but they express disinterest in traditional rabbit culture; the newcomers instead share a kind of free-verse poem unlike anything the others had ever heard before, and use much less of the Lapine language cues that we come to see from our main characters. Hazel and the other rabbits find these traits to be disturbing, and after a series of nearly-deadly incidents they soon take their leave of the place (127). This scene serves as a good demonstration for what Walt Wolfram describes as language as an identity marker for both overt and covert prestige, not just a communication tool (175). While the two groups of rabbits communicated fairly well, the differing levels of regard that they held for their language and what came with it inevitably put them at odds.

Beyond this general sense of cultural prestige, Lapine demonstrates an interesting amount of duality when we consider the data surrounding its use of names. In the text, many rabbits are referred to with one of two names: either their English language equivalent name (LENG:P) or their Lapine name (LAP:N). The rabbit Fiver, for example, is called Fiver in many circumstances, but is also called "Hrairoo" in others – this translates directly to 'little thousand', and the use of the Lapine equivalent is not performed by all of the other rabbits in the group (16). While most use his English name, his brother's use of his Lapine name, especially in times of duress, might point to an association of closeness and intimacy with the untranslated Lapine name (247). Similarly, Hazel will use a rabbit's Lapine name to offer comfort after an injury as he does with Pipkin ("Hlao") (Adams 44). But conversely, other rabbits like Hazel might also be

called by their Lapine name or an English/Lapine honorific construction (Hazel-*rah*: compare to El-ahrai*rah*) not by those they deem close companions but by those that owe them a degree of respect (227). With the duality of rabbit names on display, Lapine becomes a carrier for the concepts of closeness as well as authority or respect.

On the other side of the chart, we have the corpus of potential source material for the presence of the translated Lapine substrate – all of the dialogue, reflection, and inner thought that was likely translated for narrative ease. Many of these datapoints reflect a fairly standard use of English as we understand it, though despite this, we still see examples of non-traditional English constructions used in rabbit dialogue with little supplemental material supplied to explain their exact meaning. Instead, readers are left to build a meaning from context or to speculate on the meaning on their own by further engaging with the animal world portrayed in the rest of the text. Perhaps the most fitting example of this is the rabbit idiom on page 340, where Fiver works to convince Hazel to step back from his desire to get work done while he waits for a leg injury to heal: "you're trying to eat grass that isn't there." On one hand, we might try to negate this example by pointing out that we as English speakers have a similar adage – you're "grasping at straws" or looking for connections between events or ideas that don't actually exist – yet at the same time, that doesn't quite fit the meaning if we look at the context in which Fiver is using it. The rabbit idiom is more about being patient and waiting for things to grow, the similarity in form to our idiom representing a false cognate or false equivalency in a translation setting. Doesn't acknowledging this connection between our world and theirs confirm that there is an undercurrent of a culture that is not quite out own permeating even the English of the text, even though it is never explicitly confirmed? The paradox of the grass idiom illustrates the subtlety

that this translated Lapine can take on and is at its most visible if we approach the document from the vantage point of a translator, both as a reader and as a scholar.

The distribution of this data and its close association with bonding or prestige marking activities links the visible Lapine closely with identity marking behavior, and the word relationship frequency data from the qualitative analysis correlates the relationship between name forms. Just as we can observe an increase in Lapine use in more intimate social situations, the contextual data associated with Lapine name use illustrates both the closeness and the prestige power dynamics on display with the function of the language itself. This says much about not only how a language holds cultural material, but also about how a translator must handle source text culture when undertaking a new project: especially when we are working with a language we can never fully understand. In all of these cases, the context surrounding the data collected suggests that, even when sections of dialogue are translated to a human language to make the narrative easier to digest for the reader, the presence of rabbit culture cannot be separated from the text, translated or otherwise.

4. *WATERSHIP DOWN* AS AN ANIMAL TEXT IN TRANSLATION

As detailed in Klaus Krippendorff's book on content analysis, it is important to remember that inferences made about a text with this message are meaningful with their context and purpose in mind; if we want to understand how the Lapine substrate we see in the text took the form it did and the effect it has on the text, we must remember that language itself is a cultural and rhetorical artifact (Chesterman 35). This focus on audience and cultural ethnomethodological concerns effectively connects content analysis to the concept of cultural materiality. To a practitioner of cultural materiality, culture and identity are inherently linked with and held within language or communication in any form that it takes, present in all of the stuff that surrounds discourse and the rhetorical agents that participate in it. Haley Zertuche describes the versatile application of this method, specifically where animal experiences are concerned. By connecting body, perception, and environment directly to language and rhetoric, the human perception of all of these things is decentered to be one on many material schemas that are not inherently hierarchically valued. Rhetorical and communicative processes are defined and shaped by the lived experience of the rhetorical agent, and the weight held by these – once tangential or separate from our notion of rhetoric - are now made integral and inseparable from text and its value. To return to Diane Davis, we may once again consider rhetoric and communication from the idea of a rhetorical bestiary: not human or animal rhetoric, but a selection of animal *rhetorics* (284).

Translation of cultural material holds a similar weight as well, for, as Andrew Chesterman notes in his book, a translated text "manipulates the target culture, including the target culture's perception of the source culture" (35). As mentioned previously, this mutual manipulation of the end product on both sides of the translation process calls for a need to be mindful of how we situate audience and author. In order to bridge the gap between the source

culture and the target culture, both sides would perhaps at first glance want to meet halfway (Schulte and Biguenet 41). However, a hybrid approach compromises the integrity of the source culture on either side of the equation, rendering both sides potentially inaccurate (Schulte and Biguenet 42). Thus, a translator must decide between resituating the reader or resituating the author, as Schulte describes, citing Schleiermacher for the concept of relocation (41). The superior approach depends on the motives behind the translation [iii], but for the cultural weight we want to preserve as detailed by Nord and Chesterman, encouraging the reader to explore the source culture via the translator's mastery of the source language would both preserve the substrate we are hoping to locate with our analysis while also encouraging the L2 and culture exploration the text already hopes to encourage in the reader through its use of defamiliarization (Schulte and Biguenet 41-44). By understanding how and where language holds cultural material, translators can make an informed decision about how best to preserve it.

Considering our approach, Nord and Chesterman's definitions are vital in establishing not only the role of the source language in the translated text, but also in determining how we interact with the source language if we chose to be source culture oriented. Pedersen, in her 2005 conference article, describes the interactions a translator may undertake with their text, aligning some of these directly with source-culture oriented practices. Of these, we can see examples of *retention* of the source language to preserve culture, as well as examples of *specification* of detail in translated sections to facilitate the plot, as well as *addition* for rabbit language and behavior at the narrative level, in the form of narrational asides and numbered footnotes directing readers back to the included Lapine glossary. (Pedersen 3-5) The reader support provided by Adams, despite not being a linguist or a translator, falls in line with translation practices at the functional level. Beyond the functional level, translators must also consider events in which they cannot

fully retain the source text's culture or meaning, and where concessions must be made to make the target text clear. How does a translator deal with culturally heavy nouns like names in a regular translation, never mind a translation from a language that no living human is a fully natural speaker of? For this, we will consult Lincoln Fernandes and Maria Tymoczko. In Fernandes' article "Translation of Names in Children's Fantasy Literature: Bringing the Young Reader into Play," he brings to task the importance of names and the identity weight they can hold for a character as well as the challenges they can pose for translators, particularly translators of fiction. Despite the risk one runs in altering such an at times important aspect of a text, Fernandes explores how the translation of names can also be used to entice young readers to engage with a work of fiction, illuminate symbolic naming beyond the source text's culture, and improve readability of the target text (46-47). For names are, as Tymoczko describes, "often the semiotic elements of a text that are most urgent and at the same time the most problematic to be translated, especially due to their semiotic significance which is often culture-bound" (224). With the high number of names represented in the data from the content analysis, *Watership* seems to reflect this sentiment well. Not only does this illustrate the nuance and importance of the social relationships built around animal science research, represented in part by rabbit naming practices within the text, it also serves to stress the individual agency and self-hood of animal characters within the text. Though Fernandes and Tymoczko both describe a variety of options for dealing with names in fiction, Adams elects to opt for more than one of the presented strategies, choosing to include both the source-text's version of a name and a target-text version. This, to some in the field, would make the target-text difficult to follow from a translation perspective if not handled properly, but the goal of including both names is two-fold. This, on one hand, acknowledges the status of Lapine names as loaded signifiers (Fernandes 49) that

demand translation but also have something to lose in the process; on the other hand, the act of providing a translated version of the name makes seeing the connection between Lapine and English a little easier for the reader, while also using the translated pair to present an implicit rabbit cultural practice in a way that is noticeable but not directly distracting from the surface narrative. Much like the names themselves, the translation practices enacted on them are loaded with cultural weight and say just as much about Lapine language and identity as they do about the act of Lapine-to-English translation.

But in looking at the weight of culture and the value of names as well as the accessibility choices of the translation process, we must also return to the inevitable question of authorship and authenticity in animal narratives composed by humans. Animal texts are, at this time, still constructed by humans and represent only an approximation of what the animal's experience is like. If the goal in creating an animal narrative is understanding and empathy for the animal perspective, a story told to us in a language we don't know, perhaps we should consider looking at animal narratives not as human narratives with implications for animals and humans or a human take on an unknowable truth but rather as animal texts *in translation*, made accessible to a human audience through a familiar language not to make the narrative easier to grasp, but to encourage cultural exploration and active critical empathy on the part of the reader that, through defamiliarization and cultural materiality, can escape the limiting factors of a human evaluative standpoint. Viewing the text as a translation makes room for the exploration of rhetoric and cultural material that differs from our own, and encourages the human reader to look beyond their own familiar experience of the world around them, the relationships they build, and the culture they experience on a day-to-day basis. Stories like *Watership* become not just anthropomorphized animal stories for humans, but bilingual rabbit stories for bilingual readers

and rabbits alike. But what of wild rabbits? At the end of the day, one does have to remember that, outside of narrative, there are real voiceless animal populations being represented in these texts as well.

5. REAL, RHETORICAL, AND CINEMATIC RABBITS

When Ronald Lockley published *The Private Life of the Rabbit* in 1964, neither he nor his reader might have suspected the text would have a lasting impact on the realm of fiction and animal narrative in the form of Adams' works. Lockley's text was inherently a scientific one, a collection of observations on animal behavior with detailed field notes, analyses, and research. Though perhaps now his most well-known book, *The Private Life of the Rabbit* is but one of over fifty natural history books that Lockley wrote concerning the fauna of the British Isles and represents an ambitious four-year study conducted by Lockley to observe rabbit social behavior in as natural of a controlled environment as possible. To achieve this, Lockley built extensive natural environments for his thousands of hours of observations, even going as far as fashioning a dark dugout with a glass side right alongside the warren so that the underground behavior of the rabbits might be observed. This work is mirrored in the behavior demonstrated by Adams' rabbits in *Watership Down,* where rabbit groups follow similar social hierarchies, feeding behaviors, and body language (Adams 24, 68). Quotes from Lockley's book even make occasional appearances within the meta-narrative of Adams' text, both as helpful footnotes for learning readers and as chapter epithets throughout the book.

Much like work within Animal Studies itself, the desire to connect a critical animal narrative project like *Watership Down* to vetted work within the field of Animal Science is not a new phenomenon from a critical perspective. The interdisciplinary nature of Animal Studies and its long-standing links with Animal Science, Ecology, Primatology, and other fields have been integral to the development of the school of theory, but they also represent familiar ground that a theorist must tread and retread when making an argument. The field is fraught, in many ways, with such a powerful unknowing that one way we can attempt to define the animal experience in

a way we can understand is to turn to science and empirical data for what we perceive to be a concrete answer. Perhaps a representation of the opposite of anthropomorphism in narrative, the turn to hard science likewise provides a partial picture of the animal experience, but is not a stand-in or an opportunity to say 'we know everything there is to know'. The firing of neurons and the movement of chemicals throughout the body are one way to recognize a physiological response, but it is not the same as taking up a critical empathy. Much like our approach to anthropomorphism in previous sections, this chapter posits that, though science is not a skeleton key to the animal experience, to dismiss its value or neglect to apply it in a reading leaves an entire path of inquiry into one's topic entirely unexplored. In the case of *Watership Down,* Adams' connection to a published piece of science literature provides us with a unique opportunity to explore the effects of creating a science-informed culture for the character of an animal narrative in an attempt to represent some semblance of an accurate albeit harsh reality of animal life. But what does this mean for the other side of this interdisciplinary relationship? What can Animal Studies offer the world of Animal Sciences? Much as Weil's critical empathy can offer us a way to begin to decenter the Anthropos, Animal Studies can perhaps decenter the animal from its place as object or pathogen in the body of research at large. If not described as an avenue for commercial meat farming or a piece of property that must be protected from disease for the farm to remain viable, rabbits in many of these studies are described as vermin that pose harm to crops – a subject both Lockley and Adams touch upon with their allusions to the virus myxomatosis and its use to control populations in the British Isles in 1953, resulting in 99% population fatality (Lockley 121). Humanities scholarship at its core is built upon the notion that it is valuable to consider a subject from what are many at times conflicting perspectives – this

well-versed critical eye, not unlike the thorough nature of scientific rigor, encourages development of new and interesting theory, which is positive no matter what the discipline.

Much like Adams' later work, Lockley at many points in his text expresses an interest in writing the reality of the rabbit experience, and structured his observations like many other observational studies of animal social groups, including those following troupes of bonobos or chimpanzees. Lockley's field notes are highly detailed and extensive, keeping careful track of feeding, toileting, and hierarchical behavior of each rabbit within the test environment. All of these behaviors make appearances in *Watership Down,* and are often referred to most frequently with the use of Lapine verbiage or otherwise defamiliarized English like "silflay" for the morning and evening feeding, or passages surrounding the consumption of pellets, or feces within Adams' narrative. The connection between Lockley's work and the world of *Watership,* when read together, create a sense of verisimilitude that enhances our understanding of the animal experience. This connection is at the heart of Adams' rabbit culture and language and has survived as a legacy into the novel's subsequent adaptations – thus bringing this unique take on rabbit culture and animal agency to a brand-new audience.

Since its publication in 1975, *Watership Down* has seen multiple adaptations and interpretations from Rosen's 1978 film to the BBC's recent mini-series adaptation as recently as 2018. The film is notorious amongst people that grew up with it, and amongst British Film Board employees who must still field complaints contesting the film's U (fit for all ages) rating forty years later. To many, the film captures the grim reality of animal existence that was present in the book as well and represents the world Adams' built with a great degree of fidelity. Upon deciding to explore Rosen's film for a conference this year and then integrate it into this document, I was not convinced that the film, which spent many years languishing in productions

troubles (Rosen, 1978) under many different sets of hands, would align itself as closely to the linguistic model presented in the book. Where the book has the opportunity to rely on translation aids, like footnotes, asides, and a glossary, these genre conventions that are possible in a textual medium would not be possible to implement in an audio/visual experience. To reach a general audience, including many young children that might not have had the opportunity to read the book, the Lapine conlang stood risk for being cut at worst, subtitled or explained in an introductory passage at best [iv]. Upon watching it in full, I was fascinated to see that it did none of those things.

Much like parts of the translation itself, the film's choice to depict its rabbits, though animated, as realistically as possible extended also to its treatment of their language as it was represented in the original book. The Lapine words chosen to appear in the film were treated as part of reality - used without gloss, explanation, subtitle, and sometimes without context in a way that made the viewer pause and reevaluate what they were hearing. Where the novel made an attempt to ease the reader into Lapine language learning, the film chose to throw viewers into the deep end of the pool, using the ambiguity of the presentation of the conlang to produce the same defamiliarizing effect that Adams' attention to the language in the book initially produced. Adaptation is, in some senses, a sort of translation all its own, and the move from book to film represented another step in the translation process that chose a unique way to continue to represent and preserve rabbit culture. Looking into the process of adapting animal narratives from text to screen in this manner is a practice I would like to explore further, as the broader applications of this have weight when we consider the representation of animal culture in the new age of cinema and the completely artificial cinematic animal.

6. BROADER IMPLICATIONS AND THE VALUE OF OUTSIDER CREATIONS

In the end, these questions surrounding animal texts, constructed languages, and animal culture representation across media all come down to a question of value: how do we determine the scholarly value of a creative endeavor, how do we promote the representation of experiences beyond the human as valuable, and how does a piece of art's distance from our own experience as scholars or as humans affect our ability to see value within it? The question of value and how we see it in the experience of the Other has remained a steady presence throughout Humanities scholarship and is one of those questions rooted in individual ambiguity that tends to defy a concrete, well-defined answer.

For this case, I would like to return briefly to the Lapine artlang itself and to the similarities it and other similar linguistic projects share with the world of Outsider Art. Defined by Roger Cardinal in 1972, Outsider Art is now often erroneously applied to all art produced by the untrained, outside the mainstream, professional art world. But more accurately, Outsider Art is closely related to *Art Brut*, and is often produced by marginalized groups that are not only not participating in the mainstream art world, but completely cut off from it and from major society as well. The art of children, and of asylum patients were first considered in this way, and the term has expanded since then to include other marginalized groups (Cardinal). Both interpretations of the term are poignant when we consider an art language as a piece of art, particularly an art language meant to represent a marginalized, voiceless group like that of an animal. They become even more poignant when we consider the disagreements Outsider Art can spark within the larger community, particularly in terms of value, prestige, and gatekeeping into the greater art world – while many outsider artists experienced no prestige during their lived lives, their work enjoyed relative popularity upon its post-mortem discovery for its difference

from the contemporary modernist movement. Now consider the parallel. Adams was not a professional linguist, and though he did briefly correspond with one while creating his conlangs, he did not engage in the discourse of the community at large. While it is an overstep to ascribe a label to a creator, particularly in a genre outside the one in which he works, the parallels here surrounding acceptance and community gatekeeping have notable ramifications when considered through the lens of humanities scholarship.

And what of the animals represented by Adams' conlang? If we were to take the comparison one step beyond, and consider the speakers of Adams' artlang, through translation, the true users and owners of that cultural material, what does the act of gatekeeping Outsider Art based on the values of the established art world imply for marginalized animal narratives within the realm of the academic? Perhaps this is me grasping at straws, or "trying to eat grass that isn't there", but I think it's a grave situation that needs considering.

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NOTES

[i] There are other animal narratives, like *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* for example, where specific animals are set apart from the rest because of their ability to read human writing. Much as with *Watership,* one can argue that outside of these notedly unusual circumstances, the mice and rats of this text use another language to communicate even though we never see the language directly.

[ii] This is discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, on page 18.

[iii] A critique of this approach notes the limits of arguing that these are the only two bodies involved in a translation that may be moved in order to facilitate transfer. Venuti argues, for example, that it is nationalistic chauvinism that motivates Schleiermacher's decision to relocate the reader over the author (Venuti 99-108).

[iv] Indeed, much like many of the initial rejection letters from book publishers Adams received for *Watership,* many of these same complaints received by the British Film Board voiced confusion at the "nonsense words" included in the film.